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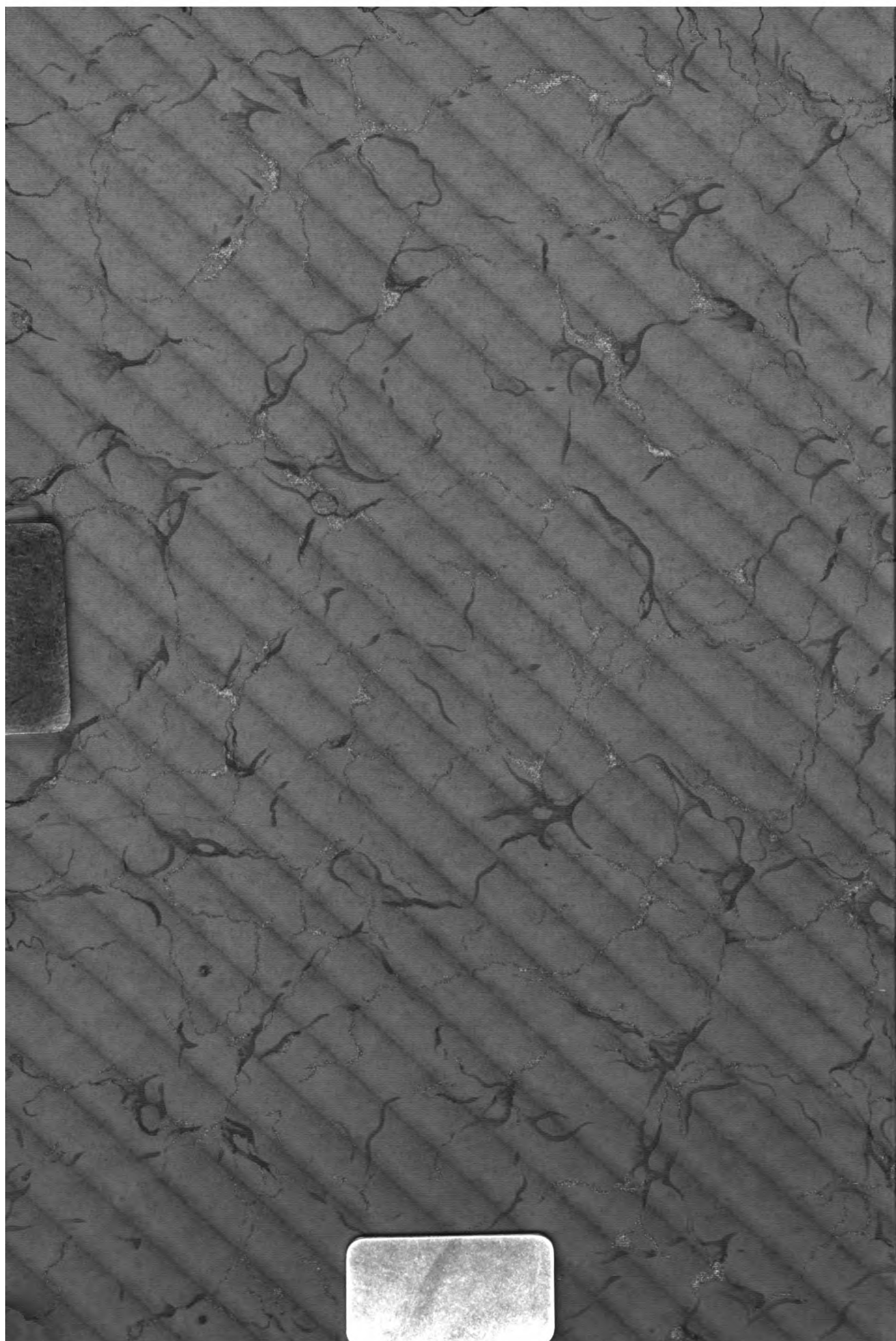
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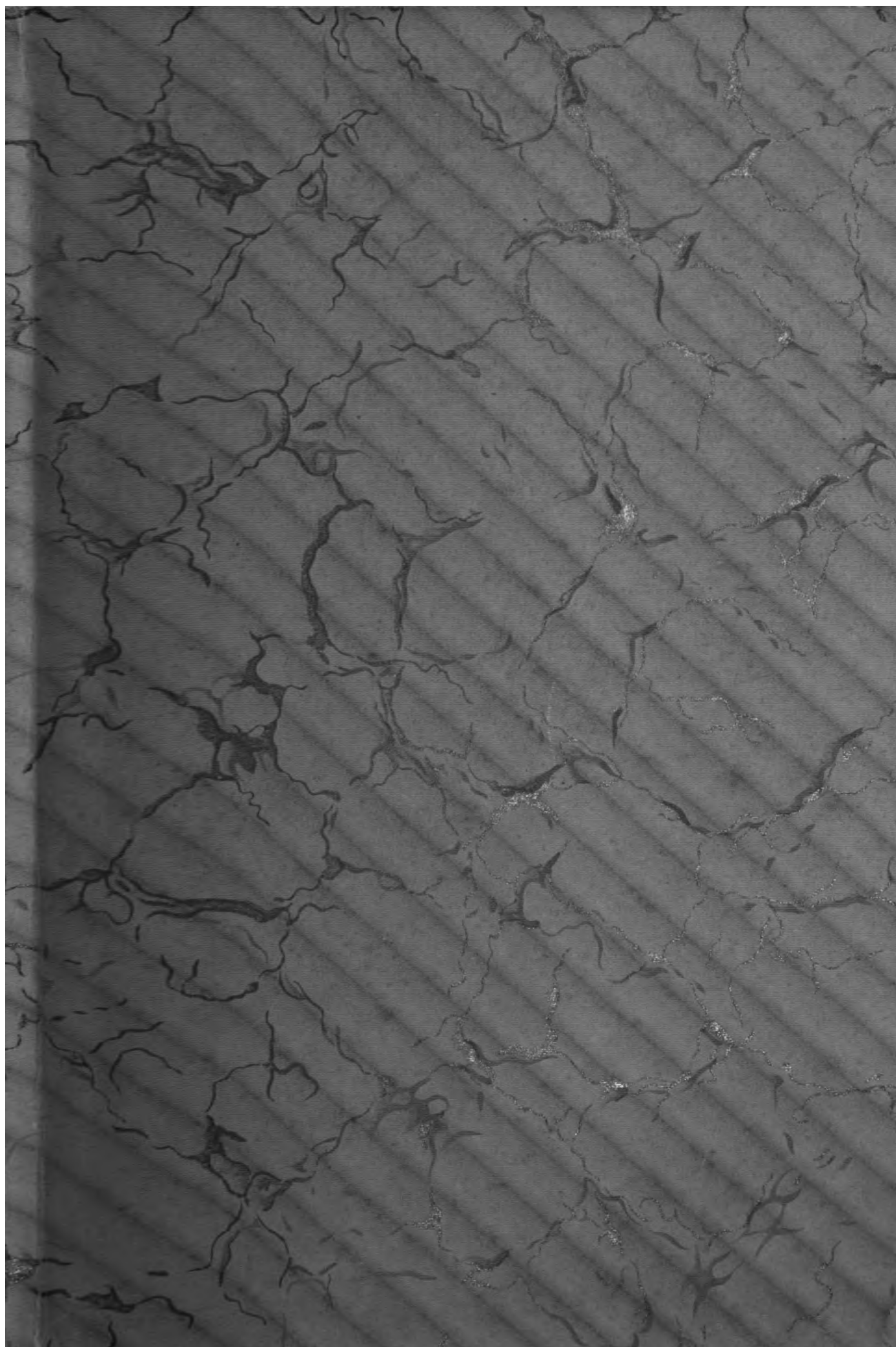


*Old 'miscellany' days, a selection
of stories from 'Bentley's ...*

Cruikshank, George, 1792–1878, Bentley's
miscellany, George Cruikshank

Geo Cruikshank







OLD 'MISCELLANY' DAYS.





Wm. G. Smith

621 Bentley's Miscellany

A SELECTION OF STORIES FROM
'BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY.'

BY *VARIOUS AUTHORS.*

ILLUSTRATED BY

George Cruikshank

1837—1843.



*WITH THIRTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS PRINTED FROM THE
ORIGINAL ETCHINGS ON THE STEEL.*

LONDON :

Richard Bentley and Son,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1885.

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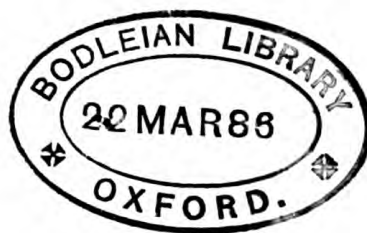
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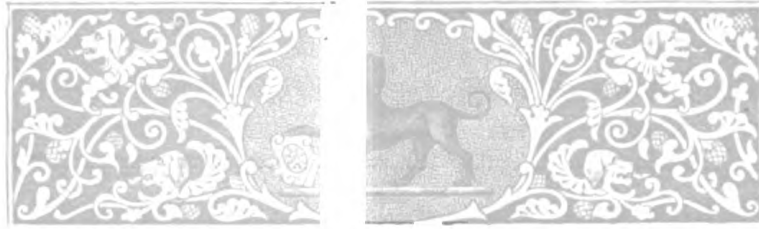
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Preface.



THE interest which attaches to everything which proceeded from George Cruikshank leads the publishers of this volume to hope that it will supply a want, as well as afford amusement, to the present generation, to most of whom these plates are wholly unknown.

They were etched on steel by George Cruikshank to illustrate various stories which appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany* from 1837 to 1842, and they have not been worked since impressions were taken from them for *Bentley's Miscellany*, and they are now reproduced from the original steel plates.

The stories which accompany the plates appeared in the *Miscellany* from 1837 to 1843, and were written by Charles Whitehead, the gifted author of 'Richard Savage;' by Paul Pindar, under which name Yonge Akerman the antiquarian wrote; by Mrs. Gore, the popular novelist and authoress of 'Mothers and Daughters'; by Dr. Mackay, author of 'Extraordinary Popular Delusions,' and the well-known correspondent of the *Times* during the late war between the Northern and Southern States of America; by Dalton Barham, son of the far-famed 'Ingoldsby;' by George Soane, Edward Mayhew, Captain Curling, and by W. H. Barker, better known as 'The Old Sailor,' whose 'Nights at Sea' had a great popularity in their time, and by many other popular writers of that day, some of whom were present at the *Miscellany* Dinners in the Red Room in New Burlington Street, dinners referred to in Moore's 'Diary,' where with the grace of Luttrell, the sparkling humour of Sam Slick,

the audacious wit of Hook, or the bright, genial play of fancy of Tom Ingoldsby, would mingle the song of Tom Moore, the rollicking story of Maxwell, and the cynical humour of Father Prout. From this gathering George Cruikshank must on no account be omitted, or Alfred Crowquill, nor, later on, the accomplished, the refined John Leech, as true a gentleman and artist as ever took the brush or pencil in hand.

The plates themselves, it will be seen, are of very various merit, and whilst some recall the Cruikshank of 'Oliver Twist,' a very few were so little worked upon, and so hard and wooden, that, except that they are the work of this great artist, the publishers would be inclined to omit them. Such plates as 'Jack detected Sailing under False Colours,' 'Joe amongst the Mummies,' and 'The Battle of the Nile,' are excellent specimens of Cruikshank's humour at its happiest. Very little behind these are 'The Confessions of an Elderly Gentleman,' 'The Harmonious Owls,' and 'The Autobiography of a Joke.'

In the plate which accompanies the story of 'A Practical Joke' the reader will notice, in an inner room, an admirable portrait of Napoleon. Few as the lines are which go to make the face of the great Emperor, no one requires to be told who is intended to be represented. In 'Marcel's Last Minuet' the face of the figure on the right is full of vigour and scorn; and how varied is the expression of mingled horror and surprise in the 'Three Black Robbers'! Some of the plates on which Cruikshank did not expend his usual skill are unsigned by him, but they are his work; and the publisher appended his name sometimes to the plate, and at other times to the story.

A full and exhaustive Life of George Cruikshank is greatly wanted. None of the 'Lives' extant, even when supplemented by the 'Dictionary' by Mr. Reid, supply all that is required, though undoubtedly they are steps in the right direction. It is much to be desired that Mr. Edwin Truman should give to the world in some shape his immense stores of accurate information respecting this great artist. Connoisseurs are aware that he is acquainted with every work which George Cruikshank acknowledged, and that Mr. Truman's long intimacy with this great master, and his unaffected admiration for his genius, place him in a position to

speak with absolute authority. He has, moreover, we believe, the most perfect collection of Cruikshank's works possessed by any one, and as most of this great artist's works must have as much immortality as is possible to human productions, it is important that the opportunity should not be lost while it is possible to obtain an accurate catalogue of his works.

The present volume is a step towards the history of his connexion with the New Burlington Street house. In addition to these plates, he did some of his finest work for it. His illustrations to 'Oliver Twist' are well-known, and largely contributed to the immense success which attended the start of *Bentley's Miscellany*. It will be remembered that a controversy arose respecting this work, and that Cruikshank claimed the honour of the invention of the story. While this exaggerated claim cannot be admitted, it is no doubt true that the genius of the artist stimulated that of the writer, and when Dickens saw his ideas so ably reflected, he kindled with a fresh enthusiasm, and the two acting in cordial combination produced a work which will ever belong to our literature and our art.

Of scarcely less merit, and perhaps, mechanically, of superior workmanship, were the plates he executed for 'Jack Sheppard,' which work also made its appearance in *Bentley's Miscellany*. These were followed by the illustrations to 'Guy Fawkes,' which, however, were not up to the high mark reached in his previous works for that periodical.

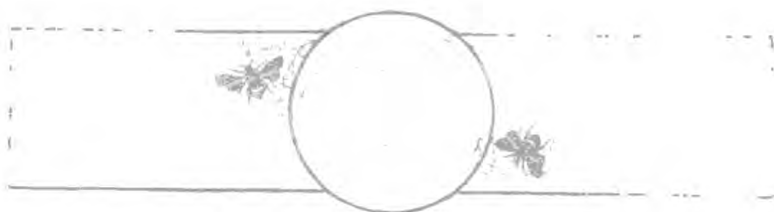
With the advent of John Leech, Cruikshank's connexion with *Bentley's Miscellany* waned, though for some years illustrations of both artists appeared together. Cruikshank subsequently transferred his pencil to the pages of *Ainsworth's Magazine*, which had, however, a somewhat brief existence, and after which time Cruikshank produced nothing of a very remarkable character.

A few pages further on will be found a reduction of the cover Cruikshank so gracefully designed for *Bentley's Miscellany*.



DEDICATED
TO THE NUMEROUS ADMIRERS AND COLLECTORS
OF THE
WORKS OF GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

MDCCCLXXXV.



Note.

If the present work meets with a favourable reception at the hands of the public, it is proposed to issue in the course of next year a companion volume of stories, also from 'Bentley's Miscellany,' accompanied by the etchings of John Leech, which appeared about the same time as the Cruikshank etchings now re-issued for the first time.





The Doctor's Office

By J. H. P.

London



The Barber of Beaulieu.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, July, 1842.]



IN the skirts of the New Forest, and deeply embosomed in groves and orchards, stands the little village of Beaulieu, which name it richly merits, though the inhabitants have been pleased to transform it into the unmeaning sound of *Bewley*. The village is nearly encircled by a valley, of considerable extent, and is surrounded by well-wooded hills, through the middle of which runs a forest-stream for a distance of nearly two miles beyond the village. Here, however, it swells into an ample lake, which meets the tide from Southampton Water, ebbing and flowing with it beneath all that remains of the ancient abbey. These ruins, which form the present church, were, in olden time—alas, for the days gone by!—the refectory of monks of the order of St. Benedict.

In this quiet nook dwelt, some few years ago, one Master Nicodemus Bibbet, who throughout all the villages of the New Forest was popularly known under the *sobriquet* of 'The Barber of Beaulieu,' he being, in fact, the recognised lion of the district. And a very rare specimen of the genus *homo* was this same Barber of Beaulieu. Like George Selwyn, of gallows-loving memory, the supreme delight of our barber was in witnessing the infliction of death either on man or animal, but more particularly the former. Yet Master Nicodemus had one crook in his lot: it had never been his good hap to see a man strangled on the gallows. On this score, fate seemed to owe him a grudge; for though he extended his range of travel for that purpose up even to fifty miles (and executions had occurred over and over again within that limit), still, by some unaccountable chance, he had invariably been disappointed.*

At length the annual assize came round again, and again the

* A parallel case to this is quoted in Mozley's 'Later Reminiscences,' published in 1885. 'My father,' says Mozley, 'used to tell a story of a servant-girl at Gainsborough who got leave to walk to Lincoln to see an execution. The poor girl returned in the evening in tears. There had been a reprieve.' Vol. I., p. 364.

net of the law had caught a victim in its meshes. This time it was a woman, a poor servant-girl, who had been accused of attempting to poison her master and his family, and was actually condemned upon the evidence of the scoundrel who had himself mixed the arsenic in the oatmeal. Upon hearing these glad tidings, the barber resolved not to give a chance away; but taking the occasion by the forelock, he set out for Winchester two days before the appointed morning of execution.

How slowly did the time creep on! To his eager fancy it seemed as if the long minute-hand of the town-clock had been struck with palsy, and, instead of taking great hops, as it did at other times, was moving along at the more deliberate pace of the hour-hand. At length, however, the blissful moment did actually arrive—the bell tolled out the death-summons to the living—the plumeless hearse stood below the scaffold ready for the body in which the life-blood was still flowing as fresh and red as in the veins of any of the spectators; the hangman pulled the white cap over his victim's face; he fixed the noose about her neck, and—a reprieve came. The girl's innocence had been discovered only just in time to save both judge and jury from the crime of murder.

Sad and disconsolate was the condition in which Nicodemus returned home; so much so, indeed, that not even the sharp tongue of his wife could induce him to resume his usual occupation. For ten whole days not a head was clipped, not a beard was shaved in Beaulieu; and in fact the villagers were one and all beginning to look as bristly as their own swine that fed, troop-wise, in the forest; even the squire's poodle remained unshorn; and there is no guessing what might have been the consequence, when, one morning, he found neither butter nor bread upon his breakfast-table, but pure water, cold and hot, contained in two distinct jugs of equal size for his election. Suddenly the conviction flashed across his mind that to eat he must work; and forthwith he handled his comb and scissors, stropped his razor, and, instead of deluging his stomach with the hot water, put it to the more legitimate use of working up a lather for the chins of his expectant customers.

Still he went about his business like a man in a dream; he lost his appetite, rarely gossiped, could not sleep o' nights—nay, what was the worst sign of all, being invited by a friendly butcher to attend the slaughter of a prize-ox, he actually declined the invitation. After this, it was evident, to all Beaulieu that their barber was a doomed man! The village undertaker already began to talk of him as a certain job; the parson was heard to wonder if he would leave enough to pay the Church's fees, as was

the duty of every good Christian ; sundry cronies of his Xantippe published somewhat too loudly their conjectures, whether his widow would marry the sexton or the brewer's head-clerk, while a few whispered their votes in favour of his apprentice—a tall, raw-boned lad, not quite seventeen years old, with locks of a fiery hue, a most capacious mouth, and a formidable squint in his left eye. Sad and dreary as was Nicodemus, these friendly purposes had not escaped him, and forthwith he determined to disappoint the speculators. Early one fine morning, without previous notice given to any living soul, he decamped with his wife and household goods, including the fiery-haired apprentice, set himself down in the modern Babylon, and pitched his tent in the skirts of the classical Saint Giles, where a long pole, duly garlanded with red circlets, announced his occupation to all whom it might concern.

About this time legal murder had begun to grow somewhat out of fashion ; and the disappointed Hangman even went so far as to petition the Civic Authorities for an increase of salary, upon the ground that, though he was as ready and willing as ever to exercise his functions, yet the supply of necks for the halter was so scanty that he could scarcely earn salt to his porridge. Whether the *patres conscripti* of the City, the worshipful Lord Mayor and Aldermen, were moved so far by the distress of their faithful servant as to open their purse-strings, does not appear upon the record ; but just now an event occurred that proved Othello's occupation was not yet gone, and considerably mitigated his dolour. Courvoisier (for it is of this worthy we are about to speak), impelled by a vindictive spirit, and not less, perhaps, by his thirst of gold, assassinated, it will be remembered, Lord William Russell. The miscreant—for Courvoisier really was a miscreant, and one whom no man could pity—was duly tried, and sentenced to be hanged by the neck till he was dead, though his learned counsel swore by all the saints in the Calendar that they were condemning a poor creature who was as innocent as themselves.

Nicodemus had watched the whole course of the trial with as much earnestness as if his own life had depended upon its issue ; it was a rare sight to see how his face lengthened or shortened, and his jaw fell or rose, according to the shifting nature of the evidence, and when the judge put on his black cap to pronounce sentence, he verily thought he had never beheld a more becoming head-dress. It was the evening of the day previous to the execution. Nicodemus sat in his back-parlour, luxuriating, over a glass of toddy, in sundry pleasing fancies on the spectacle of the morrow. He wondered how the murderer would look and act : what would he say ? would he die craven, or make a bold face at

the gallows?—what was he about at that very moment?—praying, eating, or sleeping, and, if he slept, of what stuff were his dreams made?—did they allow him a lamp in his cell?

‘I would give half my shop,’ said Nicodemus to himself, ‘and my wife into the bargain, to have a peep at him—only one little peep! I wonder if they have shaved him yet—his beard was terribly long at the trial!’

This was a grave doubt, and Nicodemus felt it to be so, wherefore he rocked himself to and fro in his arm-chair, and took a long pull at the toddy-jug to help him in the solution. Under the combined influence of these two stimuli, his imagination expanded most marvellously. All the paraphernalia of the morrow shaped themselves out to him in the fire as vividly as if they had been limned on canvas by the hand of some skilful artist; there were the gallows, and the culprit, and Jack Ketch, with the parson at his elbow, all flashing and twinkling as the live coals flashed and twinkled, and shifting as they shifted, with the falling together of the embers.

The clock from St. Giles’s Church struck nine, and Nicodemus, tossing off what remained of his toddy, started up in a prodigious hurry. ‘It is time; I must be off, and secure a place near the scaffold, or the mob will be beforehand with me, and then I shall see nothing, or next to nothing. ’Zooks! I would not give a rush to be there, unless I could look into the fellow’s eyes, and hear his teeth chatter!’

Thus saying, he wrapt about him the cloak that served himself and his wife in common, it being, by virtue of a family compact, her property when she went to market in the morning, and devolving again on him when he paid his nightly visits to the public-house at the corner. But, just as he emerged from his little snugger into the shop, a stranger made his appearance from the street. He was a short, broad-shouldered figure, with a hooked nose, a long chin, a monstrously high forehead, and ears that looked very like two horns, both from shape and situation, for they had a marvellous curl with them, and grew much higher up than is usual with such appendages. Then, too, his feet were clubbed, the right much more so than the left, which produced an awkward limp in his walk. His dress, moreover, was to the full as *outré* as his figure, that is, according to the present ideas of dress, though, probably, at one time it was the height of fashion; his breeches were of black velvet, large and swelling, like a Dutchman’s togs; his frock-coat was of the same material; his flowered silk waistcoat, being thrown open, and held only by a single button, discovered a curiously slashed shirt, much in the style of an antique watch-paper; and his collar, rolled back, presented to

view a stout bull-neck, that was excellently well calculated to uphold the superincumbent weight of head and face—a burthen certainly much too great for any throat of ordinary dimensions.

‘I want to be shaved,’ exclaimed this odd-looking customer.

‘You do, indeed!’ involuntarily ejaculated Nicodemus, struck by the bristly black chin of his visitant; ‘Courvoisier’s beard was not half so long—it may be, though, by this time.’

‘You are out there,’ replied the stranger, taking out his watch; ‘ten minutes past nine! they have this moment done shaving him.’

‘You don’t say so!’ cried the barber in amazement.

‘I do say so,’ repeated the stranger; ‘they have this moment done shaving him.’

Nicodemus was thunderstruck. He could neither move nor speak from the excess of his astonishment.

‘And you had best do as much for me,’ continued the stranger, ‘or you’ll be too late for the show.’

‘It must be Jack Ketch!’ murmured the barber, elated beyond measure at coming in contact with so illustrious a personage. ‘It must be Jack Ketch!’ he repeated to himself with increasing animation; ‘who else could know thus precisely what was going on within the walls of Newgate?’

So profound was the barber’s veneration for this supposed dispenser of the law’s last favour, that he did for him what he would not have done for any other customer in London, though that other had been the Lord Mayor in person. Albeit dying with impatience to set off for Newgate, yet he placed the arm-chair for him, stropped his best razor, worked up a lather fit for King or Kaiser, and tied a clean napkin under his chin, though this last was, in general, only a Sunday luxury.

‘My beard is tough,’ growled the stranger, as Nicodemus prepared to make the first sweep.

‘D——y!’ replied the barber, surprised for the moment out of his politeness by the unexpected resistance of a beard that was more like hog’s bristles than the natural product of the human chin. Never before had he come in contact with such a beard. But, then, the customer was Jack Ketch—at least, he thought so—and it would not do to disoblige a man of his functions in the State. Nicodemus, therefore, took a fresh razor, and made a renewed attack upon the tough, grizzly stubble. But, with all his efforts, he did not gain much ground, and the stranger winced grievously under the operation. Alarmed at these unpromising signs, he asked, with a great show of sympathy, ‘Do I hurt you, sir?’

'D——y!' replied the stranger, giving him back his own exclamation, and precisely in his own tones.

The barber laughed, or at least affected to laugh, with infinite hilarity at this imitation of himself, that he might keep the great man in good humour; and this nice piece of flattery in some measure effected its object. The stranger replied to it by a gracious cachinnation on his part, and, calling Nicodemus a fool, bade him proceed with his work, an injunction to which the latter was not slow in attending. Again he commenced operations, and with such determined energy, that the wiry beard rasped and grated against the razor, till it set his teeth on edge to hear it.

'The devil!' exclaimed Nicodemus.

'Just so!' replied the stranger.

Nicodemus thought this a very odd reply; indeed, he did not know exactly what to make of it; but he shaved away with might and main notwithstanding. The clock chimed three quarters.

'I shall be too late!' he mentally exclaimed, and made a desperate cut at the obstinate beard, when the blade was forced back by the resistance offered to it, cutting the operator's fingers to the bone.

'Lord have mercy on me!' ejaculated the barber.

'Don't swear, man,' said the stranger hastily, with a most sinister frown, or rather scowl, his bushy brows contracting so as almost to veil his eyes—'don't swear, man; I'll not allow it in my presence.'

'I beg ten thousand pardons,' said the barber; 'but really——'

'Lather away, fool!' roared the stranger, stamping vehemently with his club-feet.

It was plain that the stranger was a hasty gentleman, and one who in his wrathful mood might do mischief. Nicodemus, therefore, did not venture a reply, but assiduously applied himself to his wearisome and, as it well-nigh seemed, hopeless task of rasping away at the refractory beard. The clock struck ten.

'Too late, by heavens!' muttered Nicodemus, forgetting at the moment all prudential considerations.

The stranger said nothing, but gave him a look that rendered all words superfluous. It made his teeth chatter, and his knees tremble, and caused him to resume his work more earnestly than ever. One quarter—two quarters—three quarters—and the long grizzly chin was little more than half shaven. The perspiration trickled down the barber's face as much from exertion as from the agony of his impatience. There must surely, he thought, be some trick, some juggling in all this; for mere mortal hair never could have resisted the razor's edge in such a fashion. Or was the stranger the—— No; he would not pronounce the word

even to himself. Such an idea was too ridiculous; and yet he could not help looking down very suspiciously at the club-feet. Rapid as the glance was, it did not escape the notice of the stranger.

'Handsome legs, are they not?' said he, stretching them out, as if to invite a more close inspection. Had they, indeed, been modelled after the Belvedere Apollo, he could not have regarded them with greater complacency.

'Handsome feet, are they not?' he repeated, in the happiest tone of self-satisfaction.

'Very,' replied the barber, scarcely knowing what he said in answer to such an awkward question.

'Ho! ho! ho!' laughed the stranger; 'you're a man of taste, I find—ho! ho! ho! But shave on—shave on, my fine fellow; it's getting late.'

'You need not tell me *that*,' cried Nicodemus, again carried away by his impatience, for just then the clock struck eleven—'you need not tell me *that*.'

'Certainly not,' replied the stranger mildly. 'You seem to have a tolerably long pair of ears on your head; and, as they are not particularly ornamental, it is but fair to suppose they may be useful. Of course you heard the clock from St. Giles's steeple.'

Nicodemus was half mad with vexation; and no doubt his wrath would have boiled over in words, had it not been considerably cooled and qualified by fear. Still he could not control the irritation that tingled in his fingers; and making a last desperate sweep at the remaining portion of beard, it yielded to the steel, crackling and sparkling like an electric discharge. Between joy at his accomplished task and anger at the lateness of the hour, he tore the napkin from the stranger's neck, and fell to snapping his fingers, dancing about at the same time as if possessed by the spirit of St. Vitus.

'What am I to pay?' asked the stranger, as if quite insensible to the agitation of poor Nicodemus.

'Not a penny—not a farthing!' exclaimed the latter. 'Only leave my shop, or let me leave it. Death and the devil!—will you stand out of my way?'

'Very good,' said the stranger, quietly taking a pinch of snuff, and placing himself in the doorway, so as effectually to prevent his host's egress.

'Curses!' cried the barber.

'As many as you like,' said the stranger. 'Go on. I like you wonderfully.'

'And I wish you at the devil!' shouted the infuriated barber.

'No, you don't,' was the cool reply.

'May I be d——d then!' cried Nicodemus.

'Humph!' exclaimed the stranger; 'there's no need of putting it on that footing either, seeing the trifling matter that you allude to was settled long ago. But I see you are one of the right sort, and I'll help you to your wishes.'

'Jack Ketch, after all!' exclaimed the barber: 'I have been thinking so this half hour. My dear, good, invaluable friend!—to think that I should ever have the honour of seeing so great a man in my poor domicile!—seated in my own arm-chair—my towel about his throat!—my hand upon his nose! Nicodemus, Nicodemus! little did the mother who bore you dream of your living to such an hour!'

'Calm your transports,' said the stranger, with one of his singular smiles. 'I am not exactly he whom you take me for.'

'Not Jack Ketch?' sighed the barber, his under-jaw dropping considerably—'you are not Jack Ketch?'

'Don't let that disturb you,' said the stranger. 'You will soon see enough of him, I promise you.'

The barber's jaw resumed its natural position, and his face became radiant with smiles.

'But let us cut the matter short, for the hour wears late,' continued his visitor.

'It does indeed!' groaned Nicodemus, his thoughts reverting to Newgate, and the small chance that now remained to him of getting a convenient place for the morrow.

'Never mind; I will take you into Newgate—into Courvoisier's very cell; and I promise you the very best place upon the scaffold.'

These last words were again accompanied by one of the stranger's peculiar leers; but the delighted barber only ejaculated in his transport, 'Good Heavens!' Hereupon the former stamped with his club-feet till the dust flew up, exclaiming, 'Have I not told you of this before? Swear again, and that instant I quit your house.'

'A thousand pardons!' cried the barber; 'but will you indeed be so kind as to help me to a place on the scaffold?'

'I have helped many a man before now to as high a place,' replied the stranger.

'Have you, indeed? Well, I shall always remember the obligation.'

'I have no doubt you will,' said the stranger, and again he gave one of his singular smiles—'aye, to the last moment of your life, I'll be sworn for you. But put on your wife's cloak, and——'

'Excuse me,' interrupted Nicodemus, with unusual vivacity; 'not my wife's cloak, but mine, except in the morning.'

‘No matter; wrap the old blanket about you, and follow me; for the night is waning rapidly.’

Nicodemus did as he was directed, and forthwith the two singular companions threaded their way to Newgate, where door after door opened as if by magic at the stranger's knock, till at length they found themselves in the very cell of the murderer. But what was the barber's surprise when he discovered in Courvoisier the exact similitude of his own form and figure, as he had often seen them reflected in the glass. Scarcely could he credit the testimony of his senses; a resemblance of this kind seemed to go beyond all the bounds of possibility. He had little time, however, to dwell upon such feelings; they were quickly swallowed up in the revelations that now took place; for his companion had the singular faculty of drawing from the culprit a confession far beyond what judge or jury had been able to extract, even with the priest to back them. To this tremendous tale of guilt our barber listened with breathless attention till his blood ran cold, and the hair stood erect upon his head.

The cell seemed to grow colder, the dull light got dimmer, and the bell of St. Sepulchre's tolled out yet more hollowly, while the murderer narrated how he had stolen to his victim's couch, how for a moment—only for a moment—he had hesitated to do the deed, and had palled in resolution; how, when he struck the first ineffectual blow, the wounded man struggled and prayed for life; how, when the victim rolled at his feet a lifeless corpse, the whole room suddenly appeared to be in flames—the flames of hell, while all manner of strange and fearful shapes flitted about him, and his hearing was stunned by wild cries and uncouth laughter, and sounds that did not belong to earth. And then, again, how the mere howling of a watch-dog, by the very alarm his voice inspired, had at once restored him to his self-possession. Nicodemus felt relieved when the noise of unbarring bolts announced that the gaoler was at hand to warn them of it being time to quit the prison.

‘Now, gentlemen!’ exclaimed the gaoler as he entered, followed for greater security by a stout, grim-looking satellite; ‘I dare not let you stay any longer.’

No reply was made; but the stranger and Courvoisier rose to leave the dungeon arm in arm, much to the surprise of Nicodemus, who was about to follow them, when he was stopped by the heavy hand of the chief Cerberus.

‘Where are you going to, my fine fellow?’ growled the man of many keys.

‘Where!’ repeated the barber, somewhat disconcerted by this sudden check upon his free-will; ‘why, home, if you have no objection.’

'Ho! ho! ho!' shouted the gaolers in unison, while the stranger sighed out compassionately, in his blandest tones, 'Poor fellow! poor fellow!'

'Why, you surely don't mean to keep me here all night?' cried Nicodemus.

'Of course not,' said Cerberus; 'not by no manner of means; only stand back, will you, and let the gentlemen pass, or I shall be obligated to make you, and I should not like that either. I'm too tender-hearted, as everybody says who knows anything of Jem Ward.'

During this self-eulogium of the susceptible gaoler, Nicodemus glanced uneasily from one to the other, in the hope of discovering the latent joke, but not a smile could he detect on any of their faces. At once the idea struck him that, from the peculiar semblance of the murderer to himself, there might have possibly been some mistaking of persons, under which impression he hastily exclaimed, 'Good heavens, gentlemen, you surely do not mistake me—*me*, the Barber of Beaulieu—for the unfortunate Courvoisier, though I must confess to an extraordinary likeness.'

'Very like, indeed!' cried the goalers, with a grim smile.

Nicodemus was confounded, as well he might be, though by no means inclined to give up his own identity. He turned imploringly to the stranger: 'But you, my good friend, surely you must know me, since it's little more than an hour or so since I shaved you, when you promised to get me a good place at the hanging.'

This last notion seemed to tickle the fancy of both gaolers. They actually relaxed into a loud laugh—a most unusual sound in the cells and passages of Newgate.

'A good place at the hanging!' repeated the chief Cerberus, when the transient fit had passed away—'a good place at the hanging! You may take your Bible oath of that—the very best—and no mistake.'

'Poor wretch!' commiseratingly said the stranger: 'he has gone mad from sheer fright and agony, and now fancies himself some other person.'

'Why, surely I am the Barber of Beaulieu!' half muttered Nicodemus to himself, with some incipient misgivings as to his actual identity. 'I wish I had a glass to see myself.'

'Come along! come along!' cried Cerberus; 'he'll be quiet enough when he's alone, I warrant you; and if he is not, it's no great matter. His nonsense won't do no harm to nobody.'

'Stop a moment, if you please,' said the stranger compassionately; 'it may, perhaps, soothe his frenzy, and make him better able to attend to his religious duties, if I gratify him in

this trifling matter. Look here, my poor fellow,' he continued, holding up a small pocket-mirror—'look here, and know yourself.'

Nicodemus started back aghast. The mirror reflected not his face as he had known it for many years in his diurnal shavings and washings, but presented a lank, cadaverous visage, of a foreign mould, and a huge head covered with long, black hair, that shone as if it had been steeped in oil. Anything more at variance with his previous ideas of himself could not well have been imagined. Was he mad, or only drunk? or did he dream? His brain went round, whirring and whizzing like a mill in a high wind; and before he could recover himself, so as to collect his ideas, and give them words, they had all gone. He was alone—alone in the condemned cell—that fearful spot, where so many before him had passed through the horrors of their last night! In the frenzy of the moment he shrieked aloud, begging and cursing by turns, but not a step sounded along the vaulted passages; and when his voice ceased from pure exhaustion, the gloomy silence of the prison seemed to settle down more deep and full of awe than ever.

In the transient calm of mind that now ensued, he endeavoured to account for his situation—to reason with himself upon the facts about him, and extort the truth from them. That he was no longer himself in outward semblance was too plain for doubt; and yet the idea of his inward identity was not the weaker from this conviction. He was conscious of the same thoughts, the same recollections, that for years had occupied him; and therefore, he not unreasonably argued, he must be the same man, in spite of any outward appearances to the contrary. But how was he to bring over others to his opinion? how was he to make the world believe a story which he scarcely could believe himself? No; he must die upon the scaffold, innocent as he was, by the hands of the common hangman, amidst the execrations of thousands, who would rejoice at the death of the supposed murderer. For the first time in his life he began to think it was a very cruel curiosity that led people to run after the execution of a fellow-creature. As a corollary to this very natural idea, his conscience twitted him with his own appetite for such exhibitions. Of course he could not deny it; and the inward monitor growing more violent the more he was listened to, at last suggested that the present mysterious change, with all its unpleasant accompaniments, past and prospective, was no more than a fitting retribution for the offence.

But poor Nicodemus, though considerably cast down by these inward prickings and objurgations, was none the more reconciled to the idea of being the chief performer in the morning's spectacle.

On the contrary, he dwelt on the image of the gallows, till the cold sweat of agony ran down his brow, and the teeth chattered in his head, as if under the influence of a bitter frost. Then came the fever-fit of terror: his tongue was scorched till he felt as if a hot cinder were rolling in his mouth, his brain seemed literally on fire; and in the intenseness of his agony he made sundry efforts to smash his skull against the walls, though, from want of sufficient courage to do the deed effectually, he reaped only pain and bruises from his desperate mood.

At length the morning broke, and found him still a watcher; not a single wink of sleep had closed his eyes the whole of this long and fearful night. Then came the visit of the minister; the summons to the chamber where his hands and arms were to be pinioned; the first shock of the bell that solemnly tolled out the funeral of the living man; the march in grand procession through dreary passages, where daylight and lamplight faintly struggled with the darkness; the unbarring of gate after gate, which, when they once closed behind him, would never again open to him in this life—and, sad close of all! the scaffold, with its fearful appendages, and the crowd of spectators below, eager as he himself had been for the cruel exhibition. And now the cap was drawn over his face; the noose was fastened under his ear; Jack Ketch, as if in mockery of his odious office, had actually shaken hands with him—the same fingers which had tied the rope, and which would presently withdraw the bolt, polluting him with the mimic grasp of good-will and friendship: another minute only, and he would be struggling in the death-throes. But in that minute what a world of thoughts passed through his brain!—what years of his bygone life were acted over again in that little speck of time!—how inexpressibly dear to him became on the sudden the shop where he had almost starved, and had foolishly imagined that human wretchedness could scarcely go beyond his!—how gladly, how more than gladly, would he have exchanged lots with the poorest beggar in the streets, ay, even with the wretched convict, who earned a scanty meal of bread and water, with gyved limbs and gradually wasting strength, till he sank into the grave hopeless and unlamented.

‘Oh, that I could but call back the last two days!’ he exclaimed in agony of heart—‘only the last two days!—and that this was no more than a frightful dream!’

Scarcely had the last words syllabled themselves upon his trembling lips, when he—awoke; and found himself sitting in his little parlour, before the expiring embers of the neglected fire. The dream, however, had made an impression as deep as it was salutary. From that time forth the barber was an altered man;

the change in his inward self being as wonderful as the outward change he had just been dreaming of in his person. He no longer sought after executions, but grew sick at the sight, or even the talk, of blood ; so that when at length he died, in the fulness of years, the whole village followed him to the grave. Even to this hour, when a child is seen prone to cruelty, the village-elders will send the young delinquent to the spot where rest the remains of *The Barber of Beaulieu*.



Harold's room - the end

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Marcel's Last Minuet.

[Bentley's Miscellany, October, 1838.]



ANY person who was in the habit of passing through the Rue Richelieu in the year 1746, would be sure of witnessing a crowd of gay equipages drawn up before the gate of a rather handsome hôtel, which usually maintained its position from eleven in the morning until an hour after noon. Young noblemen *en chenille*, their hair half powdered, and carelessly turned up with the comb only, jumped out lightly from their elegant phaetons, while footmen in gorgeous liveries opened the carriage doors, and held out their arms respectfully to ladies attired in morning-dresses, and who were all young, if they were not beautiful. The carriages succeeded one another with extraordinary rapidity, and but few of the visitors prolonged their stay beyond five minutes. If any stranger, who was surprised at this incessant but always regular bustle, inquired the reason, he would be told that the hôtel belonged to M. Marcel; or else his inquiry would be answered by a question, and he would be asked if he were a gentleman, or wished to be presented at Court.

'If so,' they would add, 'all you have to do is to go upstairs; it will only cost you twelve francs.' If the singularity of this piece of information induced the stranger to go through with the adventure, he crossed the threshold of the carriage gate without being stopped by a servant's impertinent interrogatory of 'Where are you going, sir?' The door was open to everybody; and on entering, you stood in a court neatly paved in mosaic, and surrounded by orange-trees in boxes, and a profusion of foreign shrubs. In the depth of winter a verdant and ever-smiling landscape might be seen on the walls, which were painted in that fashion. On the right hand, between two pillars, was a wide staircase, over which was spread a rich and thick carpet; and the angles of the landing-places were ornamented with pedestals, on which were placed nymphs, graces, and doves, in plaster, after the designs of Bouchardon.

This staircase led to the anteroom of the first floor. A half-opened door faced you, and seemed to invite you to enter.

Through it there was a passage into a withdrawing-room, where two footmen received you with much ceremony, and took charge of your hat and cane. A respectful but expressive sign indicated your place, next to the person who had arrived last before you, on a low bench covered with red velvet, unless you preferred to stand, but always in the position assigned to you by priority of time; for, gentleman or lady alike, each individual was bound to maintain his post, and it was very rarely that gallantry prevailed against etiquette. What was most surprising was to notice the silence and decorum observed by the harebrained youths of fashion *en déshabille*, and the bright-eyed and coquettishly-looking dames and damsels; the most lively only hazarded a few whispered words, which were answered by a slight smile. It seemed as if they were all apprehensive of disturbing the progress of some mystery or sacred rite.

In fact, something extraordinary was actually transpiring in the next apartment, the folding doors of which opened every minute to give egress to one person, and to admit his successor. It was a spacious and magnificent saloon, lighted by three windows with red damask curtains trimmed with gold fringe. The walls were covered with hangings of blue silk, and, at intervals, lofty glasses doubled by repetition the glitter of the gilding which ornamented the rich *consoles* and the exquisitely sculptured tables. A copy of the *Hours* of Guido was painted on the ceiling, and the variety of colours harmonized well with a sky-blue ground. On the floor, which shone like a mirror, were traced two parallel lines in chalk, commencing at the entrance-door, and ending at a semicircular line in the form of a crescent.

At that spot, seated in a large arm-chair, like a divinity, at the centre of a table, was a grave-looking man, in a graceful, although somewhat theatrical attitude. It was Marcel, the celebrated dancer. His undoubted talent, and, still more, his solemn enthusiasm for his art, had obtained him a reputation which, although it might appear absurd to some persons, was not the less widely extended on that account. He excelled more especially in the minuet; and that dance was his passion, his glory, his universe. 'Ah, sir!' said he to a stranger who expressed astonishment at his enthusiasm, 'the minuet is the encyclopedia of every art, grace, and science.' He had reason in his respect for it, for he had acquired thereby a considerable fortune. He had the *entrée* of the first society in France: no lady who pretended to refinement of manners, no gentleman of rank, elegance, or fashion, could presume to present himself or herself in the *beau-monde* without having taken lessons of Marcel how to carry the hat or fan properly, or to manage the hoop or sword gracefully.

At the period of which we are speaking, Marcel was about sixty years of age, and was in all the *éclat* of his renown. He was tall, and rather coarsely built, but his face was striking. Time had not robbed him of the uprightness of his figure, or diminished the elasticity of his movements; but he had discontinued his lessons in dancing, as the demands for his instruction were more than he could possibly attend to. All his thoughts were now devoted to a branch of his art which he correctly deemed the most elevated and the most useful of all. He gave lessons in bowing, and in the whole class of salutations. And let it not be supposed that this science was a trivial and unimportant one. In those times of etiquette, when ranks and conditions were so strongly defined, the bow was a most important and integral feature in the proper, and necessary, and indispensable knowledge of life.

Marcel reckoned in his category of bows and curtsies two hundred and thirty-six for each sex, each one of which expressed the station, and frequently the thoughts of the person who made it, modified by the position of the individual to whom it was addressed. There was the court bow, the city bow, the bow of the great nobleman to the financier, and that of the financier to the courtier; the bow of the latter when asking a favour of a minister, and that of a statesman when bowing out a suppliant; the bow of two rivals when disputing about precedence; the obeisance of a young lady to whom a suitor is introduced, with that of a flirt to a favoured lover, etc. The imagination would be lost in the labyrinth of bows and obeisances of which Marcel held the clue, without ever entangling it.

As it was not convenient, nor even practicable, for him to wait upon all the great personages who summoned him to their presence, he had established the custom of giving lessons in the salon into which we have introduced the reader. It will be readily conceived that the company that attended there was a select one; the ceremonial, therefore, was the same for everybody. A lackey opened the door, and announced each arrival. The party on entering proceeded along the line chalked on the floor, which led to the front of Marcel's arm-chair. When this was reached, the visitor made the required bow, according to the professor's direction, after which he returned again to the door, and repeated the form. Then, making the accustomed bow of leave-taking, he walked down the parallel line to depart, taking care to deposit two crowns, of six francs each, in a silver urn placed for this purpose in a niche by the side of the door. In this manner people were taught to walk and bow, to enter and retire from an apartment, at twelve francs the lesson; and, as about forty francs' worth of lessons

was generally sufficient, we can see how little it cost to give the last polish to a good education.

It is true that all the bows were not rated at the same tariff. Those which were entitled *presentation bows at court* cost twenty louis d'ors; but we must remember how many things were comprised in a lesson of this kind, and such a treasury of knowledge, with all its accessories, will not be considered exorbitant at six hundred livres. On these great occasions Marcel exhibited all the delicacy of his science without reserve. He bestowed the most rigid attention upon the minutest movement; he demonstrated all the suppleness necessary to make an inclination with grace and expression; how to recede two steps to make a second bow; and to step backward again to prepare for the third obeisance, in which the party bent himself within a short distance of the ground; after which he raised himself slowly, until, still almost forming the figure of a crescent, and stepping backwards, he mixed in the surrounding crowd. At these times Marcel represented the King, and he never failed to assume all the dignity suited to the character, in order, as he said, to train his pupils to meet without discomposure and embarrassment the imposing aspect of royal majesty.

The ladies were instructed with still greater care and solicitude; for they, he said, had still more need of all the assistance of his art than the other sex. In fact, it was no easy task to give a graceful motion to these tall dolls, imprisoned in their long corsets of steel, surrounded by a circumvallation of immense hoops, and almost bending under the elaborate construction of a head-dress two feet high. These obstacles, while they inspired Marcel's genius, frequently put his patience to severe tests. On such occasions words of singular energy and strange idiom fell from his lips, and, as faithful narrators of the manners of the day, we are compelled to admit that the dialect of Marcel did not always correspond with the elegance of his pantomime. It was by no means uncommon for him to say to a duchess, 'For heaven's sake, madame, hold yourself straight;—you waddle like a goose;'—'try and walk a little better than that, or you will be taken for a cook,' with other similar compliments, which the great ladies took all in good part. His reputation, his age, and his familiarity with the nobility, made Marcel a privileged man, so that he could say what he pleased without giving offence. When he overstepped the limits of decorum, no notice was taken of it, or the young courtiers contented themselves with replying, 'There, there, Father Marcel! Will your majesty deign to forgive us?' and that ended all.

One unlucky day, evil chance would have it that the young

Duc de Caraman, one of the most brilliant noblemen of the Court, took it into his head to go and make his bow to Marcel. He set out from his *petite maison* in the Fauxbourg du Temple, with the Chevalier d'Origny, the Marquis d'Escar, and two of the *mousquetaires*, whose names are not recorded. Their morning had been passed in much hilarity: and although the fumes of champagne were somewhat dissipated by the fresh air, there still remained that degree of excitement which the young nobles of that day held to be a point of *bon ton*. We do not get drunk nowadays; we only stupefy ourselves with cigars. Every generation has some anomaly, which it elevates into good manners.

The young gentlemen burst into the ante-room simultaneously, and walked into the salon without announcing themselves: to the great scandal of Marcel's noble visitors, who had always hitherto scrupulously observed the programme of ceremony established by him. When Marcel saw them thus abruptly intrude into his sanctuary, he rose hastily from his arm-chair, filled with indignation, like a high priest of Isis when the mysteries are troubled by profane or uninitiated footsteps. Addressing himself to the duke, who was in advance of his noisy comrades, he said:

'Monsieur le Duc, you are not ignorant that it is the usage not to enter this apartment without being previously announced. I have the greatest respect for your rank, but, without withholding anything which is your due, I conceive myself entitled to remind you that I have frequently princes waiting their turn in my ante-chamber, and that the reign of equality is recognised in the temple of the arts.'

'Do not be angry, Father Jupiter,' responded the duke, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder: 'what you have just said is superbly true. I am conscious that I am obnoxious to the severity of your indignation; but your sacred majesty must learn that I do not come here to make my lowest reverence; and the urgency of the occasion has impelled me to omit the ceremonial of usage. The Princess de Guémenée gives a grand ball this evening, at which my friends here and myself are to be present; you have invented some new minuet steps, which are said to be requisite, and we are come to entreat you to oblige us with a short lesson.'

'This is not the proper time and place, Monsieur le Duc,' rejoined Marcel. 'You must have perceived that there are several ladies and gentlemen in the next room; and——'

'The ladies and gentlemen can wait,' interrupted the duke; 'it will not occasion two minutes' delay. Besides, if you like, they can be invited in with us; they will be amused, and bear their detention with more good humour.'

'Not so, Monsieur le Duc; I do not desire them to be witnesses of——'

'Then let us begin, for we are extremely hurried.'

Marcel considered for a moment; then, with perfect calmness, but with a determined accent, he replied:

'I am anxious to meet your wishes, Monsieur le Duc, but the thing is altogether impossible.'

'How impossible? You forget whom you are speaking to.'

'You cannot dance without a violin, and there is none here.'

'That's right,' remarked one of the *mousquetaires*, as he drew a small pocket-violin, a child's toy, from beneath his cloak, and commenced tuning it with all the gravity imaginable. 'It is indubitably correct that we can't get on without a violin; and, lo and behold! here is one. You see, kind and gracious master, that we have provided for everything. I am not a virtuoso, I admit, and you will perhaps soon find out that I have not the delicacy of Bordien's touch, nor the strength of Prevôt; but we shall get on very well by ear, and by your assistance. If you don't approve of my violin, we can easily procure a trumpet, on which I play indifferently well. Come, Caraman, give your hand to Monsieur Marcel; D'Origny, you must act as cavalier to D'Escar. We will dance a minuet of two couples, so that the lesson will do for all. Take your places; sirs, to your places!'

Marcel was wild with rage; but what could he do? He perceived, by the rapid and vehement utterance and heightened colour of his visitors, that they were not in a condition to listen to reason. He thought, besides, that he owed it to his own dignity not to compromise himself with hot-headed young men, who were restrained by no considerations of self-respect, and that the only means of preventing the unpleasant results of such an adventure would be to smooth it over as quietly as possible. In consequence, he yielded; but, while he prepared to comply with their demand, he heaved a deep sigh, and raised his eyes as if to call heaven to witness the unworthy violence of which he was the victim.

The Duc de Caraman offered him his hand with unexceptionable elegance, and the lesson began.

We ought here to remark that the duke's figure was anything but a fine one, although he was colonel of a regiment *d'élite*, in which not one of the privates was less than six feet high. His legs were thin and weak, and, when he was closely examined, a slight protuberance might be perceived between his shoulders, which caused his head to protrude a little. The ladies of the Court, by whom he was well received, spoke of his person as

charming and *distingué*; while those to whom he had given offence called him a humpback. With this exception, he was decidedly a handsome cavalier, witty, brilliant, and very brave, but vain, and exceedingly captious about any allusion to his figure, which he held in the highest esteem, or the antiquity of his family, for which he had the most religious veneration. Thus much premised, we will proceed with our narration.

Marcel began his forced lesson with a good grace, although it was easy to perceive, by his knit brow and the convulsive motion of his lips, that he was under the most rigid self-constraint. In his eyes it was an unheard-of atrocity, a sort of martyrdom, that he, Marcel, the god of the minuet, should be compelled to submit to the caprices of young coxcombs, who had no other merits than that of being born in such a position as to be thenceforward called dukes and marquises! The soul of the accomplished artist was agonized by the deepest mortification, and nothing but the consciousness of his utter helplessness prevented his breaking into open resistance, and energetically speaking his sentiments. But it was out of the power of human nature to bear beyond a certain point. The discordant sounds of the vile fiddle, on which the *mousquetaire* scraped most outrageously, pierced through his ears to his heart; so that, after a minute or two, he called out impatiently:

‘It is impossible to dance, sir, to such an awful *charivari*!’

‘For all that,’ replied the *mousquetaire*, ‘I have taken lessons of Grosbois.’

‘And of little Mademoiselle Garsin of the opera,’ added the Marquis d’Escar, ‘who charged him a thousand francs each time.’

‘He paid dearly, then,’ observed Marcel, with a cynical smile, ‘for what everyone else gets for nothing. But could not you contrive to play something like a minuet?’

‘Why, what else am I doing?’ asked the performer.

‘What are you doing? *Mon Dieu!* you are crucifying *La belle Bourbonnaise*.’

‘That’s true!’ they all exclaimed.

‘Oh! oh! ho!’ screamed one, ‘I thought it was the saraband of the *Noces de Thetis et Pelée*.’

‘And I,’ roared out another, ‘took it for Rameau’s *Danse des Sauvages*.’

Here they all laughed so that they could scarcely stand. The other *mousquetaire* then took the violin from his comrade, and handed it to Marcel.

‘You are drunk,’ said he; ‘let Marcel play.’

‘What do you mean, sir?’ asked Marcel. ‘Do you take me

for a country dancing-master? Have the goodness to remember that Marcel has never touched a violin.'

'He is right!' exclaimed the Chevalier d'Origny; 'you insult him. It is just as if you should order a *mousquetaire* to mount a donkey. Monsieur Marcel, compose yourself; I will put all to rights. I flatter myself I have a good voice. I will sing your favourite minuet-step, while these gentlemen go through the figure with you.'

Again Marcel did violence to his feelings, impatient as he was to put an end to so scandalous a scene; but it was in vain that he exhibited all those demonstrations which were generally listened to with so much deference and respect. It was easy to perceive by the affected awkwardness and smothered laughter of the gentlemen that they had only come to amuse themselves. The old blood of the artist burned in his veins, and, soon forgetting the prudence he had hitherto exercised, he gave way to the impetuosity of his wrath, which on this occasion had something of burlesque in it; but it was all thrown away. His exasperated features, and the comparisons he adduced, which were frequently rude and gross enough, only increased the hilarity of his pupils, who seemed determined to take it all in good part.

The Duc de Caraman was the one who tried his patience the most severely. For upwards of five minutes Marcel had been doing his best, but without success, to make him hold his hat in a proper manner.

'Who ever before held a hat in that way?' asked Marcel. 'You look as if you were asking for charity, and were ashamed of what you were doing. Turn out the great toe of your right foot, and stretch your leg forward—that's right; it would be better if there were some calf to it. Keep yourself upright now—more, more. Hold your chest out, and your head well up.'

So saying, he pushed up the duke's head, and pressed his shoulders forward. The duke, who did not like this rough tuition, called out,

'That's enough, Monsieur Marcel; that will do. You will dislocate my neck!'

'I am only making you straight,' answered Marcel.

'You will never succeed in that,' observed the Chevalier d'Origny, laughing heartily at the martyrdom of the little duke.

'You are right, Monsieur le Chevalier,' added Marcel; 'I quite forgot—no one can straighten a hump—'

He did not finish his sentence, or rather its conclusion was drowned in a loud burst of laughter from the duke's friends, who were delighted with the coarse pleasantry, which seemed to have petrified their friend and leader.

In fact, the duke had been hit in his most vulnerable spot. He would willingly have borne any raillery upon the other members of his body, as he had too good an opinion of their beauty to dread any criticism thereupon; but to be attacked in his hump!—and before his friends too!—who would instantly go and circulate the remark through every saloon in Paris! This was too much for his pride and self-love. Trembling with rage, he put his hand to his sword; but a fresh shout of laughter made him pause, while it served to augment his indignation. He struck his sword's hilt violently, as he returned it half-drawn into its sheath, and, taking off one of his gloves, he said to Marcel, who was looking at him steadily and seriously:

'If you were a gentleman, I would answer you with this sword; but as you are only a low conceited fellow, this is the only notice I can take of you.'

So saying, he struck Marcel's cheek with his glove, which he then threw in his face.

This action, which passed with the rapidity of lightning, instantly put an end to the merriment of his friends. They admired Marcel as an accomplished artist, while they respected him as an excellent man, and they were hurt when they saw him treated in this manner.

'You have done wrong,' said the Marquis d'Escar to the duke. 'A joke should not be retorted by so cruel an insult, particularly to an old man.'

'I have only chastised impertinence. If anyone is displeased at it, he has only to say so, and I will give him immediate explanation.'

'Then it must be to me,' exclaimed each of his friends, advancing upon him, while his rage was only increased by the disapprobation of his companions.

While this was passing, Marcel stood motionless, his eyes fixed, his lips pale, as if he had been stricken by a thunderbolt. His features underwent an entire change, and his silence indicated an inward grief that no language had power to express. Two large tears at length ran down his cheeks, and his head fell upon his breast.

The young noblemen came to him, and took him by the hand. They said everything they could imagine to heal the wound his pride had suffered, and to soothe his feelings. But Marcel heard not a word; his bosom swelled as if with spasms, and his knees shook under him. They led him to his arm-chair, into which he fell exhausted, and worn out with emotion. His distress was so vehement, that even the duke was softened by it. He saw that he had gone too far, and, stepping towards Marcel with a mingled

feeling of shame and regret, he tried to repair his wrong by confessing it.

'No, Monsieur le Duc,' replied Marcel, in answer to his apologies, 'the fault is with me alone in forgetting the immense distance which separates a man of your rank from a miserable creature like me. You have killed Marcel—but he has deserved his fate.'

He remained a few minutes without making any reply to the kind and anxious observations of the youths who thronged around him; then, rising with the air and manner of a person who has just come to an irrevocable decision, he stepped firmly to the folding-doors of his saloon, which he flung open, and invited all the company in the outer room to enter, and then ordered his musician to be sent for. When the latter made his appearance, Marcel bowed gracefully and respectfully to the youngest and handsomest lady of the circle, and requested she would do him the honour of dancing with him.

This unexpected proposition was received with a gratified murmur of applause; for it was a long time since any one had seen Marcel dance, and no one could guess the cause of this sudden caprice. The musician, by his direction, played the first bars of Rameau's famous minuet in *Les Indes Galantes*; Marcel made the grand salute to his partner with that grace which was peculiar to him alone, and the minuet commenced.

Never before had this celebrated dancer displayed such talent; never had the elegance of his attitudes and the elasticity of his movement excited such sincere admiration. His feet traced the most beautiful figures on the floor; the spectators held their breath, while their eyes devoured his steps, which were followed by a slight buzz of surprise and pleasure; for they feared to interrupt their enjoyment by giving utterance to it. It was not till the conclusion, when Marcel had made his last salute, that the hall rang with the most enthusiastic and heartfelt plaudits; they crowded round him, and almost suffocated him with the warmth of their congratulations. The great Condé, after the battle of Rocroy, was not surrounded with more homage.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' said Marcel, when the first burst of enthusiasm had somewhat subsided, 'glory is a sweet sensation, and I wished to taste it once again. I was too happy, and too proud of my art; but my old age has been tarnished by disgrace—my career is now over. Adieu, ladies! gentlemen, adieu! Marcel has danced his last minuet!'

* * * * *

A week after this scene Marcel was no more!



"Don't be too sure."

22 25 1866

London: Edward B. Gifford, 817



‘Don’t be Too Sure ;’

OR,

THE DISASTERS OF A MARRIAGE-DAY.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, August, 1842.]



R. JAMES INKPEN was the confidential clerk of the highly-respectable firm of Squeezer, Shirk, and M’Quibble, appearing in the Law List annually as duly-certificated attorneys, located in Raymond’s Buildings, Gray’s Inn. The adage says, ‘*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*,’—which, being interpreted, means, ‘*It takes five years to make an attorney*,’ as some wag of ancient days rendered it ; and though Jemmy had long since filled this *lustrum* as a limb of the law, still by some occult process, known and valued alone by ‘gents, etc.,’ Inkpen never rose to the dignity of a certificate ; in fact, he was nothing more nor less than the confidential clerk.

For nearly a dozen years steadily, punctually, and diligently, did James Inkpen attend to the dull routine of a law-clerk’s duty. Wet or dry, hail, rain, fog, sunshine, showery, or fair, he was as reckless of the weather as the most desperate disbeliever in the prophetic powers of Murphy. His *post* was his *desk*, and no jockey ever made for *the post* with greater, more certain and assured steadiness than did Inkpen for his seat of dignity as ‘Chancery-clerk, and confidential ditto,’ in the middle room in the offices of the ‘respectable’ firm above-mentioned.

Jemmy was a happy man ; he had one hundred and fifty pounds per annum ‘sal.,’ as he abbreviated it ; the implicit *confidence* of his ‘respectable’ employers ; the *friendship*, that is to say, the deferential subserviency, of the other clerks from the fact of his being the cashier, and the general good-will of all with whom he had business, from his unaffected disposition to be obliging and civil. But, though Jemmy voted himself, and, moreover, was voted by his acquaintance, ‘a good sort of fellow,’ still there was wanting, as he felt (at times acutely), a something to complete the measure of his felicity ; and when Joe Spriggins, Past Noble Grand of the Blue-Plume Knights, and common-law clerk to

Diddlem & Co., used to pump out in a cracked voice the line of Moore's murdered ditty :

'But oh ! there is something more exquisite still,'

Inkpen would every Saturday evening remove his clay from his lips, throw himself back in his chair, turn up his eyes, heave a deep sigh, and finish the display of feeling by convulsively drinking off the *residuum* of fourpen'orth of gin warm, which invigorated him so, that, amidst the din of hammering, bravoing, applauding, he could muster up the power to tell 'the waiter,' ere he left the room, in a demi-stentorian strain, to bring him another 'go.'

The fact was, Inkpen thought it was time that he had a 'Mrs. I. ;' he felt the necessity of perpetuating the dynasty of the Inkpens, and ere he fell into 'the sere and yellow leaf,' he determined upon committing matrimony, and, eschewing all bachelor-comforts, boldly dashing into the beatitudes which belong to the life of a Benedict. Nor was he long, after he had come to this resolution, in making his selection. A prim damsel, of neat attire, once honoured Jemmy by accepting half the shelter of his gingham in a sudden summer evening storm. She was a dressmaker of some talent, and was 'well-to-do.' He was fortunate in protecting her, for she had a flimsy ball-dress under her arm, which would have been spoilt by the sudden torrent that poured down but for his timely aid. 'What great effects from little causes spring !'—this act of attention won her heart ; and when she revealed the fact of her frequenting Dr. Thumpcushion's chapel, every succeeding Sunday evening found Jemmy a 'decidedly pious' attendant close by the side of Miss Juliana Fipps. We say nothing about their moonlight rambles in the romantic locality of Kennington Common (Inkpen lodged in Lambeth Walk, where, also, did the divine Juliana wield her needle), or the numerous delicious *tête-à-têtes* they had in certain arbours, over brown-painted tables, in certain places of public resort yclept *tea-gardens* we believe because they afford accommodation for smokers and porter-drinkers. Suffice it to say, the course of their true love *did* run most smooth, and in the month of May, 1842, 'last past,' the *ultimatum* and definite treaty of alliance for life was agreed upon, to be signed, sealed, and delivered, between James Inkpen, bachelor, on the one part, and Juliana Fipps, spinster, on the other, in the presence of the rector of St. Mary, Lambeth, at such a day.

It was observed by every knight of the 'Blue Plume' that on the Saturday evening near the end of May, Jemmy Inkpen was particularly jocose, a rise in spirits which was in some degree attributed to a display of opulence and generosity not exactly re-

concilable with his previous habits. He was noticed to have ordered half a dozen cigars, and insisted on standing 'goes round,' laughed at everything within fifty degrees of a joke, and with a still stronger and more commendable spirit of pleasantry, broken out into a hearty guffaw when the rest of his associates were merely meditating merriment.

As Jemmy wended his way home, he could not refrain from rubbing his hands, rejoicing within himself, and, as the moon shone beautiful and bright, beaming over the surface of the broad Thames, he thought he would walk down to the river's edge, and contemplate in romantic gratification for a few minutes the beauteous orb as it cast its glow over the sacred edifice which in the morning would be the spot whereat his future happiness or misfortune would be sealed. Placing his back to the wooden paling, he regarded the venerable Palace with feelings of awe, and letting his eye fall upon the church of St. Mary adjacent, he involuntarily exclaimed:

'Ah! to-morrow—to-morrow! there my fate will be sealed; and, by the blessing of Heaven, it shall be *the happiest day of my life.*'

He had hardly uttered this exclamation when a voice struck upon his ear, and the words, clearly and slowly enunciated, 'DON'T BE TOO SURE!' rang through his brain. Inkpen started, trembling, and cast a hurried glance around, but saw nothing save the shadow, as he imagined, of a crouching body stealing along the Palace walls. For a moment he was fixed to the spot, and a cold sweat came over him. After waiting a minute or two to regain his composure (for he was no coward), he rallied, and laughing at his fancy, walked slowly home, occasionally turning to see if he was followed, forgetful of all, his mind being solely filled with the blissful anticipation of the morrow, when he, in pride of heart, would lead Juliana Fipps to the altar, returning from it with Mrs. Inkpen.

The morrow came. Bright and glowing sunshine ushered in the day, and gave goodly promise of a glorious continuance, when James Inkpen, confidential clerk to Messrs. Squeezer, Shirk, and M'Quibble, from whom he had obtained three days' leave, on the plea of visiting a sick relation in Warwickshire, gaily and jauntily attired in a stylish frock-coat, figured green satin waistcoat, striped trousers, and well-fitting Wellingtons to match, gay sky-blue stock, Paris white velvet hat, and kid-gloves in pocket, started from his abode to escort his Juliana to the temple of Hymen; due time being allowed, of course, to admit of the arrival of Miss Amelia Snooks, Miss Fipps' particular friend and bridesmaid.

Inkpen, it must be here stated, had determined upon keeping his marriage a *profound secret*; hence his subterfuge of the *sick relation in Warwickshire* to his employers. He calculated upon a pleasant four-and-twenty hours at the Isle of Wight, and then a rapid *retour* to Lambeth by the whirlwind agency of the railway. 'Nobody would be a bit the wiser.' In order to forward proceedings, he engaged a cab to take a carpet-bag, portmanteau, and band-box, containing his and his spouse's temporary wardrobe during their excursion, and which was to convey them immediately after the ceremony to the Southampton railway station at Nine Elms.

The ceremony was performed; Jemmy was in raptures; Mrs. Inkpen seemed delighted. The weather was lovely in the extreme; very few seemed to be attracted by the solitary cab waiting at the turn of the road. Amelia Snooks kissed, with tears in her eyes, Juliana Inkpen, late Fipps, a salutation which was returned with equal pathos. Inkpen was quite cock-a-hoop; and, after handing his spouse into the cab, could not refrain from ejaculating, in the exultation of his heart:

'Well! dearest July! this promises indeed to be the *happiest day of my life!*'

He had hardly said the words, and closed the door of the cab, when the same voice which he fancied he had heard overnight broke again upon his ear, and the same words again rang through his head, 'DON'T BE TOO SURE!' The cabman whipped on for the station. Juliana looked charming, and Jemmy, after a moment's flush at the exhorting repetition of the warning, thought nothing more of it.

In due time Mr. and Mrs. James Inkpen reached Nine Elms; fare paid, and luggage stowed away. They were just in time; the engine was hissing with a twenty-thousand-snake power, and the leviathan train lay like the defunct body of the great black sea-serpent, ready to be lugged along at the words 'all right.' Mrs. Inkpen had already entered one of the first-class carriages, and Jemmy was just on the point of following her, when, in a voice indicative of the deepest dismay, she discovered she had either left her reticule in the cab, or at church, or dropped it.

'Oh, James, love!—it's gone!'

'What, dear?'

'My reticule!'

'Pooh! Never mind; only a handkerchief, smelling-bottle, glove, eh?'

'More! James—my gold watch and small trinket-box! I would not lose them for the world. Run, James—run! Oh, dear, offer a reward! What shall I do?'

James was petrified; but he was a prudent man, and as he afterwards said, 'How could *I* stand the loss?' So, without hesitation, he rushed to the entrance, and dashed down to where the cabs assembled, in hopes of catching the one that brought them. No sooner had he given his first hurried scrutiny than the ominous bell, proclaiming the start of the train, sounded dolefully in his ears. In a state of bewilderment beyond expression, poor Jemmy for a moment seemed fixed to the spot, and then rushed up to the passengers' room! But, oh what a sight presented itself! The bell was sounding like the death-knell of his departed hopes. The long black train was moving at the rate of twenty miles an hour, bearing his beloved away from him. There he stood, mute, motionless, the picture of agony and despair. Who shall describe his feelings?—'tis beyond the power of pen. They may be conceived; they cannot be told!

How long he might have remained in this state it is impossible to say, had he not been aroused by a smart tap on the shoulder by one of the railway-police, who intimated 'he must not stand there.'

'Stand!' muttered James, in a melancholy tone. 'I can't stand anywhere. I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels.'

'What's the matter, my good sir?' said the policeman considerably.

'She's gone—gone!' said Inkpen.

'Who?'

'My wife!—only married this morning. Oh! oh!' and he groaned more intensely than before.

The policeman hardly knew whether to laugh or look serious, but it suddenly occurred to him that he had closed the door upon a lady who asked about her husband just before the train started, so he soothingly said to Inkpen, 'Come, come, sir; it will be all right! You can go by the next train. Your good lady will only be at Southampton some three hours waiting for you. So keep up. The next train goes at two.'

The drowning man catches at a straw; so poor Jemmy Inkpen, after heaving a few deep sighs, meandered in a musing melancholy mood to the Railway Tavern, and sat down to ruminate upon this unfortunate incident in '*the happiest day of his life*,' over a glass of brandy-and water, cold without; and by the time he had finished that and another, he had managed to persuade himself there was nothing very grievous after all, when the sudden recollection of the missing reticule, which the loss of his wife had driven temporarily from his memory, rushed upon him, and, seizing his hat, he dashed amongst the cabs to make his search. Alas! the first intimation he received was from a man who 'recollected

werry vell as ow he vos the ginelman as vos axin' arter Black Bill, vot druv him from the chirch, and he vos blowed if Bill didn't vip off the blessed minute as he seed the ginelman !'

This unsatisfactory intelligence opened the sluices of unhappiness again in the heart of Inkpen. What ! lose his wife, her watch, her rings, her trinkets, 'All—all her little ones, at one fell swoop !' Macduff's agony was nothing to Inkpen's. The Chancery-clerk's soul sank within him ; he already looked ten years older than he did two hours before. Two o'clock at length came, and Inkpen, anxiously gazing towards the west, fancied the blue-eyed maid, Hope, was beckoning him with smiles to her whom his heart loved most dearly ; with alacrity he jumped into the carriage, and far different now was the sound of the starting-bell—the monster engine gave forth its last grunt, and away rolled the *mail-train*. Now they whizz past Wandsworth, Kingston comes and goes like the 'baseless fabric of a vision ;' in fact, the journey was a series of dissolving views, worked upon by lightning. Southampton is gained at last, and out Jemmy Inkpen jumped to make anxious inquiry after his missing better-half.

Alas ! at the station he could gain no tidings. Her description answered that of at least a hundred other ladies ; and, with a face the picture of despair, the poor disconsolate Chancery-clerk wandered joyless amidst throngs of happy faces, casting his lacklustre, but inquiring eye around him. Hotels were visited ; barmaids, waiters, chambermaids questioned, but it was all fruitless ; not a vestige of Mrs. Inkpen was to be discovered. At last the idea struck him, could she have returned to town ?—a train had started during his sojourn ! He felt assured she was *not* at Southampton. To think was to act ; and Jemmy walked quickly to the station, and took his place in the slow luggage-train, determined to inquire at every station they stopped at, offering a reward to any one who would bring him intelligence of Mrs. Inkpen.

When he arrived at Bishopstoke he received information, conveyed certainly in a very vague sort of manner, that a lady answering his wife's description had been taken ill going down in the morning-train, and was at the Coach and Horses at Southampton. Jemmy's heart beat within him ; and, without waiting for the next train, he ordered a post-chaise at Bishopstoke, and directed the post-boy to drive as fast as possible on towards Southampton. After proceeding some distance, by some unlucky mischance or other, the off-horse broke down. This determined Jemmy to walk the five miles, being, as he said, quite fresh. The night was oppressively hot, and it was evident a thunderstorm

was brewing aloft, so Jemmy, a capital walker, now animated by a feeling which would throw the speed of a redshank into a cripple, started off briskly. He had not, however, cleared half-a-mile before down it came in pailfuls. The thunder rolled, making a magnificent uproar in the firmament, and the vivid lightning flashed, dazzling the poor, drenched Inkpen, and distracting him at every step.

We have already specified his attire; our readers may then well imagine his condition. His trousers hung like wet sacks to his shaking legs; his new superfine coat was rapidly losing its brilliancy; the Paris-velvet white tile was a shapeless mass. However—what will not love do?—onward he ran, now puffing and blowing hard, now pulling up to recover wind, then rushing on with desperation. At last he reached Southampton, and made directly for the Coach and Horses. He rang lustily at the bell, which was quickly answered by Boots.

'You have a lady, I think, who came by the train to-day, who has been taken ill?' said Jemmy, shaking his drenched hat with one hand, and wiping down his coat with the other.

Boots stared at him, and said 'he'd ausk!'

Chambermaid having answered summons, and replying in the affirmative, which gave a glow of satisfaction to Jemmy, he was told to walk in.

'What a dreadful night!' said Jemmy, 'to get this terrible soaking in only so short a distance!'

'Lauks me! so you have, indeed,' said chambermaid—'sich a little ways, indeed. The lady has been expecting you ever so long.'

'Ah! I dare say,' said Jemmy; 'no doubt of it—no doubt of it. Sad business; but these things will happen.'

'So they will, sir,' said she.

'Yes,' interrupted Jemmy, 'so they will. Better late than never, though, eh?'

'Ah! very true, sir. That's what I say when gentlemen rings in sich a hurry. The lady wanted to send for somebody else.'

'The devil she did!' said Jemmy.

'Yes,' said chambermaid; 'but my missis said as how she was sartain sure you'd come.'

'Much obliged to her,' ejaculated Jemmy, relieved.

'I'll just go and tell the lady you are here, sir, and be back in a minute. Please step in the coffee-room.'

'Well,' thought Inkpen, 'though bad began this day, let me hope *now* that nothing worse remains behind. Here I am at last under the same roof, after all my anxieties, with my adorable Juliana—a pretty pickle, I must confess, though, for a bridegroom on his marriage-night. Never mind—let fate do its worst.'

Jemmy perked up, and actually tried a whistle, when the chambermaid returned.

'Please to walk up, sir—this way,' ushering the ardent and impatient Jemmy into No. 3, second pair front. 'Here is the gentleman you wanted to see, ma'am,' said the damsel, closing the door, leaving the happy couple alone.

Speak of Robinson's rush for the Derby, the struggle for the best place at a sight—speak of anything indicative of onward powerful impulse, and our readers will but faintly come up to the affectionate ardour of Jemmy Inkpen. To seize her in his arms with rapturous grasp—to stifle her with kisses—was the work of a moment, and but the work of a moment; for, when relaxing for a second to draw breath and gaze upon her, he uttered, 'Oh! Juliana—my life, my love!' he was astonished to find himself by a violent effort shaken off, while the lady replied to his exclamation by a loud, wild shriek, shouting with a very unfeminine howl, 'Och! murther! murther!—robbery!—murther!' adding to every word, by way of accompaniment, a terrific pull at the bell.

It need scarcely be told that the house was in a few minutes in an uproar. Doors were heard opening in every direction, and, following the sound, No. 3 was soon filled with men and women, clothed with what things they could huddle on. There stood Jemmy Inkpen, shivering like a dog in a wet sack, his eye-balls glaring in a wild stare of astonishment—the lady in either real or affected hysterics. In the midst of the confusion, when everybody was questioning, and nobody answering, in bounced a big, black-whiskered, mustachioed man, a light in one hand, and a boot-jack in the other, followed by the chambermaid trembling.

'What the divil's all this?' said he, banging down the candlestick, and hitting the drawers a crack that disordered its *chest* for the term of its natural life—'what the blazes is all this about? Spake, Katty—spake,' said he; 'spake, my heart!'

'Och! Mike,' groaned the lady, 'some vagabond, like the divil drawn through the Liffey, has broke into my room.'

'Is it dramin' you are?' said Black-whiskers.

'Och! sure, no drame at all, at all,' said the lady, rising up in bed; and giving a faint scream, sank down, pointing to Jemmy, saying, 'There's the murderin' villain!'

Black-whiskers would have annihilated Jemmy on the spot, but for the chambermaid. He had already grasped the unfortunate Chancery-clerk by the throat, and was strangling him very scientifically, shaking him as an ogre might an infant—the boot-jack was vengefully uplifted, when the chambermaid held his arm and said there must be some dreadful mistake, and begged him not to commit murder.

'Who are you?' said Black-whiskers, in a voice of thunder, his wild eye flashing fire—'spake!' A horrible guttural sound alone escaped from Jemmy.

'He's Dr. Leech's new assistant,' said the chambermaid, 'and come to see your sister. Hasn't been here more than two minutes.'

'Oh ho!' said Black-whiskers, somewhat mollified, and perhaps not altogether desirous of continuing the scene; 'then, by the powers, he'll see the last of her.'

So saying, he dragged the unfortunate Jemmy out of the room, and fixing him at the head of a rather precipitous flight of stairs, took full measure of his distance, and with a furious kick sent the doomed Chancery-clerk, head first, down to the bottom of the flight. Aided by the instinct evoked by desperate circumstances, Jemmy in the hubble-bubble contrived to reach the door, and bolted out like a shot from a shovel.

Poor luckless Jemmy, breathless, gasping, groaning, soaked through, half choked, his bones aching through his shaking, kick, and fall, stumbled rather than walked across the street, where he sank down in the last stage of anguish and despair on the steps of a door, wishing death might come and relieve him from the miseries of his situation. Poor devil! he groaned aloud, but none cheered his woe. He held his head drooping between his knees in helpless agony, while his frame shook and quivered with every heart-drawn sob.

Jemmy had not remained in this dolorous position five minutes before he was awakened from a drowsiness, the combined result of over-anxiety, fatigue, and their concomitants, which he was falling into, by the broad, blinding glare of what is called a policeman's *bull's-eye* held close to his face.

'What's that heap? What! the very man I am in search of! Come, get up!' said the constable gruffly. 'Mister, I wants you.'

'Do you?' said Jemmy faintly. 'What for?'

'Oh! you'll know soon enough what for; but I thinks you knows what for without my telling of you.'

'I say, and I'll swear, and I'll prove it was all a mistake,' said Jemmy.

'Very well,' said the constable; 'prove it if you can; but things look very dark against you. But come along.' So saying, he took hold of Inkpen by the arm, and brought him to the station-house.

Arrived there, the inspector and another constable were seen intently examining a printed paper, and alternately reading it and scrutinizing Jemmy, who by this time appeared to possess the

feelings of a man who has got as far as the press-room at Newgate, and declares himself quite resigned to his fate.

'Humph!' at last said the inspector, 'the description does not exactly answer; but yet he may be the accomplice. What's your name?' said he, addressing Jemmy.

'James Inkpen,' was the answer.

'What are you?'

'I don't care what becomes of me after what has happened,' thought Jemmy. 'So here goes—I'll out with it. Chancery-clerk to Messrs. Squeezer, Shirk, and M'Quibble, of Gray's Inn,' said Inkpen boldly.

'A frank avowal, to say the least,' said the inspector, 'and it saves me a deal of trouble. Do you know one John Smith?'

'I do.'

'What was he?'

'Common law-clerk in the same office.'

'Good again. This fellow thinks to turn approver,' thought the inspector. 'You are aware that John Smith is charged with forgery, and that you are supposed to be his accomplice?'

Jemmy's heart sank for a moment, and a cold dew came over him. In a minute, however, the panoply of innocence, which ever protects the honest, braced him up, and James Inkpen, the confidential clerk of hitherto unsullied character, stood erect, if not in the majesty, in all the strength, of conscious rectitude.

'And,' continued the inspector, 'you are charged with embezzlement.'

'Who charges me?' said Inkpen, with a coolness and steadiness of manner that surprised those who had witnessed his previous prostration of mind and body.

'Your employers, whom you have just named, Messrs. Squeezer, Shirk, and M'Quibble. As you have answered openly, I'll read you their communication, received this afternoon.

"To the Superintendent of Police, Southampton.

"Sir,—Enclosed is the description of two clerks of ours, recently absconded: one, John Smith (the description here given), charged with forging on us, etc., and the other, James Inkpen, suspected of embezzlement, and of being an accomplice of the said Smith. Inkpen obtained leave of absence from us, in order to visit relations in Warwickshire, yesterday, which we have found to be a false representation, and, upon inquiry, we have reason to believe he has gone to Southampton to escape abroad. Inkpen has long been in our employ, and we have hitherto put the greatest faith in him, which, up to this moment, we have never found misplaced; but we are afraid he has been led into evil courses by Smith."

Jemmy could stand it no longer—he sank upon his knees, and wept aloud. He would have called upon Heaven to bear witness to his innocence, but his utterance was choked; and in pity to his state of suffering, he was led away, and, by the consideration

of the inspector, placed in a bed. And the day that found James Inkpen at morn a blithesome bridegroom, leading in the sunshine of the heart and of the heavens a beloved wife to the altar, left him at midnight a prisoner, charged with felony, his solitary bed the gift of a policeman!

The nine o'clock train the next morning brought down to Southampton three individuals, the most important to James Inkpen's human happiness; and, as in trains where hundreds—aye, and thousands—can be steamed along without any knowledge that they are mutual passengers, so it was in this case. *Imprimis* came Mrs. Inkpen, who had stopped at Bishopstoke, and returned immediately upon finding that Jemmy did not follow her, the poor fellow having passed her there in the mail train, which goes direct. The next was Mr. Squeezer, with a Bow Street officer, and the third no less a personage than John Smith, the delinquent clerk. Mrs. Inkpen and Mr. Squeezer, though with very different objects, made their way to the police-office—the wife as the best place to inquire in a strange town after her missing spouse; the attorney for any tidings of his missing clerks. Mr. Smith, of course, studiously avoided that mansion of safety.

Mr. Squeezer and the Bow Street officer entered the station-house first, and were followed by Mrs. Inkpen, who felt an uncontrollable nervousness come over her. The officer soon made himself known to the inspector, introduced Mr. Squeezer of Gray's Inn, and a conversation in a whisper for a few minutes ensued. Meanwhile, Mrs. Inkpen ventured to address Mr. Squeezer, a man of prepossessing appearance, saying tremulously:

'Pray, sir, are you the Mister Squeezer in the legal profession in London?'

'I am, madam.'

'Well, sir, would you be so kind as to tell me if you know one James Inkpen?'

Squeezer looked at her as though he would read her soul; and then, relaxing his features into a professional smile, replied:

'Yes; I think I do. Is he a relation of yours?'

'Oh, sir! we were married yesterday, and by a mischance on the railway, I have never set eyes on him since.'

'Humph!' said Squeezer; but at this moment the Bow Street officer came up, and said:

'Smith is certainly about here. We are on his track; for the other chap, Inkpen, is caged here.'

'What's that you say?' shrieked Mrs. Inkpen. 'Speak!—my husband in prison!'

'Ma'am!' surlily and impudently observed the officer, looking at her as though she was a confederate.

'Hush!' said Squeezer, laying his hand upon the officer's arm, and mildly taking the hand of Mrs. Inkpen; 'don't alarm yourself. Step this way for a few minutes, and this mystery may be cleared up. Jones,' said he, turning to the officer, 'search for Smith. Something assures me he is not far off.'

In a few words Mrs. Inkpen stated how she had won and how she had lost Inkpen; and on poor Inkpen's being introduced, what with joy at seeing his wife, and joy at seeing his master, whom he knew he could conscientiously convince of his innocence, he alternately wept and laughed. The scene was equally comic and affecting.

'Oh, sir!' at last he stammered, throwing himself on his knees to Mr. Squeezer, 'with what am I charged? I have never, never wronged you by word or deed.'

'Why was that cheque not paid in on Saturday morning,' said Mr. Squeezer gravely, 'which I gave you overnight?'

'Good Heavens!' cried Inkpen; 'I see it all! I forgot to lock my desk, and Smith must have taken it!'

'We have ascertained that you were *not* the person who procured the cash for it,' said Mr. Squeezer, 'which looks somewhat in your favour. But, though I am sincerely sorry for your position, at present, until you more sufficiently exonerate yourself, I cannot allow you to be out of custody.'

Poor Inkpen sank trembling on a chair, the picture of death, his wife falling on him in a fainting fit. Mr. Squeezer was evidently affected, as he had always valued Inkpen. At this moment a noise was heard at the door of the station-house, and a happy change came o'er the scene by the Bow Street officer bringing in Mr. Smith, handcuffed, but looking very bold and reckless.

'As you thought, we have found Mr. Smith,' said Jones, 'not far off, Mr. Squeezer!'

Smith, at the sound of his master's name, turned to the quarter where he stood, and looked on the eve of fainting, all his confidence forsaking him.

'Villain!' said Inkpen, rushing at him, 'confess that you have plundered my desk, and save an innocent man!'

'Smith,' said Mr. Squeezer, 'you know your course of guilt is now run; your character is well known to me. It will be better for you to say whether what Inkpen says is true or not.'

The thief's boldness completely forsook him at his master's last remark; he knew the infamy of his past character, and that his hour was come. After a silence of a few seconds, he faltered out, 'Inkpen is innocent; I am alone guilty!'

* * * * *

The rest is soon told. Mr. Squeezer rejoiced to find that his favourite clerk had not forfeited his confidence, and extended his leave of absence for a week.

Inkpen's joy was unbounded ; and as he that evening fondly caressed his Juliana, she affectionately returned his embrace, exclaiming that this was *the happiest day of her life*.

'Ha !' said Jemmy, with a start that alarmed her, 'the day is not over yet—*don't be too sure*'—a remark that elicited from him the recital of his mishaps and sufferings, which we have faithfully chronicled for the reader.



Drawn & Engraved by G. Cruikshank.

The Self-killing Ryan.

N. B. & Co. 1888

London, Richard Bentley 1843

2. It is essential to ensure that all data is entered correctly and consistently.

3. The second part of the document outlines the procedures for handling discrepancies.

4. It is important to identify the source of the error and take appropriate corrective action.

5. The third part of the document provides a detailed overview of the system's capabilities.

6. This section describes the various features and functions available to users.

7. The fourth part of the document discusses the security measures in place to protect user data.

8. It is crucial to implement strong security protocols to prevent unauthorized access.

9. The fifth part of the document outlines the training requirements for new users.

10. It is important to ensure that all users are properly trained before they begin using the system.

11. The sixth part of the document discusses the ongoing support and maintenance services.

12. It is essential to provide timely support to users to ensure the system remains operational.

13. The seventh part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed.

14. It is important to review the document regularly to ensure it remains up-to-date.



The Self-Playing Organ.

BY MRS. GORE.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, July, 1843.]



HEATHAM is a pleasant village in the county of Herts—a village of smock-frocks, straw-plaiting, and pleasant faces; having on its outskirts the usual Hertfordshire allowance of *parkettes*, lodges, and ‘genteel residences,’ with taking titles, so apt to figure in the windows of house-agents annexed to seductive sketches in water colours of rural *otium cum dignitate*, every way worthy to figure in the Suffolk Street gallery. Of these country seats—nearly as changeable in their proprietors as seats in Parliament—the grandest was decidedly Wheatham Priory—about as much of a priory, by the way, as the Freemasons’ Tavern, having been built, from foundation-stone to turret, within the last ten years. Instead of pretending to the dim religious light accordant with the sacred title it arrogated to itself, it combined all orders of architecture with all varieties of style—being constructed in poppy-coloured brick, after the fashion of Fortnum’s Temple of sugar and spice in Piccadilly.

New as it was, however, Wheatham Priory was the property of a master still newer than itself. The construction of this barbarous edifice had, as usual, ruined the retired citizen for whom it had been originally designed; and instead of residing under the battlemented roof of his nondescript priory, the old pin-maker had been so fortunate as to escape the Queen’s Bench by retreating into a more modest home in Wheatham churchyard. The scarlet abomination had, in consequence, come to the hammer; which, though unable to do the kindness to the neighbourhood of knocking it down altogether, had knocked it down, for the time being, to the possession of that distinguished member of the Common Council, Mr. Gamaliel Cribbs, of Gracechurch Street.

The quiet neighbourhood of Wheatham heaved a sigh on hearing that, in addition to the eyesore of what the villagers familiarly called ‘the red house,’ it was about to be afflicted with

the company of a man whom the newspapers, and his own litigious, fractious, and interfering officiousness, rendered so notorious in the annals of City legislation. For it was a sociable and tranquil district; free from the envy and heartburnings too often arising in English country neighbourhoods from pretension to the favour of some adjacent ducal castle or lordly hall. There was not so much as the coronet of viscount or viscountess, within ten miles round, to furnish a golden apple of discord; and the arrival of the pompous Mr. Gamaliel Cribbs, in his lake-coloured family-coach, was accordingly hailed with sore misgivings and regrets.

Nevertheless, all the duties of country-neighbourship were discharged in a truly Christian spirit towards the new-comers. Cards and visits—visits and cards—and, in process of time, dinner-parties and tea-parties afforded occasion to Mr. and Mrs. Cribbs to exhibit their hospitalities in return; and, as had been anticipated, the exhibition was effected in a style intended to strike humiliation into the hearts of those whom the dignities of the castellated priory had heretofore failed to intimidate. Turtle and venison smoked upon the board of the Common-Councilman; and, lest the new little succession houses of the new little country-seat should be put to the blush by the forcing-houses of Ashridge or Bocket, such pines and peaches arrived, per coach from Covent Garden, as might have been supposed to arrive from the garden of the Hesperides.

By all this unneighbourly ostentation, poor little Wheatham felt considerably oppressed. It had no longer courage to invite the great man whose plate out-glittered the sunshine to its homely tea-parties and family-dinners. Its sociable spirit sank rebuked. The bows and curtsies exchanged at church with Mr. and Mrs. Gamaliel Cribbs, instead of becoming more cordial on a closer acquaintance, grew colder or more reserved. One or two elderly spinsters, of small means, wondered at their own audacity in having attempted so august an acquaintance, and withdrew from the field; and it was only the good vicar, Doctor Monson, and his warm-hearted wife who, regarding the Cribbses as absurd people, with whom, as parishioners, it was their duty to be indulgent, remained on the same terms as ever with Wheatham Priory. Associating familiarly with the old-established families of the county, the Monsons contented themselves with regretting the bad taste of their rich neighbours; hoping that the crumbs which fell from their table might prove at least a blessing to the poor.

In this, however, they were completely mistaken. Gamaliel, like most ostentatious people, was a keen economist. He did not suffer crumbs even to *exist* in his establishment. The loaves and fishes were weighed in the balance, and if found wanting by the

fraction of a pennyweight, the quarter-sessions would have heard of it !

Scarcely was the City man established in his new possession, when prodigious placards were exhibited at intervals on the outskirts of his estate of seven-and-thirty acres, warning off trespassers, and threatening man and beast with the utmost rigour of the law. But to the surprise, almost to the disappointment, of the new landed proprietor, neither beast nor man defied his enactments ! Either the morals of the parish were kept in too good repair by the worthy vicar, or the terrors attached to the name of the Common-Councilman had penetrated even as far as the rural district of Wheatham ; for not so much as even a withered stick disappeared from his hedges.

Such, in short, was the pacific character of the parish, that for three long years did Gamaliel divide his time between Gracechurch Street and his 'genteel residence,' without having been able to prosecute a single offender, or so much as to impound a stray donkey ! His legal fangs might as well have been extracted, or his claws pared to the quick, for any use they proved to him in the county of Herts. No one chose to rob him—no one chose to quarrel with him. The good-natured vicar allowed him to say his say unanswered when he talked nonsense ; and as oil is said to be the most efficient antidote against the bite of a reptile, the quiet acquiescence of the neighbourhood rendered innocuous the arbitrary temper of the city *energumen*.

All this was becoming prodigiously provoking to Cribbs the cantankerous. He longed for a little opposition, a little bickering to keep up his spirits. On the eve of retiring from active life, he could not look forward without uneasiness to spending the remainder of his days in a place where, as no one interfered with him, he was unprivileged to interfere with any. He was beginning to fear that he had chosen ill for his future happiness ; that, further from town, a more lawless population might have called into action his legislative powers, enabling him to find fault and occupation : when lo ! a happy source of discord presented itself under a form most harmonious.

The organ of Wheatham Church, which was now a century old and had been half a century out of order, was arriving at so asthmatic a pitch of disablement, that at times it required all the good feeling prevalent in so well-regulated a parish to preserve decorous gravity in the congregation during the psalmodial portions of Divine service. Truth to tell, the organist had grown old with the organ, the musician and his instrument being so well assimilated in their infirmities that it was difficult to separate old Blowpipe from the wheezing organ in strictures upon its demerits ;

and as the old man had spent the whole of his respectable days in the parish, had tuned its pianos for the space of threescore years, and instructed the damsels of four succeeding generations in the art of fingering, he had so many kindly patronesses and champions among the fair Wheathamites, that the 'flats' which ought to have been 'naturals,' and the 'naturals' which ought to have been 'sharps,' were generously unheard.

Shortly, however, after the transfer of the priory to its new hands, the poor old man underwent a stroke of palsy; and it was only because ably represented in the organ-loft by young Alfred Blowpipe, one of his grandsons, that he escaped being removed from his functions in favour of a more efficient performer.

But the modernised skill of the young artist served only to render still more disagreeably apparent the defects of the organ; half of which had been previously attributed to the tremulous hand of the superannuated organist. Poor Alfred strove hard to make the best of it. For the height of his ambition was to succeed the head of the family in his office; the stipend of which, added to his earnings and the consequence of which tending to increase them, would, he flattered himself, enable him to fulfil the dearest wish of his heart, and claim the hand of pretty Mary Gray, the only daughter of the village schoolmistress. His prospects as regarded this preferment were good; for the vicar, whose married daughters had been drilled through their Steibelt by old Blowpipe, favoured his pretensions; and on summer-evenings it was a pleasant recreation to poor Alfred to saunter with Mary and her mother through the green lanes and outskirts of the luxuriant cornfields of Wheatham, indulging in delightful dreams of future domesticity.

Of late these visions had received a pleasant acceleration from a hint let fall by Dr. Monson, that, if the harvest should prove so good as to afford the certainty of a prosperous winter to secure the parish from extraordinary appeals to its beneficence, he would propose a subscription for a new organ; in consequence of which contingent condition, Mary Gray became as careful an observer of the vicissitudes of the weather and state of the crops as though she had possessed landed property rivalling the mighty estates of Gamaliel Cribbs, Esq. Whenever the sun shone, Mary smiled; whenever the rain fell over-abundantly, Mary wept — until the poor girl's face became a perfect weather-glass!

Luckily, however, the skies were propitious! It rained only when rain was wanting, and shone only when sunshine was in request; and before the close of July so plentifully were the garners of Wheatham filled with their golden store, that it was as much as Alfred Blowpipe could do *not* to convert his voluntaries

at matins and even-song into jigs and strathspeys; for the heart of the young organist was glad within him.

The vicar was as good as his word; and early in the month of August an extraordinary meeting of the vestry was called; and Mumps, the churchwarden, having contrived to whisper its purport in various directions, the parish was tolerably in the secret of the proposition about to be laid before its thrones and dominions. Unfortunately, as it happened; for the great Cripps was fated to receive the first hint of it from an officious stationer of Wheatham, who had the honour of supplying the priory with wafers and packthread—in order, as the great man frequently observed, to afford a little patronage to the ‘people on his estate’—whereas, had Dr. Monson made an express visit of communication on the subject to his wealthy parishioner, a new organ would have formed an especial and exclusive gift from the priory; the benefaction being duly commemorated in letters of gold upon the front of the instrument.

But the Common-Councilman had no notion of being less in Dr. Monson’s confidence than Wirewove the stationer. The Common-Councilman felt that Wheatham Priory was entitled to the deference of Wheatham Vicarage; and before he reached the scarlet lodge of his little domain, on the sultry afternoon when the irritating communication was first conveyed, he had made up his mind to get up an opposition to Dr. Monson’s project, or, as *he* phrased it, ‘to let the parson see he wasn’t the man to be bamboozled.’

Accordingly, when the vestry met, and, in his usual simple and friendly tone, the vicar communicated his intention to appeal to the liberality of the parish for the renewal of the organ and the permanent appointment of Alfred Blowpipe in place of his infirm grandfather, to whom he was to make an adequate allowance out of his stipend, Gamaliel up, and spoke—spoke loud and long—and, unhappily, in the tone of plausibility and authority which a long habit of factious oratory enabled him readily to assume. ‘The wants of the people,’ ‘the necessities of the poor,’ ‘the disasters of the times,’ ‘the serious duty of those entrusted with the distribution of the parochial funds,’ were successively enlarged upon. ‘For *his* part,’ he said, ‘he fully agreed with his esteemed friend, Dr. Monson, that no point should be left unconsidered by thinking minds, which tended to enhance the attraction of divine worship to those lukewarm Christians less inclined than could be wished to devotional practices. God forbid,’ he observed, ‘that any portion, however trivial, of the Church service should be neglected in the parish to which he belonged. But he would only ask the worthy friends and colleagues he had the pleasure of

addressing whether it was becoming, in times like the present, to take the children's bread, and give it unto the dogs?—whether there was any pretext or excuse for putting the parish to an enormous expense for the purchase of a musical instrument, when one of less cost, but abundantly sufficient for their purpose, might be had. Above all,' he asked, 'how were they to settle it with their consciences if they saddled a parish far from easy in its circumstances with the gnawing worm of a permanent organist, at the high salary of forty or fifty pounds per annum; at a period when, thanks to the march of intellect and progress of civilization, the finest music extant was the result of machinery! What was the Apollonicon, he should like to know? He would undertake to say that cylinder organs satisfied the parochial ambition of nine out of every ten parishes of the calibre of Wheatham! Cylinder organs neither ate, nor drank, nor slept. Cylinder organs were not subject to paralytic strokes. The first cost was the sole cost. Any rational being (that worthy man, for instance, Jones, the sexton, who maintained a large family without the aid of parochial relief) would be overjoyed to turn the organ of Wheatham for a sum of sixpence per hour—say five pounds per annum; which would leave a bonus of five and forty pounds annually in favour of the parish, to say nothing of the hundred, or hundred and twenty pounds, economized in the prime cost of the instrument. This was a matter for their serious—their *very* serious—consideration. It was not a subject to be dealt with so lightly as *some* people seemed to imagine. All administrative duties, from the highest to the lowest, from the greatest to the least, were delegations from Providence to the consciences of responsible Christians. What would be their emotions, he wished to inquire, when the howling tempests of a severe winter shook their habitations about their ears, conveying the terrible certainty that hundreds of their fellow-parishioners were shivering with cold—cold aggravated by misery and famine; and they reflected that the money, which might have secured warmth and comfort to these afflicted creatures, had been squandered on the futile purpose of tickling the ears of certain persons, whose piety was of so equivocal a nature that they could not worship their Maker without the stimulus of an accessory which, to the truly pious, was as the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal! *The deaths of these suffering Christians, if death should ensue, would lie at their door.* He would say no more. He confessed himself to be overcome by the consciousness of his own moral and parochial responsibilities.'

He said no more, but he had said more than enough. His big words and solemn utterance bewildered the wits of the half dozen farmers accustomed to the simple delivery of the vicar.

Cylinders carried the day. Machinery *versus* labour had the verdict in its favour. The parish discovered that it could not possibly afford an outlay of more than fifty pounds for so trivial an acquisition; and Gamaliel Cribbs, Esq., was accordingly deputed to treat with Messrs. Grindwell and Co.

That evening poor Alfred had not courage to propose to Mary and her mother their usual stroll along the green lanes. All three sat silent and sorrowful in the school-house, pretending to contemplate a beautiful nosegay of exotics which the young man had brought from the nurseryman's, to whose progeny he officiated as musical preceptor, to console his plighted wife for the loss of their accustomed rural pleasures. And lo! before the end of the week, their dreary prospects and bitter disappointments were confirmed by news that the squire of the priory had added to the sum of money decreed for the purchase of an organ a further sum of fifty pounds, in order to secure the parish against the salary of even an organ-grinder, by the acquisition of a self-playing organ!

A self-playing organ! Such an invention had never before been heard of in that simple district; and the vestry had some difficulty in bringing itself to understand how the united efforts of the Blowpipes, old and young, could ever be sufficiently superseded by means of wheels and levers. All Wheatham was in a state of excitement; more especially when there arrived, in process of time, from town, a well-appointed van, containing a highly varnished mahogany organ, escorted by a young gentleman of dandified aspect, who was to superintend the setting-up of the new instrument, officiate for the first Sunday as master of the ceremonies, and to instruct Jones, the gravedigger, in the art and mystery of the stops, and adaptation of tunes.

Such a state of excitement had never before convulsed the peaceful bosom of Wheatham. When Sunday came, it seemed no longer the holy Sabbath in the observance of which the Wheathamites had been trained by the schooling of the vicar. It was a day to rush to church and listen—not to the exhortations of the pulpit, but the piping of the organ-loft.

On that memorable Sunday Alfred Blowpipe took his seat, for the first time, in the midst of the congregation, as a private individual, with all the concealed heartburnings of an ex-minister appearing at court for the first time in presence of his successor in office; and lucky was it for the Christian responsibilities of the displaced organist that his jealousies and resentments were expended only on a thing of wood and leather; for, had the gentleman in such well-varnished boots and so excessively frilled a shirt as he who set the machine in motion been a permanent infliction on the parish, Alfred would certainly have been moved to perform

his weekly devotions in the adjoining parish, to avoid the grievance of beholding his rival ascend officially into the organ-loft. His sole consolation consisted in the fact that his poor old grandfather's infirmities of mind and body secured *him* from the knowledge that his humble kingdom was taken from him.

Meanwhile, the service, though read with his accustomed reverence by Dr. Monson, failed to produce its usual influence on the congregation, which was restless and inquisitive as the audience of a London theatre on the night of a new play. It was evidently a relief to all present when the moment arrived for the exhibition of the miraculous powers of the showy novelty that figured in the gallery. Before the psalm-books of the public could be opened, everybody was on foot; and when the mellifluous tones of the really excellent organ were heard in the church, so long disgraced by the discordant wheezing of the old one, even Alfred was astonished. He could not have believed that so excellent a mechanical substitute could be provided for the taste and skill, on the exercise of which depended his daily bread; and while the hearts of all other persons present were elevated by the sound, his own became depressed to despair. The organist's occupation was gone!

Throughout the ensuing week Wheatham was in ecstasies of gratitude towards the judicious munificence of the priory; and Gamaliel Cribbs progressed from house to house (that is, to every house saving the vicarage), reaping a harvest of thanks and praise. Had the little town been a great borough, and its representation vacant, Gamaliel would unquestionably have been its man. Everybody was avowedly longing for Sunday. Everybody, while applauding the far-sighted wisdom which had saved a sum of sixty pounds per annum to the parish, expressed a degree of musical enthusiasm in favour of the self-playing organ, which they would never have expressed in favour of the finest instrument turned out by Flight and Robson, and played by human hands.

The next Sunday the London master of the ceremonies had returned to the place from whence he came; the organ being fixed and paid for—the organ, with its twenty-four psalms and anthems—to which the parish of Wheatham was to listen in content and quietness for the remainder of its days.

Tears were in the eyes of Mary Gray as she took her place in her pew, and knew that the young voices of her mother's scholars were to be no longer attuned by the masterly aid of her future husband. She was careful never once to glance towards the organ in the course of the service. She could not have borne to behold Jones, the sexton, attired in his Sunday clothes, in the place of her beloved Alfred.

The first psalm was sung; and no one present could believe that the youthful voices by which the new organ was accompanied were the same which had appeared to utter 'harsh discords and unpleasing sharps,' when united with the mumbling, broken-down bellows of preceding Sundays; nor, to their shame be it spoken, could Alfred or Mary sufficiently restrict their attention to the Communion Service that ensued, to avoid perceiving that the Cribbs family had drawn aside the crimson curtains of their pew, to expose themselves to the approving and grateful glances of the congregation—nay, that during the performance of the anthem, Gamaliel had uplifted himself upon his hassock, the better to enjoy the sense of his growing popularity. Poor Mary prayed heartily to be delivered from temptation, even the temptation of loving her neighbour less than herself, or rather, less than Alfred, whom she loved *as* herself.

The second psalm commenced—'four verses of the morning hymn' being duly announced by the clerk, and duly taken up by the children, much to the approbation of all present. As usual, in the course of the third verse, Dr. Monson, attired in his gown, ascended the pulpit, where, in the solemn duties of the moment, he lost all thought of factious parishioners or harmonious organs; and at the concluding line of the last verse opened his sermon, and awaited only the reclosing of the psalm-books of his flock to commence his solemn adjuration.

But though the psalm-books closed as he expected, the strain of the organ did *not*! Another verse, to which of course there was no vocal accompaniment, succeeded, after the congregation had reseated itself.

'A little over-zeal on the part of poor Jones!' thought the vicar. 'Before next Sunday, I will warn him to cease with the singing.'

And once more, at the conclusion of the verse, he prepared himself to resume his duty. But, alas! the organ chose to resume also—once, twice, and again, till, after it had performed no less than four gratuitous verses, the vicar beckoned to his clerk, desiring him to inform Jones that he had given them more than enough.

A few minutes afterwards, a message to Dr. Monson from his agonized delegate apprized the poor vicar that the organ had got the best of it; that, owing to the mismanagement of the inexperienced sexton, the stops were embarrassed; and that there was no putting an end to the performance till the unruly instrument had gone through its twelve repetitions of the hymn!

Inexpressibly vexed (for the congregation was a more numerous one, and collected from greater distances than it had ever been

his fortune to behold within those walls), Dr. Monson sat down and resigned himself.

But, though the gravity of his functions prevented *his* entering into the ludicrous side of the question, all present were not equally forbearing. At every renewal of the hymn slight titterings were heard, and the vicar was beginning to count with anxious feelings the repetitions of the performance, when lo! just as, at the close of the twelfth verse, he began to breathe more freely and find himself once more at ease in his own pulpit, where his mind had never known disturbance before, the concluding semibreve of the rebellious organ had scarcely exhausted its swelling breath, when a *new* strain commenced—the EVENING HYMN!

Twelve verses of the evening hymn! This time the giggling of the juvenile portions of the population of Wheatham proved past all power of suppression; and though two naughty boys, whose merriment had burst into a guffaw, were thrust out of the porch by the beadle, with threatenings of a whipping on the morrow, the tittering of the charity school was as though a thousand swallows' nests were rearing their young in the roof.

The case was now imminent. Dr. Monson, inexpressibly anxious lest the awkwardness of such a catastrophe should desecrate the sacred spot he had so long preserved in odour of sanctity, despatched a message to Alfred Blowpipe, requesting him to lend his immediate aid in remedying the difficulty. But alas! the report of the ex-organist was fully as discouraging as that of the clerk. The handle of the stop-bolt had been wrested off by the untutored hand of Jones, the sexton; and there was no possibility of silencing the organ till it had gone through its *twelve times twenty-four tunes*—a performance which, on a moderate calculation, would last till dark!

One only remedy suggested itself. A slip of paper, forwarded by the dismayed Gamaliel Cribbs, reminded the vicar that, the four sturdy carpenters being present by whom the organ had been placed in the loft, nothing would be easier than for them to remove it, and carry it forth into the churchyard till the conclusion of divine service!

After a moment's deliberation, the vicar, in the interests of his sermon, thought fit to comply; and by a group of stalwart Wheat-hamites, vying in proportions with Irish chairmen, was the hapless gift of the discomfited Gamaliel removed from its high estate, and carried out of church, like a crying child—more than one grave old farmer finding it necessary to conceal his laughter behind his straw-hat during the operation, and more than one youngster exploding into ungovernable merriment. Mary Gray alone, with downcast eyes, and the corners of her mouth quivering between

mirth and tears of joy, sat thanking Providence for the unlooked-for mischance.

No sooner was the gravity of the congregation decently restored than the distressed vicar gave out his text. But even now all was not as it should be. The churchyard was a small one; and from beneath the spreading yew at its extremest verge, under which the loquacious organ had been placed for shelter, it was heard at intervals babbling on, like Demosthenes declaiming in solitary eloquence on the seashore. After every full stop of the sermon, as the voice of the vicar paused, that of the persevering organ became audible at a distance. And again the titterings were renewed, and again the preacher became perplexed, till he found it best to come to an abrupt conclusion, and dismiss his flock, as he had already dismissed the refractory instrument.

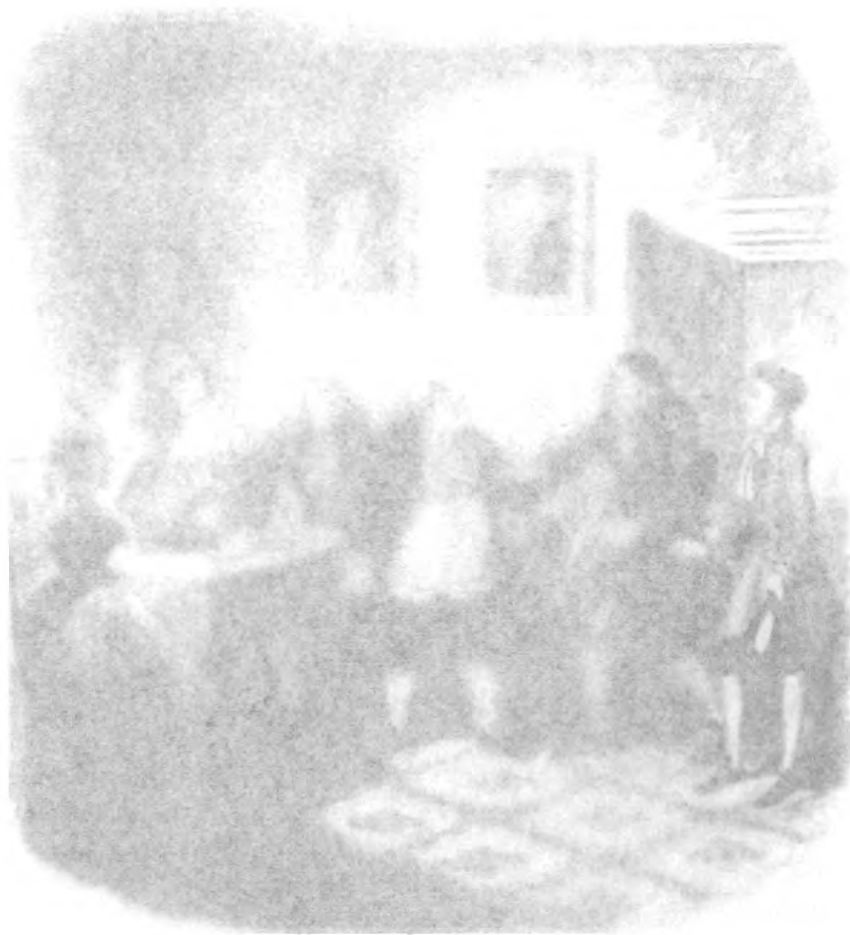
In short, St. Cecilia prospered her own; for it need hardly be added that, after a disaster which called forth the witticisms of the dullest of county chronicles, and finally reached the wags of the London journals, Wheatham and the Wheathamites were moved to get up a memorial in favour of a finger-organ and resident organist. Exchange, which was no robbery, enabled them to accomplish their purpose; and whenever any of my readers feel inclined for a quiet Sunday's devotions, they will find Dr. Monson still in the pulpit—Alfred Blowpipe in the organ-loft—and *Mrs. Alfred* presiding at the head of the village-school, in place of her infirm mother. Gamaliel Cribbs has taken a house at Margate, where he usually passes his summers. And since 'the royal feast for Persia, won by Philip's warlike son,' never was the benignant protection of St. Cecilia more auspiciously manifested than in favour of the young organist of Wheatham!



Portrait of a Lady

1711. 1. 28

From Robert Barclay's Will.



Hunting John Dory.

BY GEORGE SOANE.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, October, 1842.]



MATTHEW MUCHMORE was a fat little gentleman, on short legs, with a glistening eye, a round shiny face, and so unctuous withal, that he involuntarily impressed you with the idea he must have oil in his veins instead of blood, like other people. He was a man of exquisite taste—not in music, nor yet in painting, and still less could it be said of him that he was particularly distinguished for his taste in dress, or dancing, or any such frivolities: no, it was in the matter of turtle and venison, champagne and Burgundy, that he was truly great; in these his taste was pre-eminent. Some foolish folks, whom I know, can see nothing to admire in this faculty of appreciating good things, and make it a great merit that their coarse throats can swallow anything. But why should not taste be as much cultivated in the tongue as in any other organ? Surely there is quite as much merit in being able to point out and relish the various niceties of some exquisite dish—niceties imperceptible to the vulgar—as in the faculty of enjoying pictures with the eye, or music with the ear. So thought and reasoned the great Matthew, and, by the beard of Plato, many worse systems of philosophy have been and still are current in the world.

It unluckily, however, chanced with him as it has done with so many other people, Nature and Fortune could by no means agree in electing him for a common favourite, for, while the one had endowed him with this admirable delicacy of palate, the other had been exceedingly niggard in supplying him with the means of gratifying it. Hence it followed that he was obliged to be a regular diner-out, if he meant to dine at all; but, as he had a fund of good-humour to back him, could tell a story well, and was besides no mean adept in the art of flattery, he was for the most part a welcome guest at the table of his acquaintance, whom, for his especial convenience, he took care should be as numerous as possible. They were chosen, moreover, with every attention to the quality of their dinners, so that a certain malicious wag

used to say that his dining frequently at any house was as good as a diploma to the cook of that particular establishment.

Still it would sometimes happen that his stomach got baffled and disappointed in its expectations ; the meals even of his most valued friends were not at all times equally choice or well supplied ; and in more than one instance, when dropping in and invited to stop, the dinner which he fondly expected would consist at least of fish and fowl, in the absence of better things, proved to be that opprobrium on decent housekeeping, cold meat, eked out by the fragments of the day previous. Sorely was his patience tried, and his philosophy tasked by such occurrences ; for, however good-humoured a man may be, every human temper has limits to its power of endurance, and this with him was the limit—the last straw on the back of the over-loaded camel : it was the one evil of life that he could not bear without wincing ; and his curses, like those of Macbeth's subjects, were not loud, but deep. At length, after long and serious reflection on the subject, he bethought him of a notable expedient by which he might be able to guess his bill of fare beforehand with some degree of certainty, instead of rashly accepting an invitation which might end, when too late to retreat, in cold orts and indigestible pickles. This was, to inquire at the various butchers and fishmongers who usually supplied his friends, what their several customers had ordered, and according to their replies, all duly entered and noted down, would he regulate his visits for the day.

It was in compliance with this laudable custom that our oleaginous little friend one day paid a visit to the King's fishmonger. On a marble slab at one side of the shop lay, as usual, several parcels of fish variously ticketed, according to their several destinations ; and as he was by this time well known to the master, he was of course permitted to examine these important records, which he immediately fastened upon with all the *gusto* of an antiquary who has luckily discovered an illegible MS. There were soles—better never appeared at the table of a duke ; cod-fish—the worst of them might have tempted a Jew to forswear his creed and sit at a Christian's feast, even without the hope of cheating him ; salmon—the Lord Mayor and his whole court of aldermen might have abandoned the greenest turtle or the highest venison only for the chance of a single mouthful. But, pre-eminent amongst them all was a John Dory—and oh ! such a John ! So magnificent in his proportions ! so delicate in his complexion ! so firm in his texture !—of a verity he might have been eaten even as he lay there in all his uncooked loveliness, unscathed by fire, untouched by water, unadulterated by sauce.

The heart of Matthew leaped within him as he gazed upon this

noble product of the salt seas. His eyes and mouth ran over from excess of rapture; his cheeks grew more oleaginous and shiny, the inward spirit lighting up his face as a farthing rushlight dimly burns through the yellow horn of a lantern. A moment's glance at the ticket in the fish's jowl sufficed to show him that John was intended for the table of Lord Spring. Here was a glorious chance!—his lordship was one of those who constantly asked him to dinner with the benevolent purpose of laughing at him. 'But let him laugh who wins!' thought Matthew to himself, and off he posted, on the wings of love—his passion really deserved the name—and in less than half an hour he was to be seen knocking at his lordship's door; not the loud, bullying dub-dub of an importunate dun, nor the consequential rat-a-tat-tat that so fitly announces an aristocratic visitor, nor yet the sneaking knock of a poor artist who seeks for patronage—but a sort of conciliatory, yet firm tat-tat-tu, evincing that the knocker has great respect for the knockee, but still considers himself to be somebody in the world.

Now it happened to be just nine o'clock, consequently his lordship was at breakfast—people kept shocking hours in those days to what they do now!—and Matthew was fortunate enough to gain a ready admission to him.

'I was just thinking of you, Mat!' he exclaimed, smiling benignantly on the epicure; 'I have a score of jovial spirits to dine with me to-day. Suppose you join our party?'

Most cheerfully did Matthew accept the invitation.

At this moment a servant entered, bearing on a silver tray a small pink-coloured note, redolent with all the perfumes—not of Arabia, but of De la Croix, or some other of his odorous brethren. It was from Madame Mantalon, a fashionable Frenchwoman, in whom his lordship especially delighted. As he read her perfumed missive, a bland smile stole over his face, indicative of satisfaction with the writer, and he inquired of the servant what game there was in the house.

'None,' was the reply.

Whereat his lordship, giving a short, dissatisfied 'humph!' demanded if there was any fish.

'Only a John Dory,' said the gentleman's gentleman, 'which has just come in for your lordship's table to-day.'

'Is it a fine fish, Mortimer?'

'Remarkably, your lordship.'

'That will do, then. Send it to Madame Mantalon, with my compliments, and say that I may perhaps see her to-morrow.'

Mortimer accordingly departed; but Matthew, unfortunate Matthew! the colour fled from his rubicund cheeks, and he sat

the image of despair. Dido, abandoned by the false Æneas, did not look more disconsolately after the ship of the flying traitor.

'Why, what is the matter with you?' exclaimed his lordship. 'Are you ill, Mat?'

'Only a little touch of my old complaint, a little vertigo or so,' said Matthew, the colour bounding back again to his cheeks.

'God bless my soul!' exclaimed his lordship, starting up, and laying his hand on the bell-pull; 'he's going to have a fit; I'll send for Dr. Stumps.'

'Not at all necessary, my lord; I am much better now; a mouthful of fresh air is all that is requisite; so, with your leave, I'll just step into the Park for an hour or so.'

'Then I must not expect you to dinner to-day, I suppose?' said his lordship, in a tone of sympathy.

'I fear not; but, perhaps, as I shall be so close, I may look in upon Madame.'

At this reply, carelessly and dexterously as it was given, the words seeming to slip from Matthew's lips almost without his consciousness, a sudden light flashed upon his lordship. He looked steadily at his visitor for a few moments, and then said, with a knowing laugh:

'Do so, Mat; John Dory is the best thing in the world for your complaint; and you can hint to Isabelle that the fish I have just sent will not keep till to-morrow.'

Matthew now shuffled out of the room, with joy at his heart, and posted off to the little Frenchwoman's. Here, as his lordship's friend, he was of course made welcome, but not a word did the lady say about dinner, despite of all his hints about unoccupied time, and not knowing what to do with himself. Madame, baffled as it seemed by his long visit, at last begged he would stay and dine with her.

'But this is fast-day,' she said, smiling, 'with us Catholics, and I have nothing but my favourite dish of macaroni.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed the alarmed epicure, 'then John has not come?'

'Jean!' said the lady, opening her eyes to the utmost, and giving a shrug, such as only a Frenchwoman can give, 'what Jean?'

'The beautiful John Dory!' cried Matthew, more in the way of exclamation than reply.

'Monsieur Doré?' said Madame; 'I shall not be acquaint with no Monsieur Doré.'

'If anything should have happened to him on the road!' exclaimed Matthew, without noticing the lady's disclaimer, fortified as it was with a double negative, 'if that careless rascal should have dropped him in the mud!'

'Mais, mon Dieu!' exclaimed Madame, waxing impatient and irritable, 'I shall not know him, no, nothing at all. Who is monsieur?'

'Bah!' said Matthew angrily; 'he's no monsieur; he's a fish, the loveliest that ever smoked upon a table!'

Madame burst out into a prolonged fit of laughing.

'Du poisson! ah! mon Dieu! a présent. Now I shall comprends—you was intend an ugly monster, with a huge head, comme ça—ah! comme il était laid!'

'Ugly? he was beautiful!'

'Eh! mon Dieu! you shall have de taste bien extraordinaire; mais n'importe; I shall no like such poissons, and have send him to my old ami, Monsieur Dumas.'

This was the unkindest cut of all. Of Monsieur Dumas he absolutely knew nothing, except that he was suspected of being a Catholic priest, a dangerous character to associate with in those days, when Popery was very generally believed to have an intimate connection with the cause of the Pretender, who, even then, according to the best intelligence from abroad, was preparing to make another struggle for the throne of his ancestors. Independently, then, of the peril, there would be no little difficulty in contriving for himself a place at the dinner-table of a perfect stranger.

It was a daring scheme which our epicure meditated; some may even feel disposed to call it a piece of matchless impudence: and in the very outset his confidence was destined to be put to a severe trial. Scarcely had he time to rejoice in his dexterity in obtaining his release from Madame and a macaroni dinner than he encountered the mischief-loving Sir Frederick Sands.

'My good fellow!' he exclaimed, in a tone that was meant to express much friendly anxiety, 'what on earth could take you to the house of that Frenchwoman? Don't you know that to be seen going there is to be suspected of Jacobitism in these days, and that to be so suspected is the nearest way to a halter and gibbet of your own? But whither away so fast?'

'To Lord Spring!' answered Matthew, vainly endeavouring to free himself from the knight's grasp.

'Then I congratulate you,' said the knight, 'on the very fair chance you have of being hanged forthwith. Why, Lord Spring is one of the staunchest adherents of the Pretender! there was a talk only the other day of sending him to the Tower upon suspicion.'

Matthew's jaw immediately dropped, and his whole face elongated prodigiously at this intimation. But yet, to give up his John Dory! it was impossible to entertain such an idea for a single moment.

'Come what may come,' thought he to himself, 'I must and will dine upon John this blessed day—yea, though I should lose my head for it to-morrow.'

Resolution worthy of a Roman! and by way of tempering so much courage with a due mixture of caution and prudence, he communicated the whole mystery of his past and future wanderings to Sir Frederick, so that in case of any accident he might have a staunch loyalist and a true-blue Protestant to fall back upon for a character. To all these details did his mischievous auditor seriously incline; and, having heard him out, commended with laudable gravity his pursuit of the fish (the *flying* fish, as he called it), but all the time with the secret intention of leading him into a scrape before the day was over. Somehow or other, it generally happens that when a man is bent on any mischief, the devil is sure to be ready at his elbow with the means. And so it chanced now. Scarcely had Matthew bade farewell to his insidious adviser, than a certain secretary, well known as a Government spy, made his appearance on the scene. Touching his hat to Sir Frederick, he was about to pass on, as one who thought his absence was more likely to be agreeable than his company, when the latter, staying him, said:

'A word with you, Mr. Breedon!'

The spy started at the summons, not quite satisfied whether he was going to receive a bribe or a beating, for his conscience, without being asked, assured him he had quite as good a right to expect one as the other. He stopped, notwithstanding; blows being much too common an occurrence with him to let the fear of them stand in the way of any better chance.

'Well met, Mr. Breedon!' cried Sir Frederick hastily; 'you have come in the very nick to do a service to the State, and to yourself at the same time.'

Mr. Breedon instantly called up a look of patriotism that would have done honour to 'the noblest Roman of them all'—it was absolutely Brutus in coat, waistcoat, and trousers—a great improvement on the costume of ancient Rome.

'You see that short, fat man, in the blue coat and grey trousers?—yonder, I mean. He is looking in at the pastrycook's window; now he walks on again. Do you mark him?'

'I have him,' said the spy eagerly.'

'Then follow him: watch him; do not lose him for a moment.'

'I won't.'

'He's a Jesuit in disguise!' continued Sir Frederick, sinking his voice into a mysterious whisper.

'Is he, indeed?' said the spy, in a similar tone; 'but truly I

thought as much; he has all the air of St. Omer's about him, though he's much fatter than the breed in general.'

'Fat as he is, he brings letters from the Pretender to the Jacobites on this side of the water. He has just come out of Madame Mantalon's—you must have heard of her—she corresponds with half the Catholics in England, and he is now going to Mr. Dumas', who is generally suspected for a Jesuit.'

Off galloped the spy in pursuit of Matthew, who, in his no less eager pursuit of the John Dory had by this time reached the house of Mr. Dumas. For a moment a qualm of bashfulness withheld his uplifted hand from the knocker, but he thought of John, and immediately was himself again. Down came the knocker, out came the servant, and in went the modest Matthew, with an intimation that he wished to see Mr. Dumas on a very urgent business. In a few minutes a message was brought down from the master of the house, expressing his readiness to see the urgent gentleman, and up marched Matthew into the drawing-room, under the convoy of the servant, who, having placed a chair, again withdrew to the lower regions, leaving the two principals looking at each other in silence.

'I crave your pardon, sir,' at length said the veracious Matthew; 'when I asked for Mr. Dumas, I fully expected to see a very different person,—one, indeed, who is not half your years, and permit me to add, who is by no means so well calculated as yourself for the higher walks of life.'

'There needs no apology, Mr. Muchmore,' said the old gentleman, peering out the name from a furtive glance at the card, which he still held in hand.

'I am quite ashamed of my stupid blunder,' replied the bashful visitant, 'and fear I must give up all hope of ever seeing the object of my search. I have already been over half London.'

The benevolent old gentleman took the hint, and politely requested him to be seated. Here was one point gained, at all events.

'You are too good,' said Matthew: 'I ought by this time to be with Lord Spring; but, no matter; I can put off that business to another day.'

'Lord Spring!' exclaimed the old gentleman; 'you are acquainted with that excellent nobleman,—my worthy friend, if I may presume to call him so?'

'Intimately,' replied Matthew; 'I was at his breakfast-table this very morning.'

Our epicure had struck the right cord. The benevolent old gentleman came at once to look upon him as a friend's friend, and, throwing off the last shades of reserve, earnestly pressed him to

take some refreshments. 'Would he like wine and biscuits? or did he prefer a sandwich?'

'Much obliged to you,' said Matthew; 'but, as I like to dine early, I seldom eat anything before that meal.'

This was a wise forbearance, and showed the delicacy of his tact, but still it did not produce the hoped-for invitation; so Matthew did all that could be done in such a dilemma. He made himself as agreeable as possible,—told a thousand pleasant anecdotes, at which, indeed, he was an adept,—discussed every subject that he thought most likely to prove interesting to his host,—and, in short, played his part so well, that the old gentleman at last requested the favour of his company to dinner.

'Oh! John Dory! John Dory!' mentally ejaculated the delighted Matthew, 'at last I have thee!—*post tot casus, tot discrimina rerum*—after so many cruel disappointments, so many buffetings of unkind fortune!'

On his invitation being accepted, the old gentleman politely expressed a hope that his guest might be able to make a meal of the Lenten diet he had to set before him. 'Not expecting,' he said, 'the pleasure of any company, he had nothing better for dinner than some *soup-maigre* and an *omelette*.'

At this announcement Matthew was thunderstruck—no John Dory, after all! Had Fate herself entered the lists against him, and vowed to make of him a second Tantalus? He groaned inwardly at the idea. 'And what had become of the fish?—whither had it gone?—who was the lucky mortal destined by too partial fortune to feed upon its sweetness? It was no easy matter to get a solution of these knotty points, except, indeed, by putting the question directly to the old gentleman, and this was rather too much even for the modesty of our friend Matthew; so he fidgeted, and bit his fingers, and looked foolish, greatly to the surprise of his host, who could only attribute these symptoms to discontent with the Lenten fare he had announced. In his usual spirit of kindness, therefore, he said:

'Tis a pity you did not happen to call a few minutes earlier, as in that case I might have amended our meal with a splendid John Dory. It had just come in from an old friend; but being much too great a treat for a bachelor dining alone, I sent it off to good Master Gillies.'

'The hunchbacked tailor of Cheapside?' said Matthew, with sudden vivacity.

'The same,' replied the old gentleman. 'Odd enough that, high or low, you should seem to know all my acquaintance.'

'Very odd,' responded Matthew. 'And, now I think of it, I promised to see him to-day by one o'clock. It's on the matter of

a bill of some standing; and really I wonder how I came to forget it.'

Great was the old gentleman's admiration at this spirit of punctuality—so great, indeed, that he was not particularly urgent with Matthew to fulfil his first promise of dining with him on *omelette* and *soup-maigre*; so that our unctuous friend once more found himself in the street in pursuit of the fugitive John Dory. But in proportion as his speed brought him nearer and nearer to the tailor's well-known shop, so did his confidence in himself and his cause decline, the fact being that he was in Master Gillies' books, but not in his good books, and between the two there is a wide difference. Poor Matthew's appetite quailed for a moment when he remembered this circumstance, and how much worse than gout or rheumatism was the twinge from a bailiff's paw, however lightly laid upon the shoulder; but John Dory still gleamed to his fancy in the distance, marshalling him the way that he should go, as whilom the visionary dagger led Macbeth to the king's bedroom. On it beckoned him, and on he went, as if writs had been only innocent bits of parchment, with no more harm in them than so many strips for tailors' measures.

In this desperate mood he entered the domicile of the redoubted fashioner, and though at the first glimpse of his visitant a dark cloud passed over the hunchback's face, yet this was transitory as an April shower, and like that was succeeded by a fair sunshine.

'I have not come to pay you,' said Matthew, deeming it wisest to anticipate the attack that he knew else awaited him—'I have not, indeed.'

'I did not suppose you had,' answered the hunchback, in a mild voice. 'It's rather the old suit for a new suit, I should imagine.' And the little man chuckled as gently at his own facetiousness as if he were half ashamed of doing anything so much out of character.

Matthew of course laughed, and in a much louder key, as in prudence bound; but the next moment, putting on a demure face, he gravely said:

'No, no, Master Gillies; henceforth I intend incurring no fresh bills till I have paid off what I already owe.'

'A very virtuous resolution,' said the hunchback, with a smile. What that smile meant it was no easy matter to divine; but it made Matthew feel anything rather than comfortable.

'I have only called,' he said, 'that you might see I have not forgotten you, nor the little unsettled account between us.'

Again the hunchback gave one of his inexplicable leers, and his voice lost none of its wonted gentleness as he replied:

'Well, that *does* show an honest mind; there's at least the intention to pay—when you can.'

'Of course, of course!' cried Matthew hastily.

'And now you are here,' said the hunchback, 'perhaps you will honour my poor house by taking your nooning with me?—some cake and a glass of sherry?'

'Nay, that were to spoil your dinner: for I know you keep early hours, and it's hard upon two already; but, if it does not put you too much out of your way, I'll take a snack with you when you sit down to dinner.'

'I shall be proud of your company,' said the tailor. 'Excuse me, though, for a few minutes. I have some orders to give the men in the workshop.'

'Oh! don't let me interfere with business!' exclaimed Matthew. 'Do exactly as if I were not here.'

To this the hunchback only replied by one of his uncomfortable smiles, and edged off something after the fashion of a crab into his back parlour.

'Confound the little distortion!' muttered Matthew, as the door closed upon his host; 'I hardly know what to make of him to-day. How if he has gone out only to send for one of the City officers, meaning to pack me off to the Compter, now that he has me in the rat-trap? Oh, John Dory! John Dory! what toils, what perils do I encounter for thy sake!'

This was a wise suspicion, all things considered, and it was not a little strengthened when, through the shop-window, he saw one of the hunchback's myrmidons hurrying along like one who is bound on a business that requires no ordinary despatch.

After such a hint it would have been no very prudent measure to have trusted implicitly to his host's smiles: out, therefore, he darted, and followed, though not too closely, the steps of the flying tailor, till he saw him enter a house with grated windows, and a huge brass plate affixed. On the latter, even at that distance, he could plainly read, 'Thomas Fangs, Officer to the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex'—a proof that even in those days bailiffs had the grace to be ashamed of their vocation, and so endeavoured to cloak a foul office by a fine name. Here was 'confirmation strong as proof of holy writ'; and, as if that were not enough, the tailor's man had not been in the house more than a minute when he came out again with Mr. Fangs himself in his best top-boots, a dirty, bandy-legged follower bringing up the rear of this respectable party. Off flew Matthew the instant his eye caught them, up this alley and down another, till he was fairly brought to a stand, from want of breath, at a timber-yard on the river-side. By a sort of blind impulse he dashed into the yard, and finding the door of communica-

tion open between that and the house adjoining, he entered without hesitation, and scampered upstairs to the drawing-room, much to the surprise of those who were sitting about the fire-place in expectation of their dinner.

‘Mr. Muchmore! cried the lady of the mansion.

‘Matthew!’ exclaimed the master; ‘where, in the name of wonder, do you come from?—and why in this strange fashion? One would fancy you had dropped down from the clouds amongst us.’

The sound of these familiar voices acted upon Matthew like cold water dashed into the face of a patient just about to go off into a fit. His alarm at tailors and bailiffs passed away in a minute; and he at once saw that he had stumbled, without knowing it, into the house of an old friend—no other, indeed, than John Gillies, the timber-merchant. It would be difficult to say which party looked the most astonished—Matthew, or mine host and his family; but the former, with whom bashfulness was at no time a predominant failing, soon recovered himself enough to stammer out in excuse, that, wishing to cut a most unpleasant acquaintance, he had taken refuge in the merchant’s dwelling. Now this certainly was the truth, only it happened to be truth in disguise, and it passed muster very well with the frank-hearted man of deals, who invited him, since he was there, to stay and take pot-luck with the family.

‘By-the-bye,’ he said, ‘we have had an odd accident to-day, that I was angry enough about at the time, but which I am not sorry for now that I find we are to have the pleasure of your company. A fine John Dory was brought to the house about half an hour ago, and, as it was directed to Mr. Gillies—some namesake of mine, I suppose—the cook thought it had been sent in by me to eke out a short dinner, and without further ceremony popped it into the fish-kettle. It was only from a few words dropped casually that I learned the mistake, and then it was too late to attempt rectifying it—the fish was nearly half boiled; so, although somewhat against my conscience, I e’en left Master John where I found him—in hot water.’

Here was a pleasant stroke of that whimsical jade, Fortune!—after having hunted John Dory all the morning to no purpose, now to stumble upon him in a place and at a time when such a thing could be least expected. The heart of Mat, therefore, leaped and was glad within him at the messenger’s stupidity in consigning the precious cargo to a wrong port, and internally he vowed to make himself amends by many a precious morsel for all his previous disappointments. But ‘*l’homme propose, et Dieu dispose*,’ says the proverb, and so it turned out on the present occasion.

It was past the usual dinner-hour, and the timber-merchant,

having repeatedly consulted his watch at short intervals, and as often received from it a renewed assurance of the fact, began to be impatient; his wife smiled more and more languidly in answer to his increasing complaints of the cook's want of punctuality; the young ladies looked pale and dull from fasting; and when nearly half an hour had thus elapsed, and still no call came to dinner, even Matthew's previous hilarity and triumph gave way to certain unpleasant misgivings, though he, too, was silent, hiding in his bosom, as whilom did the Spartan boy, the foe that was devouring him.

At length, instead of dinner, two strangers were announced, the one a little, thin, dapper coxcomb, in a sky-blue coat, and the other a tall, broad-shouldered varlet, with legs and arms conformable, and a bull-neck, admirably calculated for the support of the huge head that rested on it.

'That's Mr. Muchmore,' cried the sky-blue individual, pointing to our friend Matthew.

'Then you must come with me,' said the more rugged personage, stepping forward.

'Not so, friend,' replied the merchant. 'I'll be his bail, and I hardly think you'll venture to refuse it.'

'Bail!' said the man, with a sardonic grin; 'it's much you know of these matters. Why, it ain'tailable—not in no court.'

'Notailable!' cried the merchant. 'I never heard of such a thing!'

'You hear it now, then,' said the man, 'and it's I that tells you—John Holdfast; so mind, old gentleman, you remember it another time.'

Before the merchant could deliver himself of the angry reply that was at his tongue's end, Mr. Breedon—for it was no other than that worthy—gracefully stepped forward, and, with as much joy in his face as if he were communicating the pleasantest news imaginable, informed him that his friend was not arrested for debt, but apprehended on a charge of high treason.

'Me!' exclaimed the astonished Matthew—'apprehend me upon a charge of high treason! There must be some mistake!'

'That 'ere's no consarn of mine,' cried the Bow Street myrmidon. 'Make the Old Bailey jury believe as much, and it may save you a ride to Tyburn.'

'Are you sure that this gentleman is the person intended in your warrant?' asked the merchant, quite satisfied that his fat friend was the last person in the world to mix himself up in anything of the kind.

'You're precious hard of belief,' replied the man, with a sneer. 'Read the warrant yourself.'

The merchant took the sealed parchment, and seemed to scan it over and over again, his perplexity being anything but lessened by the perusal. At length he said, 'The warrant bears your name, sure enough. I should not wonder if some informing scoundrel has been trumping up this ridiculous charge, in the hope of somehow or other making money of you. There is no help for it, I fear,' continued the merchant. 'You must needs go, and I will go with you to see that you have fair play in this matter.'

For the first time in the whole course of that eventful day was Matthew false to the memory of John Dory.

The magistrate, into whose awful presence Matthew was now led, or rather dragged, was devoted, as becomes a worshipful law-dispenser, soul and body to the powers that be. Short work was made with Matthew. He was fully committed to Newgate to take his trial, with a very fair chance of being hanged, unless some *Deus ex machinâ* descended, in this the fifth and last act, to save him from the gallows.

The hours passed sadly enough with the unlucky prisoner; confused visions of rope, and John Dory, and bailiffs floated before his troubled brain, and even his appetite failed him, though the jailor very affectionately placed before him a nice loaf of sour black bread, and a large pitcher full to the brim of Thames water. Nor were matters much mended when night came. In spite of the accommodation afforded by a bundle of somewhat musty straw, poor Matthew could not for a long time compose himself to sleep; and even when, at a late hour, his eyes at length were closed, his dreams had just the same colour as his waking fancies: they were made up of fish, bailiffs, and hangmen. In one of them he cut off his own head with his own hands, and held it up to the admiring multitude, the said head discoursing most feelingly all the time on the wisdom of eating apple-sauce with fish, and stuffing goose with parsley and red-herrings!

It was now the evening of the second day, and Mat, from want of his usual food and sleep, had grown more disconsolate than ever, when suddenly the dungeon-door opened, and Sir Frederick appeared, his finger on his lip to intimate the necessity of silence, and an expression of fear in his face, that effectually stifled the joyful exclamation that was rising to greet his presence.

'Bribery!—escape!—caution!' he whispered rapidly, and seizing Matthew's by no means unwilling hand, he led him forth from the dungeon.

At last he found himself whirled along the streets in Sir Frederick's own carriage. Then, and not till then, did he venture to ask how this wonderful escape had been contrived. Sir Frederick burst into a fit of laughter.

‘My good fellow, your escape is all a hoax. I heard from Breedon what had happened—indeed, to own the truth, it was I who set him on—and immediately I went and explained all to my friend, Sir Robert Walpole, who gave me an order for your discharge. More than that, he is anxious to see you, and has invited you to dinner.’

‘To dinner!’ sighed Matthew, for the thought of John Dory rushed full upon his memory, now that he felt himself safe, and the tears came to his eyes.

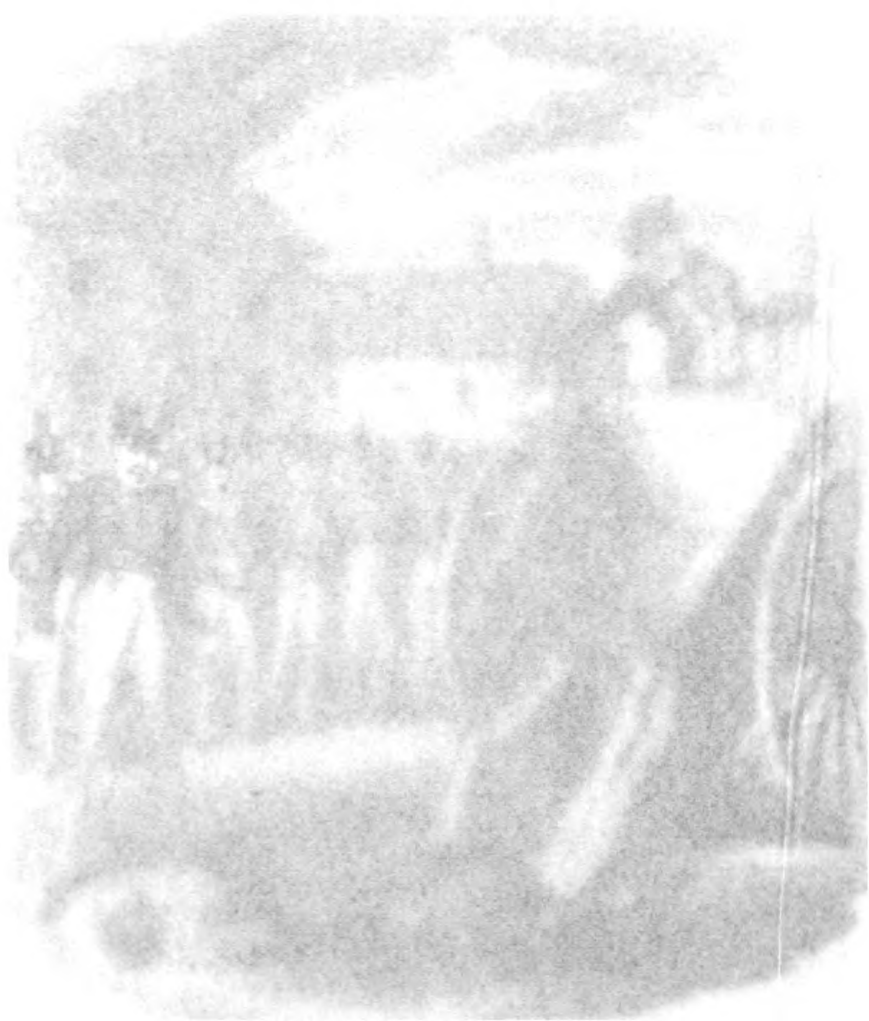
Matthew was duly introduced to the Minister, and sat down to dinner with a select party of friends of both sexes. There was the welcome clatter of plates and glasses,—the delicious odour of soup from the yet uncovered tureen,—then the serving-men stepped noiselessly forward, and all the covers were simultaneously removed,—all, save one, and that one stood before Matthew. A moment’s pause followed—every eye was fixed with an odd expression upon our unctuous friend, who actually gasped with expectation. His colour went and came like a young lady when first listening to a lover, or like a dying dolphin, only the simile is somewhat the worse for wear—the servant, at a sign from his master, removed the cover—and what a glorious sight!—it was—yes, it was a John Dory!—a fresh John Dory!—a plump John Dory!—fresher, plumper than that for which he had gone through so many trials! Happy, happy, happy Matthew!



Miner's Cure for Cough

RECEIVED

FROM THE



Minor Bodkin's Cure for Conceit.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, September, 1842.]

PEOPLE often wondered what possible motive the Commander-in-Chief for the time being could have had for sending the fifty—th to Connaught: and I fear it must now remain among those other political problems which in their turns have bothered the quidnuncs, few of which have afforded more food for speculation, or presented greater difficulties in their solution. As to the causes, however, why all this wonderment was exhibited on the occasion, these are peculiarly easy of development. The fifty—th were about as well fitted to undertake the care of a Connaught garrison as so many turkeys would have been. They were spooneys to a man—not a single redeeming character among them, from the fusty old colonel down to the little ensign of six weeks' standing. They were as genteel as so many milliners—exquisites from top to toe, and used pocket-handkerchiefs that would do for a drag-hunt. Matrimony was an abomination, the very mention of which would have excited more horror among them than the bursting of a bomb. Champagne was the only tippie they approved of; they would as soon have robbed a church as subscribe to the hounds; and as to venturing their delicate carcasses in such a perilous operation as hunting, it never was dreamed of among them. Only think what a precious consignment they were to send to Loughrea!

As soon as the doom of these unfortunates was irrevocably sealed, and it became past hoping for but that Loughrea was their portion, old Colonel Courtney called his officers together, into the mess-room, and made the melancholy announcement. Their future quarters, he told them, lay in a place called Connaught, a part of the world generally shunned by all persons except individuals of the most doubtful and dangerous character, and which, in wiser times than ours, had been regarded as a *pis aller* for hell. The aborigines were, he said, represented by those who knew them best as a peculiarly reprobate race. Silver forks,

even in this enlightened age, seemed to be an utter novelty to the generality of them: sobriety a virtue very little practised—celibacy not at all held in as much honour as it ought—cheating at cards encouraged to a most alarming extent—the small-loan system universally adopted—and pistol-practice an absolute indispensable.

‘My children,’ continued the worthy commander, after this detail, ‘such being the society into which we are to be thrown for our sins, what steps ought we to take to resist the contamination which threatens us? To convert these helpless savages to the usages of the *beau monde* would be a hopeless task—even to D’Orsay himself it would be a fruitless mission. Shall we, then, yield to circumstances, and bear with them?—tolerate them in our mess-room, and submit to be their guests?—haply endeavour to accommodate ourselves to their customs? or shall we rather, as best beseems us, reject all communion with their uncleanness, all fellowship, all association? I pause for a reply.’

‘We will!—we will!’ resounded from all quarters. ‘To Coventry with any man who dares to act otherwise.’

‘To Coventry with him, then!’ exclaimed the aged orator, with solemn emphasis. ‘’Tis a decision, my children, which will redound to your honour as long as the fifty—th has a leg to stand on.’

Never was a community more utterly bothered than the Loughrea people were by the tactics of the new-comers. They could make nothing of them. Instead of a crack regiment, as they were led to expect, they had got a cracked one, and, in consequence, no regiment ever excited such a sensation there before. The rejected Galwegians laughed or grumbled, according as their tastes severally inclined. The men swore, and began to look out for fight; the girls tossed their heads, and began to look out for fun; while the old ladies began to speculate whether the gentlemen of the fifty—th came into the world at all like other people. Everything about them became a mystery and an object for rumour to dilate upon. Some said they spent their time washing their white gloves; others, that their evenings were occupied in putting their hair into curl-papers, and their mornings in taking them out; while some were credulous enough to believe that they dispelled their ennui by dressing dolls. There was no end to the odd stories which were afloat about them; and of course some of them reached the ears of the parties themselves, and wrought in them no great satisfaction. Slander, it was evident, was busy; but to take any formal notice of her efforts would have been most decidedly beneath the regimental dignity, at the same time that they all felt they could no longer afford to treat

these efforts with silent contempt. Some practical refutation was thus the only thing to be thought of; but of what nature that should be was a matter requiring more than ordinary consideration.

It was recollected, at length, that two of the corps were crack shots, as deadly visitants as ever disturbed the repose of a pheasantry, or stopped the flight of a partridge. Now, it was evident that if Lieutenants Meredith and Lyster were to go forth on a shooting excursion in the face of the whole country, the imputations against the manhood and manliness of the fifty—th would be most necessarily repelled, and a very good foundation for respect laid in their stead; since it was clear that if a man is marksman enough to wing a wild duck, *à fortiori* he could wing a country gentleman, if driven to it. It was a happy thought, and was speedily put into execution.

On a lovely morning in January these two officers accordingly went out armed *cap-à-pie*, and prepared to retrieve the honour of the body to which they belonged. Not a regiment in the line but might have accepted them for its champions. From their neckcloths to their shoe-ties they were unexceptionable, nay, fitted to sit for pictures of the sporting fashions. The ladies looked at them, and sighed over their exclusiveness; the gentlemen looked at them, and stuck their tongues in their jaws; but my two heroes stalked haughtily on, unmoved by either sex, and, snipe being their object, took that direction which seemed to them most favourable.

Not being so well versed in the geography of the country as they might have been were they but a little more social, Lieutenant Meredith and his comrade had but a toilsome and rather unprofitable walk of it, notwithstanding their well-tried prowess. In fact, noon was approaching; and as yet they had gained nothing but a pretty accurate knowledge of the soundings of several of the bogholes. To return would have been exceedingly desirable, but to return empty was out of the question; for, whatever little commiseration they might receive in the barracks, it was but too certain that among the townsfolk their ill-success would be a standing joke for a twelvemonth; and altogether they began to conceive that it would have been far more conducive to the regimental dignity, and their own in particular, had they contented themselves to remain within their sanctuary, and leave Galway boys and Galway snipe to those whose nature it was to understand them better.

While they were in this desponding mood a ray of hope, however, beamed on them which made their bosoms swell, and almost enabled them to fancy they could see their game-bags swelling too.

Just on the verge of the bog through which they were floundering, and at no great distance, they could observe a swamp sheltered by thick plantations, and clothed here and there with cozy thickets of snug furze, while pools of water interspersed here and there made it a spot that a snipe or widgeon of any taste might be content to live and die in. There were cabins, too, adjacent, and smoke, moreover, curling out of holes in their roofs—a sight that of itself warmed the hearts of the poor exquisites, for, silly creatures! they had brought nothing out with them to keep their noses warm, but a thimbleful or two of sherry, or some such delicate stuff—and what was that on a Galway bog, and during the reign of a nor'-easter? Right ahead, then, in the direction of the land of promise they wended their way, and after a few small mishaps, of which, however, they had learned to think less than they had at first, they succeeded in reaching the desired locality.

'I say, Meredith, this place looks devilish like a preserve,' remarked Lieutenant Lyster, as he looked about him; 'take care; are we trespassing, old boy?'

'Pooh!' rejoined the other, as he flung away his cigar, and prepared for action, 'they're not up to that kind of thing at all hereabouts. Bless your soul! my dear fellow, the Galway people never preserve anything, nor will they probably these hundred years. It's all slap away, and no questions asked.'

'Here goes, then, for a beginning,' exclaimed the inquirer, slapping away at a snipe which rose screaming within twenty yards of him; another, startled by this report, followed, and received the charge of his second barrel. His example was almost simultaneously followed by Meredith, with equal success—for two brace of plump birds lay sprawling on the turf, the first fruits of their labours. The two officers laughed cheerily at one another while they bagged the produce, reckoning no doubt within themselves on compensating their patience now for all they had suffered in the early part of the day; in fact, so pleasantly were they occupied, that, until he was already within a few yards of them, they never observed a figure that was strolling towards them, attracted by their shots.

'The gamekeeper, by Jove!' exclaimed Lyster, pointing him out to his companion.

The individual so designated was a rather curious specimen of the human race, let his calling be what it might. Huntsman or groom he couldn't be, for he was too awkward; nor butler, for he was too dirty; and yet, the laziness of his gait, as well as the peculiarity of his garb, announced him to be a domestic of some kind or other; so that, although unmarked by a single trace of the profession, it was more than probable Lyster's hypothesis was

correct. He might be a poor relation, converted into a very so-so gamekeeper, for want of a more suitable avocation. He carried a rakish look of consequence about him; his clothes were such as when new were above the common, and the fellow wore them as though he had helped to take the gloss off them himself; one of his eyes had a most expressive, though not very ornamental leer, and there was a twist in his mouth that seemed to betray a habit of saying what he liked, where he liked, and when he liked. He was rather tall, and had a considerable slouch in his shoulders, which, however, could not be the effect of age, for he appeared scarcely fifty, and was airy enough to be ten years younger; he wore a battered grey hat very much on one side, a green frock-coat with brass hunting buttons; and drab inexpressibles, with gaiters in continuation, completed his suit. Such was the figure whose untoward appearance disturbed the composure of the two officers.

'Your servant, gentlemen—your servant,' said he when he came within sufficient distance. 'Good sport, I warrant; Cloughmore's just the place for it.'

'Why, ya-as,' drawled out Meredith, determining to brazen out his trespass, and at all events reassured by the amicable manner of the supposed official, 'it's not so bad. Pray, whose property is it?'

'Whose property is it!' repeated the new-comer; 'bedad, that's a puzzling question to ask about any property hereabouts. Minor Bodkin says it's his; but then——'

'It's more likely it belongs to his creditors, you'd say,' rejoined Lyster, supplying the aposiopesis.

'Right!' exclaimed their communicative informant, leering at him with a most comical expression of approbation of his shrewdness; 'and then, you know, if he has no creditors now, it's to be hoped he will if he lives, and has any luck.'

'You're gamekeeper, I presume?' remarked Meredith carelessly.

'Ay, and fifty things besides,' answered the new-comer. 'Jack of all trades, and able for anything about a gentleman's house but hard work.'

'Then, as the gentleman's a minor, I suppose the game's not very closely looked after,' said Meredith, coming at once to business.

'Why,' replied the other, 'he's particular enough himself; and bedad! he's very cute of his age. People say he's as knowing as a pet fox.'

'Indeed!' said the officer drily, 'yet you look very like a customer that would occasionally work a little on the sly for your own account, eh?'

'*Thiggum*,' quoth the gamekeeper, responding with a wink, and slapping the blind side of his nose with his finger.

'Pon my soul, no one could blame you,' continued the officer, with affected commiseration. 'You look as if you were all your life on monkey's allowance.'

'Never a more; I have but the run of the house,' replied the other, '*forreear* that it isn't better. What would I do, only that now and then I meet with a gentleman?'

The two officers forthwith produced their purses, and, in spite of the coy reluctance and earnest remonstrances of the blushing official, a smart *douceur* was forced on his acceptance.

'Bedad!' said the sly rogue, 'it's not every day I meet with the likes of your honours. Won't ye often come this way?'

'That's according to what sport we meet,' answered Meredith.

'By the powers, then, if I don't show you as much as you like, ye're hard to be plased!' exclaimed the gamekeeper. 'To the d—l with Minor Bodkin! I'm your honour's humble servant for the day.'

'Much obliged,' replied the officer. 'And pray what name shall we call you?'

'My name's Malachi, at your service,' answered he, with a low bow.

'Malachi what?' demanded the inquisitive Lieutenant.

'Why, my mother was a Brimmajem,' replied the gamekeeper, looking down, and apparently a little embarrassed by the question.

'Oh! I see, I see!' exclaimed Lyster knowingly. 'Then, for fear of mistakes, we'll call you Mr. Malachi Brimmajem.'

'That's just as your honour plases,' answered he of the dubious name; and all preliminaries being thus settled, to work they went like men that had lost too much time already.

It was not long before the two sportsmen became actually glutted with the ravages they committed among the feathered denizens of Cloughmore, under the practised guidance of their obsequious attendant. At last, by some mischance or other, two of the best birds they had shot during the day took it into their heads to tumble into a broad but shallow pool, on the brink of which they were flushed.

'What the deuce shall we do now?' exclaimed Lyster. 'Pity to lose such a splendid brace.'

'Come, Mr. Malachi,' said Meredith, 'no help for it, you see. you must only peel off, and retrieve them for us. Beg pardon, and all that, but what can we do?'

Malachi cocked his eye at the speaker with a most comical expression—it almost looked like defiance—but it melted away gradually into something more good-humoured.

'Murder!' said he, 'is it into the could water?'

'Pooh! you won't be up to your knees. There—I knew you'd be obliging. Well, who'd ever think you had such a handsome pair of pins? Positively I envy you. In with you now, my buck, and 'twill be all over before you could sound a tattoo. Devilish sorry we've nothing to give you to drink,' continued he, while the shivering gamekeeper was resuming his clothes; 'the flask is dry as a powder-horn.'

'It's lucky for me, then, that there's a drop in my own,' he answered, producing it, 'some of the Minor's own favourite drink. Maybe your honours would like to taste it;' and pouring a portion of it into the cap of the flask, he handed it to Meredith. The officer put it to his nose.

'Very peculiar *bouquet*, and not disagreeable,' said he, handing it to Lyster.

'Rather agreeable, I should say,' replied the latter, after trying it by a similar test; and he handed it back, but with a very unwilling hand.

'I think I had better try what taste it has,' said Lieutenant Meredith.

'Just sip it and try,' replied his comrade.

'Wonderful!' exclaimed the *militaire*, after making the experiment; and, panting for breath, he held the bewitching cup to Lyster.

'Glorious!' echoed the other, smacking his lips, while a wholesome tinge of red began to creep over his blue physiognomy.

'What is it made of?'

'The devil a thing in it but potheen,' replied the gamekeeper; 'and sure enough it deserves all you could say of it.' And, in proof of the high opinion he had of its merits, he emptied the flask at a draught, and straightway was himself again.

'By Jove! I'm tired shooting these little things,' exclaimed Lieutenant Lyster, with a yawn, after he bagged the recovered birds. 'Don't you think, Meredith, we've just room for a hare each, if we could meet one?'

'Right, faith! I never thought of that,' rejoined Meredith. 'Come, Malachi——'

'Oh! tut, tut, gentlemen!' cried the gamekeeper, evidently horrified by the proposal, 'it mustn't be thought of. The whole barony would rise against you for shooting a hare in a hunting country. The like never was heard of—'twould be regular pot-hunting.'

'Pshaw! do you imagine we care a pin for what your Connaught squires think?' replied the officer contemptuously. 'Let them grin and bear it.'

'Well, by all that's beautiful, Minor Bodkin would almost as soon you'd shoot a sheep,' pleaded the gamekeeper. 'Thunder and turf! haven't ye enough of his game already?'

'To the d—l with Minor Bodkin,' coolly rejoined Lieutenant Lyster.

'Oh dear! oh dear! what will become of me?' exclaimed Malachi. 'Ye'll bring me to the gallows before ye've done with me.'

'Never fear, man,' replied the tempter; 'twill be half a guinea in your way; and you may have our words of honour that we'll never peach.'

'Oh, ay,' said Malachi, 'there's no knowing how slily it might come out when you'd be sitting over a tumbler with the Minor.'

'*Per Bacco!* that's a good one!' cried the officers, with a roar of laughter, elicited by the bare idea of such a horrible possibility.

'I don't think I'd be right to trust ye,' remarked Malachi, in a dubious tone.

'Nonsense!—to be sure you will,' said Meredith. 'Aren't you trusting us all day?'

'Well, head or harp, then, for it,' groaned the afflicted man, pulling out a half-crown.

'Head!' cried Meredith, and head it was; so all excuse was removed, and shouldering their Mantons, they followed their guide into the plantations in search of poor pussy.

The brace of hares was soon found and disposed of, and the additional weight of the game-bags in consequence began to admonish the officers that it was time for them to return to their quarters, which they were shocked to find, on inquiry, were now close on eight miles distant, allowing for short cuts. How to reach Loughrea became, accordingly, a question of no slight importance to them, jaded and heavy-laden as they were; but never were men so stupid: Malachi found it impossible to make them understand the route he was recommending them to take.

'Stay, now,' said he, after scratching his head for some time, in utter perplexity. 'I think I have a way that ye can't mistake, if ye have eyes in your heads at all—at all. It can't be but you know where the piper's stile is?'

'Tut, no, man!' replied Meredith, rather angrily, 'didn't I tell you we're strangers?'

'Dth! 'dth!' rejoined their puzzled director, 'what sort of a place were ye reared in at all? Well, if you don't know where it is, ye must only try and learn the way to it. First and foremost, ye know the Hole-in-the-wall public-house, of course, don't ye?'

'Confound it! no, we don't. How could we?' roared the *militaire*.

'Whisht ! whisht ! avick, and don't get into a passion, or you'll never have the geography of the thing,' expostulated their much-enduring attendant ; 'you can't but find it out, if you try. See here, now,—suppose this big stone was the gate-house of Crackeen and this stump was the tree at the cross-roads—the big ash-tree, you know ; then the Hole-in-the-wall would be—ay, it would be just where the bush is. Well——'

'The fact is,' said Lyster, impatiently interrupting him, 'that we'll never reach Loughrea, if the road is such a riddle—you must come and show it to us.'

'Impossible !' said Mr. Brimmajem, gravely shaking his head. 'The Minor couldn't get a bit of dinner until I go back.'

'Get us a guide, then.'

'Aye, by the powers, so I can !' exclaimed he ; 'your honours must stop just where you are, though, for fear of losing yourselves in the wood, and the *gossoon* will be with you in a jiffy,' and so saying he hurried off, leaving his two *protégés* to their meditations, which, by-the-by, were none of the pleasantest.

About a quarter of an hour elapsed, and still no one appeared. The night was rapidly falling ; their legs gradually stiffening ; it afforded them, therefore, no small delight when they at length caught the sound of advancing footsteps, and observed in the dusk the figure of a young man quickly making way towards them.

'Which of your honours am I to give this to ?' demanded the courier, as soon as he came up, presenting at the same time a curiously-folded billet. Meredith took it out of his hand, and seeing no direction on it, looked at his comrade, who nodded to him to open it ; he accordingly complied, and read :

'Mr. M. Bodkin presents his compliments to the gentlemen who did his grounds the honour of a visit, and expects to have the pleasure of their company to-day at dinner. Mr. B. cannot hear of any excuse.'

'That old scoundrel must have betrayed us,' stammered Lyster. 'How the deuce will we manage to get out of it, for of course we can't accept it ?'

'The masther tould me to tell ye, gintlemen, to make haste,' said the bearer of this ill-omened epistle, 'he always dines at half after four.'

'Hark'ye, my lad,' said Meredith, 'you must contrive not to be able to find us. Do you understand ? and in the meantime you can occupy yourself earning a few shillings by leading us out to the high-road.'

'Ubbaboo !' exclaimed the messenger, in reply. 'Troth, it's little business I'd have going back to Minor Bodkin with such a

story, more especially as he warned me not to do it if I was axed, for he swore that living or dead you'd dine with him to-day.'

'Pon my soul, this kind of hospitality's anything but agreeable,' said Meredith peevishly. 'I'm afraid we're completely trapped.'

'By Jove!' exclaimed Lyster, 'Courtenay himself couldn't get out of it. We're not to blame.'

'Don't you begin to feel very hungry?' inquired Meredith.

'Awfully,' responded Lyster: 'and, what's worse, I'm so tired—quite foundered.'

'We could cut the puppy to-morrow, you know, if we like,' suggested Meredith.

'Ay, and it would be such capital practice to snub him all the evening. We can quiz him most gloriously, for he must be a precious greenhorn.'

'Faith! we'll go,' exclaimed the one.

'Faith! we can't help it,' rejoined the other. 'Lead the way, my lad, and we'll see what sort of stuff your master is made of.'

After traversing a few winding paths, they emerged upon a lawn, in which stood the mansion of their host,—a long, rambling, old-looking, odd-looking tenement, with many windows of many sizes and patterns, some parts of it most whimsically out of repair; others as whimsically attended to with scrupulous exactness. As soon as the officers knocked at the door it was thrown open, nor were they astonished at perceiving that the individual who officiated on the occasion was their *quondam* attendant. His deportment was, however, a good deal changed; no longer the garrulous, obsequious guide, he now stood confessed a staid master of the ceremonies, and gravely motioned them in.

'Not a word about the hares, gentlemen,' he slyly whispered as they entered. 'Give me the bags, and I'll hide them!'

'I'm afraid you played us false, my old buck,' said Lyster, as he resigned the spoil; 'however, it's no great matter now, for we're likely to see more sport than we calculated.'

'Troth, he'll be mighty glad to see ye, for ye're a regular god-send,' said Malachi.

'The pleasure will be all on one side, then,' muttered Meredith.

'You'll not say that when you know him better,' replied the partial functionary. 'You can't think what a taste he has for the army. He'll be a rael ornament to his country when he grows a little oulder. This way, gentlemen!—this way, if you plase,' and he marshalled them into an old-fashioned parlour, full of all sorts of lumber, but a comfortable nook withal.

'We'll make ourselves snug, now, gentlemen, for a while,' said Malachi, taking up the poker, and thrusting it into the blazing turf-fire, that shone in the ample grate.

'Thank you,' said Lyster, coolly disarming him, 'we'll do that ourselves, and in the meantime you'll be so good as to trot off and let your master know of our arrival.'

'And, harkye!' said Meredith, in continuation, 'see that he washes his face, and wipes his nose, and all that, before you exhibit him. How old is he?'

'How ould would you take *me* to be?' demanded Malachi, a little huffed.

'You're no minor, at all events,' replied Meredith, laughing.

'Faith, then, they call me one,' rejoined Malachi; 'and, unless I was changed at nurse, I'm just Minor Bodkin, at your service.'

'You!' exclaimed both officers in a breath, dismayed by this unexpected *dénouement*.

'I,' coolly replied the claimant of the Bodkin honours. 'Don't you know that people never come to years of discretion in this country? Minor once, minor always.'

A whole train of recollections swept with railroad speed through the heads of the two officers. The thousand-and-one little circumstances occurring all day, that ought to have opened their eyes, and doubtless would have done so, but for the whimsical anomaly between the age of their entertainer and his appellation; a contradiction, however, of daily occurrence in the west, where names of the kind preserve their tenacity much longer than their propriety—the abominably free comments in which they had indulged when discussing the habits of the squirarchy—and, worst of all, the manner in which they had been treating him, and which he had so maliciously tolerated, in order to overwhelm them the more completely. Never was there a more successful hoax; and it was but too clear that the humourist had it in his power now to inflict the most ample vengeance upon them. Still there was a ray of hope.

'I'll never believe it,' stammered Meredith; 'you're only trying to hoax us.'

'Not now, I assure you,' replied their host. 'I allow that I have been trying all day, and I think I have succeeded pretty well. However, I think it will be best for us all to abide by our former understanding, that Minor Bodkin's to know nothing of the doings of Malachi Brimmajem. You had the length of your tether all day, and I must have mine now. Are you satisfied?'

The two victims looked to one another for succour and advice; but they both cut such an excessively sheepish and ludicrous figure, that laughter was the immediate result. Still, it was no laughing matter: it was evident they had bearded in his very den, though unwittingly, one of the most truculent of that whimsical

and dangerous race of animals which they had of late taken so much pains to shun. Vague ideas of raw-head-and-bloody-bones began to rise in their minds, despite of them. However, the creature seemed inclined to be good-humoured; and as they had no resource but to yield, they did it with as good a grace as they could, concluding their surrender with an incoherent attempt at an apology.

'Tut, man, don't mention it!' exclaimed Malachi. 'Never fear but we'll be quits before the night's over. I like a joke in my heart, and it's not every day such a joke as that is to be met with. Come along,' continued he, on observing his victims wincing under the hint of retaliation; 'as we've a minute or two to spare, before dinner's on the table, you may as well amuse yourselves looking at my curiosities. This room's a perfect museum, I can tell you. There, do you see that brace of antique-looking peacemakers hanging near the picture?—they're a little dingy, but no matter—do you know who they belonged to once?'

'Some highwayman, I fancy,' replied Lyster, afraid to hold his tongue, and yet unable to answer such a question correctly.

'Pshaw! I'd never take to guessing as a trade, if I was you,' rejoined his host contemptuously. 'No, sir; they were Geoffrey Blake's favourites once in their day, and for fifty years or more there wasn't a sod-party in Galway, or near it, that they hadn't a share in. They were known far and wide, and had wonderful luck. This one was the luckiest though;' and taking down one of the venerable relics, he pointed to a long array of notches of different lengths cut on the handle. 'Only look at them—a faithful record of all it accomplished. Fifteen final settlements—that's the long notches—regular cases for the coroner, you know; and seven-and-twenty seriously winged—that's the short ones. Ah, 'twas a sweet tool!' he fondly exclaimed, and, throwing himself into a field-attitude, he snapped it at Lyster's ear, causing him to start back a yard, his nerves not being 'Irish' enough to bear such an unwonted and unexpected test.

'Pooh! you thought it was loaded, I suppose,' said he, enjoying most cordially the discomposure he had effected. 'But no—I never had the heart to put a grain of powder into them since I got them. Poor Geoffrey willed them to me on his death-bed, for he had the misfortune to die in his bed after all; and, although I had occasion for the like twice since, I couldn't think of using them, poor fellow!' And, with a profound sigh, he replaced the retired peacemaker on its hook.

'Those are my own tools,' said he, in continuation, pointing to a beautiful brace suspended over the mantelpiece. 'They're new-fangled things, detonators, and saw-handles, and all that—'

Rigby's best, though. The farthest is the one I shot Captain Kenny with ; but some people prefer the other.'

The two officers cleared their throats, and looked volumes at one another ; but, as they held their peace, it would be unfair to construe any particular meaning out of their glances.

There are a great many odd people in the world that one doesn't know what to make of—men that would bother a *de lunatico* jury, though every individual of the twelve was a Solomon—shrewd, crafty, and knowing in some things, whimsical in others, while on one or two points they are as mad as if they were born in Bedlam. Eminent among such was Malachi Bodkin of Cloughmore, or, as he was better known in and about his own territory, Minor Bodkin. He had been left a minor at a very early age, and under the worst guardianship that could well be imagined. To a bachelor uncle the person and fortunes of the young heir were entrusted, for what reason it would be hard to say, unless it was for the purpose of trying experimentally what would be the result of such a comical disposal. Cloughmore was a pleasant place enough, and the uncle took up his abode there, stepping quietly into the shoes of the defunct proprietor. Probably he thought that people would be remarking him if he hired them by himself ; so he kept his nephew there too, and a merry life they had of it, undisturbed by books of any kind, and, happy creatures ! freed from the trammels of female power, a hatred of which was from the first instilled into the mind of his *élève* by the old gentleman. Malachi grew up the antitype of his preceptor, and there was but one heart between them. So the old man held his ground good to the end, and died in the arms of his ward long enough after he reached his majority. So much for his care of the person ; but as to the fortunes a different story is to be told, a story that might easily be anticipated. Debts had accumulated on debts, law-costs on law-costs ; every tenant had fallen ruinously into arrear ; every species of property on the concern had been suffered to go to the bad. Economy never had been thought of ; nothing but fun and frolic ; and in the end poor Malachi became a man upon whom the sub-sheriff of Galway might count as being a couple of hundreds in his way at the very least. Disappointment and embarrassment made him crabbed and sour, and aggravated all his eccentricities ; while, as he grew poorer, he of course grew prouder, until at the time to which my story refers he reached such a climax in both these qualities, as made him rather a rum customer for a brace of exquisites to meddle with ; and this the parties themselves seemed already to have discovered.

'Come, boys, dinner's on the table, such as it is,' exclaimed the

humourist. 'No excuse necessary, I know. Biddy got short warning, so, of course, we must be satisfied with whatever she gives us. The mess-table has made you used to bachelor's fare by this time, or the devil's in it.' And so saying, he seated himself at the head of the table, which, while they were admiring his curiosities, so called, had been covered with a cloth not the cleanest, one large dish containing a portion of nondescript food, a couple of dishes of potatoes, with plates and glasses for the trio.

'Is it leather do you think?' inquired Lyster of his comrade, under his breath, and pointing to the viands in the dish. Meredith replied by shaking his head reprovingly, and then looking significantly at the glittering instruments which hung over the mantelpiece. All the words in the dictionary could not have expressed his meaning better or more concisely.

'Of course you'll take a rasher,' said the host carelessly; 'for you see there's nothing else. I wish it was better for your sakes; but the next time we'll be better prepared. And anyhow, rashers are not to be sneezed at. Fat or lean, Captain?' And he looked inquiringly at Meredith, who, making a resolution at random, prepared to discuss as he best might the ambiguous dainty, Lyster following his example. The fear of their host, joined to the sharpness of their appetites, removed a good deal of their fastidiousness, so that ere long the dish became empty. Malachi rang a hand-bell which lay by his side, and called lustily for more; nor were his guests disposed to forbid him. The summons was immediately obeyed, and a second dish laid before the master of the entertainment; but, imagine with how much vexation the officers beheld the cover removed, and a splendid shoulder of mutton thereby revealed to view! Their host, whether justly or not, appeared equally surprised.

'Dth! 'dth!' exclaimed he peevishly, 'that Biddy's an original, if there's one in Connaught. Did you ever hear such a trick?—to make us spend our appetites on them rashers, while she had such a dainty as this on the spit. No help for it, however; so, let me send you a slice. I dare say you'll find room for one.'

They could have wept outright. Their throats were scalded with the fiery esculent upon which they had satiated their ravenous hunger. They had scarce a scrap of appetite left; and that little was fast vanishing under the effects of vexation, so that after swallowing a few morsels of the tempting joint, they were fain to lay down their knives and forks, notwithstanding the remonstrances of their host, and proclaim themselves fed, but far from being satisfied. Hunger had now given place to thirst; and they would gladly have opened a channel in their bosoms for the

River Shannon to take a meander through, for such a pair of salted maws they never had in their lives before.

As soon as the table was cleared, a brace of decanters, with very suspicious-looking contents, was placed before their host, who seemed to think the tippie demanded an apology.

'Sorry I can't say much for the wine, gents,' said he; 'but good wine's very hard to be got. I bought it for port and sherry; so we'll take it for granted that it's genuine, and drink it for want of better,' and he filled his glass, and passed the decanters on. The sherry was execrable; the port was worse. Sir Humphrey Davy would have spent a day in analyzing them before he could detect a thimbleful of wine in the composition of either of them; but what were they to do, having two such reasons external and internal for drinking whatever came before them? A longing recollection seized both the guests at the same moment, and made their mouths water, for they could not but think what a difference lay between the fluid before them and the delicious beverage with which Malachi, in his capacity of gamekeeper, had supplied them; nay, they could read the thought in the faces of each other; and, as they read they gathered courage to hint their opinions on the subject.

'Hem! ahem!' quoth Lieutenant Meredith, 'you'll excuse me for inquiring the name of that liqueur you carry in the flask. By Jove! we must have some of it at our mess, for I don't know a more excellent thing in its way; but I forget how you called it.'

'Is it the potheen you mean?' inquired their host, with an expression of amazement. 'Sure, you don't mean to say you'd be so vulgar as to drink punch?' demanded Malachi, still more surprised than before. 'Faith! maybe you'd like a jug now; but I didn't like to mention it for fear of offending you. However, if you've no objection, I'll get up the materials; but remember, it wasn't I that proposed it.'

'Oh, by all means!' exclaimed the delighted *militaires*, rubbing their hands with ecstasy at the mere idea of the luxury that awaited them, and not at all able to understand the virtuous scruples of their entertainer. Nothing could exceed the glad alacrity with which Malachi acceded to their wishes; hot water, sugar, and a bottle, were placed on the table as it were by magic, flanked by a trio of tumblers, accompanied by glasses to correspond; one of which was seized by the host, and one each by his guests.

'Do you know how to mix it, though?' demanded Malachi, recollecting himself.

'Why, no,' replied Lyster; 'but we'll follow your example.'

'Bedad, then, if you do,' responded their model, with a dry smile, 'ye'll do well. Here goes, anyhow;—first sugar, three lumps;

now water, do you see, halfway up exactly—capital!—you'll be able to teach the whole mess to-morrow, or next day. Now, in with the potheen to the very brim. And now, gentlemen, your healths, and so forth.'

Oh, with what a relish they emptied their glasses, and smacked their lips! It was a new era in their lives—an era never to be forgotten! Their thirst was half melted already; their apprehensions sweetly subsiding, their pleasure rapidly tending to a climax, when Malachi rose, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

'Eh!' exclaimed the officers, with a perplexed stare.

'Don't be alarmed, pray,' said Malachi; 'it is only an old custom always understood, that as soon as the hot water comes in the room's locked up for the night, for fear of accidents, as a matter of course. So now we'll make ourselves snug.'

'But, pardon me,' stammered Meredith; 'you know we must be in barracks to-night. Daren't miss parade in the morning if our lives depended on it.'

'Pshaw!' interposed their host. 'Put it out of your heads at once. I'll take no offence, as you seem to be ignorant of our ways; but I'll thank you not to mention it again.'

'But, my dear sir,' remonstrated the astounded officer, 'the consequence will be that we'll have to stand a court-martial. I assure you I don't exaggerate.'

'Sorry for it,' was the cool reply; 'but old customs must be kept up, you know. What hour must you be at parade, may I ask?'

'Nine o'clock precisely; and old Courtenay's as sharp as a needle.'

'Oh, well; we can manage it easily,' said Malachi. 'Never fear, my boys. I'll drive you over in my own carriage—'pon my honour I will. You shall be there to the moment, and I'll explain the whole thing to the Colonel.'

It was useless to murmur. The thing itself wasn't so very unreasonable. They reflected that if their brother-officers got a sight of the man they had to deal with, it would greatly help the excuse that was to be made for their transgression, and this in itself would be no small object. Moreover, they were tired after the day's work, and the drink was more than commonly seductive. So the result of all these considerations was that they resigned themselves to their fate, and prepared to make a night of it.

* * * * *

The next morning there was a direful hubbub in Loughrea barracks; no tidings could be heard of their missing brethren, and the fifty—th to a man pronounced them kidnapped by the natives; plans for their recovery were proposed and canvassed by

various knots in various corners; but none could be decided on. Parade hour came, and still no account of them; and the excitement was at its height, when an odd-looking genius drove a cart into the square, and demanded to see Colonel Courtenay. The afflicted commander stepped forward, announcing his rank, and asked his business.

'I've got something in the cart that belongs to you,' was the reply.

The Colonel proceeded towards the vehicle, to identify his property, and the driver, to assist him, drew aside the fastening, and upset the contents into the square. Horror of horrors! there were his two officers huddled up in straw, senseless, and to all appearance lifeless.

'Dead?' exclaimed the agonised commander.

'Dead drunk only,' was the cool reply of the stranger. 'I promised to bring them safe home, and there they are, sound as a bell,' and so saying he wheeled round his 'carriage,' and before anyone thought of stopping him, to demand an explanation, was half a mile off on the road to Cloughmore.

The story spread with most unmerciful rapidity; and the Lough-rea people would have canonized Minor Bodkin, if they only knew how to go about it; but the poor fifty—th never got the better of their discomfiture. At length it became known that a regiment for the West Indies was very badly wanted. So the fifty—th begged, as a favour, to be transported no matter where, so that it was out of the reach of Minor Bodkin; and to the West Indies they went accordingly.



Mr. Colonel's Office.

P. H. & S. 1855

W. H. & S. 1855



Orlando Griffin.

BY CHARLES WHITEHEAD,

AUTHOR OF 'RICHARD SAVAGE,' 'DEVEREUX, EARL OF ESSEX,' ETC.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, September, 1843.]



HERE is a small town called Greystoke, a few miles to the west of the ancient borough of St. Albans; and in this town many excellent and opulent people reside. Of this latter class was Mr. Orlando Griffin, a young gentleman whose whole course of life had hitherto flowed in so unruffled a stream, that he had been compelled to resort to the circulating library for that amount of mental excitement without which, he devoutly believed, the heart cannot be continued in a healthy state of vibration. Indeed, so sincerely did Mr. Griffin sympathise with, and so entirely did he enter into, the well-imagined woes of the Julia Walsinghams and the Adeline Montresors, and the highly-wrought perplexities and deeply-conceived miseries of their heroic counterparts, the Lord Mortimers, and the Honourable Augustus Waldegraves, that he could not very well understand, he could not be made to feel the real distresses of people about him, who chanced to possess English and not Grecian outlines, and whose names opposed a stumbling-block to that description of sentiment to be met with in the beaten paths of fiction.

It will be readily surmised that a young gentleman of Mr. Griffin's disposition, and appetite for polite literature, could hardly love anybody better than himself, unless that individual came in the shape of a young lady, beautiful as an angel, fascinating as a *houri*, and sentimental as himself. Such an one a propitious fortune provided in the person of Miss Amelia Wickham, a fair, unearthly-looking being, possessing all those indispensable requisites which the rigorous *beau idéal* established in Griffin's bosom led him to desiderate.

Amelia Wickham had been for no great length of time a resident at Greystoke. She had been wafted thither by the London coach, and was accompanied by her mother, a tall

lady, of highly cultivated manners and complexion, the latter predominating in her nose, and with a voice of singular monotony and depth, such, for instance, as we may imagine to have proceeded from Lady Macbeth with a very bad cold.

Through the instrumentality of a friend, Mr. Griffin obtained an introduction to the interesting strangers, and was invited to partake of those social amenities which ladies familiar with London society are so well qualified to dispense. In the small but elegant drawing-room (twelve feet by nine), of Mrs. Wickham, our young gentleman found that courtesy and candour are the characteristics of the truly genteel; and a sense of deep abasement sometimes crept over him when he reflected upon his own unworthiness, considered as a candidate for the hand of the fair Miss Wickham.

But this sense of self-humiliation seldom lasts long, and would seem to have left Orlando Griffin altogether shortly afterwards; for, one evening, when his Amelia had retired to rest, he took the mother to the window, and with a tremor proper to the circumstances, figuratively laid his person and fortune at the feet of her daughter. It was upon this occasion that Mrs. Wickham's discretion was made signally manifest. 'She was highly and deeply honoured by his preference. She really did not know; she could not possibly say; her only treasure's heart might not be engaged; there certainly had been a young gentleman, Mr. Charles Nincombe, but that was not likely, after all. Would he give her till to-morrow evening?' She bade him hope in the meantime.

'I must tell you,' said the high-souled matron, in conclusion, 'that I have no fortune to give my daughter; but that is, of course, no object with you. She is herself a jewel beyond all price. You have heard of Mr. Livermore—the Livermore?'

'Oh, yes; often.'

Here Griffin made a venial trespass upon the fields of fiction.

'Mr. Livermore is her uncle,' pursued Mrs. Wickham, 'and is immensely rich—in fact, high sheriff of Surrey, and lord of the manor of Teddington. He has often said he didn't know what he might do for Amy one of these days, which clearly means that he *does* know what he *may* do. Money *is* an object, dear sir, although we have not been accustomed to regard it. Congenial souls, domestic bliss, two hearts in unison; these are the real—the only blessings—Orlando.'

How sweetly, how touchingly confidential and familiar, this recognition of him as a valued friend by the name he had received at the baptismal font! Griffin could scarce contain himself till he got outside the house.

To describe the sensation of Mr. Griffin when he next bent his way to the cottage in which his Amelia was enshrined, for the purpose of resolving the important query whether he was to be beyond expression happy, or a raving maniac for the rest of his days—is quite out of the question. Hope and fear see-sawed away in his bosom with considerable vehemence and vigour; and by the time he arrived at the gate, and when he beheld the mother at one window, and the daughter at the other, he would have given a trifle for a new pair of knee-joints, and a tongue warranted to wag if required.

Mrs. Wickham flew to the door, and greeting him on the threshold, seized both his hands between her own, and drew him into the parlour. Griffin could not but remark that the nose was somewhat redder, and that the voice was rather more subterraneous than usual, as she hurriedly paid him the compliments of the evening. He accounted for the voice on the score of intense emotion; and the pressure of the nasal promontory against a window-pane, it is well known, causes a portion of the vital fluid to establish itself in that region.

‘Orlando Griffin, you have vanquished, you have conquered!’ was all she could in the first instance utter.

Griffin looked more like a captive than a conqueror as she lugged him (how plaguy strong the old lady must be! but no, it was ‘enthusiasm’) to an arm-chair. Releasing her hold, and drawing another chair towards her, she kept his hand, riveted her gaze upon him, and said, her lips quivering with excitement:

‘She is yours!—wholly, entirely yours!—yours for ever! and hereafter I must look upon you in the light of a son.’

Griffin inwardly wished that she would not look quite so much at him in any light; and attempted a reply, which died away in an inarticulate mumble.

‘Young man,’ resumed Mrs. Wickham solemnly, ‘when a mother bestows the sole blessing of her existence upon another, what has she not a right to expect? Oh! give me a solemn assurance that when she becomes yours you will cherish and protect her?’

Her future son-in-law raised his eyes slowly to a fly-cage immediately over his head, and silently surveyed the physical proportions of a corpulent blue-bottle. (We may mention that orbs in the ascendant are invariably held, in the court of love, equivalent to an affidavit. The Lord Chancellor Hymen would cry, ‘Take a rule’ upon much less satisfactory testimony.)

‘But where is the dear child?’ cried Mrs. Wickham as she arose. ‘Why should I longer keep asunder two beings so formed for each other?’

Griffin would fain have asked her to stay a few minutes until he got his heart under, which began to hammer away at his ribs with pavior-like pertinacity, but his tongue was as dry on a sudden as an old card-case. The five minutes that preceded a kind of affectionate scuffle in the passage between the mother and daughter were indeed fearful ; but when his own Amelia appeared, led in by her dignified and deservedly happy parent, a dizziness possessed him ; all the voluminous precedents for his conduct upon such occasions, which Rooke's library afforded, faded from his memory ; and, if he did stagger forward, and fall upon one knee, the action must, in justice, be imputed not so much to personal gallantry as to physical weakness.

I leave it to the lovers of sentiment of a high and ennobling character to conceive the feelings of this young and sentimental couple ; and I invite such as have no taste for such scenes, while they imagine the intensely gratifying sensations of the delighted Mrs. Wickham, to accompany her as she proceeds to the kitchen, to follow her as she carries a small jug up to her own chamber, and to sympathise with her as she concocts a glass of brandy and water, rather stiff than otherwise.

It might be tedious to the reader to relate how often, and with what feelings, Orlando thenceforth betook himself to Eden Cottage (so called by Mrs. Wickham), there to ' speed the soft intercourse ' towards the matrimonial goal, which, alas ! is not always the winning-post. He, however, knows little of human nature who supposes that because love is blind, the bystanders are not in active possession of their optics—who believes that, while doves are billing and cooing, magpies are not busy with sidelong eyes and nimble chatter ; in a word, who imagines that to every absorbed Romeo and Juliet there are not scores of vigilant Paul Prys and Miss Pratts.

Scarce had Griffin whispered the blissful sanction given to his hopes—whispered it even to his own beating heart—ere it was openly discussed by many who made it a subject of levity and personal jest. Mysterious Providence ! The sensitive soul of Orlando revolted at the precocious publicity given to his passion. To think that every female in the place, from the tender age of fourteen to the tough period of fourscore, had been canvassing, sifting, weighing every throb, sigh, feeling of his bosom !

Griffin pressed for an early day on which his happiness might be completed, but was encountered by both ladies with scruples such as delicacy alone can start, such as a mind of the most exquisite refinement only can appreciate. And now Mrs. Wickham, with a finely pointed oratorical crayon (if the expression may be permitted) chalked out the outline of a course of proceeding she

ventured to suggest it might be as well if he pursued, which discomposed him not a little, and he was by no means satisfied that Mrs. Wickham was in the right when she asserted that 'it would be so like himself,' that it would be 'only worthy of a Griffin,' that it would be 'such a tender instance of his confidence and regard, if he presented his affianced bride with a bank-note'—a few hundreds merely, no more—'as a marriage present.' 'Oh, sir!' concluded the venerable relative of Livermore, the august high sheriff and lord of the manor, 'without the most unlimited confidence in each other, the hope of happiness in the married state'—here she waved her hand, her reticule flying to the troubled air—'is a dream—a dream!'

She afterwards condescended to quote precedents, drawn from sources with which they were alike familiar, chronicles of passion, records of the beautiful and true, volumes of the heart. Griffin was at length convinced; but for the life of him, when he offered to his Amelia's acceptance a handsome pocket-book, with a costly tissue-paper lining, he could not help thinking upon a certain adage, which plainly intimates that a gentleman not reputed wise and the commodity which is better than wisdom are liable to speedy separation.

Thenceforward matters went on smoothly. Amelia, as a reward, it is to be presumed, of his generosity, charmingly consented to a proposition he had heretofore fruitlessly urged, that they should go to London. Griffin was led to believe that he had interest sufficient to secure a stool in a Government office, and had suspected for a long time past that by secluding himself in the country, he was neither doing justice to his pretensions nor performing his duty as a good citizen. This acquiescence to his wishes on the part of his betrothed and her mother, though late, pleased him excessively. The health of his adored one was, of course, a grave consideration; and that of her parent was, no doubt, of no slight collateral consequence; but still he was led to hope they had undesignedly magnified the blighting effects of the metropolitan atmosphere; the more so that the ladies not only ceased to dwell upon the topics of London smoke, epidemics and noise, but positively appeared desirous of returning to them.

At length Orlando was blest with the hand of his Amelia. They were married with the strictest privacy at a distant village-church, and banqueted upon lamb-chops and liquids at a roadside public-house. On such a day a man is, of course, in a disposition to pardon even a foe who may have attempted his jugular. Still, Griffin could not but shudder when he beheld the sinuous course towards the post-chaise made by his exceedingly lively mother-in-law; nor, although he acknowledged the truth of the observation,

could he admire its mode of delivery when—the vehicle in motion towards home—that lady remarked :

‘ Well, now,—it appearsh to me, my beloved and affec—tionate son,’—hiccup—‘ Orlando Griffin, we’ve shpent a most delightful—’ (here the maternal nose lodged upon his breastpin,) ‘ and r-r-romantic day.’ These last words were somewhat entangled in his frill.

Heavens ! she was very much the worse for liquor !

‘ I hope your mother is not often thus, dearest ?’ whispered Orlando to his bride.

‘ Not very often—oh, no ! her spirits have been over-excited. See ! she is going to sleep,’

Griffin was heartily glad of it, glancing at intervals during the ride at the inebriated one, who appeared agitated by the motion of the chaise, like a resemblance of the human figure made by one of art’s journeymen, and formed, for the most part, of straw.

The happy couple and their excitable adjunct, whose unequivocal condition in the post-chaise had well-nigh lost her that respectful esteem with which Griffin had heretofore regarded her, started on the following morning for London, and were in due time set down at the Three Cups, in Aldersgate Street. Here Mrs. Wickham proposed an adjournment to the coffee-room, and insinuated two glasses of brandy and water. Griffin sighed, and consented, inwardly resolving to put in for a lion’s share of the alcoholic preparation. He dreaded a repetition of the exhibition of the previous day. Unhallowed destiny ! to see the mother of his soul’s idol bundled neck and crop into a hackney-coach by the wondering waiters of a respectable tavern, and jolted off to a strange lodging, looking like the resuscitated mummy of the wife of Cheops, or one of the Ptolemies,—*that* must not be. The thought almost lifted his hat off his head. The elderly lady, however, forestalled his design upon the goblets, tossing off one of the glasses with much satisfaction, and little ceremony. This done, she set down the empty vessel, and prepared to sally forth in quest of apartments. Her knowledge of town made this a most desirable measure, and away she hurried, proposing to return ‘ ere the Leviathan could swim a league,’ or, to use her own words, which were to the same effect, ‘ before he could say Jack Robinson,’—a phrase Griffin thought neither elegant in taste nor true as to the fact.

At the end of what the apathetic clock proclaimed to be an hour and a half, but the lovers deemed five or six minutes, Mrs. Wickham returned, in a state of perturbation and flurry not easily to be accounted for, when the business upon which she had gone forth was considered.

‘Well, my dear madam,’ observed Griffin, ‘I hope you have succeeded in obtaining for us a temporary home?’

‘Oh yes, I’ve done *that*,’ replied Mrs. Wickham, ‘flopping’ down by the side of her daughter, and fanning her face with her handkerchief; ‘nice rooms in Charterhouse Square, over the way. We can go in at once. But, oh! my dear,’ turning to Amelia, ‘only guess whom I have seen?’

‘Whom, in mercy’s name?’ cried Amelia, turning white, and then red, and then permanently white.

‘Compose yourself, my dearest life,’ said Orlando.

‘Who is it?’ urged the bride.

‘Why’—and Mrs. Wickham turned a dubious eye upon Griffin—‘I have seen your father.’

‘My father!—papa!’ exclaimed Amelia.

‘Her papa!’ echoed Griffin. ‘Till this day I never heard she had a papa. This is extraordinary!’

‘Why didn’t you avoid him?’ demanded the daughter, in a tone of vexation.

‘My love, I couldn’t. He came full tilt upon me just when I was leaving the lodgings.’

‘Why should he be avoided, love?’ inquired Griffin. ‘The father of my wife must always be—extraordinary! Why had you not told me of his existence?’

‘That may well be thought peculiar, my dear Orlando,’ said Mrs. Wickham; ‘but the truth is, he is such a strange man—so very strange!’

Griffin glanced towards his bride. ‘So very strange a man!’ she murmured sweetly, veiling her dove-like eyes with her silken lashes.

‘But you will soon see him,’ cried Mrs. Wickham abruptly. ‘He swears he’ll call, and that before the week’s out.’

‘I shall be very happy, I’m sure,’ stammered Griffin; but he could get no further.

As they walked, followed by their luggage, to Charterhouse Square—a square, by-the-by, whose only claim to cheerfulness is derived from the fact of its looking very like an evacuated churchyard—Griffin could not help pondering upon the unlooked-for papa. ‘So very strange a man!’ It began to strike him that strangeness was a family failing. And he never to have been told of this eccentric parent before! Undoubtedly, had he been at any time asked whether Miss Wickham had ever had a father, he should, without hesitation, have replied in the affirmative. Had he ever thought about him at all, he would have concluded that he had long ago played his little part, with applause or otherwise, and left this breathing stage to less evanescent and more youthful

performers. He must be some moody misanthrope—some selfish, fashionable sensualist—a military man, probably—Colonel Wickham (he had read of such), who had abandoned his wife, whose happiness he had sacrificed, and his daughter, to whose welfare he was utterly indifferent, and was now squandering his half-pay in gambling and riotous dissipation.

He had an early opportunity of ascertaining how far conjecture may, in such cases, be relied upon. Not many days had elapsed since their quiet instalment in Charterhouse Square ere a tremendous single rap, that must have reverberated through all the cloisters of the Chartreuse, made Griffin drop 'The Mysterious Orphan' upon the floor, and caused the two ladies to start from their chairs like balls from a trap.

'His knock!' cried Mrs. Wickham, seizing two bottles by their respective necks, and hurrying away with them to a cupboard.

'So it is,' coincided Amelia briskly. 'Dear Griffin, papa is come. Stay, ma, leave the gin.'

Griffin arose for the purpose of meeting half way his new and, as he concluded, from certain painful gruntings that proceeded from him as he ascended the stairs, his asthmatic connection. Orlando's preconception of Mr. Wickham's appearance was, he found, anything but just; nor, as he learnt afterwards, and guessed at the time, was he more accurate in his conjecture as to his profession. Mr. Wickham, to do him justice, had paid particular attention to his toilet; but being attired in a blue coat, for which somebody else must have been measured several years before; in a waistcoat of an iron-mould pattern; in smalls, upon each leg of which knives had apparently been sharpened; and in boots, the tops of which were of a Spanish mahogany colour, it must be admitted that he could not readily be mistaken for a military man. When I add that he had chosen a Belcher handkerchief as the ornament of his neck on this his first appearance, that his shirt-frill had been battened upon by moths, and that he wore an enormous brooch in his bosom, which looked like a piece of petrified brawn, his *tout ensemble*, as the likeness of a member of the military profession, will not, perhaps, appear more striking. In truth, as he stood in the doorway, his hat in his hand, motionless for a moment, he resembled very nearly a Bow Street officer.

Salutations having been exchanged, Mr. Wickham, after staring about the room with much seeming complacency, and eyeing Griffin once more with a grave regard, pulled a chair towards him with the hook of his stick, crying, 'Come here, you dog,' and took a seat. The ladies had retired on his entrance, but presently appeared. Mr. Wickham thought it by no means necessary to be ceremonious with such near and dear relations.

'Well, old girl, you're here, are you?' was his speech to his consort; and, nodding to his daughter, 'So, Slyboots, you've got a husband, have you? Mind, *I* didn't tell you to.' Then, turning to Griffin, and bursting into a laugh not commonly heard of at court, or even in the mansions of the nobility, he added, 'It's only my way; don't mind me. I'm a rum un—ain't I, old un?' winking at the august matron behind Griffin's chair.

Mr. Wickham presently made public a wish on his part to be provided with 'a yard of clay,' and entered upon a discourse, having for its object a eulogium upon the virtues and sanative properties of half-and-half, when compounded of Barclay's double stout and Charrington's treble X. He would take a glass or so of 'max' in its neat state, he was pleased to remark, as a 'wind up.'

'Holy St. Agatha!' thought Orlando, 'what a truly vulgar monster! And can this terrific vulgarian be the author of Amelia's being?'

An observation which escaped Mr. Wickham during the evening posed Griffin prodigiously. He could make neither head nor tail of it. What an extraordinary domestic circle had he entered!—a circle, he began to suspect, not unlike a magician's, terrible to stay in, ruinous to spring out of. He sincerely wished he had been confined in the most damp and rheumatic cell at the very extremity of the countless corridors of a castle, rather than have met and mingled with these unfathomable Wickhams.

The gauger—for such was the male representative of the family—had been smoking his pipe in philosophical silence for a considerable time, when he suddenly withdrew it from his mouth, and began to move his shoulders about in a manner which implies that the operator is possessed with some highly agreeable fancy, or under the influence of a quaint conceit.

'Never trust me,' cried he, 'if this isn't the queerest start I ever came across. You're a deep old girl, Liz, *you are!*' shaking his fist jocularly at his wife. 'Go out of town—do the genteel—get "my daughter" married—married—ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! Now, I wonder what Bob would think of all this?—poor Bob!'

'Father!' cried Amelia, aghast.

'Mr. Wickham!' remonstrated the mother, shaking her front at him with agitating earnestness.

Mr. Wickham was, as he said, 'pulled up' in time.

'Well,' he remarked, 'it's no concern of mine—only mark, my girls, my finger's out of the pie. Sir,' turning to Griffin, with a bow of deep respect, 'your *very* good health. If you're not a Noble Grand, I hope you will be. May the present moment be the worst of our lives!'

'Amen!' thought Griffin. The subject then dropped.

But who was this Bob?—and ‘poor Bob,’ too! Wherefore poor? Wickham’s sympathies were evidently interested in his behalf. Not a day passed but Griffin ruminated upon the invisible Robert. He could obtain no information respecting him from his wife, who said it was all stuff and nonsense, and bade him not be a fool. No explanation could be wrung from Mrs. Wickham, who shook her head, and warned him against the indulgence of a morbid curiosity; and the gauger, when he applied to him, cried ‘mum,’ with his hand to his mouth, adding that he was not going to get his head combed by the old un, and that he didn’t fancy clapper-clawing. ‘My girl’s a dabster at it; but I dare say you’ve found out that before this.’

Orlando *had* done so; but this was not his sole discovery. The ladies had thrown off all restraint long ago. Griffin was a meek man; and whenever anything particularly vexed him he retired to his chamber, and grinned against the wainscot to settle his nerves.

The life he was leading was indeed pitiable. A woman had been added to the family, who sat all day long making new dresses for his lady and her mother. Friends of all sizes, of both sexes, and unanimous in their devotion to ardent spirits, were constantly dropping in and staggering out. Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Haymarket were pronounced bores—dull and tiresome—and the Eagle and the Albert Saloon divided their patronage of the drama. Mrs. Griffin had her faults of temper, her ‘human frailties,’ and outraged Orlando’s sensitive spirit at every turn. The tall and impressive Mrs. Wickham spurned the vile rules that slavish decorum has absurdly framed, and plied the bottle nightly with bacchanalian perseverance. Sometimes she embraced her dear son, her own Orlando, with an affection quite stifling, and wept on him with a mother’s fervour; anon she would invite and call him forth to a boxing-match, being herself her own bottle-holder.

To add, if anything could add, to the misery of the sentimentalist, he became at length convinced that it was by no means within the range of probability that he would ever be called upon to serve his Queen and country, by performing the duties of a clerk in a Government office. This last hope strangled, Griffin wandered about disconsolate, almost heartbroken. The creature, in happier days to be derided and despised, was now become a wretch to move pity and compassion. And thus nearly a twelvemonth wore away.

‘Two more years under the same system,’ cried Orlando, ‘and by the beard of holy Anselm, the hermit, I shall be a bankrupt and a Bedlamite!’

A month at Ramsgate, the journey to be accomplished by

steamer, had been projected by the ladies. The morning of their departure arrived, and they proceeded to a wharf in Lower Thames Street. As they stood on the quay by the water side, gazing towards the majestic steamers, and wondering which was *The Magnet*, their attention was drawn to a head, the hair whereof was cut with classical closeness, which emerged almost from beneath their feet. The owner of that head had, in fact, got out of a boat, and was climbing up the steps which are placed perpendicularly against the platform of the quay. The stranger, having gained *terra firma*, gave himself a smart shake, and disclosed his features to the projected voyagers.

A shriek burst from the lips of Amelia, and Mrs. Wickham, falling backward against a bale of rags, uttered a profane ejaculation, which, it is to be hoped, nothing but so surprising a *rencontre* could have induced her to employ.

And who could be this terror-striking alluvial deposit? Why, 'mother of my sainted Amelia!' if he wasn't rapturously hugging Mrs. Griffin in his arms.

'Why, mother,' cried this apparently naval character, skipping from Amelia towards the once majestic Mrs. Wickham, now, alas! languishing upon a couch of rags, and giving her shoulder a dislocating shake, while he seized her hand with an iron gripe—'why, mother, you don't seem glad to see me? How did you know I was coming up to-day? But never mind—give us your fin, old girl. I daresay the sight of me has upset you both. My wigs! how gaily you're both toggled out! Who's this ugly-mugged swell?' pointing towards Griffin.

'The man must be mad,' said Orlando. 'You don't know him, Amelia?'

'Oh yes, she does, sir,' said a man, coming up and touching his hat; 'she's his wife, and that's her mother. I know 'em both well. I've come up with him from Chatham.' Then drawing Griffin, the pallid but emancipated Griffin, aside, he added, 'His name's Robert Smasher, and he was connected with a gang of coiners, and got ten years; but they let him off half way, because o' good conduct.'

Robert Smasher! the mysterious Bob disclosed in full at last! Griffin indulged in a gradually lessening view of that worthy, as he walked off with his wife and mother-in-law—both casting many a rueful look behind.

Orlando at that moment would have tipped a fiddler a crown, and any competent artist a guinea—the one for playing, the other for dancing a hornpipe.

A few nights afterwards, Mr. Griffin attended an appointment at the Goat, in the vicinity of Smithfield, and met the crestfallen

Mrs. Wickham and the disconsolate Mrs. Smasher. Grateful for his release, he was not unwilling to pay for his liberty. They separated on the best terms in the world.

Mr. Griffin is still a bachelor, and resides at Greystoke. There has been a rumour—but I know not how true it is—of a certain farmer's daughter, with a very red face, and arms of the same colour. His housekeeper thinks it likely, averring, that since Griffin's return from London, he is fool enough for anything. I am not sure of that. I am rather in favour of the farmer's daughter.



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Regular Habits.

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Regular Habits.

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'Pity, that regularity,
Like Isaac Shove's, is such a rarity !'—COLMAN.



ANTHONY FUBKINS was admitted at an early age into the counting-house of Messrs. Borax, Box, and Fustic, in the capacity of office-boy, his business being to sweep its floor, dust the desks, fill the ink-stands—in short, to fulfil the duty of making himself generally useful. This he managed to perform to everybody's satisfaction ; and he gradually rose until he sat in the seat of honour, and became chief where he had originally been a drudge. He was the very pattern and model of correctness and precision. He never entered the counting-house either one minute before, or half a minute behind, half-past nine o'clock in the morning ; and never again quitted his desk to return home until the clock at 'Change had struck the hour of four. On his reaching the post of principal clerk—important to him in every way ; first from the increased station it conferred upon him, and next, from the addition it made to his yearly salary ; a most momentous and important event—nay, an epoch!—occurred in the hitherto monotonous existence of Anthony : he married !!!

It must be a matter of astonishment how a man constituted like Fubkins could have fallen in love ; and it may be doubted, indeed, whether the inclination he suffered under that denomination really was love. His preference for the favoured lady originated in his predilection for order and regularity. Previously to his rising in the world, he had been an inhabitant of a two-pair back-room in one of the narrow streets leading from the Minories, which looked upon the backs of some other houses of a similar description in an adjoining parallel street. The only time he had for looking out of his *only* window was during the operation of shaving in the morning, before he left for business. He observed a young woman constantly sitting at the window of a little back parlour in the next street, industriously occupied in plying her

needle. For a very considerable period he paid not the slightest attention to the sempstress, not even by remarking to himself—for he was his own confidential adviser—his admiration of her persevering industry.

At length, however, his curiosity became excited; and, after some roundabout inquiries, he found out that she was the daughter of a retired exciseman, one Aminadab Tapps, whose whole earthly possessions consisted of his superannuation pension, a few odd pieces of furniture, which had descended to him from his father, and of his only daughter, Tabitha by name. Dab Tapps, as he was irreverently called by his familiars, frequented in the evening the parlour of a small public-house in the same street, called 'The Cat and Turban'; and it was with the hopes of becoming ultimately acquainted with the daughter that Fubkins ventured, through this means, to scrape an intimacy with the father. He entered the precincts of this fane of Bacchus with fear and trembling, lest by use it should become customary, and by habit a necessity, and thus sap the foundation of the very superstructure of his character, the height of his pride—*his regular habits*. He, however, stooped to conquer. Anthony at first became on terms of conversable acquaintance with Tapps; then on those of familiarity and friendship; until, at length, he saw him home every evening after the termination of his libations,—for, alas! it is not to be denied that Tapps *fuddled*!

He now had passed the Rubicon, and from that time his wooing prospered. He, however, much to the indignation of Tapps, now forsook 'The Cat and Turban,' and left him, the aforesaid Tapps, to find his way home, drunk or sober, as he could. Fubkins, like all men of regular habits, kept his passions (if he had any) under perfect control. He therefore told Tabby, that, as she had no earthly goods, and as he had at that precise period only a salary of fifty pounds per annum, they must defer their marriage until he should have a rise; and they did wait until Fubkins was promoted to the chief stool in the counting-house. Very shortly after this he married Tabitha.

Dab was no sooner relieved from filial control, than he spent the greater part of his time at his favourite resort, 'The Cat and Turban'; in fact, was constantly drunk, as he expressed it, 'for company's sake'; and, just at the period he was about to become a grandfather, he died, having been found drowned in the gutter. It was given in evidence before the coroner that he was returning home from his daily potations at 'The Cat and Turban,' and in his usual condition—very drunk; that there had been a heavy shower of rain, and that the gutter in the middle of the street had overflowed its banks; and it was supposed that the unfortunate

Tapps, in crossing the street to his own house, had fallen on his face, and, being incapacitated by inebriation from assisting himself, had been choked by the dirty puddle. The jury brought in a verdict of manslaughter against 'The Cat and Turban,' with a deodand of one shilling upon the gutter. Fubkins buried Tapps; and Mrs. Fubkins produced a son and heir on the same day.

Fubkins, having such an example of the sad effects of *irregular* habits, determined that *his* boy should be a man of *most regular habits*. Our hero was first introduced to his mother on the eleventh day of November, 1811, at eleven minutes past eleven o'clock at night; which, as has been previously stated, was the very day on which poor Tapps was consigned to *his* mother-earth. After much discussion, it was settled that he should be named Jeremiah Augustus, and so he was christened. His infant and boyish days passed pretty much as they do with other children, excepting that he was more orderly than is habitual with other juveniles; and this was attributed to his having constantly repeated to him the necessity of order, and the excellence of regularity.

The high character which his father held with the firm procured for Jeremiah Augustus admission into the counting-house; and, thus fairly launched into life, he kept on the even tenor of his way, and never was troubled with any of those fancies or desires for novelty which are so destructive to the regular habits of other young men. His feelings and passions had been so thoroughly blunted both by precept and example, from living with his parents, that he was monotonous both in thought and speech. He shot up 'from infancy to youth, from youth to middle age,' without possessing a single idea but such as had been previously engendered by his worthy parents.

He thus passed on the voyage of life perfectly tranquil until he was twenty-four years old, when the methodical arrangement of his existence was interrupted by the sudden death of his father, which occurred at twenty-three minutes fifteen seconds past two o'clock on the morning of the twenty-second day of December, 1834. It is necessary here to digress a little, for the purpose of commenting upon the sad effects of irregularity. The twenty-second of December was the anniversary of Fubkins's marriage; and on this particular occasion he had felt more jovially inclined than usual, and had expressed his wish to Tabby at dinner-time that, instead of the mutton-chops with which they usually concluded the business of the day, she should provide pork-chops, and that an addition of half-a-pint of ale should be made to his usual quantity. He usually ate one chop, and drank half his pint

of ale with his supper; reserving the remainder to clear the smoke of the one pipe, with which he regaled himself after this meal, from his throat. On this unlucky day he ate two pork-chops, drank the whole quantity of the ale at supper, and then insisted upon toasting Tabby's health in a tumbler of gin and water. This unhappy deviation from his regular habit cost him his life; he went to bed, was seized with apoplexy, and died.

Tabitha, being a woman of regular habits, very soon dried up her tears; for she found that revelling 'in the luxury of woe' interfered too much with her accustomed duties. On Sunday afternoon—that being the only day on which Jeremiah Augustus was unoccupied—she began seriously to talk to him upon the melancholy loss they had both sustained; and lamented that, whenever she should be called to join her dearly-beloved and departed Anthony, her darling son would be left alone in the wide world, without a soul to care for him, or one to care for. To obviate such an evil, she observed that it was a duty on his part to seek out a young woman of congenial disposition, but, above everything, of *regular habits*, to be his partner for life; in fact, that it was imperative upon him that he should marry!

This species of advice, nearly amounting to a command, and coming from his mother—whose slightest wishes he had always been accustomed to obey—staggered Fubkins; but, as he never questioned the propriety of her behests, he stammered out an assent to her proposition; being at the same time most perfectly bewildered as to the manner in which it could be possibly brought about. Such had been the strictness with which our friend Jeremiah Augustus had been brought up, that he had never been able to surmount that natural diffidence which would not allow of his looking *any one* in the face; far less had he ever contemplated the indecorum of looking at a woman.

Unfortunately for him, his mother had never kept up any female acquaintance, and her advanced years prevented her now from seeking them. Surrounded and beset with such difficulties, Fubkins was not merely at a loss, but absolutely in despair of being able to find the best mode of proceeding. He was ever anxious to obey his only parent; and his dilemma was how he should be able to prove the readiness of his acquiescence to her wish.

'Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,' says the adage, and it was well illustrated in Fubkins. He had no sooner conquered his *mauvaise honte*, and made up his mind to look females in the face, than he found he could not restrain his admiration of them. The more, however, he beheld them, the more was he impressed with the idea of awe, mixed with a feeling of their unapproachableness;

and he consequently foresaw a great difficulty in fulfilling the object he had in view.

His business occasioned him to be out in the evening twice a-week, on the foreign-post nights; and in walking home from the counting-house on those evenings he often met, nearly in the same spot, and about the same hour, a young woman of jaunty carriage, dashingy dressed, and of rather a prepossessing person, who always appeared to be sauntering along merely for recreation. He had already seen her on several evenings, when it suddenly struck him that *she* must be *one* of those young women for whose acquaintance his mother had bidden him so anxiously to seek, as being so desirable an object of his love; and the more he thought of this, the greater was the conviction in his own mind that she was one of those women of regular habits for whom he was to look; and what rendered it most conclusive to him was the fact that he always met her walking at the same spot, at the same hour, whenever he had seen her.

Duly impressed with the verity of his opinion, he determined upon looking at her more particularly on their next *rencontre*. In accordance with these intentions, the very next foreign-post night he was on the alert for the meeting; and, in passing her, he ventured to cast a glance at her, and, to his great pleasure and astonishment, he thought, or he believed, she smiled at him. Being a modest man, he was not quite sure upon this point, and he consequently deferred any endeavour to make her acquaintance until he was certain as to the fact of her smiling; he therefore waited—it must be owned, somewhat impatiently—until the opportunity should occur for its verification. Next post night at length came; and in walking home, Fubkins again came in contact with the lady, and on looking at her, he was convinced that he was not deceived, but that she had indeed, really and truly, *smiled upon him!* Thus encouraged, he determined on speaking to her; and at their next encounter, addressed her with, ‘A fine evening, miss!’ This led to a desultory conversation, and at length terminated by her giving him her name and address very neatly written upon a smallish sort of card; it was to this effect:

*Miss Araminta Ophelia Sylphington,
Milliner and Dressmaker,
No. 3, Wilhelmina Crescent, Bagnigge Wells Road.
N.B.—Ladies’ own materials made up, with the greatest despatch,
and in the newest fashion.*

In the course of their ambulatory conversation she favoured him with some slight account of herself; that she was an orphan, having lost her parents in very early life—indeed, so early that she could not say she had ever known them. That she was, however, possessed of a *small* independence, which she increased by following her present occupation, and for protection was living with her aunt, who had brought her up. That she was forewoman to a wholesale house in the City, and filled up her leisure time, when she had any, in the manner specified on her card. This was not told all at once, but was elicited from her by degrees in the progress of their walk, which at length brought them within sight of her aunt's residence; when she told Fubkins she must really wish him good night, for she did not think it at all proper to be seen walking with a gentleman in the evening who was an entire stranger to her, that she must consider it as very imprudent, and that her aunt, should she know it, would never forgive her. This extreme anxiety of guarding against even the appearance of impropriety put Jeremiah in ecstasies, and notwithstanding he could but applaud her prudence, he was loth to leave her; but at length they parted, upon a mutual promise of meeting again. During the whole of his return home he was like a man walking on air; he was not only enraptured with her person, but still more with her propriety of conduct; and the more he reflected, the more was he convinced that she was the very woman his respected surviving parent had desired him to win and wear. Her every expression even went to convince him of the fact.

On the following foreign-post night, the only night, by-the-bye, on which he was ever absent from the presence of his mother, he sauntered leisurely towards the place where he had been accustomed to meet Miss Sylphington, and, to his great joy, he had not waited long before he saw her coming. Claiming the privilege of previous acquaintance, he offered her his hand, and after gently shaking hers, he, without leaving it, drew her arm within his own, and proceeded with her towards her home.

Their conversation was at first desultory; but after some little time it became more interesting, and finished by being confidential; for our friend Jeremiah found himself imperceptibly detailing to her all his present hopes and future prospects, and was only prevented from putting the eventful question by having arrived at the spot where she compelled him to say farewell; at least, she said she could not permit him to come any further with her, until she had introduced him to her aunt. This he very much pressed her to do, and at length she consented; and it was arranged he should come and take tea with her on the following Sunday.

Notwithstanding Fubkins had but two days to wait, it seemed an age, and his patience was nearly exhausted by the time the happy day arrived. No sooner had he swallowed his dinner than he started upon his anxious but pleasurable expedition. He had taken great pains in adorning his person, and was dressed in a grass-green coat, with a velvet collar of the same colour, embossed metal buttons bearing a faint resemblance to silver; a brimstone-coloured waistcoat, and lightish drab trousers. The collar of his shirt was very erect, and round his neck he wore a flame-coloured satin stock, of the kind then denominated a tie, and in which was inserted a very large garnet-pin—whether this last article of dress was symbolical of the ardour of his passion, or whether it was merely a matter of taste was never exactly known.

On reaching Bagnigge Wells Road, he commenced his search for Wilhelmina Crescent; and on finding it, was surprised at the smallness of the houses. He knocked at No. 3, and, on inquiring for Miss Sylphington, was desired to walk in by an elderly female, who was short and stout, and dressed very flauntily—her red face being surmounted by an enormous cap, decorated with a profusion of cherry-coloured ribbons. He was ushered into a very small room, in which everything was small in proportion; a diminutive glass was suspended over the fire-place, a very small table was in the centre, and four equally *petite* chairs were placed at regular distances round the apartment. By the side of the looking-glass on the mantelpiece were two plaster casts, painted black, and purporting to be resemblances of two of our greatest poets, Shakespeare and Milton, each pointing with a finger to a tablet, on which had once been visible a quotation from their works, though then effaced. Beside these were two vases of common green earthenware, intended by the maker to contain flowers, but appropriated by the possessor to the reception of every description of stray articles, for which no other receptacle could be found. Araminta soon entered the room, and received Fubkins with a simper and downward look, which she meant to represent bashfulness at the novelty of her situation, and the greatest possible modesty of demeanour, all of which did not lose their effect upon our friend, who took it as she intended.

The short, stout, red-faced, elderly lady now brought in the tea-things, and was introduced to him by Araminta as her aunt, Mrs. Pimpleby. Nothing occurred during tea, except a discussion between the ladies as to the relative merits of the performances at two very celebrated places of amusement in that locality, 'White Conduit' and the 'Eagle'; and as to whether Mr. M'Muffin or Mr. Snarl played the hero of their respective melodramas in the most imposing style. Jeremiah could not assist

in the debate, as he was totally unacquainted with the respective merits of the gentlemen, but he listened with the greatest attention and admiration. The conversation having at length flagged, Mrs. Pimpleby proposed a walk, which being assented to, the ladies retired to put on their things; and he was left in the interim to his own joyous reflections. After some time they returned, fully equipped, and Fubkins gallantly offering an arm to each, they strolled towards the suburban brick-fields of the north of London. As they approached the 'Mother Red-Cap,' Araminta was suddenly seized with a fit of rurality, and began a dissertation upon the beauties of the country, and how—

' Well she loved the woods and the groves,
They raptures put her in ;'

while, on the other hand, Mrs. Pimpleby began to complain of the heat, exclaiming how dry she was. It was at length determined they should extend their walk to the 'Load of Hay' on Haverstock Hill, a renowned tea-garden, where they could rest and refresh themselves. With this arrangement all parties were delighted, and they proceeded merrily, when a thought suddenly flashed across the mind of Jeremiah, that in all probability he should be called upon to pay for the refreshments, a circumstance he had entirely forgotten when he had so readily concurred with Mrs. Pimpleby's proposition. He, however, resolved, as he could not avoid it, that the pecuniary damage should be as small as possible. Among other of the wise saws which his respected mother had instilled into him, was one, which experience had taught her was of great value, and which was, 'that sixpence frequently saves a shilling.' In compliance, therefore, with her advice, he always kept the money which he carried about him, and which never exceeded five shillings, in this small coin. When therefore he discovered this overt attempt upon his sixpences, which the requiring of refreshment evidently was, he determined to separate as few of his darlings from each other's society as he possibly could, without appearing mean in the eyes of his lady-love.

They at length reached the desired spot; and Mrs. Pimpleby, whose face from exertion had become redder than her own ribbons, grunted out her satisfaction at being able to sit down, while Araminta whispered forth in gentler accents, 'Well, I declare, how very pleasant!'

They had not been long seated, when the waiter came up, and inquired 'Whether they called for anything, or, was anyone serving them?' This most effectually broke the ice, and Jeremiah found himself compelled, for his character's sake, to order something; and, having an eye upon his exchequer, had made up his

mind to call for six-pennyworth of gin-and-water, 'cold without,' and plenty of water, thus hoping to escape with the expenditure of only *one* sixpence. His intentions were, however, soon frustrated by both Araminta and Mrs. Pimpleby exclaiming together, that 'they hated gin and water, it was so low; that rum and water warm, with a bit of sugar and lemon, was the nicest.' Thus overwhelmed, Fubkins could but accede, and the rum and water, as ordered, was soon produced, the waiter holding it in his hand until the shilling which he demanded for it was paid; and on receiving which, he asked for something for himself. Fubkins, quite aghast at having to expend double the amount he originally calculated upon, was completely crushed by this new attack upon his pocket, and in the fury of despair drew forth a third sixpence, and threw it on the table of the box in which they were sitting, when it was as immediately snatched up by the waiter, who, making a low bow, said, 'Thankye, sir, I sees *you* are a real gentleman.'

This glass of rum and water was soon despatched, when he hoped the ladies would resume their walk; but this neither of them appeared inclined to do, instead of which they gave continual hints of their being very hot and thirsty; so that, at length, he was most reluctantly compelled to make a further draught upon his finances, and order another glass of rum and water.

By the time this was disposed of, Fubkins had become animated, for, although his portion had not been large, yet, from being entirely unaccustomed to the use of spirits, it had caused an unusually exhilarating effect; and he became more tender in his attentions to Araminta. He was just on the point of getting serious, when the lady's notice was drawn to another part of the garden by her aunt exclaiming:

'Why, bless me, if here ain't Ephraim!'

To Jeremiah's dismay, he saw approaching them a young man of swaggering air, very showily dressed, who was received by both ladies with great satisfaction. He was mentioned, rather than introduced to him, as Ephraim Sniggsby, a nephew of Mrs. Pimpleby, and a cousin of Araminta's. After inquiring how they were, and how long they had been there, he proposed they should have something to drink, and immediately ordered two glasses of rum and water, with some biscuits, and insisted that Fubkins and himself should pay for these between them, or, as he expressed it, 'Go a Yorkshire.'

Notwithstanding the exhilarating effects of his previous potations, Jeremiah did not all at once forget his parental lessons of thrift, and he very reluctantly acquiesced in Sniggsby's proposal. When this additional quantity of refreshment had disappeared, Mrs.

Pimpleby said 'it was time to be off, for it was growing dusk, and it was very improper for respectable young women to be out late at night.'

Fubkins, on hearing this, prepared himself for walking homewards with Araminta, with the twofold intention of resuming the important conversation which had been interrupted by Sniggsby's appearance, and also asking some explanation from her of the great warmth of manner with which she received him.

Although he had remained silent during the time of Sniggsby's presence, he had not forgotten to participate fully in the rum and water; and, upon attempting to rise, he found a very peculiar sensation in his head, together with an incapacity for directing his limbs, which he could not account for. While he was making this painful discovery, he saw, with dismay, Sniggsby draw Araminta's arm within his own and walk away, leaving him to solace himself with Mrs. Pimpleby. Fubkins and the old lady proceeded to leave the gardens as soon as possible after their companions.

The action of walking soon completed what the first attempts at rising had commenced; and they had not advanced far down the hill when Fubkins evidently showed strong signs of inebriation.

Poor Mrs. Fubkins waited tea for Jeremiah Augustus from five o'clock, her usual hour, until half-past six, when, he not returning, she sat down to take it alone; wondering, at the same time, what had become of him, and where he could be gone,—but consoling herself that he could not possibly be doing wrong, as his habits were so regular. At length nine o'clock, her supper-hour, came, and still he was absent: she now became somewhat uneasy, and began to conjure up visions of death by thieves, running-over, and drowning, not being able to determine to which of these causes she was to attribute his absence. Time now wore on to near midnight, and she was considering what steps should be taken for finding her missing lamb, when her attention was attracted by a confused murmur of voices at the door of her house, like persons in altercation. This was followed by several single raps at her door: and, on opening it, she beheld her darling son, hopelessly and helplessly drunk, in the arms of some policemen, who had found him lying senseless in the Hampstead Road, without his watch or money; and having discovered his address in his hat, had brought him home. At her request they put him into his own bed, and she then, to her horror, found that he had two black eyes and a broken nose.

He rambled incessantly during the night; he murmured forth some words, the import of which was incomprehensible, but which

seemed to her to sound something like 'rum!' 'Araminta!' 'stand treat!' Towards morning, after sleeping heavily though uneasily, his senses returned. After some importunity, he proceeded to give his mother a faithful account of all the adventures of the preceding night; but he could not make out or remember how he had lost his senses, together with his watch and pin, or how he became possessed of two black eyes. At length he came to this conclusion, that Sniggsby had watched him arrive at Miss Sylphington's, and had waylaid him on his return, beaten him, and deprived him of his watch. His mother confirmed him in this opinion by assuring him, from what she knew of women in general, that no woman of regular habits, such as he had described his Araminta to be, could possibly be cognisant of any such transaction; and that it was solely to be attributed to the jealousy of this less favoured rival, who dreaded the effects of the handsome person and fascinating manners of her Jeremiah Augustus. She, however, recommended him not to go to No. 3, Wilhelmina Crescent again, for fear of the consequences; but advised him to seek the lady at her accustomed spot, and tell her how he had been used.

With this counsel, Jeremiah Augustus Fubkins was satisfied, and determined on following it. But, alas! he never had an opportunity; for from that time Miss Ophelia Araminta Sylphington was never found walking at the usual place, and Jeremiah Fubkins never saw her afterwards, and so he lived and died—a 'regular' bachelor!

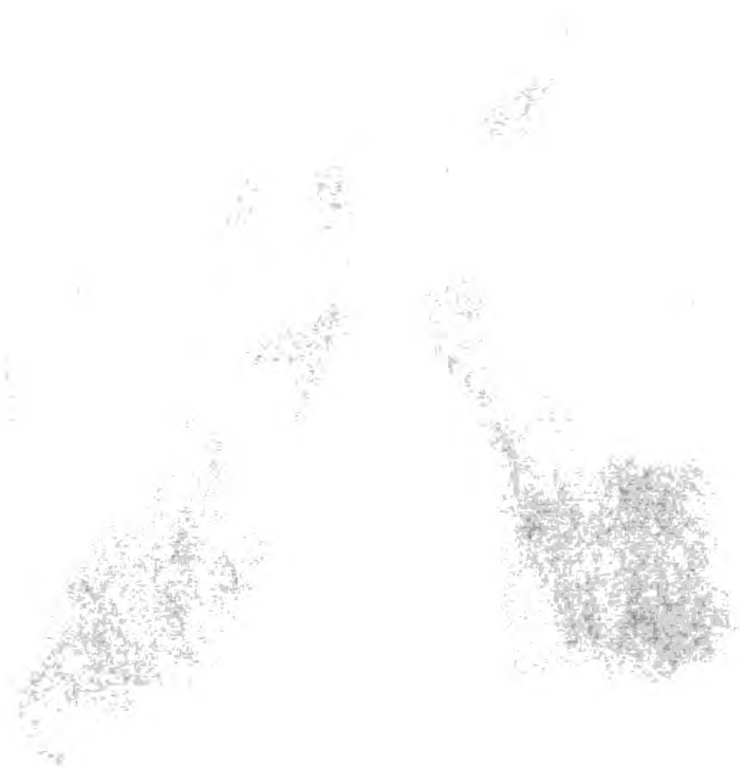




What a Wonderful World it is!

1838

London, Richard Bentley Oct 1, 1838



The Handsome Clear-Starcher.

A LEGEND OF THE DAYS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, October, 1838.]



WE talk of the Goddess of Fashion ; but where
Has her Goddessship deigned to be seen ?
Though her taste is consulted each day by the fair,
While men of all ages admiringly stare ?—
She can be no one else but The Queen.

So, at least, it was erst, when Eliza the Great
Of our isle was the pride and the pet ;
For though dress form'd small part of her right royal state,
And she valued alike her proud foes' love and hate,
She was once pleased a fashion to set.

Her sole reason for choosing was what ladies give,—
'Twas her pleasure, and that was enough.
But, when once it was seen, none without it could live,
'Twould have been all the same if't were coarse as a sieve,
But the 'set' was a fine stiffen'd ruff.

Some wore gowns thickly 'broider'd like garlands of May ;
All wore stomachers hard as a shield,
Standing upright and stiff, as in martial array
(Of the march of clear-starching it then was the day),
And all else but the face was conceal'd.

But the ruff ! the white, well-stiffen'd, well clear-starch'd ruff
More than lace, silk, or velvet was prized.
'Its edges,' they said, 'like a saw should be rough ;'
And slanderers declare they their handmaids would cuff
If it was not well starch'd, gumm'd, or sized.

'Tis a pity when ladies so pretty allow
Themselves to fall into a pet,
And, in their own boudoirs to 'kick up a row,'
About things they're to wear, with the what, where, or how.
Anger ne'er made a maid pretty yet.

But, alas ! in those days some few fair ones were frail,
 And their tempers would sometimes rebel :
 Though perhaps the great breakfasts of beef-steaks and ale*
 Might have heated the blood of the maid of our tale,
 And caused what we've now got to tell.

Her name we don't mention, because it may chance
 That she yet hath relations at court ;
 Suffice it, her beauty was such as romance
 For all heroines claims,—she could sing, play, and dance
A merveille,—but to dress was her forte,

Or, say, rather her foible ; so when ruffs came in,
 And good starch rose uncommonly high,
 She assured her clear-starcher she cared not a pin
 For the price, but her ruffs must be stiff as block-tin ;
 And the clear-starcher said she would try.

So her ruffs were well-starch'd, dried, and starch'd o'er again,
 And both cold and hot-ironed, and prest,
 And plaited, et cetera ;—but all was in vain,
 For she spake naughty words, and declared it was plain
 Her artiste was a fool like the rest.

She was sadly provoked, and yet dared not rebel
 Against fashion's imperious decree ;
 So when next her handmaiden desired her to tell
 Where her ruffs should be sent, she cried, ' Send them to h—,
 And the d—l may starch them for me !'

These were very bad words to escape from the lips
 Of a lady so handsome and young.
 But, when passion's our tyrant, morality trips,
 While the tempter keeps watch for such sad naughty slips
 As our maiden had made with her tongue.

* The following is an extract from an order of King Henry the Eighth for a daily allowance to a maid of honour in 1522 :

'*First.* Every morning at brekefast oon chyne of beyf at our kechyn, oon chete loff and oon maunchet at our panatrye barr, and a galone of ale at our buttrye barr.

'*Item.* At dyner a pese of beyf, a stroke of roste, and a reward at our said kechyn, a caste of chete brede at our panatrye barr, and a galone of ale at our buttrye barr.

'*Item.* At afternoone a maunchet of brede at our panatrye barr, and half a galone of ale at our buttrye barr.

'*Item.* At supper a messe of potage, a pese of mutten, and a reward at our said kechyn, a cast of chete brede at our panatrye, and a galone of ale at our buttrye.

'*Item.* At after supper a chete loff, and a maunchet at our panatrye barr, and half a galone of ale at our seller barr.'

And scarce had she spoken, when suddenly came
An odd sort of 'Rat ! tat !' at her door.
'Twas not loud enough quite for a lord or a dame,
Nor yet for her tradesfolk sufficiently tame.
She had ne'er heard such knocking before.

And, of course she felt curious to know what it meant,
So her handmaid immediately ran
To the window ; and, when o'er the casement she'd leant,
Exclaim'd, with an air of exceeding content,
'A remarkably handsome young man !'

The young man, when shewn up, bow'd and smiled with much
grace.

And soon, whispering, ventured to say,
'Gentle lady, excuse me, but such is my case
That indeed we must be quite alone face to face.
Do, pray, send your handmaiden away !'

Some signal, no doubt often practised before,
Caused her maid through the doorway to glide,
While the lady, embarrass'd, looked down on the floor,
And blush'd (perhaps) for a moment, and when that was o'er,
Found the handsome young man at her side.

The fine figure and face of that singular beau
All comparisons seem'd to defy ;
And his dress at all points was completely 'the go,'
Yet there still was a something not quite '*comme il faut*'
In the sly wicked glance of his eye.

But his manner was humble, and silvery the tone
Of his voice, as, in euphonic strain,
He said, 'Pride of the palace ! well worthy the throne !
If legitimate claim were with beauty alone,
All your rivals' pretensions were vain !'

Then (as then was the mode) he the lady compared
To the sun, moon, and stars, and their light ;
Nor the heathen mythology's goddesses spared,
Any maiden of our modest days would have stared,
And some, perhaps, have run off in a fright.

But she listen'd, and aye as the flatterer spake
Smiled and gracefully flirted her fan,
And, much wondering what end to his speech he would make,
Sigh'd, and thought, 'Though I fear he's a bit of a rake,
He is really a charming young man !'

The gallant's peroration at length took a turn
 That appear'd a most singular whim ;
 He found fault with her ruff, and declared he could earn
 Her applause (since he'd travelled clear-starching to learn)
 If she would but entrust one with him.

The request was a strange one. Yet wherefore refuse ?
 ' Well,—pray take one !' she said with a laugh.
 ' Do your best. It may serve your waste time to amuse.
 But it's really so odd ! Have you learnt to black shoes
 In your travels ? or dye an old scarf ?'

' I have learnt many things,' was the stranger's reply,
 ' And you'll soon find I know quite enough
 To fulfil your commission, for certainly I
 Can hotpress, et cetera ; and so, now, good b'ye,
 Till I come back again with your ruff.'

The next drawing-room day our fair maiden began
 Her court toilet ; but all went so-so.
 ' Ugh !' she cried, ' I'm quite frightful, do all that I can !
 There's nothing so fickle and faithless as man !
 What's become of my clear-starching beau ?'

' Ah ! my lady !' said Abigail, plastering her hair,
 ' That young fellow has play'd you a trick,
 And stole——' But her mistress cried, ' Phoo ! I don't care !
 If I could get but only *one* ruff fit to wear,
 I would don it, though brought by Old Nick.'

There's a proverb that says, ' If you speak of some folks
 They are sure very soon to appear.'
 And, while Abigail call'd the beau's visit a hoax,
 And his clear-starching one of young gentlemen's jokes,
 His odd ' Rat ! tat !' proclaim'd he was near.

' Take this box to your mistress, and make my respects,'
 Said the starcher as fierce as a Don,
 While he strode down the hall, ' and observe she neglects
 Not to put on the ruff as my paper directs,
 And I'll settle the plaits when 'tis on.'

What that paper contain'd is a mystery still,
 Since the chronicles only disclose
 That she said his request she would strictly fulfil,
 And then smiling, exclaim'd, ' What a moderate bill !
 Well, he must see all right, I suppose.'

Then—her toilet completed—her pride was immense.

'Twas 'a love of a ruff!' she declared,
As it compass'd her neck with its firm triple fence.
Her sole feeling was self-admiration intense,
While her handmaid admiringly stared,

And then cried, 'La! I never saw nothing so nice :
What a clever young man that must be !
I suppose, though, he'll charge an extravagant price ?'
'No,' her lady replied, ' 'twas a cunning device !
And he's no common tradesman, you'll see.

'The fact is, that he mention'd his charge, and you know
That I've now no engagement on hand.
At least nothing—quite serious—or likely—and so—
After all—what's a kiss from a handsome young beau ?
Well—be silent—you now understand.

'When he comes to inspect that my ruff sets all well,
Just step out for a minute or two ;
Not much longer, because there's a proverb folks tell,
'Give some people an inch, and they'll soon take an ell.
'I wish, miss,' said her maid, 'I was you.'

Then, with looks so demure as might Cerberus bilk,
The young gentleman bow'd himself in.
His dress was embroider'd rich velvet and silk,
His point-lace and kid-gloves were as white as new milk,
And jet-black was the tuft on his chin.

'Fairest lady!' he said, 'may I venture to hope
That you deign to approve of my work ?
This I'll venture to say, that such clear-starch and soap
Never stiffen'd a collar for queen, king, or pope,
Nor his most sublime-porte-ship, the Turk.

'And I've got' (here he smiled) 'a particular way,
Which I'll show you, of finishing off.
Just allow me! Phoo—nonsense! You promised to pay——'
But the lady drew back, frown'd, and said, 'Not now, pray !'
And sent abigail out by a cough.

All that afterward happen'd is dingy as night,
Though her maiden, as maids would of old,
Peep'd and listen'd, at first with a curious delight,
Then grew anxious,—and then was thrown into a fright.
And this was the story she told.

She declared the beau boasted his wonderful knack
Of full-dressing for banquet and ball ;
And that, presently after, she heard a loud smack,
And, immediately after, a much louder crack ;
Then a shriek that was louder than all.

To her mistress's aid she accordingly ran,
Wondering much what the matter could be ;
Since a simple salute from a handsome young man
Never caused such an uproar since kissing began.
But no mistress nor beau could she see !

Both were gone ! where and how it was fearful to guess,
As a sulphurous odour remain'd,
While thick smoke still obscured the bay-window's recess,
And with burnt hoof-like marks, and a cindery mess,
The best carpet was shockingly stain'd.

What occur'd at the window the smoke might conceal,
Though the maid often vow'd that she saw
What was horrid enough all her blood to congeal,
A long black thing that twisted about like an eel,
And the tips of two horns and a claw.

But, more certain it is, from that day ne'er again
Did that lady at court reappear,
Nor amid the *beau monde*. All inquiries were vain.
So, though how they eloped must a mystery remain,
What the clear-starcher was, seem'd too clear.

Now, ye ladies of England ! young, charming, and fair !
Pray, be warn'd by this maiden's sad fate !
And, whenever strange beaux, gay and handsome, may dare
To approach you with flattering speeches, beware
Lest their falsehood you rue when too late.

Above all, while your hearts are warm, tender, and young,
Let no art of the tempter prevail
To extort a rash promise ; since slips of the tongue
O'er fair prospects have often a gloomy veil flung,
And caused ladies' disasters in rhymes to be strung,
As hath chanced to the maid of our tale.



The Secret

1844 10/15

1844 10/15 1837



The Secret.

FROM THE FRENCH OF PAUL DE KOCK.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, October, 1837.]



NATHALIE DE HAUTEVILLE, at the age of twenty-two, had been for three years a widow. She was a brunette, with large black eyes, and one of those fascinating faces whose charm consists more in expression than in regularity of features, and in which are portrayed at once all the elegance of the Frenchwoman, all the vivacity of the Italian, and all the fire of a daughter of Spain.

When she married, at eighteen, a man of nearly three times her age, Nathalie, a mere child in character, had not bestowed a thought on anything beyond her wedding-dresses, her marriage-presents, and the delight of being called 'Madame.' Her husband was as generous to her as he was rich. Twelve months had passed in a continued round of gaiety and amusement, when M. de Hauteville was suddenly attacked by a malady which carried him off in a few days, and left his young widow to mourn for a husband as she would have mourned for the loss of a friend and protector.

But, at eighteen, sorrow soon passes away; the heart is so new to every feeling, to every illusion. Madame de Hauteville found that she was courted by the world; that she was invited everywhere; and that, by her fortune and her position, she was called upon to become an ornament of society. Yet she felt that she was too young to live without a mentor, and to go out alone; so she asked her uncle, M. d'Ablaincourt, to come and live with her.

M. d'Ablaincourt was an old bachelor: one love only had he ever known, and the object of that was—himself. His love for himself was paramount; and, if ever he went so far as to show any liking for any other individual, he must have received from that individual such attention as to make him a gainer by their intimacy. M. d'Ablaincourt was an egotist; but, at the same time, a well-bred, a well-mannered egotist. He had all the air of devoting himself to the wishes of others, whilst he was exclusively

occupied in compassing his own ; he would appear to be taking a lively interest in those around him, whilst in reality he never felt any interest in anybody but himself. Too thoughtless to do harm, he was as little disposed to do good, unless it were for his own advantage. In short, he liked to be at his ease, and to be surrounded with all the enjoyments which luxury could invent. Such was the character of M. d'Ablaincourt, who readily acceded to his niece's proposal, because Nathalie, though a little giddy, had a good and affectionate heart, and would load him with kindnesses and attentions.

M. d'Ablaincourt went out into the world with his niece, because he had not yet lost his relish for its pleasures ; but if an invitation came for any party which he thought held out no amusement for him, he would turn to her and say, ' I am afraid, my dear, you will not like this party ; there will be nothing at all but play. I shall be very happy to take you ; you know I always do exactly as you wish, but I think you will find it dull.' And Nathalie, who was all confidence in her uncle, never failed to answer, ' You are quite right, uncle ; it will be much better for us not to go.'

So it was with everything else. M. d'Ablaincourt, who, without wishing to be thought so, was an excessive *gourmand*, said one day to his niece :

' You know, my dear, I am no *gourmand* ; I care very little myself how things are served up, and am always satisfied with what is laid before me ; but your cook puts too much salt in everything, which is not wholesome for a young woman ; and then, she sends up her dishes in a careless, slovenly way, which is very annoying to me on your account, as you often give dinners. The other day there were six people at table, and the spinach was badly dressed. You must consider what people will say of your management when they see such neglect. They will say that Madame de Hauteville has no idea of having things as they ought to be ; and this may do you harm, as there are persons who notice everything.'

' What you say is very true, dear uncle ; will you take the trouble of looking out for a good cook for me ?'

' To be sure, my love ; you know I think nothing of trouble when I can be of service to you.'

' How lucky I am in having you always by me to tell me of all these little things, which I should never think of !' said Nathalie, kissing her uncle ; and he, good old man, forthwith discharged the cook who dressed the spinach badly, to make way for one who shone particularly in all *his* favourite dishes.

Another time some improvements were to be made in the garden ; for instance, the trees in front of the old gentleman's

windows were to be felled, because they might occasion a dampness which would be dangerous for Nathalie. And then the elegant calash was to be exchanged for a landau, as being a carriage in which a young lady could be much more at her ease. So minutely attentive was M. d'Ablaincourt to the comforts and enjoyments of his niece !

Nathalie was somewhat of a coquette. Accustomed to conquest, she used to listen with a smile to the numerous proposals which were made to her, and sent off all suitors to her uncle, telling them, 'Before I can give you any hope, I must know what M. d'Ablaincourt thinks of you.'

Had her heart favoured any individual, it is probable that the answer of Nathalie would have been different ; but, as it was, she thought nothing could be more agreeable than to please all, and be the slave of none.

The old gentleman, for his part, being master in his niece's house, was not at all anxious that she should marry again. A nephew might be less inclined to give way, less indulgent to him than Nathalie, so that he never failed to find some serious fault in every fresh aspirant to the hand of the pretty widow, and, as in every other case, he seemed to be thinking of nothing but her happiness.

In addition to his egotism, and his fondness for good living, M. d'Ablaincourt had of late years been seized with a violent passion for *tric-trac*. His favourite pastime, his highest delight, was this game ; but, unfortunately for him, it was one very little played. The ladies do not like it in a room, because it is noisy ; the gentlemen prefer *bouillotte* or *écarté* ; so that the old gentleman very seldom found an opportunity of indulging his propensity. If any of his niece's visitors did happen to play, he seized upon them for the whole evening—there was no possibility of escape. But, as they did not come to the pretty widow's for the sake of a game at *tric-trac* with the old uncle, many were the nights he sighed in vain for somebody to play with.

To please her uncle, Nathalie attempted to learn ; but in vain. She was too giddy to give the necessary attention, and was continually making mistakes : the uncle scolded, and at last Nathalie, throwing away dice and dice-box, said, 'It is no use—I never can learn this game.'

'I am sorry for it,' answered M. d'Ablaincourt, 'very sorry ; it would have given you so much pleasure. I only wished to teach it you for your own amusement.'

Such was the state of affairs, when, at a very large party, where Nathalie was allowed to stand unrivalled for personal beauty and

elegance of dress, M. d'Aspremont was announced, a captain in the navy.

Nathalie expected to see a blunt, gruff old sailor, with a wooden leg and a black patch on his eye. To her great astonishment there entered a tall, handsome young man, with a graceful figure and commanding air, and without either a wooden leg or a black patch.

Armand d'Aspremont had entered the service very early in life; his whole soul was in his profession; and, though only thirty, he had risen to the rank of captain. His family property was considerable, and he had increased his fortune by his own exertions. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that, after fifteen years spent at sea, he should have yielded to a longing for repose; yet he never could be persuaded to listen to the solicitations of his friends, who urged him to marry; hitherto he had only laughed at love as a passion unworthy of a sailor.

The sight of Nathalie changed all his ideas—the whole man underwent a sudden revolution. He watched her dancing, and could look nowhere else. All the other beauties in the room passed before him but as vain shadows, so busy were his eyes in following the graceful movements of the young widow.

'Who is that lovely creature who dances so beautifully?' at last he exclaimed to a person next him.

'That is Madame de Hauteville, a young widow. You admire her, captain?'

'I think her enchanting.'

'She is very beautiful! And her mental qualifications are at least equal to her personal charms. But you must ask her to dance, and then you will be able to judge for yourself.'

'I ask her to dance!—I never danced in my life!' And for the first time Armand felt that this was a deficiency in his education. However, he went and stood close to the beauty, watching an opportunity of entering into conversation with her. Once he was on the very point of succeeding, when a young man came up and led her away to the quadrille. Poor Armand bit his lips, and was obliged again to content himself with admiring her dancing. This whole evening he made no further advances, but he did not lose sight of his enchantress for an instant.

The captain's behaviour did not pass unobserved by Nathalie—so soon do women see what effect they produce—and, although she did not appear to notice it, she felt secretly not a little flattered; for D'Aspremont had been described to her as a man who was far from agreeable in the society of ladies, and who had never been known to pay a single compliment. And

Nathalie said to herself, 'What fun it would be to hear him make love !'

D'Aspremont, who, before he had seen Nathalie, went very little into society, particularly to balls, from henceforth never missed going wherever he had a chance of meeting his fair widow. He had succeeded in speaking to her, and had done his utmost to render himself agreeable. His behaviour was entirely changed, and the world was not more slow than usual in discovering the cause, or in commenting upon the marked attention which he paid to Nathalie.

'Mind you are not caught, captain!' a good-natured friend would say. 'Madame de Hauteville is a coquette, who will but make a toy of your love and a joke of your sighs.' And to Nathalie some equally kind friend would say, 'The captain is an original, a bear, with every fault that a sailor can possess. He is passionate, he is obstinate, he swears, he smokes. You will never make anything of him.'

In spite of these charitable warnings—the result, perhaps, of envy and jealousy—the sailor and the coquette enjoyed a mutual pleasure in each other's society. Whenever D'Aspremont was on the point of forgetting himself, and letting out an expression a little too nautical, Nathalie looked at him with a slight frown. He stopped short, stammered, and dared not finish his sentence, so afraid was he of seeing a harsh look on that pretty face. Nor is it a slight proof of the mighty power of love that it can thus implant fear in the breast of a sailor.

Some rumours of his niece's new conquest had reached the ears of M. d'Ablaincourt; but he had paid little attention to them, thinking that this new admirer would share the fate of all the others, and that it would be very easy to get him dismissed. Yet the report had so far increased, that when Nathalie one day told her uncle that she had asked the captain to her house, the old gentleman almost flew into a passion, and said, with a vehemence quite uncommon to him:

'You have done very wrong, Nathalie; you do not consult me as you ought. I am told that Captain d'Aspremont is a blunt, unpolished, quarrelsome — He is always behind your chair, and he has never even asked *me* how I did. There was no necessity at all for you to ask him. You know, my dear,' added he, softening his tone, 'all I say is for your good; but indeed you are too thoughtless.'

Nathalie, quite afraid that she had acted very inconsiderately, was going to put off the captain; but this the uncle did not require: he thought he should be able to prevent too frequent a repetition of his visits.

It is a trite observation, that the most important events in life are frequently the result of the most trivial incidents—that on a mere thread, which chance has thrown in our way, may hang our whole future destiny. Such was the case in the present instance: to the game of *tric-trac* it was owing that Madame de Hauteville became Madame d'Aspremont. The captain was an excellent player; and happening in the course of conversation to broach the subject, M. d'Ablaincourt caught at him immediately, and proposed a game. D'Aspremont consented; and, having understood that it was necessary to play the agreeable to the old uncle, spent the whole evening at *tric-trac*.

When everybody was gone, Nathalie complained of the captain's want of gallantry—that he had hardly paid her any attention at all.

'You were quite right,' said she pettishly to her uncle; 'sailors are very disagreeable people. I am very sorry I ever asked M. d'Aspremont.'

'On the contrary, my dear,' replied the old bachelor, 'we had formed quite an erroneous opinion of M. d'Aspremont. I found him so agreeable and so well-bred that I have asked him to come very often to play with—I mean, to pay his court to you. He is a very clever, gentlemanlike young man.'

Nathalie, seeing that the captain had won the heart of her uncle, pardoned his want of attention to her. Thanks to *tric-trac*, and to his being necessary to M. d'Ablaincourt's amusement, he came very often to the house, and at last succeeded in winning the heart of the young widow. One morning she came, her face covered with blushes, to tell her uncle that M. d'Aspremont had proposed to her, and to ask his advice.

The old gentleman thought for a few minutes, and he said to himself, 'If she refuses him, there will be an end to his visits here; no more *tric-trac*. If she accepts him, he will be one of the family; I shall always be able to nail him for a game;' and the answer was:

'You cannot do better than accept him.'

The happiness of Nathalie was complete, for she really loved Armand; but, as woman never should seem to yield too easily, she sent for the captain to dictate her conditions.

'If it is true that you love me,' she began.

'If it is true! Oh, madame, I swear by all——'

'Allow me to speak first. If you love me, you will not hesitate to give me the proofs I demand.'

'Whatever you ask, I——'

'In the first place, you must no longer swear as you do occasionally; it is a shocking habit before a lady; secondly—and on

this point I insist more particularly—you must give up smoking, for I hate the smell of a pipe of tobacco; in short, I never will have a husband who smokes.'

Armand heaved a sigh, and answered:

'To please you I will submit to anything—I will give up smoking.'

Her conditions being thus acceded to, the fair widow could no longer withhold her hand, and in a short time Armand and Nathalie reappeared in the world as a newly-married and happy couple. Yet the world was not satisfied. 'How could that affected flirt marry a sailor?' said one. 'So the rough captain has let himself be caught by the pretty widow's coquetry,' said another. 'This is a couple ill-matched enough.'

Poor judges of the human heart are they who imagine a resemblance of disposition to be essential to love! On the contrary, the most happy effects are produced by contrast; mark but the union of light and shade; and is not strength wanting to uphold weakness: the wild bursts of mirth to dispel melancholy? You join together two kindred tempers, two similar organizations, and what is the result? 'Tis as the blind leading the blind.

The young couple passed the first few months after their marriage in undisturbed happiness. Yet in the midst of the rapture he experienced in the society of his lovely bride, Armand sometimes became pensive, his brow was contracted, and his eyes betrayed a secret uneasiness. But this lasted not; it was but as a fleeting cloud, which passes without leaving a trace. Nathalie had not hitherto perceived it. After some time, however, these moments of restlessness and gloom recurred so frequently as no longer to escape her observation.

'What is the matter, my love?' said she to her husband one day, when she saw him stamping his foot with impatience; 'what makes you so cross?'

'Nothing—nothing at all!' answered the captain, as if ashamed of having lost his self-possession. 'With whom do you think I should be cross?'

'Indeed, my dear, I know not; but I have fancied several times that I perceived a something impatient in your manner. If I have unconsciously done anything to vex you, do tell me, that it may never happen again.'

The captain kissed his wife affectionately, and again assured her that she was mistaken. For some days he manifested none of those emotions which had so disturbed Nathalie; but at length the same thing occurred again. Armand forgot himself once more, and she racked her brain to guess what cause her husband could have for this uneasiness. Not being satisfied with her own

solution of the problem, she communicated her thoughts to her uncle, who replied immediately, 'Yes, my dear, you are quite right. I am sure something must be the matter with D'Aspremont; for several times lately, at *tric-trac*, he has looked round with an abstracted air, passed his hand across his temples, and finished by making an egregious blunder.'

'But, uncle, what can the mystery be? My husband must have some secret which preys upon his mind, and he does not choose to trust me with it.'

'Very likely; there are many things which a man cannot tell his wife.'

'Which a man cannot tell his wife! That is a thing I do not understand. I expect my husband to tell me everything, to have no mysteries with me, as I have none with him. I can never be happy so long as he on whom I have bestowed my heart keeps any secret from me.'

M. d'Ablaincourt, to comfort his niece, or rather, perhaps, to cut short a conversation which began to bore him, promised to do his utmost to discover the cause of his nephew's uneasiness; but he went no further than trying to make him play oftener at *tric-trac*, as being an excellent method of keeping him in good humour.

Early in the summer they left Paris for a beautiful property belonging to the captain in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau. He appeared still as fond of his wife as ever; to afford her pleasure was his delight, to anticipate her wishes his study; but, as she was not fond of walking, he begged to be allowed to take a stroll into the country every day after dinner. This was too natural a request to be denied; and after dinner, whether they were alone or not, out went Armand, and returned in the best humour imaginable. Still Nathalie was far from being satisfied; her suspicions returned, and she said to herself, 'My husband has no longer the serious, gloomy look he used to wear in Paris; but it is only since he has gone out every evening after dinner. Sometimes he is away two hours—where can he go?—and he always likes to be alone. There is some mystery in his conduct, and I shall never be happy until I have found it out.'

One day that Madame d'Aspremont gave a party a young man present said, laughing, to the master of the house:

'What were you doing yesterday, Armand, in the disguise of a peasant at the window of a little cottage about half a mile from hence? If my horse had not started, I was coming to ask if you were feeding your sheep.'

'My husband in the disguise of a peasant!' exclaimed Nathalie, fixing her eyes upon Armand in amazement.

'Oh! Edward has made a mistake,' replied the captain, endeavouring to conceal a visible embarrassment; 'he must have taken somebody else for me.'

'Very likely,' said the young man, hurt at the impression which his words had made upon Nathalie, and perceiving that he had been guilty of an indiscretion. 'I must have been deceived.'

'How was the man dressed?' asked Nathalie. 'Where was the cottage?'

'Really, I know the country so little I should have some difficulty in finding the spot. As for the man, he had on a blue smock-frock, with a sort of cap on his head. I don't know what could have put it into my head that it was the captain, as it is not the carnival.'

Madame d'Aspremont said no more on the subject, but remained persuaded that it *was* her husband. The assumption of a disguise proved that he was engaged in some extraordinary intrigue, and in a flood of tears poor Nathalie complained of the bitterness of her lot in having married a man of mysteries.

Whether secrets of this nature are the only ones which women can keep, far be it from me to decide: but certain it is that they always connect some infidelity with those of our sex. Madame d'Aspremont did not form an exception to this general observation and in a fit of jealousy she begged to return to town. Her husband consented immediately, and in a few days they were in Paris. Here the captain again betrayed the same symptoms of discontent, until one day he said to his wife:

'My dear, a walk after dinner does me a great deal of good. During the latter part of our stay in the country I was quite well in consequence. You can easily conceive that an old sailor wants exercise, and that he cannot remain cooped up in a room or a theatre all the evening.'

'Oh! very easily,' replied Nathalie, biting her lips with spleen; 'go and take your walk, if it does you good.'

'But, my love, if it annoys you——'

'Oh! not in the least; take your walk; I have no objection.'

So the husband took his evening walk, returned in excellent spirits, and again every sign of impatience had vanished.

'My husband is carrying on some intrigue: he loves another, and cannot live without seeing her,' said poor Nathalie to herself. 'This is the secret of his strange conduct, of his ill-humour, and of his walks. I am very, very wretched; and the more so that when he is with me he is all kindness, all attention! I know not how I can tell him that he is a monster, a traitor! But tell him I must, or my heart will burst! Yet if I could but get some undeniable proof of his faithlessness. Oh! yes, I will have some

proof.' And with a swelling heart, and eyes full of tears, she rushed into her uncle's room, crying that 'she was the most miserable woman alive!'

'What is the matter?' said the old gentleman, burying himself in his arm-chair. 'What has happened?'

'Every day after dinner,' answered his niece, sobbing, 'my husband goes out to walk, as he did in the country, and stays away two hours. When he returns, he is always cheerful and gay, gives me a thousand little marks of his attention, and swears that he adores me as he did the day of our marriage. My dear uncle, I can bear it no longer!—You must see that this is all treachery and deceit. Armand is playing me false.'

'He plays less with me at *tric-trac*,' was the answer of the imperturbable uncle; 'but still——'

'My dear uncle, if you do not help me to discover this mystery, I shall die of grief—I shall commit some rash act—I shall get separated from my husband. Oh! my good uncle, you who are so kind, so ready to oblige, do render me this service,—do find out where my husband goes every evening.'

'There can be no doubt about my readiness to oblige, seeing that it has been the business of my life; but really I do not know how I can serve you.'

'I repeat, if this mystery is not cleared up, you will lose your niece.'

M. d'Ablaincourt had no wish to lose his niece, or, for the matter of that, his nephew either. He felt that any rupture between the young couple would disturb the quiet, easy life he was now enjoying, and he therefore decided upon taking some steps to restore peace. He pretended to follow the captain; but, finding this fatiguing, he returned slowly home after a certain time, and said to his niece, 'I have followed your husband more than six times, and he walks very quietly alone.'

'Where, where, my dear uncle?'

'Sometimes one way, and sometimes another; so that all your suspicions are entirely without foundation.'

Nathalie was not duped by this answer, though she pretended to place implicit confidence in her uncle's words. Determined on discovering the truth, she sent for a little errand-boy, who stood always at the corner of their house, and whom she had heard more than once praised for his quickness and intelligence. Having ascertained that he knew her husband by sight, she said to him, 'M. d'Aspremont goes out every evening. To-morrow you must follow him, watch where he goes, and bring me back word immediately. And take care not to be seen.'

The boy promised to execute her orders faithfully, and Nathalie

awaited the morrow with that impatience of which the jealous alone can form any idea. At length the moment arrived, the captain went out, and the little messenger was on his track. Trembling, and in a fever of agitation, Nathalie sat counting the minutes and seconds as they passed until the return of the boy. Three-quarters of an hour had elapsed when he made his appearance, covered with dust, and in a violent perspiration.

‘Well,’ said Nathalie in an altered tone of voice, ‘what have you seen? Tell me everything.’

‘Why, ma’am, I followed the master, taking care he shouldn’t see me—and a long chase it was—to the Vieille Rue du Temple in the Marais. There he went into a queer-looking sort of a house—I forget the number, but I should know it again—in an alley, and there was no porter.’

‘No porter!—in an alley!—Oh, the wretch!’

‘As soon as the master had gone in,’ continued the boy, ‘I went in too. He kept on going upstairs till he got to the third floor, and then he took out a key and opened the door.’

‘The monster!—he opened the door himself,—he has a key,—and my uncle to take his part! You are quite sure he opened the door himself—that he did not knock?’

‘Quite sure, ma’am; and, when I heard him shut the door, I went up softly and peeped in at the keyhole: as there were only two doors, I soon found the right one; and there I saw the master dragging a great wooden chest across the room, and then he began to undress himself.’

‘To undress himself!—O Heavens!—Go on.’

‘I couldn’t see into the corner of the room where he was; but presently he came out dressed in a grey smock, with a Greek cap on his head. And so, ma’am, I thought you’d like to know all I’d seen, and I ran with all my might to tell you.’

‘You are a very good boy. You must now go and fetch a coach directly, get up with the coachman, and direct him to the house.’

Nathalie, meanwhile, flew to her room, put on a bonnet and shawl, rushed down to her uncle, crying out, ‘My husband has betrayed me,—I am going to catch him;’ and before the old gentleman could extract another word from her, she was out of the house, in the coach, and gone. In the Vieille Rue du Temple the coach stopped; Nathalie got out, pale, trembling, and scarcely able to support herself. The boy showed her the entrance, and she declined his further attendance. With the help of the hand-rail she ascended a dark narrow staircase till she reached the third story, when she had just force enough left to throw herself against the door, and cry out:

‘Let me in, or I shall die!’

The door opened, the captain received her in his arms, and she saw nothing but her husband alone, in a smock and a Greek cap, smoking a superb Turkish pipe.

‘My wife!’ exclaimed Armand in utter amazement.

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Nathalie, resuming her self-command; ‘your injured wife, who has discovered your perfidy, and has been made acquainted with your disguise, and who has come in person to unravel the mystery of your conduct.’

‘What, Nathalie!—could you, then, suppose that I loved another? You wish to fathom the mystery,—here it is;’ and he showed her the pipe. ‘Before our marriage you forbade me to smoke, and I promised to obey. For some months I kept my promise most faithfully. Oh! Nathalie, if you did but know what I suffered in consequence,—the fretfulness, the depression of spirits under which I laboured for hours together!—it was my old friend that I missed, my darling pipe that I sighed for in vain! At last I could hold out no longer; and, when we were in the country, happening to go into a cottage where an old man was smoking, I asked him if he could afford me a place of refuge, and at the same time lend me a smock and a hat; for I was afraid that my clothes might betray me. Our arrangements were soon made; and, thanks to this precaution, you had not the slightest suspicion of the real cause of my daily absence. Shortly afterwards you determined upon returning to Paris; and, being obliged to find a new way of indulging myself with my pipe, I took this little garret, and brought hither my old dress. You are now, my love, in possession of the whole mystery, and I trust you will pardon my disobedience. You see I have done everything in my power to conceal it from you.’

Nathalie threw herself into her husband’s arms, and cried out in an ecstasy of delight,

‘So this is really all!—how happy I am! From henceforth, dearest, you shall smoke as much as you like at home; you shall not have to hide yourself for that!’ and away she went to her uncle with a face all beaming with joy, to tell him that Armand loved her, adored her still,—it was only that he smoked. ‘But now,’ added she, ‘I am so happy, that he shall smoke as much as he likes.’

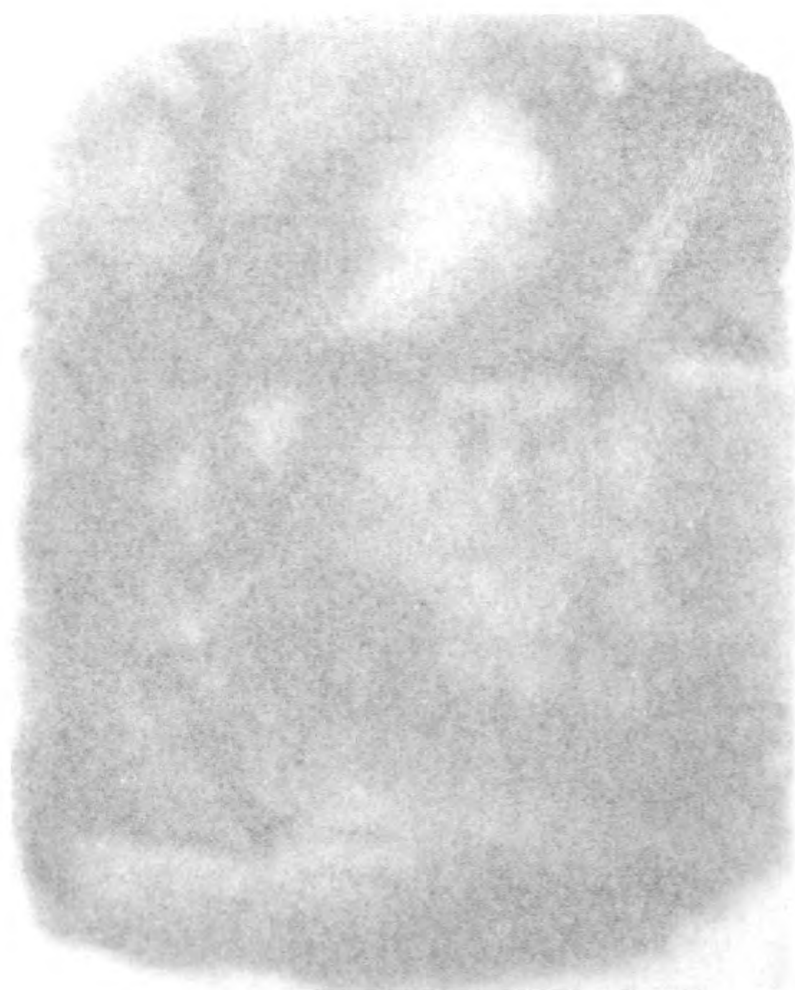
‘The best plan will be,’ said M. d’Ablaincourt, ‘for your husband to smoke as he plays at *tric-trac*; and so,’ muttered the old gentleman aside, ‘I shall be sure of my game every evening.’



The Landlord's House on the Marshes.

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What Sannell's Ride to Highworth.

A WILTSHIRE LEGEND.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, November, 1841.]



THEN ye doant beleeve in witches, naybour?' queried old George Pinnock of his friend and gossip, Samuel Hornblow, as they sat enjoying a jug of ale at the door of the former, in the quiet village of Blunsdon.

'Noa, George, I doant,' was the reply. 'I doant beleeve in nothin' o' th' zort. It's only a passel o' old wives' stories, and may do very well to vrighten children.'

'Now, there you're wrong, Maester Sam'ell—quite wrong, I do azhure ye. It's very plain there *be* such people. What was that woman as Saul went to zee? And ain't our King hisself writ a book about witches and hobgoblins, and all them there zort o' things? I heard 'em talking about it at Highworth last Vriday as ever was.'

'Ay, ay, naybour, that's all very well,' replied the incredulous Master Hornblow. 'Kings can zee and zay many things that we poor volk can't.'

'Eez, zart'inly,' rejoined Pinnock; 'but 'tain't the King only; our curate, Zur Rafe, zays a man as doan't beleeve in ghosts and witches is worse nor a haythen. Now, I tell ye what, Maester Hornblow'—here his voice subsided to a whisper—'it's my belief we've got a witch pretty nigh us.' He pointed as he spoke to a dilapidated cottage at a short distance from the spot. Master Hornblow, looking furtively over his shoulder, set down the jug which he was about to raise to his lips, and with open mouth and staring eyes gave evidence that his unbelief was not very deeply rooted.

'Ah!' continued the village demonologist, 'there's a witch there, naybour, as zure as my name's George. Young Tom Strange zays the devil often goes to zupper wi' Moll Phillips, and one night when a was goin' whome a heard a strainge noise, and looked in at the winder.'

'Well, what did a zee?' interrupted Hornblow, whose curiosity was excited, staring with all his eyes; 'what did a zee?'

'Why, a mortal odd zight. Moll Phillips was a zittin' at a table, wi' her two cats, and a strange un as big as a calf was a zittin' oppozite to um.'

'The Lard zave us! you doan't zay zo!' ejaculated Master Hornblow, screwing round his seat, and bringing his back to the wall.

'Eez, they was all a-making a strange mowing and chattering; but Tom cou'dn't make out a word on't, and while a was a peer-ing into the place summut made the boy sneeze, when, whew! all was dark in a minnit, and somebody took Tom by the scruff o' the neck, and pitched 'un over the wall! I warrand he'll never go near thuck place agen.'

'Very strainge, naybour, ver—y strainge,' observed Master Hornblow, looking aghast. 'If the justice comes to hear on't Moll will be burnt zome day in Highworth market-place for a zart'inty.'

'Whist! naybour,' said Pinnock, placing his finger on his nose and winking significantly. 'These sort o' volk have long ears, and are nation spiteful. Ye wou'dn't like Moll and her cats to pay ye a visit to-night, would ye?'

'Oh Lard! noa, noa!' cried the convert; 'doan't ye talk on't, naybour. They zay, talk o' the old 'un, and he's zure to zhow 's harns!'

At that moment the shadow of something passing before the sun was thrown on the white wall of the cottage. It was caused by the transit of the old raven who built in the huge elms at the entrance of the village; but Master Hornblow's terror was already excited to the utmost pitch, and never doubting but that it was the shadow of the foul fiend himself, he bellowed like a bull-calf, and overthrowing the table in his fright, clung to his friend for protection.

'Od drattle the stupid body!' cried Pinnock, on seeing the damage that had been done; 'thee hast broken my best jug, and spilt a pint o' good liquor.'

'Never mind, naybour,' said Master Samuel, recovering himself; 'thee shalst have a quart for it when thee com'st to my house.'

'Why, what wast vrightened of, man?' continued Pinnock, lifting up the table. 'Not of a shadow, surely; for Zur Rafe says the old 'un has no shadow, nor have they as sell theirselves; so, *when a witch sails by in the air on a moonlight night, you only see the shadow of her besom.*'

'What's that you're talking about, Master Pinnock?' cried a young man who came up at the moment on a bay gelding.

It was Wat Sannell, a servant of the Ernley family, then re-

siding at Bury Blunsdon, a harum-scarum, dare-devil young fellow, whose good looks and activity were his sole recommendations.

'What's that you say, Gaffers?' cried he, addressing the pair.

'We're talking about witches,' replied Pinnock.

'Then you're a couple of old gawnies,' said the servitor, laughing.

'What! doan't ye beleeve in 'em?' cried Master Pinnock.

'Beleeve in 'em!' echoed Wat. 'No; and he's a fool who does. Such things are out o' fashion now, Gaffer Pinnock.'

'That's as *you* think, Maester Wat; but we *kneow* better,' said Pinnock. 'Who zets up that great thistle in the close, there? and who daanzes round 'un every night? Cut 'un down as often as 'e wull, and a grows dree times thicker and stronger the next marnin'!'

'Ha! ha! ha!' laughed Wat. 'If that's the case, it ought to be as big as an elmen tree by this time, for I've cut it down a dozen times, and last night I pulled it up by the roots (for I had on my hawking-glove), and threw it in at Moll Phillips' window. If she be a witch, 'twill serve for a salad when her master, the devil, comes to sup with her.'

'I wou'dn't a done it for a purse o' Jacobuses,' said Pinnock, in a subdued tone. 'Moll's uncommon spiteful, and 'll pay ye off vor it, for a zart'inty.'

'Pish!' exclaimed Wat. 'We intend to duck her to-morrow. I don't care for witches; yet, beshrew me, if I couldn't believe Moll *was* one. I don't know how I came to be tempted; but this morning, as I brought home my master's birding-piece, I saw one of her ugly black cats sitting on the wall, when I thought I would have a shot. Well, I let fly, and up sprung the brute as high as the cottage chimney! It fell down against the door, and brought out her mistress. By St. Christopher! how the jade swore when she saw her favourite riddled like a cullender!'

'Then thee bist a very cruel fellow,' observed Master Samuel Hornblow, who, no longer a sceptic, for some moments had been shuddering in silence, 'and Moll will pay thee off vor 't.'

Wat made no reply, but laughed loudly at the recollection of his feat, and Pinnock asked him where he was going.

'I am going to Highworth, Gaffer, for a pair of hawk-bells for Mistress Dorothea, if you must know my business,' said the serving-man; and giving his horse the spur, he turned the corner, and was quickly out of sight.

'Those young maids, though they *be* high born, like a smart sarvin'-man,' remarked old Pinnock to his friend.

'Ay, ay, George,' said Master Hornblow, trying to wink and

look knowing ; 'in my young days I loved to look on a fair face, though 'twas my master's daughter's.'

In the meanwhile, Wat held on his way to Highworth, where he soon arrived, and having obtained the hawk-bells from the silversmith of whom they had been ordered, he took a review of the contents of his leathern purse, and found that he was master of some two or three shillings—a sum in those days amply sufficient for a man to procure wherewithal to fuddle himself effectually ; so, swaggering across the market-place, he entered the common room of the inn, and called for a pottle of double beer, which he had just discussed, when an old acquaintance entered. Good liquor vanishes apace when friends meet, and in about an hour Wat was just drunk enough to care for nobody.

While these boon companions were hobbing and nobbing, the day was wearing away, and the gathering clouds foretold a thunderstorm ; but our serving-man determined to get rid of all his money before he left, and it was within half an hour of sunset when he quitted the inn, with an empty purse, an unsteady hand, and a flushed face, the hawk-bells being carefully bestowed in his leathern purse. The town was soon left behind him, and the evening breeze cooled his heated brow. The heavens looked lowering, and distant thunder rumbled among the hills. As he held on his way, he espied at some distance before him a female figure seated on a large stone by the roadside.

'Some love-sick lass come to hold tryst with her swain,' muttered Wat to himself ; 'rayther a threatening evening for lovers' meeting.'

He soon came up with the damsel, and not having the fear of her lover before his eyes, he threw himself from his horse, and walked towards her.

'My pretty maid,' said he, putting on one of his most insinuating looks, and imitating the language which he had heard employed by his betters, 'you must be lonely here without your lover.'

The maiden averted her head, and drew her wimple closer to her face, as if abashed by his bold address.

'Ah,' continued Wat, 'alone, and yet so coy ; then I must just take a peep at my fair one's face. By your leave, sweet mistress.'

With these words he stooped to remove the damsel's wimple, when, oh Cupid ! an unseen hand gave him a buffet which knocked his hat over his eyes, and he received at the same moment such a violent kick behind that it fairly sent him head-over-heels on to the greensward by the roadside.

Swearing a bitter oath, Wat scrambled on his legs, and prepared

to take vengeance on the person who had assaulted him, very naturally supposing it was the lady's lover ; but, to his great surprise, not a soul was to be seen ; even the damsel herself was clean gone ! Wat, aghast, looked around him : there was not a bush, tree or ditch within the distance of an arrow's flight which could have sheltered his assailant.

'It was the devil,' thought he, 'and the woman was a witch !'

This reflection made his flesh creep, and his hair to stand on end, and he remembered the words of old Pinnock a few hours before ; so, remounting his horse, which was grazing quietly a few paces off, he proceeded on his way, somewhat sobered by this incident.

The sun now went down, red and fiery ; the storm came on ; the thunder became louder and louder, and vivid flashes of lightning occasionally lit up the landscape. Wat felt his heart tremble within him, and wished himself safe at home. As he held on his way at a round trot, he passed a cottage on his right, at the door of which he saw in the gloom a figure which he at a glance recognised as the same he had seen sitting by the roadside. She beckoned to him to enter ; but our serving-man was not to be caught a second time.

'Aroint thee, witch !' he cried, and plying his spurs, he left the cottage far behind him. He, however, had not proceeded far, when he heard a loud grunt from a hog in the road, and the horse, stumbling upon the animal, threw Wat over his head.

'Those who are born to be hung will never be drowned,' says the proverb. Throw some people from a church-steeple, and they will light on their legs. Wat was one of these ; he fell on his hands and knees, and thereby saved his neck. His first care on rising was to catch his horse, which he accomplished with some difficulty, for his bruises had rendered him stiff, and his hands had been torn by the flinty road. But this was not all : on his leaping on the back of the gelding the saddle slipped, and he was again precipitated to the ground. Muttering curses between his closed teeth, Wat regained his feet, and proceeded to tighten his saddle-girth. As he did so, he fancied he heard a stifled chuckling of exultation behind him, but, quickly remounting, he urged on his steed. Bewildered by what had occurred, and perplexed by the darkness which now reigned around him, relieved only at intervals by the lightning, he took a wrong turning in the road, and had proceeded about three miles, when a vivid flash showed him that he had strayed from the right path. The object which the glare of the lightning revealed was a gibbet, on which swung the remains of a malefactor who had been executed on the spot some years previously. Wat knew by this ghastly sign-post that

he was several miles from home, and, turning his horse's head, proceeded to retrace his steps; but this was not an easy matter: the thunder resounded like the explosions of heavy pieces of ordnance; the lightning rolled on the ground in sheets of fire, and the rain fell in torrents. The stout heart of the dare-devil serving-man quailed at this fierce war of the elements, and a thousand times he cursed his evil stars, which had tempted him to tarry drinking at Highworth.

At length he regained the right road, and almost forgot the kicking, buffeting, and tumbling he had sustained as he saw some prospect of reaching home without a broken neck. But he was not to reach home so easily. He had scarcely gone a hundred yards when a huge black cat, the very image of that he had shot in the morning, leaped from the head of an ancient pollard-oak hard by into the middle of the road, its large eyes glowing like hot coals. The horse shied as the creature raised itself on its hind-legs, as if to dispute the way. Wat, by the vigorous application of his spurs and riding-staff, endeavoured to urge forward his steed; but the animal refused to stir, and snorted in terror. In vain did he strive to dash onward, and crush the creature beneath the horse's feet; in vain did he attempt a diversion; the cat advanced, and its gaunt figure seemed to dilate before them to an enormous size, when suddenly it darted forward, and leaped on the horse's neck. This was too much for Wat; his senses forsook him, and he fell, in an agony of terror.

While this was passing, a little knot of gossips had assembled at the forge of Will Cullum, the village blacksmith. Some had gone thither for shelter from the storm; but there were two who made it their 'custom always of an afternoon;' these were the worthy clod-poles, Messieurs Pinnock and Hornblow. Many sage opinions were adventured on the storm, which was now passing away, and the old men began to indulge in surmises as to what had become of Wat, when on a sudden the clatter of hoofs was heard, and a horse, bridled and saddled, but without a rider, dashed through the village.

'Ha!' cried one, running to the door of the smithy, 'there goes the gelding, but where's Wat?'

'He's got drunk, as usual,' observed another coolly, 'and the horse is gone home to a warm stable, while his rider prefers a bed on the cold ground.'

'His next bed, I trow, will be in the churchyard, if he be lying on the ground on such a night as this,' said the smith. 'Who'll go out and look for him?'

'Not I,' said Pinnock.

'Nor I,' muttered Master Hornblow, with a shudder.

'Nor I,' said a third worthy, affecting a cough. 'I'm rheumatic, and have forsworn walking after nightfall.'

'Why, you're all afeard!' cried the smith. 'I never met wi' such a pack of gawnies in my life!—out upon ye!'

With these words the village Vulcan indignantly donned his leathern cap, and was about to proceed in search of Wat, for whom he had a kind of fellow-feeling, knowing his own infirmity when strong drink fell in his way, when a loud shout, or rather shriek, was heard at a short distance.

'Whose voice was that?' cried Pinnock, looking aghast.

'It's Wat's,' said the smith. 'Hark!—here he comes.'

'Help me!—help me!' cried Wat, rushing frantically into the smithy, and nearly upsetting some of the gossips. 'Help me, Will Smith, for the love of God and the saints!'

Every eye was turned on the speaker, whose haggard look, bleeding face and hands, mud-bespattered clothes, and eyes staring and fixed, like those of a man while walking in his sleep, were well calculated to strike terror among the occupiers of the smithy.

'What is the matter?' cried several voices—'what is the matter?'

'*I am bewitched!*' roared Wat. 'I am bewitched, and driven mad!—help me, Will, and give me thy petronel!'

'Thou art indeed mad!' said the smith; 'and I will not give thee a weapon in such a state.'

'Give it me—give it me!' roared Wat imploringly, 'if ye would not be driven mad, like I am! The witch waits without to seize me!'

He rushed forward as he spoke, and seized the weapon, which was suspended against the wall, and having ascertained that it was loaded, he took from his pouch the hawk-bells which he had brought from Highworth, and in an instant crushed them with convulsive force between his teeth.

'Now, witch, we shall see who has the mastery!' said he, ramming home the hawk-bells, which he had converted into bullets; '*lead* will not kill thee, but *silver* will send thee to thy master!'

He rushed from the smithy in the direction of the cottage occupied by Moll Phillips, followed at a distance by the smith and his friends, and shouting vengeance against his persecutors.

As he neared the miserable tenement occupied by the aged spinster, he saw through the gloom the eyes of a large cat, which was seated on the dwarf wall.

'Now I have thee!' cried Wat, and fired his petronel. But Grimalkin was too quick for him: nimbly dropping from the wall,

the animal fled away, while the whole charge shivered to fragments the latticed window of the cottage. Wat deemed his purpose effected, as he heard a loud and piercing scream rise high above the report of the petronel; and, wound up to the highest pitch of excitement, the terrified drunkard fell flat on his face, where he was found groaning and quivering, as though in a fit.

The next morning Sannell was sufficiently recovered to narrate his adventure, and, though in a wretched state of bodily and mental prostration, his friends crowded round his bed to hear the recital from his own lips. Moll Phillips had been found in her cottage, slain by gunshot wounds, the cat mewing piteously over the remains of its mistress.

Many and sage were the remarks of the good people of Blunsdon. Some few were disposed to consider the whole story Wat had told as the creation of a drunkard's brain; but the majority were decidedly of opinion that Moll Phillips *was* a witch; while Sir Rafe, the curate, determined to take the whole particulars up to London, and lay them before his Sacred Majesty, as an addendum to the work of the modern Solomon on witches and apparitions.



in der Lohrungs-...

...



The Autobiography of a Good Joke.

BY DR. MACKAY.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, October, 1837.]



HE diamond is precious from its scarcity, and for the same reason a new thought is beyond all price. Unluckily for us moderns, the ages who came before us have seized upon all the best thoughts, and it is but rarely indeed that we can stumble upon a new one. In the pride of superior knowledge, we sometimes imagine that we have succeeded in coining a new thought in the mint of our own brain; but, ten to one, if we make any researches into the matter, we shall find our brand new thought in some musty volume whose author lived a thousand years ago. This is exceedingly provoking, and has often led me to imagine that the ancients (so miscalled) have been guilty of the most atrocious plagiarisms from us, who are the real ancients of the world. It seems as if by some unhallowed species of second-sight they have been enabled to see down the dim vistas of futurity, and have thus forestalled us in the possession of the choicest thoughts and the most original ideas.

This is especially the case with regard to jokes; all the best of them are as old as the hills. On rare occasions some commanding genius astonishes the world by a new joke; but this is an event,—the event of the year in which the grand thing is uttered. Hardly has it seen the light ere it passes with the utmost celerity from mouth to mouth; it makes the tour of all the tables in the kingdom, and is reproduced in newspapers and magazines, until no corner of the land has been unhonoured and ungladdened by its presence. Reader! it was once my fortune to be the creator, the *Ποιητής*, of a witticism of surpassing excellence,—of a joke which, as soon as it proceeded from my brain, made a dozen professed wits ready to burst with envy at my superior genius! Many a time since has that bright scintillation of intellectual light brought smiles into the faces, and gladness into the hearts of millions! and many a joyous cachinnation has it caused, to the

sensible diminution of apothecaries' bills and undertakers' fees! If I had been a diner-out, I might have provided myself with dinners for two years upon the strength of it; but I was contented with the honour, and left the profit to the smaller wits, who, by a process well known to themselves, contrive to extract venison out of jests, and champagne out of puns. For years I have reposed on my laurels as the inventor of a new thought; and, but for the hope that there were still more worlds to conquer, I would have folded my arms in dignified resignation, and acknowledged to myself that I had not lived in vain.

About a month ago, however, my complacent pride in my production received a severe check; and circumstances ensued which have led me to doubt whether in these degenerate days it is possible for a man to imagine any new thought. I was in the society of half-a-dozen men of real wit, but of no pretension,—men of too joyous a nature to be envious of my achievement,—when one of them actually uttered my joke—the joke upon which I pride myself—coolly looking me in the face, and asserting that he was the author of it. I felt at first indignant at so dishonest an act; but, convinced of my own right, I smiled contemptuously, and said nothing. My friend noticed the smile, and saw that it was not one of mirth but of scorn, and has ever since treated me with the most marked coolness. When I returned home I retired to my chamber, and throwing myself into my comfortable arm-chair, I indulged in a melancholy reverie upon the vanity of human exertion, and the disposition so common among mankind to rob the great of their dearly-acquired glory. 'Even Homer,' said I to myself, 'did not escape the universal fate. Some deny his very existence, and assert that his sublime epic was the combined work of several ballad-mongers; others again, generously acknowledge his existence, but still assert that he was no poet, but the mere singer of the verses that abler men composed! And if Homer has not escaped detraction and injustice, shall I?'

These, and similar thoughts, gradually growing more and more confused and indistinct, occupied my attention for a full hour. A bottle of champagne, corked up and untasted, stood upon the table before me. It was just the dim faint dawn of early morning; and in the grey obscurity I could plainly distinguish the black bottle as it stood between me and the window. Notwithstanding the hour, I felt half inclined to take a draught of the generous juice it contained, and was stretching forth my hand for that purpose, when, to my great surprise, the bottle gave a sudden turn, and commenced dancing round the table. Gradually two arms sprouted forth from its sides; and, giving them a joyous twirl, the

bottle skipped about more nimbly than before, and to my eyes seemed endeavouring to dance a Highland fling. I thought this very extraordinary behaviour on the part of the bottle. I rubbed my eyes, but I was wide awake. I pinched myself and came to the same conclusion. As I continued to gaze, the mysterious bottle grew larger and larger, and suddenly sprung up as tall as myself. Immediately afterwards, the cork, which had become supernaturally large and round, changed colour, and turned to a ruddy hue; and I could by degrees distinguish a pair of sparkling eyes, and a whole set of rubicund features smiling upon me with the most benign expression. The forehead of this apparition was high and bald, and marked with wrinkles,—not of decrepitude, but of a hale old age,—while a few thin grey hairs hung straggling over his temples. As soon as my astonishment was able to vent itself in words, I addressed the apparition in a query, which has since become extremely popular, and called out to it, ‘Who are you?’

Ere it had time to reply to this classical question, my eyes fell upon a roll of parchment which it held in its hand, and on which were inscribed the magic words of my joke.

‘Do you not know me?’ said this Eidolon of my wit, pointing to the scroll. ‘I am the joke upon which you pride yourself, and, although I say it myself, one of the best jokes that ever was uttered. Don’t you know me?’

‘I can’t say that I should have recognised you,’ said I, as I felt my heart yearning with paternal kindness towards him; but—Come to my arms, my son, my progeny!’

‘Aha! ha! ha!’ said the Joke, looking at me with very unfilial impertinence, and holding his sides with laughter.

‘The contempt with which you treat me is exceedingly unbecoming,’ said I with much warmth, and with the air of an offended parent; ‘and what is more, sir, it is unfeeling and unnatural—’tis past a joke, sir!’

‘’Tis no joke,’ said the Joke, still laughing with all his might, and peering at me from the corners of his eyes, the only parts of those orbits which mirth permitted to remain open; ‘really, my good friend, the honour to which you lay claim is nowise yours. Lord bless your foolish vanity! I was a patriarch before the days of your great grandfather!’

‘Pooh, pooh!’ said I; ‘it cannot be! You know that you are my production; you cannot be serious in denying it.’

‘I am not often serious,’ said the Joke, putting on a look of comic gravity; ‘but there is no reason for so much solemnity in telling an unimportant truth. However, we will not argue the point. I will proceed at once to tell you my history, to convince

you how little claim you have to the honours of paternity in my case.'

'I shall be very happy,' said I, with more reverence than I had yet assumed towards my mysterious visitor.

'For fear you should find me dry,' said the Joke, 'get a bottle of wine.'

I did as I was desired, drew the cork, filled two glasses, one of which I handed to the Joke, who, nodding good-humouredly at me, commenced the following narrative.

THE JOKE'S STORY

'I have not the slightest recollection of my progenitors ; like the great Pharaohs who built the pyramids, their names have sunk into oblivion in the lapse of ages. They must, however, have lived more than thirty centuries ago, as my reminiscences extend nearly as far back as that period. I could, if I would, draw many curious pictures of the state of society in those early ages, having mixed all my life with persons of every rank and condition, and traversed many celebrated regions. I say it with pride that I have always delighted to follow in the track of civilization, and claim as a great honour to myself and the other members of my fraternity that we have in some degree contributed to hasten the mighty march of human intelligence. It is only savage nations who are too solemn and too stupid to appreciate a joke, and upon these people I never condescended to throw myself away.

'One of my earliest introductions to society took place about two thousand five hundreds years ago, among a company of merchants who were traversing the great deserts of Arabia. Methinks I see their faces now, and the very spot where they first made acquaintance with me. It was towards sunset, under a palm-tree, beside a fountain, where the caravan had stopped to drink the refreshing waters. It has been often said that grave people love a joke, and it was a grave old trader who showed me off on this occasion, to the infinite delight of his companions, who laughed at my humour till the tears ran down their cheeks. In this manner I traversed the whole of civilized Asia, and visited at different periods the luxurious tables of Sardanapalus and Ahasuerus, and brought smiles into the faces of the queenly beauties of their courts. From Asia I passed into Greece, and I remember that I used often to sit with the soldiers round their watch-fires at the siege of Troy. At a much later period I was introduced to Homer, and shall always remember with pleasure that I was the means of procuring him a supper when, but for me, he would have gone without one. The poor peasants to whom

the still poorer bard applied for a supper and a lodging had no relish for poetry ; but they understood a joke, and the bard brought me forth for their entertainment ; and, while my self-love was flattered by their hearty laughter, his wants were supplied by their generous hospitality.

‘ But I was not only acquainted with Homer, for Aristophanes very happily introduced me into one of his lost comedies. Anacreon and I were boon companions ; and, while upon this part of my career, you will permit me to give vent to a little honest pride, by informing you in few words that I once brought a smile into the grave face of the divine Plato ; that I was introduced into an argument by no less an orator than Demosthenes ; that I was familiarly known to Æsop ; that I supped with Socrates ; and was equally well received in the court of Philip of Macedon and the camp of his victorious son. Still a humble follower in the train of civilization, I passed over to Rome. I was not very well received by the stiff, stern men of the republic ; but in the age of Augustus I was universally admired. The first time that I excited any attention was at the table of Mæcenas, when Horace was present. I may mention by the way that it was Horace himself who, in a *tête-à-tête*, first made known my merits to his illustrious patron, and the latter took the first opportunity of showing me off. I was never in my life more flattered than at the enthusiastic reception I met from the men of genius there assembled, although I have since thought that I was somewhat indebted for my success to the wealth and station of the illustrious joker. However that may be, my success was certain ; and so much was I courted, that I was compelled to visit every house in Rome where wit and good-humour stood any chance of being appreciated.

‘ After living in this manner for about a hundred years, I took it into my head to go to sleep ; and I slept so long, that, when I awoke, I found the victorious Hun in the streets of the city. This was no time for me to show my face ; and, seeing so little prospect of happy times for me and my race, I thought I could not do better than go to sleep again. I did so, and when I awoke this second time, found myself at the gay court of old King René of Provence. Among the bright ladies and amorous troubadours who held their revels there, I was much esteemed. There was, however, I am bound in candour to admit, some falling-off in my glory about this period. I was admitted to the tables of the great, it is true ; but I was looked upon as a humble dependent, and obliged to eat out of the same platter with the hired jester. I could not tolerate this unworthy treatment for ever, and it had such an effect upon me that I soon lost much of my wonted spirit and humour. I at last resolved to shut myself up in a monastery,

and lead a life of tranquillity and seclusion. You need not smile because so merry a personage as myself chose to be immured within the walls of a monastery, for I assure you that in the intellectual society of the monks—the only intellectual society that one could meet with in those days—I was soon restored to my original brightness. I lived so well and so luxuriously among these good people, that I quickly grew sleek and lazy, and somehow or other I fell into a doze, from which I was not awakened until a wit in the reign of Elizabeth stumbled upon me, and again brought me out into the busy world. I ran a splendid career in England.'

'Did you?' said I, interrupting the Joke at this part of his narrative, and appealing to him with considerable energy of manner, for I began to be apprehensive that some of my friends, more learned than myself, might have discovered the antiquity of my 'joke,' and would quiz me on the subject. I restrained my impetuosity, however, and, with some alarm depicted in my countenance, I asked him in a trembling voice: 'Did you—did you—ever—meet with—Joe Miller?'

'D— Joe Miller!' said the Joke with much vivacity; 'I suffered more from the dread of that fellow than I ever suffered in my life. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping out of his way, and I only managed it by going to sleep again. You awoke me from that slumber, when, like many others who came before you, you passed me off as your own. You remember you got much credit for me, as all ever have done who have good sense enough to introduce me only at a proper time, and wit enough to launch me forth with all my native grace and brilliancy about me.'

'Then you are not a Joe?' said I, much relieved.

'A Joe!' said the Joke, reddening with anger. 'Have I not told you already that I am not? Do you mean to insult me by the vile insinuation that I ever showed my face in such despicable company? Do you think, sir, that I am a pun?'

'Oh, by no means,' said I; 'I assure you I meant no offence.'

'You did, sir,' replied the Joke, striking his fist upon the table with great vehemence. Immediately afterwards I observed that his face became dreadfully distorted, and he shook his head convulsively from side to side. As I continued to gaze without the power of saying a single word to calm the irritation I had so unintentionally raised, I noticed that his neck grew every instant longer and longer, until his chin seemed to be fully two feet from his shoulders. I was unable to endure the sight, and rising up, half frantic with nervous excitement, I put my hand convulsively upon his head, with the benevolent intention of squeezing it down to its proper level. He glared furiously at me with his swollen

eyes, and, horrible to relate, just as I came in contact with him, his head flew off with a tremendous explosion, and bounced right through a chimney-glass that ornamented my mantelpiece. The glass flew in shivers round me. In a dreadful state of alarm I rang the bell for assistance, and sank down overpowered upon the chair.

'Beggin' your honour's pardon for being so bould,' said my tiger, a good-natured Irish boy named Phelim, who had entered at the summons, 'I think your honour had better drink a bottle of soda water and go to bed.'

'Where's his head, Phelim?' said I.

'Your own, or the bed's?' said Phelim.

'The Joke's,' replied I.

'Och, you must mane your own; it's light enough, I dare say,' said Phelim as he pulled my boots off. 'You took a dhrop too much last night, anyhow.'

'Phelim,' said I solemnly, 'did you hear nothing?'

'To be sure I did,' said Phelim. 'Haven't you, like a drunken baste as you are (begging your pardon for my bouldness), been trying to broach that bottle of champagne at this early hour of the mornin', and haven't you driven the cork through the lookin'-glass?'

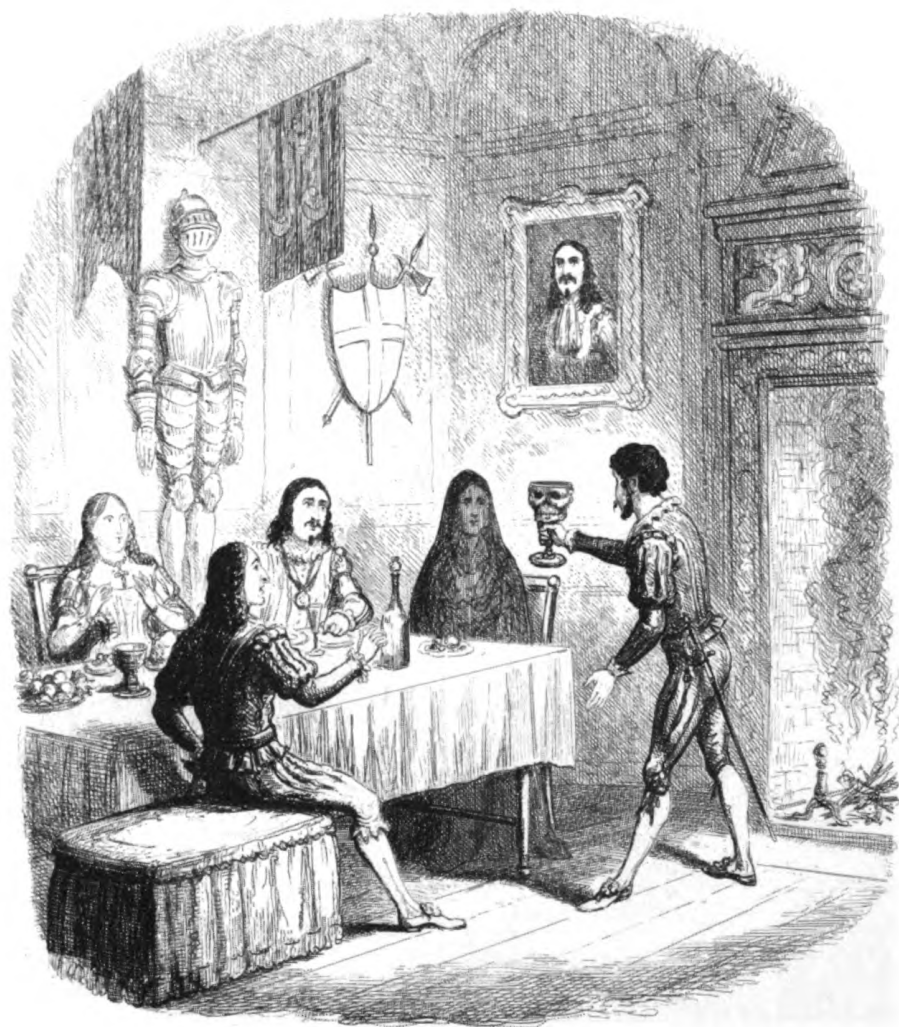
I looked at the bottle; it was uncorked, and the champagne was even at that moment sparkling over the neck of the bottle, and running over my books and papers.

'A pretty piece of work you have made of it,' said Phelim, picking up the cork and pointing to the looking-glass.

''Twas a good Joke,' said I, although my faith was somewhat staggered by Phelim's explanation.

'Troth, an' I'm glad you take it so asy,' said Phelim, ramming the cork into the bottle; 'you'll find it a dear one when the landlady brings in her bill for the lookin'-glass. But never mind it, sir, now. Go to bed and get sober.'

I took Phelim's advice, and went to bed. To this day I am unable positively to decide whether his explanation was the true one or not. I incline, however, to the belief that I was *not* drunk, but that the illustrious JOKE actually visited me in *propria personâ*. I am the more inclined to this belief from the remarkable coherency of his narrative, which I now leave, without a word of comment, to the consideration of the curious.



in the 16th century. See also p. 100.





The Band of the Forty-Seven.

A ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES.

BY HENRY CURLING.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, February, 1843.]

WHAT are you halting for, Diego?' exclaimed Don Matthias de Castro, thrusting his head from the window of a huge, ill-contrived leathern vehicle, the hindmost of three similarly constructed conveyances, which, attended by more than a dozen well-armed horsemen, had just at that moment come to a standstill in a mountain-pass of the Pyrenees. 'To stop here of all places! and be d——d to them, Diego!' cried the irascible Hidalgo. 'Ride to the front, sirrah, and order the foremost carriage to push forward as quickly as possible. We're in the worst part of this infernal road; and the Seven-and-forty, as thou well knowest, infest the neighbourhood. Spur on, sir! This is no place to be caught napping in.'

'I will so, instantly,' said the attendant, lashing his horse amongst the press; for the road being sandy, with high rocks on either hand, the horsemen and vehicles, from the anxiety of the rear to get forward, had become confused and jammed together. 'Out of the way there!' cried Diego; 'clear the road, and let me through, men! What hinders us? Forwards, I say! The general's furious at this halt.'

The beautiful Elvira de Mendoza, leaning back in the vehicle in which she was seated beside her guardian, Don Matthias de Castro, buried her face in her hands, as the vivid flashes of the forked lightning darted through the windows of the vehicle, and displayed the precipices and overhanging woods they were surrounded by, brightly as though, for the moment, a hundred flambeaux had suddenly flashed through the forest scene.

'Get on, sirs!' roared the incensed noble, once more impatiently thrusting his head from the window. 'D—— you, sir! move on! Drive over the men in front if they don't choose to get out of the way! Fire and fury! why don't you move on, you scoundrels!'

'May it please your lordship,' said the serving-man, Diego, from the place where he was now jammed up amidst the press,

'we can't stir a peg to the front. The pass is choked up in the narrowest part; a large number of broken-down carts and tumbrils are before us, and the men are dismounting to move the obstruction. The night, too, is so dark, *Señhor*, that, but for the lightning, we should not have found out what opposed our progress.'

'Tell them NOT to dismount!' roared Don Matthias. 'Bid them stand to arms: we shall be attacked here. I thought it would be so! Here, let me out this instant!'

So saying, the Hidalgo seized a pistol from his waist-belt, flung open the door of the carriage, jumped into the road, and, plucking forth his toledo, made for the front of the cavalcade.

'Halloo there!' suddenly roared a voice out of the darkness. 'Who dares remove our baggage, and disturb our bivouac? Fire, men, upon the scoundrels!'

No sooner had the words rung out from amongst the carts and waggons which obstructed the advance of the travellers, than, from front, flank, and rear, the carriages and escort were assailed. Forty-seven bullets whistled amongst the belated travellers, forty-seven swords leaped from their scabbards into the air, and forty-seven ruffians, clad in back, breast, and head piece, dashed upon the affrighted and helpless party.

A rapid and murderous combat instantly ensued. The horses of the vehicles were cut loose; the drivers and footmen were dragged down, and hurled beneath the wheels; the escort, unable to make much resistance against the odds brought against them, were dragged from their horses, and dealt with to a man; the male passengers within the carriages were killed almost before they could set foot upon the ground; and Don Matthias de Castro, a general in the Spanish service, after fighting for full five minutes like an infuriated tiger, died amidst the hoofs of the horses of his own serving-men!

Almost before the confusion was over, the female passengers of the three vehicles were dragged, fainting, from their seats by the banditti. A ferocious ruffian, with the proportions of a Hercules, and a beard like a coppice of brushwood, took possession of the lovely Elvira, for whose slightest glance nearly all the cavaliers in Madrid were dying, and who was now the hopeless and insensible captive of Roderigo Rapsalliano—a blear-eyed, broad-shouldered villain—the lieutenant of the Band of the Forty-seven!

Torches soon flashed from the clefts and crevices of the rocks which overhung that part of the road where the onslaught had taken place; and in a few minutes more the vehicles were sacked, and, as it were, almost turned inside out. Trunks and packages were strewn about, rich apparel torn from them, jewels and gold sparkled in the sand, and, in fact, a scene ensued which only the

brush of a Salvator could have done justice to. Of the passengers and escort attendant upon the three carriages, which had so recently entered the mountain-pass, only some half-dozen hapless females remained living to tell the tale; whilst the lurid glare of the flaming branches of pine, carried by some ten or a dozen miscreants, who had till now lain in ambush, flashed from the steel hauberks of their comrades, displaying their savage visages, in contrast to the grim and death-stamped features of the victims whom they had butchered, and who, in mangled heaps, lay bleeding amidst their disabled steeds and overthrown vehicles.

The captain of the banditti was the only one of his party who remained inactive whilst the band was engaged in plunder. Sitting on his horse, a little aloof from the scene, he watched for a few minutes their proceedings. After wiping his trenchant blade upon the leathern sleeve of his doublet, he sheathed the weapon, and, moving up to the spot where his lieutenant was at that moment engaged in conveying the inanimate form of the Lady Elvira from her carriage, he bade him, in a stern voice, call off some of the men from plunder, and bring the captured females instantly before him.

Roderigo, who had just begun to eye the lovely creature in his arms with the wonder of a savage who sees beauty for the first time, upon this order placed her upon the ground beside him, and, grasping his bugle, wound half a dozen notes upon it, as a call for the band to rally around him.

'I'll take charge of the woman for you, comrade,' said a man, stepping up close beside him, and extinguishing with his foot the torch which Roderigo had thrown to the ground, when he had placed Elvira upon the bank—'I'll take charge of your prize, whilst you attend to the captain's order; leave her with me here for the moment.'

'Not so,' returned the lieutenant gruffly; 'mind your own affairs. She's mine—I'll not quit her. What devil made you put out the light?'

So saying, he turned, and stooped to raise and bear off his victim; but a deadly thrust met him as he did so, and the blow taking effect in his bull-neck, just above the cuirass, he fell dead almost without a groan.

In another moment the lady was seized in the powerful arms of this new assailant, and silently and quickly conveyed into the forest.

This transfer of the beautiful Elvira had been so quickly made, and the banditti were so fully occupied with the business in hand, that he who had thus obtained possession of the greatest prize

had some little time for a fair start before the event became known, and he accordingly made the best use of it. Leading his horse into a gorge of the mountain, along which a small rivulet formed its pebbly bed, and in whose murmur the hoof-tread of the steed was drowned, he pushed on with caution but yet despatch, until at length he had to turn his horse loose, owing to the precipitous crags which had to be clambered over.

Two or three miles traversed in the rocky and overgrown path they pursued, were as much as ten in any ordinary road, and frequently the stranger was compelled to carry his companion over the dangerous ground. With the calmness of a stoic, however, and the true duty of a loyal knight, the stranger performed his task; and, at length halting in the forest, he pointed to a solitary light before them, and cheered his wearied fellow-traveller with the news that their haven was in sight. Elvira now found herself under the walls of a lone and melancholy-looking building, situated in the depths of the forest.

The storm had nearly passed away, and, as the clouds rolled beneath the moon, the battlements showed black as the thick woods around them. The night-breeze sighed drearily as the stranger, pausing before this ominous-looking place, glanced cautiously around him, whilst the wolf howling in the forest was answered by the owlet in the tower. It seemed, in short, the very situation for the stronghold of brigands; and, accordingly, the lady was once more seized with feelings of dismay and distrust. She shuddered whilst she gazed upon the dark building before her, and almost dreaded to hear her conductor propose to her to enter its walls. There was something singularly cold and stern, too, in his manner. He had scarcely addressed a word to her as he hurried onwards; and, although it is true that he had aided her, and given every assistance along the difficult path they had to traverse, still his manner had been rather that of a guard to his captive, than of an attendant escort to a damsel in distress. However, there was now no choice in the matter, and she felt that she must embrace the fate of the hour, be it for good or evil.

After pausing for a few moments, the cavalier took his bugle in hand, and wound a long-drawn blast thereon: it was instantly replied to by a sort of echo from within the walls. A few minutes more, and the clatter of arms resounded through the building; lights flashed from loop-holed towers, a sentinel challenged from the gate-house, the drawbridge was lowered, and, taking his companion by the hand, the mysterious cavalier entered the sombre-looking dwelling-house.

Elvira observed that they passed through a body of men-at-arms, who stood drawn up within the first barrier, and who did

the honours to her conductor pretty much in the same style that the turned-out guard of a garrison in the present day presents arms to the commandant. The hall of the castle, or château, to which the lady now found herself introduced, was of ample dimensions, and displayed a considerable share of comfort, as well as feudal state. An ample fire glowed upon the hearth; a massive table stood before it; and wine, together with more solid refreshments, seemed as though they had been prepared for expected guests.

The cavalier, doffing his high-crowned beaver, formally welcomed his lovely guest to his stronghold.

'In your favour, madam,' said he, 'I break through a firm resolve, never to taste the pleasures of the world, or open my gates in the way of hospitality again. The peculiar circumstances which have occurred, however, absolve me from my oath, and what I possess in this wild domain is at your service. I must, however, add that the same circumstances which have made me a recluse here will also imprison you within these walls for an indefinite period, since the dangers with which I am at present surrounded will not permit of my offering you the protection of my own escort, or suffer me to part with any of my servants. So long, however, as you remain beneath this roof your comfort shall be cared for, and all your wants supplied.'

In saying this, the cavalier proceeded to offer the Lady Elvira the refreshments of which she stood in need; and, summoning an attendant, desired that a meal should be instantly served, whilst a chamber was being prepared for her. Savoury viands were accordingly brought in by a train of serving-men, at one end of the hall; whilst from the door at its other extremity issued what the lady at first supposed was a funeral procession, since it consisted of some half-a-dozen females clad in sable suits, and veiled from head to foot, who advanced to the table, and remained stationary, as if waiting for leave to sit down and partake of the repast prepared.

The cavalier, whose brow had grown black as midnight so soon as he became aware of this accession to the party, was about to invite Elvira to a seat, when the loud and repeated blast of a bugle from without the walls arrested his attention. Making a sign to the attendant steward, that functionary left the apartment, in order to ascertain the meaning of the summons, and, quickly returning, announced that two strangers, who had apparently been attacked by some of the Forty-seven, and who were, moreover, belated and bewildered in the mountains, craved admittance and harbourage within the walls. After a slight struggle, apparently

between his firm resolve and his hospitality, the stern cavalier gave orders for their being conducted to his presence.

The new accession to the party consisted, as has been mentioned, of two travellers; and both were as far from the common run of chance wayfarers as it was possible to conceive. Both were clad in rich travelling suits, such as the wealthy merchant, or, indeed, the noble of that period, might be supposed to travel in. Their equipage, however, showed tokens of both a recent fray and a toilsome journey. They advanced into the room with the dignity and bearing which belongs to men accustomed to mingle with the nobles of the land; and the first words they spoke of apology for their necessary intrusion, proclaimed by their accent that they were Englishmen.

'They were merchants,' they said, 'on their way to Madrid. In crossing from the French frontier, they had been assailed by an outlying party of the banditti, separated from their friends and attendants, and lost in the depths of the forest.'

The taller and more bulky of the two seemed to assume the lead (although not the least superiority) over his more quiet and dignified companion, about whom there was, indeed, a presence and high bearing which claimed respect at the first glance; and accordingly, his more free and assuming comrade was unregarded in his presence, and the attention of the host instantly bestowed upon the younger and quieter of the new-comers.

'By Saint George!' said the taller one, as soon as he threw himself into the seat next the Lady Elvira, 'I am agreeably surprised here, Sir Hidalgo! In seeking a refuge within these thick-ribbed walls, I thought we should be doomed to the companionship of some half-a-dozen old-faced ancients, and, mayhap, some four or five companies of men-at-arms; here, however, have we stumbled upon a whole sisterhood of Carmelites—for so these veiled sisters appear to mine eyes; and, did not this heavenly vision by my side entirely enthrall my senses, 'fore Heaven but, cold and hungry as your mountain fastnesses have rendered us, I swear to thee I should be altogether as anxious for the removal of those envious veils I see before me, as to partake of the good cheer your hospitable board is laden with.'

'In good time,' returned the haughty Spaniard, 'your wish shall be gratified. In the meantime, while you claim the hospitality and protection of my roof, I warn you not to comment upon anything which *you* may chance to think out of the course of everyday occurrence.'

So saying, the cavalier signed to the lady, who appeared the principal of the veiled votaries, to seat herself at the table, the remainder, turning to the right-about, went out of the apartment

as solemnly as they had entered it. The steward touched the dishes with his white wand, in signal to the serving-men to uncover, and the meal proceeded. The reply of the stern-looking host to the sally of the traveller was sufficiently reproving; but that which followed yet more astonished the guests. As soon as the steward had caused the dishes to be uncovered, the host, in a stern voice, desired the mourner, who was seated opposite him, to unveil, and his guests beheld a face of such surpassing beauty that their thoughts were altogether withdrawn from the viands set before them, and lost in its contemplation.

The strangers, glancing at each other, thought that they 'ne'er had seen true beauty till that night.' The Lady Elvira was as much touched by the deep melancholy and pallid hue of those chiselled features as astonished with their lovely expression. The grim Spaniard, however, quickly recalling them to the business of life, called their attention to the good cheer before them, and himself set an example. The English travellers, upon this hint, turned their attention from the lady to an *olla podrida* of savoury flavour; the Lady Elvira swallowed part of a good-sized omelette; and the mysterious and lovely mourner, after picking up a few grains of rice, and masticating them as leisurely as Aminé, after she had feasted with the Ghoul, resumed her rigid and motionless demeanour.

The host, meanwhile, calling for wine, pledged his guests in a flowing goblet; after which the steward, with some ceremony, brought from the side-table a vessel of a curious and horrid look, a human skull, the orifices of which were covered with silver. Taking it from the hands of the steward, the host filled it with sparkling wine, rose from his seat, and offered it to the lady of the flowing-veil, who with trembling hand accepted, carried it to her lips, and drank from it.* Water was then brought to her in a silver ewer, in which she washed her hands and mouth, and, after curtsying to the master of the house, without noticing the remainder of the party, she turned and left the apartment by the way she had entered.

'Can such things be?' cried the bigger of the two Englishmen, starting to his feet. 'Now, by my knightly vow, I swear to thee, Spaniard, that I hold thee a stain to thy nation, to treat that radiant and incomparable female after yonder hellish fashion! As a free-born Englishman, I require of thee sufficing reasons for your cruelty to the unhappy woman who has even now left the apartment.'

* This incident (a lady being forced by her enraged husband to drink from the skull of her sometime gallant) is said really to have taken place in former days.

The countenance of the handsome Spaniard grew livid with concentrated rage, as, looking from one to the other of his English guests, he arose slowly from his seat, beckoned to the *major domo*, and whispered half-a-dozen words in his ear.

The younger and more dignified of the Englishmen also arose, and, with much grace, addressed the host.

'I cannot,' said he, 'permit so great an outrage to be enacted, sir, upon a defenceless woman without also protesting against its propriety. We are your guests, maybe; but to sit tamely by and, without comment, witness the torture to which you have this night subjected that lady, were to proclaim ourselves either cowards or approvers of the act. It is my pleasure that you explain the meaning of the scene you have just now entertained us with!'

'Holy Agatha! and is it so? Your pleasure, forsooth! Really, señhors,' said the Spaniard between his set teeth, 'you do me too much honour thus to interest yourselves with my poor household! By our blessed Lady!' he continued, as some half-a-dozen halberdiers entered the apartment, 'thou shalt rue this unmeasured insult before the hour has passed in which you have offered it! What ho! there! arrest these base-born islanders!'

'We are thy guests, churl!' cried the elder traveller. 'Thou darest not, for very shame, lay hands upon us!'

'You ceased to deserve the hospitality you claim,' returned the Spaniard, 'when you meddled in the household affairs of your host. Hadst thou not sat at my board, I had poniarded ye on the instant!'

'The fig of Spain for your threats!' cried the Englishman, suddenly leaping upon and seizing the Spaniard in his powerful grasp, at the same moment unsheathing his dagger and holding it high in air. 'Make but one motion, Sir Hidalgo, by way of signal to those men-at-arms of thine, and I flood the apartment with your blood! Dismiss the cut-throats from the presence, sirrah, before worse befall thee! We have fallen into evil company,' he continued to his companion. 'Your royal highness—ahem! your lordship, I would say—will do well to draw and stand upon the defensive here. This is some robbers' hold we have got into.'

It was in vain that the Spaniard tried to disengage himself from the grip of his powerful assailant, whilst the men-at-arms were fain to stand aloof, lest, on their attempting to aid their commander, he should give him the *coup de grâce* in an instant, by stabbing him to the heart. The other Englishman also unsheathing his rapier, opposed himself to the serving-men and attendants.

The hidalgo, at last cowed, and three-parts throttled, was fain

to cry *peccavi*, and signed to his men-at-arms to fall back ; upon which the Englishman threw him from him, and drew his rapier. The Spaniard, also, gathered himself up, plucked forth his toledo, and bidding the attendants not interfere, assailed his adversary with the rage and fury of a tiger ; whilst the lesser traveller anxiously watched the progress of the duel.

It was of but short duration. The hidalgo, mad with rage, rushed upon his adversary with a thrust that, had it pierced him, would have pinned him to the wainscoting. The Englishman, however, put it aside ; and, in order to save himself from being closed with, dealt his enemy a downright, straight-handed, good old English blow in the teeth, the hilt of his rapier coming with such effect in his countenance that he instantly took measure of his proportions upon the well-polished oaken flooring of his ample hall.

‘*That’s* the English method of settling a foreign noble’s hash, your highness,’ he said, stepping up, and putting his rapier to his opponent’s throat. ‘Yield thee, and promise release to the captive female you have immured in these rocky mountains, or die. I’ll teach thee to force ladies to pledge healths out of a dead man’s skull !’

Elvira now rushed forward, and throwing herself upon her knees, besought the Englishman to forbear further hostility ; he therefore sheathed his weapon, and permitted the Spaniard to arise. The haughty Don had found his level ; his fiery spirit was tamed.

‘You have the advantage, stranger,’ said he, ‘though I might, by summoning my people, sacrifice you to my revenge and resentment ; yet, as I have even now heard you address your companion by a title which shows me I am amongst men of the highest rank, I will not pursue the quarrel, but, on the contrary, am willing so far to grant your request as to explain the circumstance which has set this quarrel going. In me, sir, you behold the most miserable of men. In happier days I owned the name and title of Marquis de Castel Blastam. The lady whose cause you have so hotly advocated is my wedded wife. Unhappy was the clock that struck the hour in which she became so ! That she is beautiful yourselves have witnessed ; that she is of noble birth is no less true ; that I shall be able to vindicate myself from the charge of over-severity towards her is, perhaps, more doubtful. Yourselves shall judge me. This much, however, I may premise, that, whatever misery I have inflicted upon her, it must fall short of that which her ill-conduct causes me still to feel. In short, then, señors, twelve happy moons had barely waned after I had gained her hand when, returning on the wings of love, somewhat

unexpectedly, to my home after a hurried journey to Madrid, I beheld that which turned my heart to stone—my wife faithless, and the friend of my bosom a villain! Don Antonio de Cordova instantly fell, pierced with a dozen stabs, “the least a death to nature”; and I was about to sacrifice the traitress, his paramour, *my wife*—she whom you commiserate, when I was myself beaten to the earth, desperately wounded, and left for dead by the attendants of my sometime friend, who, hearing the sounds of our encounter, had rushed to his assistance. I gave my wife the life she begged; but my revenge conceived a punishment for her which, like the misery she had inflicted upon me, might be more insupportable than death—to confine her in an apartment in this château. I hung up on its walls the skeleton of her gallant, and that she may be kept in perpetual remembrance of her crime, in place of a cup I force her to drink from the skull of the faithless friend she suffered herself to be seduced by. The traitress, by this means, sees two objects at her meals which ought to affect her most—a living enemy, and a deceitful friend, both the consequence of her own guilt. Such, señors, is my story, with this further circumstance, that you behold me here, cooped up and surrounded by savage foes, inasmuch as both the friends and relations of him who fell by my hand, seeking my life, keep my château in a state of constant siege; whilst the connections also of my wife, no less remorseless, have with gold purchased me the additional annoyance of being continually assailed by the horde of miscreants infesting these mountains, and from their number known by the name of “*The Forty-seven*.” So far I have maintained my position, beat off my assailants, and escaped being slaughtered. To-night, whilst myself playing the spy upon the banditti, I was so fortunate as to rescue this lady from a fate worse than death; and now, sirs, if it is your wish to see and speak with the unhappy woman, my wife, I will conduct you to her.’

The offer being accepted, the English guests, together with the Lady Elvira, were forthwith conducted by their eccentric host into an elegantly furnished chamber, where they found this ‘mourning bride,’ surrounded by her women.

‘If, madam,’ said the taller stranger, addressing her, ‘your resignation and patience is equal to your punishment, and your repentance forms the product, I look upon you as the most extraordinary woman it has ever been my fortune to encounter; and I most strenuously advise that this worthy and injured nobleman should pity your sufferings, forgive your indiscretion, and once more receive you to his bosom.’

His companion, who from delicacy had forbore addressing the lady, upon this ventured to approach and second the motion.

‘Our sole motive,’ said he, ‘in wishing to intrude upon her sorrows was to endeavour to procure a reconciliation.’

‘And who, then, gentlemen,’ said the Spaniard, ‘are you who thus interest yourselves with my family matters, and advise me to such a measure?’

‘I will reveal to you my secret,’ said the younger Englishman, now, for the first time, assuming the lead in the conversation; ‘let it be, however, upon honour, since I myself am about to seek a wife from amongst your Spanish damsels. Dismiss the attendants. I am Prince Charles of England.’

‘And this rough *señor*?’

‘Villiers, Duke of Buckingham,’ returned the other. ‘*Parole d’honneur*, let the adventure go no further, for your own sake. I had you down, and might have ended you. Do you grant our request, Marquis de Castel Blastam?’

‘I do,’ returned the Spaniard. ‘We’ll to Madrid together.’

‘Then bury your skeleton, and make an *auto-da-fé* of your drinking-cup. Tush, man! for a thrust with my rapier, or a buffet with my fist, I am as unscrupulous as most men; but to force one’s wife to swallow sour wine out of her innamorato’s brain-pan! faugh! it makes me sick to think on’t!’

It would exceed the limits of this paper to wind up the tale. Suffice it, the lady of the veil had been too great a sufferer in mind to profit by the interference of the English travellers,

‘The life of all her blood was touch’d corruptibly.’

She died that night.

It is also impossible here to dilate at full upon the future career of the Lady Elvira de Castro, whether or not she became the Marchioness of Castel Blastam, and, without having the fear of an ossified goblet constantly before her eyes, allowed her preserver from the Forty-seven to take her for his second, we cannot say. We may, however, presume such was the case, as it has been handed down to a particular friend of ours by his great-grandfather’s son, that the Marquis and Marchioness de Castel Blastam danced in the same set with Prince Charles and the Infanta of Spain, at Madrid, that very season.





The Black and White



The Duellists.

BY GEORGE SOANE.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, April, 1843.]



IN the reign of William the Third duelling had become as prevalent, and well-nigh as fatal, as the plague, much to the dissatisfaction of that monarch, who publicly threatened to let the law take its own course with the next offender. Amongst the most renowned of these followers of Caranza were Frank Raedale and Edward Torrington, who were intimate friends, but of widely different tempers—the one being as impetuous as he was dissolute, while the other was of a calm and sober disposition. Still further to cement their union, Edward was the accepted lover of his friend's sister.

Such was the state of things between them, when once a respectable-looking female came to Edward with a piteous tale of her daughter's seduction by Frank, and besought his mediation in obtaining the only reparation left to her child, by marriage, and Edward, after some hesitation, undertook the office. The scorn with which Frank received his remonstrances taxed even his patient temper beyond bearing. One word provoked another, until, stung into momentary forgetfulness of himself, he called Frank a scoundrel. To this the latter replied by a blow which sent him reeling on the greensward of the park. But no sooner was the blow given than it was heartily repented of, and Frank hastened to make every atonement that words could make for such an insult. Any other than the brother of his intended, Edward most assuredly would not have forgiven; but, allowing this circumstance to prevail with him above the usual considerations, he accepted the hand held out to him in reconciliation.

There the matter would have ended, had not a certain Major O'Connor, unnoticed by the disputants, been a witness to the whole transaction. This fire-eating personage now came forward from the trees that had concealed him, and began to take the young men to task in the tone of a father rebuking his children.

'By my soul, then! but it's meself that is sorry for you, lads! seeing you shaking hands there, and the dirt of that same blow

sticking to his face! Och! wasn't it all your own good luck, and the blessing of St. Patrick to boot, that I happened to be at your elbow, like the divel looking over St. Dunstan's shoulder? To be sure it was! And won't I be after putting you in the right way? To be sure I will, my jewels!

'Much obliged to you, Major, for your offer,' said Edward coldly, 'but we neither of us see any occasion for the affair going any further.'

'Then it's mighty blind you both are,' replied the Major. 'Arrah! now, what do you think the lads of the regiment will say when they get scent of this purty piece of business? On my honour and conscience! they'll cut you, as dead as herrings that haven't been to say for a fortnight! A pleasant good-morning to you both!' Saying which the indignant Major stalked haughtily away, carrying his nose high in the air, as if the earth had something offensive to its delicacy.

The Major's prognostics turned out too true. Only a few hours elapsed before they received a message from their brother-officers, to the effect that they could no longer be admitted to the regimental mess; and this was soon followed by a letter from the Colonel, recommending them both, and particularly Edward, to quit the army as soon as possible.

'This will never do,' said the latter to his friend; 'we must go out, or become outcasts from all society. You are too notorious as a swordsman for me to shun this matter any longer.'

In vain did Frank endeavour to combat this resolution—Edward continued firm; and the result was a visit to Major O'Connor. No sooner had this warlike personage sniffed the scent of blood, than his face, which on Edward's first entrance had been all frost, relaxed into smiles and sunshine; and he replied to the request that he would be his second, 'With all the pleasure in life, my dear boy. By my soul! then, but it's meself that is pleased intirely to hear you talk once more like a real gentleman, though it's rather of the latest. But, never bother yourself, my darling: anyhow, it's better late than niver; as ould Dan said when he married a young wife, and he siventty!'

In such hands an affair of this kind was not likely to hang fire. Had it been his own case, the Major could not have shown more promptitude; so that, on the evening of the same day, the friends found themselves opposed to each other on the greensward with crossed swords. Each at first was visibly anxious to spare the other; but, as they went on, their blood got heated, and, after a few slight wounds given and taken, it was plain that both were becoming more and more in earnest. At this juncture Frank stumbled, and received his adversary's sword in his bosom, when

the latter stood transfixed with horror, as if something of the kind were not precisely the result to be expected. The consequence was, that in a few hours Edward found himself in Newgate, with a fair prospect of being speedily hanged.

Dreary as was the night that followed his apprehension, he did not find himself half so wretched in the solitude of his cell as when the next morning he was turned out into the prison-yard, for the benefit of air and exercise, amongst a set of ruffians of every grade and description in the school of crime. His appearance was welcomed with a general shout from the whole gang, who crowded round him like so many wreckers round a stranded ship. The din they made was absolutely terrific!

'Silence! my masters—silence!' cried a tall, beetle-browed fellow, whose eyes were swollen, and his face soddened by a long course of intemperance; 'silence, while I try this here prisoner!'

'Ay! ay!' cried a second; 'and I'll be his counsel: so hand us over the fee, my covey!'

'And mine too!' shouted a third; 'I'll be the 'torney in this same cause: so "post the coal," my fine fellow! Down with "the Spanish"!''

'If it's money you want,' said Edward, holding out a handful of silver, 'here it is for you; but leave me in quiet!'

'Silence, there!' cried another—the punchinello of the gang; 'the gent wants to say his prayers before he's turned off!'

'Amen!' squeaked a fifth, snatching the hat from Edward's head, and sticking it on his own; an act which Edward was about to requite by knocking him down, when his hand was in good time stayed by the man who had claimed the office of judge.

'Better not!' said he, his tone and manner expressing more sympathy than could have been expected from his appearance. 'The lads will have their rig out, whether or no; and what's the good of your running contrary? We always tries every new-comer that has a whole coat to his back; and, let me tell you, besides, you may learn a secret worth knowing by it. If we acquit you, I'll bet a pint of half-and-half the jury does; and if we says "Guilty," I'm blest if you won't be scragged, or my name's not Tim Martin!'

Edward thought it best to give way to the current, which, indeed, he had no means of resisting; and the mock trial began with all due solemnity. The judge sat down on the pavement, spreading out before him an old piece of green baize, to give the appearance of a table; on either side of which ranged the counsel and attorneys; beyond, on the right, twelve ragged fellows formed a jury; and in front stood the prisoner, guarded by two pseudo-gaolers, who both looked and acted their parts to a nicety. The

case was now opened with infinite unction by the punchinello already spoken of.

'Gentlemen of the jury,' he began, 'the case—ahem!—is a case—ahem!—that I shan't make much bother about. The prisoner what stands at the bar—at the bar, I say!—is accused of murder; and a cruel ugly job it is, gentlemen of the jury!—a hanging matter, as you all knows very well, and no mistake—ahem! And when does he do this here murder? Vy, not in the night, like a cove that knows what's what, but in the broad daylight, proving as plain as the nose on your face that he don't care two damns for judge or jury! But you, gentlemen of the jury, will put him up to a wrinkle; you'll l'arn him that an independent English jury an't by no means to be boxed up for nothing, going without their natural wittles for I don't know how long! You'll show him——'

Here the opposite counsel bounced up, exclaiming:

'Blow me tight, my lud, if there's any case to go before the jury! there an't no *corpus delicti*—as we gentlemen of the law calls it; they can't show the body of the man what they wants to gammon your ludship was murdered.'

'Is it so, brother Tadpole?' asked the learned judge, addressing the counsel for the prosecution.

'Vy, as to the matter of the body, my lud, we have been looking high and low, and can't find it nowhere.'

'Then, —— you! hold your tongue!' said the judge. 'Prisoner at the bar! you may go about your business; that is, when you have paid your fees—a pint of stingo to each man round, and a pot to your learned judge for his trouble in trying you; and I'm blest if that an't getting law cheaper than I ever did!'

'I axes pardon, my lud!' exclaimed the defendant's counsel; 'but I'm instructed by my client to say as how he's quite agreeable to stand a pot all round, and a gallon to your ludship.'

This, by-the-bye, was a suggestion proceeding from the orator's own fertile imagination.

'Why, then, your client's a trump!' cried the judge, 'a rig'lar out-and-outer, and no mistake!'

Disgusted as Edward was with his companions, still he could not help feeling his hopes revive at the verdict of this mock jury; and, strange enough, the plea which was thus brought forward in jest by the acute vagabond turned out to be real. Before the day was over he received a visit from the little surgeon, who brought him the singular but glad tidings of the body having most mysteriously disappeared, no one knew how, when, or where; a fact which incensed the family of the deceased more and more against him, inasmuch as they attributed it, if not to his im-

mediate agency, at least to that of his friends. Their increase of wrath, however, signified but little, since the absence of the corpse left no case to go before the jury; and, when the day of trial came, the prisoner was of course acquitted.

When the first burst of joy was over at being thus freed from the consequences of his fatal duel, Edward began to be more painfully alive to his altered situation in regard to Emma. To all the letters he had sent her during his late imprisonment he had received but one reply, and that was brief enough, informing him that the proposed connection between them must now positively be considered as broken off. Not a word of sympathy was expressed for his probable fate, though an acute observer might, perhaps, have detected traces of suppressed feeling in the tremulous character of the writing. It had evidently been penned by no firm hand; and from several blotted letters, it might have been inferred, without much imputation of self-flattery, that tears, however unwillingly, had been dropped upon the paper. Nor had these more favourable signs altogether escaped the notice of Edward; they encouraged him to hope, notwithstanding her determined silence; and, day after day, he might be seen pacing up and down before her cottage in the neighbourhood of Edmonton. But to no purpose.

It must not be supposed the lady was at ease all this time. On the contrary, she still loved Edward as warmly as ever; her harshness being assumed only from a sense of duty, and in compliance with the incessant admonitions of her mother, and a numerous cabinet of aunts and cousins. But passion, though it may be silenced awhile, is generally, in the long-run, more than a match for the sage monitor who is said by physiologists to take up his dwelling in the brain. And now a new ally came into the field, in the person of her favourite Abigail; who, under the influence of a handsome bribe in hand, and the promise of remuneration in future if she succeeded, undertook Edward's cause; and so well did she manage matters, that the lady, pleased to be so persuaded, in a short time consented to receive a letter from him. The next thing was to prevail upon her to reply—no very difficult point after the Rubicon had been passed. Under the pretence, therefore, of a slight headache, she retired at an earlier hour than usual, to set about what was indeed a labour of love, but which proved a much more troublesome task than she had expected. Letter after letter was begun and flung aside unfinished; and when the clock of the village church had chimed three-quarters after eleven, she was no further advanced than at first.

'It is impossible,' she exclaimed, as she listened to the deep

vibrations—'utterly impossible! I can say nothing that will not lower me in my own eyes, and perhaps, too, in his!'

Scarcely had these words escaped her lips, than a hollow voice, that to her startled fancy sounded like a summons from the dead, exclaimed, 'Emma!'

The colour fled from her cheeks, and every limb shook as she gasped forth, 'Gracious Heaven! 'tis Frank's voice!'

At the same time, her eyes being accidentally directed to the mirror on the wall in front of her, she saw passing over it the shadowy semblance of her dead brother, much the same as he had been in life, except that the face was paler and thinner. At the sight of this apparition she gave a piercing shriek, and dropped senseless from her chair.

The day had been spent by Edward, like those of the previous three months, in keeping close watch upon the cottage, and it was not till the village clock had struck twelve that he reluctantly thought of going homewards. The night was dark, and the road was lonely; for in those days London was far from having made its present strides into the country; and as, moreover, there were no lamps beyond the suburbs, the way to Edmonton was peculiarly favourable to gentlemen in the habit of levying black-mail upon the traveller. But Edward paced on, in blissful forgetfulness of everything, except the one affair nearest to his heart, when he was suddenly roused from these waking dreams by the sharp ring of two pistols, fired in rapid succession. In the next moment there was a loud cry for help; upon which Edward lost no time in hurrying to the spot thus indicated, and, upon rounding the turn of the road, he could plainly see, dark as the night was, a man standing by the side of his fallen horse, and defending himself with difficulty against two footpads. As Edward neared the scene of contention, one of the ruffians called out to him, with a loud oath, to take himself off; a piece of advice which he repaid by a knock on the head, which laid the fellow sprawling. Though the remaining footpad held his ground desperately for a minute or so, yet a few sound raps from Edward's trusty cudgel, while he was employed in warding off the cuts and thrusts of his first adversary, convinced him that he had little to gain by continuing the fight, and, leaping the hedge, he disappeared in the darkness of the copse behind it. Edward, whose blood was now up, would have followed him, had he not been kept back by the more prudent traveller, who, as he laid his hand upon his arm, hastily exclaimed:

'Not a step that way, for all the wealth of Lombard Street! Who knows how many more there may be of these gentry? Besides, the wood beyond is full of pits and holes. No, no; safe we are, and safe we'll be, if you'll take my advice.'

'And what,' said Edward, 'are we to do with the fellow that lies bleeding and snorting on the ground here?'

'E'en let him lie, as my poor roan must do—a plague upon the knave that shot her! I trust to Heaven you have given him a knock that won't let him forget to-night in a hurry!'

'Pretty well for that, I fancy. Egad! his head rang like a pewter platter!'

Leaving the horse and the stunned robber to whatever fate day-break might bring them, the new friends made the best of their way to London, and in little more than two hours they stood at the door of the silversmith, for such the traveller proved to be. Here Edward would have left him; but the kind-hearted, though somewhat unpolished, citizen would not listen to anything of the kind.

'Coznouns, man!' he exclaimed, 'you have just saved my purse, and my life too, for aught I know; and, if we part so, my name's not Gould—old Jasper Gould, silversmith and citizen. What!—you must be both tired and hungry; I'm sure I am: so we'll have a snack of cold meat, some hot punch afterwards, and then "to bed, to bed," as the woman in the play says. To-morrow, at breakfast, you shall tell me all about yourself; who you are, what you are, and how the deuce you came to be prowling about the Edmonton road at such an hour.'

Edward suffered himself to be persuaded by the hospitable old man, who, it was evident, loved to have his own way, and, moreover, was in the habit of having it. The remains of a pigeon-pie of formidable dimensions, with cold fowl and ham, and what his host called 'the liquor conformable,' furnished an excellent supper, the said conformity of fluid being enough to send both the weary travellers off to bed in a particularly happy frame of mind.

The next morning the citizen was as good as his word, and scarcely had they sat down to breakfast than he entered upon his promised inquiries. 'You must not mind,' said he, 'the bluntness of an old cit, who is more used to deal in fine silver than fine words. Who and what are you?'

'I am a soldier, and my name is Edward Torrington,' replied the guest, hardly knowing whether to be amused or offended at his host's abruptness.

'I have heard that name before. And how are you off in the world? No great funds, I dare say, in hand, and perhaps not much more in expectation, eh?'

'You must excuse me, sir, if——'

'No, sir, I shan't excuse you. It's a maxim of mine to be in no man's debt a moment longer than I can help it. I owe you a

round sum for last night, and it isn't any nonsensical pride of yours that shall keep me from paying it.'

'Really, my good sir, you are not at all in my debt; nor can I allow the trifling service I had the good fortune to render you——'

'Trifling!' interrupted the citizen, with some heat; 'why, you saved my life, and do you call that a trifle? I know not what you may think; but, coznouns, man! I reckon old Jasper Gould of more value in the city than that comes to.'

'You misunderstand me, sir. I only meant to say, that I am happy if I have been of service to you, but cannot allow it to be made a money-matter between us.'

'Now that, I suppose, is what you fine gentlemen call honour. All moonshine on the water! A dram of common honesty is worth tons of such nonsense; and that you'll learn one day, when you've grown a little older, and maybe a little wiser.'

But Edward could by no means be brought to understand this debtor and creditor way of viewing the matter; and his well-disposed but truly business-like host was beginning to wax warm, when suddenly a thought seemed to strike him.

'Bless my soul!' he exclaimed; 'you must be the young man who killed Mr. Francis Raedale in a duel the other day!'

'I deeply regret to say I had that misfortune!'

'Bad enough, to be sure; but it would have been ten times worse if he had killed you. In that case, where should I have been last night? Besides, I have taken a liking to you; and, coznouns, man! whether you will or not, I'm determined to make your fortune. And who knows what may happen? I have neither chick nor child, nor, to say the truth, is there anyone that I much care about; and you know I must leave my money to somebody. I can't take it with me when I die.'

There was something so frank, so warm-hearted, in the old man's manner, while, at the same time, his curiosity was of so searching a nature, that Edward was soon led, almost in his own despite, to communicate to him the whole progress and mystery of his love-affairs. To these revelations did he, in the language of Othello, 'seriously incline'; but no sooner did he learn that Emma had broken off the intended union in consequence of the duel, and chiefly at her mother's instigation, than he burst out in exceeding wrath.

'Now, plague take them for a parcel of fools, or hypocrites! But I'll tame them! I'll put a bit in their mouths! Let them refuse me if they dare! I'll show them that one honest man living is worth a score of dead rogues. There's my hand on it; you shall marry the girl before you're ten days older—that is, if you don't alter your mind in the meanwhile.'

After much hesitation on the part of Edward, who had sore misgivings as to the intended proceedings, the secret of which his host resolutely refused to impart, it was at length agreed that they should go together to Edmonton, where one was to remain at the village inn, while the other went on to the Raedales. Delay of any kind was seldom allowed by the old man to interfere with a resolution once adopted; and, accordingly, in as little time as the distance admitted, he was knocking at the cottage-door, which was opened by a simple country girl, who had not yet learnt the necessary art of lying with discretion. Her negative to the demand 'if her mistress was at home?' could not for a moment deceive the shrewd inquirer.

In his usual blunt manner he exclaimed, 'What's your name, child?'

'Lucy, sir,' replied the girl, simpering, and colouring up to the eyes.

'Well, then, Lucy, I tell you that your mistress *is* at home; so you'll go and tell her that I am here—Jasper Gould, silversmith and citizen of London. Do you hear, child? And, in the meantime, show me into some room, where I may sit down; for it's not seemly that a man of my years and character should be kicking his heels in the passage.'

Lucy, half laughing, but wholly confounded, escorted him into the dining-room, and away she scuttled, with more haste than ceremony, to astonish the lady of the mansion with the obstinate determination of the stranger that she should be at home, all assurances to the contrary notwithstanding.

The first impulse of the old lady was to order the instant and absolute expulsion of the intruder; the next was a strong access of female curiosity to learn what could have brought to her dwelling Jasper Gould, silversmith and citizen of London, whose name she had never heard before; and yielding to the latter feeling, she descended to the dining-room, as stiff and starched as offended dignity and six yards of goodly black velvet could by possibility make her. But the dignity and the velvet were alike thrown away upon her visitant; and when she demanded, in a tone meant to freeze him, 'What is your pleasure, sir?' he replied:

'My pleasure?—humph! I rather think I've come for *your* pleasure—that is, if you're a reasonable woman; and you ought to be, for you're old enough.'

'Sir!' said the lady.

'Why, sure you're not fool enough to be affronted?' said the unabashed visitor. 'A dog, you know, must bark, or be dumb;

and we citizens are a blunt generation, who must talk in our own fashion if we are to talk at all.'

'To the purpose, sir, if you please.'

'Right, ma'am; that's speaking like a sensible woman; and so, not to stand shilly-shally, Mr. Edward Torrington loves your daughter; *per contra*, Miss Emma loves my young friend. I call him my friend, though it's scant four-and-twenty hours that I have known anything of him, except by name. But what then? He has done me a service that I shan't forget in a hurry; and, as he bears an excellent character in the world, I have a mind to make a man of him.'

'On this subject, sir, I have nothing to reply. I wish you a very good morning.'

And the old lady, who had scrupulously avoided either sitting down herself, or inviting him to a seat, was marching with a stately step to ring the bell, when he caught her arm.

'Don't be in such a hurry, ma'am! Slow and sure go farthest in a bargain. You had a son——'

'Sir, I must request that you will leave my house.'

'You had a son,' repeated the pertinacious visitant, 'who committed forgery, and upon me, too!—me! Jasper Gould, silversmith and citizen of London!'

The old lady turned deadly pale.

'Ay, you may stare; but seeing is believing. Here is the forged bill, with the documents that prove his roguery. Lucky for him that he got himself killed as he did, for I had made up my mind to hang him.'

'Thanks!' exclaimed the old lady; 'he is removed beyond the reach of human malice.'

'Malice!' replied the citizen, with sudden warmth; 'd——n it, ma'am—Heaven forgive me for swearing!—do you call it malice to hang a rascal who commits forgery? If he were my own son, he should swing for it! But, pshaw! what an old ass am I to be talking in this way! The poor rogue's dead—lucky for him; and so, if you'll give your daughter to Master Edward, I'll stand a couple of thousands, prompt payment, just to set the young folks going. What's better, I'll fling these papers into the fire; they're an ugly epitaph for him that's gone, and no particular credit to his family that's living.'

This was indeed touching a tender point; and, after some discussion, the old lady was fain to give her consent to her daughter's marriage; whereupon the citizen, with great glee, tossed all the documents into the fire. The papers had only just begun to blaze when a loud 'Hurrah!' was shouted from the next room, and in rushed a young man in a military cloak.

‘Merciful powers!’ exclaimed the old lady; ‘the spirit of my son!’

‘The devil a bit!’ replied the citizen; ‘never saw more solid bone and muscle in all my born days!’

A few words will suffice to explain the whole mystery. On the morning of the duel he had been carried from the field by a friend, who had sought him out to warn him that the officers of justice were close upon his heels for the forgery; and, finding that life still remained in the bleeding body, he lost no time in adopting the necessary measures for his safety on the one hand, and his restoration on the other. On his recovery, Frank not only felt the prudence of his friend’s precautions at the time, but resolved still to favour the report of his own death; and in this cautious plan he persisted, till, weary of a life of such constant restraint and anxiety, he determined to see his sister in private, and consult her on the best means of pacifying the plundered silversmith. For this purpose he had stolen in at the window when the house seemed quiet and there was no light abroad to betray him, and ensconced himself snugly in her chamber. Here, with his usual propensity to mischief, a sudden whim took him to play the part of his own ghost, the consequences of which went far beyond what he had intended. Emma, as we have already seen, fainted at the sound of his voice, but not before her cries had alarmed the house, so that he was fain to make a rapid retreat to prevent discovery.

Need we say that the old lady forgave her son as a matter of course?—that, equally as a matter of course, the silversmith was never heartily reconciled to Frank till he heard of his being killed by a thrust from a French bayonet in one of King William’s Continental campaigns? Or is it necessary to tell our sagacious readers that Emma and Edward were married, and enjoyed his especial favour; but still not so much so as their eldest-born, who was christened after him, and at his death was found to have inherited the greater part of his very handsome fortune?



Mr. Ashildale!

And Richard Bentley 1842



Sir Archibald !

BY R. DALTON BARHAM.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, December, 1842.]

PICTURE to yourself, imaginative reader, a gloomy, old-fashioned apartment :—the wainscoting of oak, which, after the fashion of ladies who put their trust in Kalydor and carmine, has been painted and varnished in tolerable imitation of itself ; the ceiling is dingy, and intersected by roughly-hewn beams ; the floor uneven, and covered with a carpet of apocryphal pattern. Adorn the walls with a tolerable allowance of pictures, sketches of eminent *figurantes*, a subscription portrait of Dr. Smith, head-master of —, another of the celebrated dog ‘ Billy ’ in the act of destroying rats, a “ Smuggler on the look-out,” and a couple of Old-English interiors : add thereto a sofa, chairs of various descriptions, most of which, together with the tables, are covered with promiscuous heaps of sporting magazines, examination-papers, cigar-boxes, books, gloves, pamphlets, and spurs, and you have a view of the ‘ rooms ’ in — College, where, as the Oxford men say, Mr. Macdonald ‘ kept ’—what he kept it would be difficult to discover ; certainly neither his tea nor his sugar, his wine nor his candles, nor, indeed, any article long, of portability and general consumption.

The tenant, enveloped in a gay dressing-gown, occupied an easy-chair on one side of the grate. He was a tall, handsome youth, but with somewhat of a foppish and dissipated air,—visible through the unusual seriousness which seemed now to oppress him. His lips were compressed, and his eyes fixed earnestly on the mouldering white ashes. Opposite to him reclined a gentleman, a Bachelor, some years his senior, and of a very different appearance. He was stout-built, short-necked, and high-shouldered ; had a vulgar, flushed complexion, relieved with light wiry whiskers. His costume was of a local nature, rarely to be met with beyond the boundaries of ‘ Alma Mater,’ and consisted of a sporting-coat of strictly academical cut, fastened below the chin with a small brass platter, or large button, above which protruded a tumour of blue satin, furnished with a couple of gold

knobs ; his vest was wonderful ; and his lower limbs were encased in trousers of rainbow-patterned plaid. His figure, upon the whole, might have suggested to a fanciful view the idea of a pouter-pigeon clothed in a 'cutaway.' He, too, like his host, was regarding the dying embers with very considerable gravity.

'What in the name of Heaven is to be done ?' exclaimed the latter, at length, in a desponding tone.

'Done?—hand over the claret, and a "*Principe*," and I'll tell you,' replied his friend. 'As the tin must be raised, what do you think of a voyage to the Caryatides, or whatever they call them ? Well, don't look disgusted. I've another notion—one not so original, perhaps, but more to the purpose. Write to our sovereign lady, the Governess.'

'My mother ?' said the young man.

'Of course—my mother,' returned his Mentor, adding, in pleasing parody, 'Oh ! thou must come down with the dust, oh !—my Mother !'

'Hold, Asgill—hold ! To send me here she has already made such sacrifices as I shudder to think of ; has denied herself the comforts—ay, almost the necessities of life. She would not have me see it—but no matter—not one word of my mother. Even now,' he added, after a pause, 'even now, while we are pouring this costly poison down our throats, her fare may, for aught I know, be bread and water.'

'Then why the devil don't you mix it, and make negus for the family ?' asked Mr. Asgill. 'Nay, never bend your brows, man ! If the mother won't do, haven't you got such a thing as a melodramatic uncle, all rage and rhino, who'll knock you down, pay your debts, and talk about his extravagant dog of a nephew ?'

Macdonald shook his head.

'And yet,' said the other more seriously, 'I think I have heard you speak of a certain Sir Gilbert as a near relation.'

'We are but distantly connected : moreover, he has sons of his own,—is a stranger, and, if report speaks true, churlish, and miserly to boot.'

'Offer him ten per cent. and a corner in your will.'

'No !' exclaimed the young man bitterly. 'My own folly has left me no hope—no prospect but a jail, disgrace, and ruin ! This it is to live "fast" at Oxford !'

'Very good, indeed,' remarked Mr. Asgill, emptying his tumbler at a draught. 'In the meantime, let's have one more pull at the cruet, and then we'll try the pasteboard. The hell is at Beauchamp's rooms to-night.'

'I will not go. I have not a guinea left to hazard.'

'What of that ?' returned the other, with a laugh. 'Your

I.O.U. passes current yet ; so my advice is, sport it freely—raise what you can on your books and “thirds”—go the pace till the vacation, and then—emigrate. Hush!—a knock. Do you encourage duns at this hour?’

The knock was repeated, and, though no permission was given, the door opened, and in walked a short, stout individual in top-boots. The countenance of the intruder, though ample, was not prepossessing, being overgrown with thick, black, bushy hair, set off with a complexion of many hues, among which crimson and purple appeared to preponderate. His costume was of the same class as Mr. Asgill’s, but of a graver and more business-like character ; the coat was greener, the waistcoat larger, the buttons bigger. He looked the very grandfather of all cut-away-coated gentry, and was, ‘ay, every inch, a’ horse-dealer.

‘Ah ! Grizly,’ said Macdonald, with a very unsuccessful attempt at a smile, ‘how do, old fellow ? Take a glass of claret?’

‘No, sir, no,’ replied Mr. Grizly in a deep, husky tone, the result partly of cold, partly of ‘cold without ;’—‘I don’t want no claret. I have come, sir, about my small account—£195 10s. 6d. ; and, as I have a heavy bill to make up to-morrow, it would be convenient if you would settle at once.’

‘Impossible !’ returned the other.

‘Well, sir, as the whole is impossible, I must be content with a part ; so, if you will just hand over eighty or a hundred pound on account—’

‘My good Grizly, just at this time I really happen to be singularly short of cash ; but I expect remittances, and before the end of term—’

‘Now, ain’t this a pretty go?’ interrupted the horse-dealer, straining fearfully at pathos : ‘I only ask you, Mr. Asgill. Here am I, vith a vife and family and two twins, put off in this manner by a gen’l’mán as calls hisself a gen’l’mán. Why, s’help *me* ! I’ve mouths to feed, and eddication to pay for, and not a fi’pun note in the house. Ve shall all of us have to come to oats and hoss-flesh.’

‘Try beans, Grizzy,’ said Asgill.

‘Ah ! it’s all very well,’ continued the other ; ‘but I call it nothing but swindling for a man as comes up here only to larn a living for to go larking about like a gen’l’mán of property, vith his hacks and hunters, dogs and tandems, when their friends never see anything above a vun-hoss-shay or a four-wheeler.’

‘You insolent scoundrel !’ exclaimed Macdonald, as he felt the blood rushing to his face, ‘quit my rooms this instant !’

‘I shan’t quit no rooms,’ answered he of the top-boots doggedly, ‘till I gets my money.’

'Pray permit me to arrange this little affair,' uttered at this moment a low, pleasant voice, which seemed to proceed from an individual who had entered unobserved. 'Your name, sir,' pursued the stranger, a mild, middle-aged gentleman, with black clothes, powdered head, and pigtail, 'is, if I apprehend rightly——'

'Archibald Macdonald, sir.'

'As I know to my cost,' grumbled Mr. Grizly.

'Pray, my good man, be respectful,' said the mild gentleman. 'Of course you will be satisfied. I take the responsibility upon myself of declaring that your account shall, after proper examination, be discharged. I pledge the professional reputation of the firm of Dibbs and Slowcock to the fact; and, as soon as Sir Archibald——'

'*Sir Archibald!*' exclaimed Asgill, starting up.

'*Sir Archibald!*' echoed the young man himself.

'*Sir Archibald!*' stammered Mr. Grizly.

'Why, of course, *Sir Archibald,*' repeated the gentleman with the pigtail, betraying quite as much astonishment as any of the party.

'What the devil do you mean?' inquired the Bachelor.

'Mean?—why, surely, gentlemen—you are aware—you know—you have seen from the papers——'

'I am aware of nothing, sir, and know nothing, and I never look at the papers,' interrupted Macdonald impatiently.

'Indeed, sir; how very odd!' observed the lawyer; 'never look at the papers—dear me! But, still, you have received a private communication from our house—Dibbs and Slowcock, sir, Chancery Lane?'

Macdonald pointed, with a melancholy smile, to a heap of unopened letters, the greater part of which certainly presented no very alluring aspect.

'You see, sir, study precludes my paying any very great attention to correspondents. Pray explain yourself.'

The middle-aged gentleman partook of snuff with gravity.

'Then, sir,' said he slowly, 'you are, possibly, not aware of the melancholy decease of the late Sir Gilbert Macdonald and his two sons,—their yacht foundered in the night off Cowes, and every soul on board perished. You, sir, I presume, are, without doubt, heir both to title and estate.'

'Whoo—whoop!' shrieked Mr. Asgill, giving the death-halloo with enviable presence of mind, and in a tone so loud and shrill as to penetrate the double-doored and double-curtained common room. 'Archy, my boy, your hand! yours too, old Dibbs and Slowcock—no, hang it! give us your pig-tail! and, Grizly, you

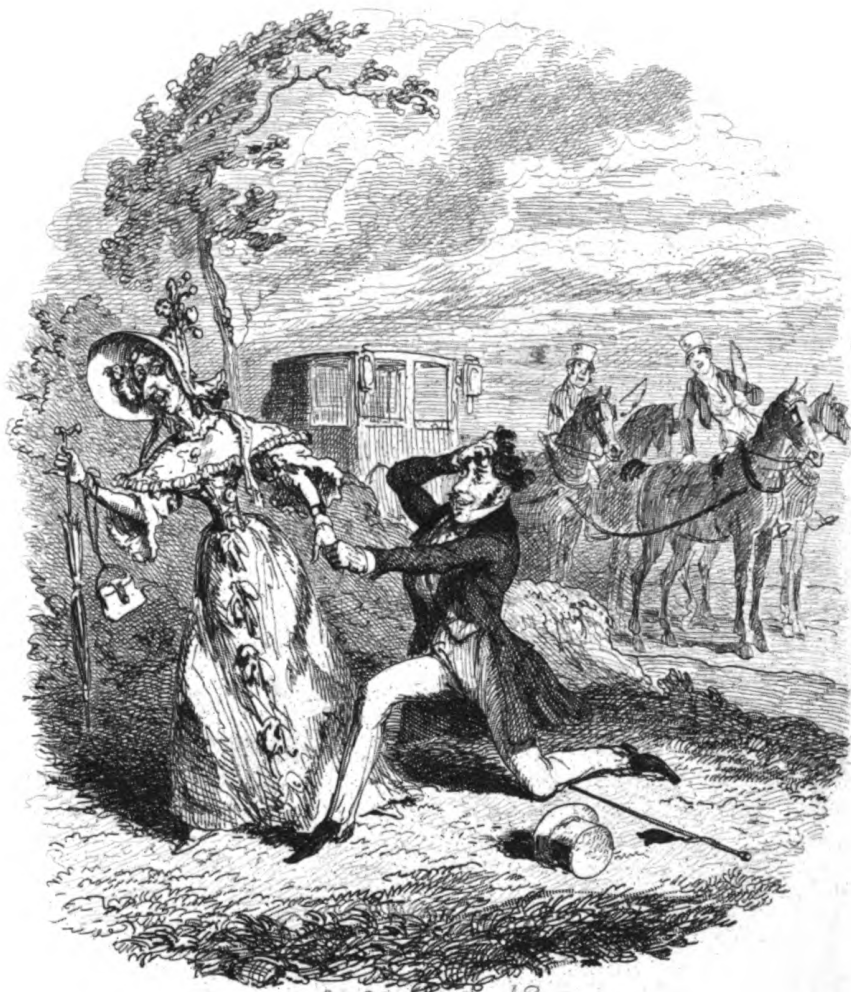
ruffian! put to the chestnut team, pack up a dozen of champagne from Ridley's, with a box of old Gag's "Emperor of Morocco" cigars; we'll be off to town at once: and, by the way, Nibbs, you may hand over a couple of "ponies" on account,—'pikes *must* be paid.'

'I was a-going to venture to observe, gen'l'men,' remarked Mr. Grizly, breaking into a truly paternal smile, and fumbling with the clasp of a plethoric-looking pocket-book, 'that I've an odd twenty-pun' note or two, which, if I might make so free with Sir Archibald——'

'Oh, dear me! no, my good man,' interposed the lawyer, upon whom the equestrian metaphor began to break; 'on no account, I beg: with Sir Archibald's permission we will act as his bankers for the present.'

'Well, settle it among yourselves, old fellows,' said Asgill kindly; 'only have the drag ready in half an hour; bring round a ladder to the back of the buttery, and, hey for London!'

As for Macdonald, he said nothing, saw nothing; but to his friend's intense surprise and amusement, buried his head between his hands and burst into tears.



Geo. Cruikshank

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

1660-1800



H. N. S. 1660-1800

The history of the Royal Society of London, from its foundation in 1660 to the present time, is a subject of great interest and importance. It is a subject which has attracted the attention of many of the most distinguished writers of the age, and which has been the subject of many valuable works. The history of the Royal Society is a history of the progress of science, and of the efforts of men to discover the laws of nature. It is a history of the triumph of reason over superstition, and of the power of human inquiry. The Royal Society has been the cradle of many of the most important discoveries of modern science, and it has been the centre of many of the most important scientific movements of the age. The history of the Royal Society is a history of the human mind, and of the human spirit. It is a history of the triumph of the human mind over the limitations of the human body, and of the human spirit over the limitations of the human world. The history of the Royal Society is a history of the human race, and of the human future. It is a history of the triumph of the human race over the limitations of the human condition, and of the human future over the limitations of the human present.



The Romance of a Day.

A PASSAGE IN THE LIFE OF AN ADVENTURER.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, June, 1837.]



WHEN things are at the worst, they are sure to mend, says the old adage; and the hero of the following narrative is a case in point. Dick Diddler was a distant connexion, by the mother's side, of the famous Jeremy, immortalized by Kenny. He was a shrewd, reckless adventurer, gifted with an elastic conscience that would stretch like indiarubber, and a genius for raising the wind unsurpassed by Æolus himself. At the period to which this tale refers, he had dissipated at the minor West-End hells, and elsewhere, the last farthing of a pittance which he inherited from his father; and was considerably in arrears with his landlady, a waspish gentlewoman who rented what she complacently termed 'an airy house' in the windiest quarter of Camden Town. This was embarrassing; but Dick was not one to despair. He had high animal spirits, knowledge of the world, imperturbable self-possession, good exterior, plausible address, and a modesty which he felt persuaded would never stand in the way of his advancement.

Thousands of London adventurers, it has been observed, rise in the morning without knowing how they shall provide a meal for the day. Our hero was just now in this predicament, for he had not even the means of procuring a breakfast. Something, however, must be done, and that immediately, so he applied himself to a cracked bell which stood on his ill-conditioned table, and, while waiting his landlady's answer to the tintinnabulary summons, occupied himself by casting a scrutinizing glance at his outer Adam. Alas! there was little here to gratify the eye of taste and gentility! His coat was in that peculiar state denominated 'seedy,' his linen was as yellow as a sea-sick cockney, and his trousers evinced tokens of an antiquity better qualified to inspire reverence than admiration.

Just as he had completed his survey, his landlady entered the room, accompanied by her first-born,—a hopeful youth, with a fine

expanse of mouth calculated seriously to perplex a quartern loaf. Dick perused her features attentively, and thought he had never before seen her look so ugly. But this of course: Venus herself would look a fright, if she came to dun for money.

'Ah, poppet, is that you?' exclaimed Dick, affectionately patting the urchin's head, by way of an agreeable commencement to the conversation; 'why, how the dear boy grows! Blessings on his pretty face; he's the very image of his ma!'

'Come, come, Mr. Diddler,' replied Mrs. Dibbs, 'that language won't do no longer. You've been blessing little Tom twice a day ever since you got into my books, but I'm not going to take out my account in blessings. Blessings won't pay my milk-score, so I must have my money,—and this very day too, for I've got a bill to make up to-morrow.'

'Have patience, my good lady, and all will be right.'

'Ay, so you've said for the last month; but saying's one thing, and doing's another.'

'Very good.'

'But it ain't very good; it's very bad.'

'Well, well, no matter, Mrs. D——'

'No matter! But I say it is a great matter—a matter of ten pounds fifteen shillings, to say nothing of them oysters what you did me out of last night.'

'Exactly so; and you shall have it all this very day, for it so happens that I'm going into the City to receive payment of a debt that has been owing me since November last. And this reminds me that I have not yet breakfasted; so pray send up—now don't apologise, for you could not possibly have known that I had an appointment in Fenchurch Street at ten o'clock.'

'Breakfast!' exclaimed Mrs. Dibbs with a disdainful toss of her head; 'no, no; not a mouthful shall you have till I get my money: I'm quite sick of your promises.'

'Nay, but my dear Mrs. D——'

'It's no use argufying the p'int; what I've said, I'll stand to. Come, Tom—drat the boy! why don't you come?' and so saying, the choleric dame, catching fast hold of her son by the pinafore, flounced out of the room, banging the door after her with the emphasis of a hurricane.

Dick remained a few minutes behind, in the hope that breakfast might yet be forthcoming: but finding that there was not the slightest prospect of his landlady's relenting, he, in the true spirit of an indignant Briton, consigned her 'eyes' to perdition; and, having just expectorated his wrath, began to furbish up his faded apparel. He tucked in his saffron shirt-collar; buttoned up his coat to the chin, refreshing the white seams with the 'Patent

Reviver ;' smoothed round his silk hat, which luckily was in good preservation ; and then rushed out of the house with the desperate determination of breakfasting at some one's expense. There is nothing like the gastric juice to stimulate a man's ingenuity. It is the secret of half the poetic inspiration in our literature.

Chance—or perhaps that ruling destiny which, do what we will, still sways all our actions—led Dick's steps in the direction of the Hampstead Road. It was a bright, cool summer morning ; the housemaids were at work with their brooms outside the cottages ; the milkman was going his rounds with his 'sky-blue ;' and the shiny porter-pots yet hung upon the garden rails. As our hero moved onward, keeping his mouth close shut, lest the lively wind might act too excitingly on his unfurnished epigastrium, his attentive optics chanced to fall on a cottage, in the front parlour of which, the window being open, he beheld a sight that roused all the shark or alderman within him, to wit, a breakfast set forth in a style that might have created an appetite 'under the ribs of death.' Dick stopped : the case was desperate ; but his self-possession was equal to the emergency. 'A Mr. Smith lives here.' said he, running his eye hastily over the premises : 'the bower, and the wooden god, those trees so neatly clipped, and that commonplace-looking terrier sleeping at the gate, with his nose poked through the rails, all betoken the habits and fancies of a Smith. Good ! I will favour the gentleman with a call ;' and with these words Dick gave a vehement pull at the garden bell.

'Is Mr. Smith at home ?' he inquired with an air of easy assurance that produced an instant effect on the girl who answered the bell.

'No, sir.'

'Upon my life, that's very awkward ; particularly so as he requested me to be——'

'Oh ! I suppose, then, you're the gentleman that was expected here to breakfast this morning ?'

'The very same, my dear.'

'Well,' continued the girl, unlocking the gate, 'master desired me to say that you were to walk in, and not wait for him, for he had to go into Tottenham Court Road on business, and should not be back for an hour.'

Dick took the hint, walked in, and in an instant was hard at work.

How he punished the invigorating coffee ! What havoc he wrought among the eggs and French rolls ! Never was seen such voracity since the days of the ventripotent Heliogabalus. His expedition was on a par with his prowess, for Mr. Smith's guest being momentarily expected, he felt that he had not a moment to lose. Accordingly, after doing prompt, impartial justice to every

article on the table, he coolly rang the bell, and, without noticing the muttered 'My stars!' of the servant as she glanced at the wreck before her, he desired her to tell Mr. Smith that, as he had a visit to pay in the neighbourhood, he could not wait longer for him, but would call again in the course of the day; and then, putting on his hat with an air, he quitted the cottage on the best possible terms with himself and all the world. There is nothing like good eating and drinking to bring out the humanities.

Having no professional duties to attend to, Dick strolled on to Hampstead Heath, where he seated himself on a bench that commands an extensive view towards the west and north. Here he continued musing upwards of an hour, in that buoyant mood which a good breakfast never fails to call forth. It was early yet to trouble himself about dinner or his landlady's bill; and Dick was not the man to recognise a grievance till it stared him in the face, when, if he could not give it the cut direct, he would boldly confront and grapple with it: so he occupied himself with whistling one of Macheath's songs in the Beggar's Opera.

While thus idling away his time, and picturing in his mind's eye the perplexed visages of Mr. Smith and his guest when they should become acquainted with the extent of their calamity, Dick's attention was suddenly directed to the sound of voices near him. He listened; and, from the dulcet accents in which the conversation was carried on, felt persuaded that the parties were making love. Curious to ascertain who they were, he retreated behind one of the broadest elms on the terrace, and there beheld a dry old maid, thin as a threadpaper, and straight as a stick of sealing-wax, smirking and affecting to blush at something that was whispered in her ear by a young man. Our adventurer fancied that the latter's person was familiar to him; so, the instant the enamoured turtles separated, he emerged from his hiding-place, and saw, advancing towards the bench he had just quitted, an old com-rogue, to whom in his better days he had lost many a sum at the gaming-table.

The recognition was mutual.

'What! Dick Diddler?'

'What! Sam Spragge?'

'Why, Sam, what has brought you here at this hour?' quoth our hero.

Samuel smiled, and pointed significantly towards the ancient virgin, who was just then crossing the Heath, near the donkey-stand.

'Hem! I understand. Much property?'

'Eight hundred a year at her own disposal, and two thousand

three per cents. at the death of a crusty, invalid brother-in-law, who lives with her in that old-fashioned house she is now entering.'

'Eight hundred a year!' said Dick, musing; 'lucky dog! And how long have you known her?'

'Oh! an eternity. Three days.'

'And where did you pick her up?'

'Under a gateway in Camden Town, where we were both standing up from the rain.'

'You seem to have made excellent use of your time.'

'Nothing easier. I could see at a glance that she was quite as anxious for a husband as I am for a rich wife; so, after some indifferent chat about the weather, etc., I prevailed on her to accept of my escort home; talked lots of sentiment as we jogged along under my umbrella; praised her beauty to the skies,—for she is inordinately vain, though ugly enough, as you must have seen, to scare a ghost—and, in short, did not quit her till she had promised to meet me on the following day.'

'And she kept her word, no doubt?'

'Yes, I have now seen her four times, and am sure that if I could but muster up funds enough for a Gretna Green trip—for she has all the romance of a boarding-school girl—I could carry her off this very night. But I cannot, Dick, I cannot;' and Sam heaved a sigh that was quite pathetic.

'Can you not borrow of her?—'tis for her own good, you know.'

'Impossible! I have represented myself as a man of substance; and, were she once to suppose me otherwise, so quick-witted is she on money matters, that she would instantly give me my dismissal.'

'And what is your angel's name?'

'Priscilla Spriggins.'

'My dear fellow,' exclaimed Dick with a sudden burst of emotion, 'from my soul I pity you; but, alas! sympathy is all I have to offer:—look here!' and, turning his empty pockets inside out, he displayed two holes therein, about as big as the aperture of a mouse-trap.

An expressive pause followed this touching exhibition; shortly after which the two adventurers parted,—Sam returning towards London, with a view, no doubt, of seeking, like Apollyon, 'whom he might devour;' and Dick remaining where he was, casting ever and anon a glance towards the house where the fair Priscilla vegetated, and meditating, the while, on the revelation that had just been made to him.

Tired at length of reverie, he arose from the bench, and made his way back into Hampstead,—slowly, for every step was bringing him nearer the residence of his unreasonable landlady. On pass-

ing down by Mount Vernon, he beheld the walls on either side of him placarded with handbills announcing that an auction was to take place that day at a large old family mansion (the by-streets of Hampstead abound in such) close by ; and, on moving towards the spot, he saw, by the groups of people who were lounging at the open door, that the sale had already begun. By way of killing an idle half-hour or so, Dick entered ; and, elbowing his way upstairs, soon found himself in a spacious drawing-room, crowded with pictures, vases, old porcelain, and other articles of *virtù*.

Just at that moment the auctioneer put up a landscape painting by one of the old masters, on which he expatiated with the customary professional eloquence. 'Going, ladies and gentlemen, going for two hundred pounds—undoubted Paul Potter—highly admired by the late lamented Lawrence—sheep so naturally coloured, you'd swear you could hear 'em bleat—frame, too, in excellent condition—going—going——'

'Two hundred and thirty !' said a small gentleman in spectacles, raising himself on tip-toe to catch the auctioneer's eye.

'Two hundred and fifty' shouted another.

'Going for two hundred and fifty,' said the man in the rostrum ; after a pause, 'upon my word, ladies and gentlemen, this is giving away the picture. Pray look at that fore-shortened old ram in the background ; why, his two horns alone are worth the money. Let me beg, for the honour of art, that——'

'Three hundred !' roared Dick, with an intrepid effrontery that extorted universal respect,—for to his other amiable qualities he added that of being a 'brag' of the first water, and was proud, even though it were but for a moment, of displaying his consequence among strangers.

As this was the highest bidding, the picture was knocked down to our hero, who, having cracked his joke, and gratified his swaggering propensities, was about to beat a retreat, when he found his elbow twitched by a nervous, eager little man—a duodecimo edition of a virtuoso—who had only that moment entered the room.

'So you have purchased that Paul Potter, sir, I understand,' said the stranger, wiping the perspiration from his bald head, and evidently struggling with his vexation.

Dick nodded an affirmative, not a little curious to know what would come next.

'Bless my soul, how unlucky ! To think that I should have been only five minutes too late, and such a run as I had for it ! Excuse the liberty I am taking, but have you any wish to be off your bargain, sir?—not that I am particularly anxious about the picture—I merely ask for information ; that's all, sir, I assure

you,' added the virtuoso, aware that he had committed himself, and endeavouring to retrieve his blunder.

Dick cast one of his most searching glances at the stranger; and, reading in his countenance the anxiety he would fain have concealed under a show of indifference, said in his slyest and most composed manner, 'May I beg to be favoured with your name, sir?'

'Smithson, sir,—Richard Smithson, agent to Lord Theodore Thickskull, whose picture-gallery I have the honour of a commission to furnish; and happening to read a day or two ago in the *Times* that a few old paintings were to be disposed of by auction here on the premises, I thought, perhaps——'

'Indeed! That alters the case,' replied our hero with an air of dignified courtesy, 'for I have some slight acquaintance with his lordship myself.'

'Bless my soul, how odd!—how uncommonly odd! Possibly, then, for my lord's sake, you will not object to——'

'No,' replied Dick, smiling, 'I did not say that.'

'Rely on it, sir,' continued the fidgety little virtuoso, 'you are mistaken in your estimate of that painting. They say it is a Paul Potter; but it's no such thing—no such thing, sir.'

'Then why are you so anxious to get possession of it?'

'Who? I, sir? Bless my soul, I'm not anxious. I merely thought that as his lordship was particularly partial to landscapes, he might be tempted, perhaps, to give more——'

'Well,' said Dick, eager to bring the matter to a conclusion, 'as I have no very pressing desire to retain the picture, though it is the very thing for my library in Mount Street, you shall have it; but on certain conditions.'

'Name them, my dear sir, name them,' said the virtuoso, his eyes sparkling with animation.

'I have bought the painting,' resumed Dick, 'for three hundred guineas; now, you shall have it for six hundred. You see, I put the matter quite on a footing of business, without the slightest reference to his lordship.'

'Six hundred guineas! Bless my soul, impossible!'

'As you please,' replied our hero with exquisite monchalance; 'I am indifferent about the matter.'

'Say four hundred, sir.'

'Not a farthing less. The pictures in this house, as the advertisement which brought me up here at this unreasonable hour, before I had even time to complete my toilette, justly observes, have been long celebrated, and——'

'I'll give you five hundred,' replied Smithson, cutting short Dick's remarks.

'Well, well, for his lordship's sake——'

‘Good!’ exclaimed the virtuoso; and hurrying Dick to a more quiet corner of the room, he took out pen and inkhorn, wrote a cheque on a West-End banker for the amount of the balance, thrust it into his hand, and then, after assuring him that he would arrange everything with the auctioneer, and would not trouble him to stay longer, hurried away towards the rostrum, as though he feared our hero would repent the transfer of a painting for which he himself imagined he should be able to screw about eight hundred pounds out of his lordship, who was remarkable for the readiness with which he paid through the nose.

No sooner had Dick lost sight of Mr. Smithson, than away he flew from the house, bounding and taking big leaps like a ram, till he reached the main street, when, changing his exultant pace for a more sober and gentlemanlike one, he hailed the Hampstead coach, which was about leaving the office, snugly ensconced himself inside, and within the hour was deposited at Charing-cross.

‘Coachman,’ quoth our hero, as the Jehu, having descended from his box, held out his hand to receive the usual fare, ‘I am rather delicately situated.’

‘Humph!’ replied the man, who seemed perfectly to comprehend, though not to sympathise with, the delicacy of the case, ‘sorry for it; but master always says, says he——’

‘The fact is,’ continued Dick, interrupting what bade fair to become a prolix Philippic, ‘though I have not a farthing in my pocket, having forgotten to take out my purse this morning, yet as I am just going to receive cash for a two hundred pound cheque, and shall return with you to Hampstead, I presume the delay of an hour will make no great difference.’

The coachman, whose white round face usually beamed with all the bland expression of a turnip, evinced symptoms of an uneasy distrust at this speech: but when Dick exhibited the cheque—not relishing the idea of a ‘bolt,’ long experience having no doubt taught him that coachmen running after a fare are apt to run with most inconvenient velocity—when, I say, Dick exhibited this convincing scrap of paper, all Jehu’s suspicions vanished, and, touching the shining edge of his hat, he absolved our hero from extempore payment, with a bow that might have done honour to a Margate dancing-master.

This knotty point settled, the ingenious Richard next posted off in a cab to the banker’s,—for it was beneath his dignity to walk,—presented his cheque, received the amount, placed it securely in his waistcoat pocket, and then made all possible haste to a well-known shop in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, where every item necessary to perfect the man of fashion may be procured at a minute’s notice.

Our hero entered the shop in a condition bordering upon the shabby genteel, though his person and address were a handsome set-off against the infirmities of his apparel: he came out dressed in the very height of ton. The hue of his linen was unimpeachable; his pantaloons fitted to a miracle; his coat was guiltless of a wrinkle. Then his gay, glossy silk waistcoat, to say nothing of—but enough; the metamorphosis was complete—the snake had cast its skin—the grub was transformed into the butterfly.

But, startling as was the change which his Hampstead speculation had wrought in his person, still more so was its effect on his mind. Here an entire revolution was already in full activity. Vast ideas fermented in his brain. He no longer crept along with the downcast look of an adventurer, but stared boldly about him, as one conscious that he was somebody. And so he was. It is not everyone who cuts a figure at the West-End that can boast of the possession of two hundred pounds!

On his road back to Charing Cross, the first object which caught our hero's eye was the Hampstead coach preparing to set out on its return. The sight brought to his recollection the fair Priscilla Spriggins; and in an instant, with the decision of a Napoleon, he resolved to make a 'Bold Stroke for a Wife,' and carry her off to Gretna that very night. The scheme was hopeless, you will say: granted; but Dick was formed to vanquish, not be vanquished by, circumstances. 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' said he; 'so here goes;' and in he popped.

It was now about two o'clock, the hour when the fair inhabitants of our cockney Arcadia are in the habit of taking the air on the Heath, some with work-bags, some with the 'last new novel,' but the majority with *Bentley's Miscellany* in their hands. Dick no sooner reached the donkey-stand than he seated himself on a bench close by,—where two young ladies were standing, fondly imagining that they beheld Windsor Castle through a spy-glass,—and looked anxiously about him, to see if he could detect Miss Spriggins among the peripatetics. But no Priscilla was visible. How, therefore, should he act? 'Wait,' said common sense; so Dick waited.

Half an hour had elapsed, and he was beginning to get impatient, when suddenly, on casting his eye towards the lady's house, he saw the door open, and Miss Spriggins herself stepped forth, with a novel in one hand, and a pea-green parasol in the other. Dick watched her motions as a cat watches a mouse: saw her steal away towards a retired quarter of the Heath, and, having made up his mind as to the line of conduct he should pursue, started from his seat and followed quickly in her wake.

On reaching her side, 'Miss Spriggins, I presume?' said he with a profound obeisance.

'The same, sir,' replied the surprised Priscilla.

'Ah! madam,' resumed Dick, bursting at once into a sentimental vein, for he felt that every minute was precious, 'happy am I to see that enchanting face once more.'

'Excuse me, sir,' said Miss Spriggins, affecting to bridle up; 'but really I do not comprehend——'

'Comprehend, madam!—and how should you? I scarcely comprehend myself. But how should it be otherwise, when for weeks past I have daily wandered over this romantic heath, hoping, but, alas! in vain, to catch one stray gleam of that sunny beauty which last April—how well I remember the date!—so riveted my fancy as it flashed on me from the front drawing-room of yonder house;' and Dick pointed towards Priscilla's dwelling.

'Really, sir, this language——'

'Is the language of frenzy, maybe; but it is the language also of passion. Ah! madam, if you but knew the flame that that one casual glimpse of your bewitching countenance lit up in my unhappy heart, you would pity what I now feel. Would to God that you were as much a stranger to me as I am to you, for then I should cease to be the wretch I am;' and Dick, having no onion ready, turned away his head, and covered his face with his handkerchief.

'Sir,' replied Miss Spriggins, startled, yet far from displeased, 'I really know not what answer to make to this most extraordinary——'

'Extraordinary, madam? Is it extraordinary to admire beauty—to reverence perfection—to live but in the hope of again seeing her who, once seen, can never be forgotten—is this extraordinary? If so, then am I the most extraordinary of men. Revered Priscilla,—Miss Spriggins, I should say,—your beauty has undone me. I should have joined my regiment at Carlisle ere now; but you, and you only, have kept me lingering in this sylvan district. Ah, madam! Captain Felix O'Flam was happy till he saw you,—happy, even though deceived by one whom he once thought his friend.'

The fair Priscilla, whose predominant infirmity, as has been before observed, was an indigestion of celibacy, could not witness the affliction of the dashing young man before her without sympathising with him; perceiving which, Dick continued,

'I see you pity me, madam, and your pity would be still more profound did you know all. It is no later than last week that I became acquainted with the arts of an adventurer named Spragge, who, for months previously, having wormed himself into my confidence, had led me to believe that——'

'Spragge!' interrupted Miss Spriggins, with a look of huge dismay; 'and pray what sort of a person may he have been?'

In reply, Dick described Sam to the life; whereupon his companion, no longer able to conceal her rage, exclaimed abruptly, 'The wretch!—what an escape have I had!'

'Escape, madam! How so? Has the villain dared to deceive you, as he has me? I know that he is one of those plausible, unprincipled adventurers about town, who make a point of preying on the unwary—and such he must have considered me, when he introduced himself one morning as a relation of the commanding officer of my regiment;—but that he should have presumed to——'

'Oh no, captain,' replied Miss Spriggins, with evident embarrassment; 'I was never his dupe. He merely called,—if indeed it be the same person, as I feel convinced it is,—one day last week at my brother's, on some pretence or other, which—which—But I have done with him, the monster!'

'Call on you, madam!' replied Dick, adroitly giving in to the lady's little deviation from fact; 'call on you, when I dared not approach your threshold! But enough—I'll cut his throat!'

'No, no, captain; believe me, he is unworthy of your revenge.'

'You say right, madam; for, since I have found reason to suspect him, I have instituted inquiries into his character, and am told that he is beneath contempt. Why—would you believe it?—the fellow has been twice ducked in a horse-pond, for thimble-rigging, at Epsom,—flogged at the cart's tail for petty larceny, rubbed down with vinegar, and set in the black hole to dry.'

'Mercy on us! you don't say so?'

'Fact. But to quit this unworthy theme, and revert to a more pleasing one:—May I, madam,'—and Dick here put on his most wheedling air,—'may I, having at length been honoured with one interview with you, presume to hope for a second? Say only that we may again meet,—nay, that this very evening we may take a stroll together through these sequestered shades,—and make me the happiest of men. Alas! I once thought that fortune alone was necessary to constitute felicity; but, now that I have *that*, I feel 'tis as nothing; and that love,—disinterested, impassioned love, is the main ingredient in the cup of human bliss. Give me but the woman I adore, and I ask—I expect nothing further; but wealth without her is a mere mockery.'

This rhapsody had more effect on his companion than anything Dick had yet said. It was a shot between wind and water.

'Oh, captain!' replied Priscilla, 'I appreciate your generous sentiments; and, to convince you that I am not unworthy to share

them, will—however strange it may appear in a young and timid female—consent to see you once more. But, remember, it must be our last interview ;’ and she sighed,—and so did Dick.

‘Adieu, then, idol of my soul ! if so I may presume to call you,’ exclaimed this ingenuous young man ; ‘adieu, till the shades of twilight lengthen along the horse-pond hard by the donkey-stand, when we will meet again, and the thrice-blessed Felix——’ Dick stopped ; seized the lady’s hand, which she faintly struggled to withdraw, imprinted on it a kiss that ‘came twanging off,’ as Massinger would say ; and then tore himself away, as if fearful of trusting himself with farther speech.

On quitting Priscilla’s side, Dick rattled across the fields to Highgate, wondering at the success that had thus far crowned his efforts. ‘Will she keep her appointment ?’ said he. ‘Yes, yes ; I see it in her eye. The “captain” has done the business ; never was there so conceited an old lass !’ and, thus soliloquizing, he found himself at the door of the best hotel in Highgate, strutted into the coffee-room, and rang the bell for the waiter.

The man answered his summons, cast a shrewd glance at his exterior, and, satisfied with the scrutiny, made a low bow, prefaced by a semicircular flourish of his napkin.

‘Waiter,’ said Dick, with the air of a prince, ‘show me into a private room, and let it be your best.’

‘Please to follow me, sir,’ replied the man ; and, so saying, he ushered our hero into a spacious apartment, which commanded a picturesque view of a brick-field, with a pigsty in the background.

‘Good !’ said Dick, and throwing himself full-length on a sofa, he ordered an early dinner, cold, but of the best quality, together with one bottle of madeira, and another of port, by way of appendix.

Well, the dinner came, wine ditto, and both were excellent. Glass after glass was filled and emptied, and Dick felt his spirits mounting into the seventh heaven of enjoyment. His thoughts were winged ; his prospects radiant with the sunny hues of hope. The fair Priscilla was his own,—his grievances were at an end,—and he henceforth could snap his fingers at fate. Happy man !

Having despatched his madeira, and two or three supplementary glasses of port, so that one bottle might not be jealous of the attentions paid to the other, Dick summoned the waiter into his presence, paid his bill like a lord, and concluded by ordering a post-chaise and four to be ready for him within two hours in a certain lane which he specified, and which led off the high-road a few yards beyond the turnpike. Of course the man understood the drift of this order. Dick, however, took no notice of his knowing simper ; but, telling him that he should return in a short time,

stalked from the hotel as if the majesty of England were centred in his person.

On returning to the Heath, he found, as he had expected, the fair Priscilla awaiting his advent by the horse-pond. She received him with a blush, to which he replied by a squeeze; and then, emboldened by the wine he had drunk, went on in a strain of high-flown panegyric which rapidly thawed the heart of the too susceptible Miss Spriggins. Dick was not the lad to do things by halves. Neck or nothing was his motto; and accordingly, before he had been ten minutes in company with his fair one, he had succeeded in drawing from her a confession that she preferred him to all the suitors she had ever had. This point gained, our hero adroitly changed the conversation; talked of his prospects when his father's estates in the North should come into his possession; of his friend Lord Theodore Thickskull, to whom he should be so proud to introduce his Priscilla; and of his intention to sell out of the army the instant she consented to be his.

Thus chatting, Dick—accidentally, to all appearance—drew his companion on towards Highgate, when, suddenly putting on a look of extreme wonder, he exclaimed, 'Who'd have thought it! We are close by the Tunnel. Ah! dearest Priscilla, you see how time flies when we are with those we love! And, now that you are here, my angel, you cannot surely refuse to honour my hotel with your presence. Nay, not a word; it is hard by, and I am sure you must be fatigued after your walk.'

The lady protested that she could not think of entering an hotel with a single man. She did, however; and was so favourably impressed with the respect shown to Dick by the waiter, who with his finger beside his nose implied that all was ready, that had she ever harboured distrust, this circumstance alone would have effectually banished it from her mind.

No sooner had the parties entered Dick's private apartment, than, strange to tell, they beheld a bottle of port wine standing on the table. And, lo! there also were two glasses! Of course our hero could not but present one to Priscilla, who received it, nothing loth, though affecting extreme coyness. Its effects were soon visible. Her bleak blue nose assumed a faint mulberry tinge, her eyes sparkled; and she simpered, languished, and ogled Dick, sighing the while, with a sort of die-away sensibility, intended to show the extreme tenderness of her nature. These blandishments, which our hero returned with compound interest, were, however, soon put an end to, by the lady's suddenly rising, and requesting him to *chaperon* her home, as it was getting late, and her brother would be uneasy at her absence. Dick complied, though with apparent reluctance, and as he passed through the hall with

Priscilla hanging on his arm, he could see the landlady peeping at him through the yellow gauze blinds of the tap-room window.

It was now confirmed twilight ; the dicky-birds were asleep in their nests ; the Highgate toll-bar looked vague and spectral in the gloom ; and nought disturbed the solemn silence of the hour, save the pot-boys calling ' Beer ! ' at the cottages by the roadside. As Dick rambled on, under the pretence of leading Miss Spriggins by a short cut home, his thoughts took the hue of the season, and he became pensive and abstracted. He looked at Priscilla, and sighed ; while she reciprocated the respiration, heaving up from the depths of her œsophagus a sigh that might have upset a schooner. And thus the enamoured pair pursued their walk, Dick every now and then squeezing his companion's hand with the gentle compression of a blacksmith's vice. 'Twas a spectacle gratifying to a benevolent heart, the sight of those devoted lovers, so wrapt up in each other as to be regardless of the extraordinary beauties of the picturesque scenery about them. The dog-rose bloomed in the hedge, but they inhaled not its fragrance. The ducks quacked in the verdant ditch beside their path, but they heeded not their euphonious ejaculations. Their own sweet thoughts were enough for them. Surrounding nature was as nought : they seemed alone in creation—the sole denizens of Middlesex !

By this time the moon had climbed the azure vault of heaven ; the last omnibus had set down the last man ; when, lo ! before he was aware of his contiguity, Dick found himself close by the turnpike. 'Twas a critical moment ; but the young man was desperate, and desperation knows no impossibilities. Changing the sentimental tone he had hitherto adopted, he burst into the most frenzied exclamations of grief ; stated the necessity he was under of immediately joining his regiment at Carlisle, which he should have done long before had not his love for Priscilla kept him lingering in the vicinity of Hampstead ; that he had not the heart to state this before ; but, now that he had explained his situation, he felt that he should not survive the shock of a separation.

' There,' said he, pointing to the carriage, which was but a few yards off, ' there is the detested vehicle destined to bear me far from thee ! Why had I not the candour to explain my position till this moment ? Alas ! who, situated as I am, could have acted otherwise ? I love—adore—doat—on you to distraction ! Let us fly, then, and link our fates together. You speak not, alas !'

' Good heavens !' replied the bewildered Miss Spriggins, ' impossible ! What would the world say ? Oh, fie, Captain Felix !—to think that I should have been exposed to——'

‘Come, Priscilla—my Priscilla—and let us hasten to be happy. The respected clergyman at Gretna——’

‘An elopement!—monstrous! Oh, that I should have lived to hear such a proposition!’

Need the sequel be insisted on? Dick wept, prayed, capered, tore his hair, and acted a thousand shrewd extravagances; swore he would hang himself to the toll-bar, or cut his throat with an oyster-knife, if his own dear Priscilla did not consent to unite her destiny with his; and, in fact, so worked upon the damsel’s sensibilities that she had no help for it but to gasp forth a reluctant consent. An instant, and all was ready for departure. Crack went the whip, round went the wheels, and away went the fond couple to Gretna Green, rattling along the high north road at the rate of fourteen miles an hour!

Thus he who at nine o’clock in the morning was an adventurer without a sixpence in his pocket, by the same hour in the evening was a gentleman in possession of a woman worth eight hundred pounds *per annum*! Gentle reader, truth is strange—stranger than fiction.



Charles I. being led to the guillotine.

Engraved by J. Smith
after a painting by Sir J. Kneller



The Two Interviews.

BY ISABELLA F. ROMER,

AUTHOR OF 'STURMER.'

'When shall we *two* meet again?'—*Macbeth*.

'I, and my fellows, are ministers of fate.'—*Tempest*.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, May, 1842.]



DURING the latter years of the regency of Philip of Orleans, when ribaldry and licentiousness were, thanks to the example of that dissolute prince, the order of the day, it had become part of the fashionable code of supreme *bon ton* for the court-gallants of Paris to distinguish themselves in drunken brawls and vulgar orgies, and even to assimilate their pronunciation to that of the populace, whose slang they adopted (a habit which the elegant Maréchal de Richelieu was never able entirely to divest himself of in later years). To sup at a tavern with a party of merry roysterers, drink until reason had become obscured, and then, sallying forth into the streets, to insult the sober citizens, beat the watch, and, staggering into some *tripot*, finish the night among gamblers and sharpers, was the mode of life which the noblest and most illustrious in France then gloried in avowing, and which *not* to have adopted would have been to parade a singularity of conduct that would have insured—not approbation, but ridicule. These were the excesses which obtained for the *lions* of that day the *sobriquet* of '*roués*.'

One night during that period, four young noblemen, belonging to the first families in the kingdom, were returning on foot, after midnight, from a supper-party in the Marais, which was then the most fashionable quarter of Paris. In passing through an obscure street in the *Cité*, they were surprised to hear the sound of musical instruments at that late hour, and in so quiet a district; their curiosity was aroused, and, approaching the house from which the strains proceeded, and which was externally of a superior description to those that surrounded it, they peeped through the *jalousies* of a room on the ground-floor, and perceived a numerous

assemblage of persons, who, by their dress, appeared to be respectable tradespeople, giving themselves up with heart and soul to the pleasures of a gay dance.

The four youths in question were not one of them above twenty-one years of age, and they joined to the thoughtless indiscretion that characterizes that early stage of life, a presumptuous confidence in themselves, which was based upon a conviction of their high rank and personal advantages, and considerably augmented by the quantity of wine which they had drunk at their gay supper. They, therefore, deemed that it would be an excellent joke were they to honour those simple citizens with their company, and, presenting themselves uninvited among them, share in the gaieties of their ball. No sooner was the giddy suggestion uttered than it was acted upon; they immediately proceeded to try the fastening of the door, which, not being locked within-side, yielded instantly to their touch; and, noiselessly gliding into the house, they contrived to mingle with the crowd of guests assembled in the ball-room, without their entry having been noticed by anyone among them. The *fête* had been given to celebrate the marriage of the son of the house, which had been solemnized that morning; the numerous connections of the bride and bridegroom were present, and each having received permission to bring friends with them to the ball, the four strangers, when first remarked, were naturally supposed to have been introduced under these auspices; and so, for a time, everything proceeded smoothly.

'I' faith!' said one of the young nobles to the other, 'these cits appear to me to be the most respectable twaddlers in the world.'

'Respectable!' repeated his friend—'*grand*, you mean! To listen to them, one would fancy one's self at a counsel of bishops. It is Monsieur de Rouen here, Monsieur de Beauvais there; and, Heaven forgive me! the master of the house, I believe, is styled *Monsieur de Paris*.'

'*Sacristie! mon cher*,' rejoined the other, 'do look at their women; what demure airs they play off! they really blush and cast down their eyes nearly as well as the *ingénues* of the *Comédie Française*! Let us find out what stuff they are made of, and try whether they have wit enough to appreciate our gallantry!'

While the two friends were thus passing their observations upon the people that surrounded them, with all the license that characterized the period, another of their companions had exceeded them in impertinence and bad taste, having already, at the other end of the room, put into practice the intention their last words had manifested. Struck by the beauty of the young bride, whose natural graces were enhanced by the elegance of her

wedding-dress, and the air of modest happiness that pervaded her whole person, the young nobleman had approached her, and invited her to dance with him; and she, suspecting no evil, had willingly acceded; but when, during the pauses of the dance, her partner scrupled not to pour into her ear compliments the most exaggerated, and sentiments and declarations of the most unequivocal nature, the timid girl, unable to silence him, and blushing and trembling at language so new to her, at last endeavoured to put an end to it by escaping from the dance. He was rash enough to prevent her attempt by forcibly detaining her at his side; but, no sooner did she feel her hands violently grasped in those of her unknown persecutor, than, bursting into an indignant passion of tears, she shrieked aloud for help, and her husband and his father, immediately rushing to her assistance, collared the imprudent youth who had dared to insult her, and, notwithstanding his powerful struggles to get free, held him fast in their iron grip.

The confusion which this incident occasioned, attracted the attention of the other intruders to the spot; who, perceiving that their friend had been assaulted, quickly drew their swords, and would have commenced an attack on the persons who surrounded him, had they not themselves been immediately overpowered by numbers and disarmed. The master of the house then, with all the indignation in his voice and manner which conduct so reprehensible was calculated to awaken, questioned the strangers as to the motives which had induced them to forget themselves, and thus to mar the harmony of the entertainment of which they were partakers; but what was his astonishment, as well as those of his guests, when he learned from the lips of the delinquents that they had presumed to introduce themselves uninvited to his *fête*, and were unknown to every person assembled there!

Indignant at an insult which appeared to reflect not only upon the master of the revels, but upon every individual composing his society, the younger part of the male guests prepared to punish such insolent temerity in the most exemplary manner. The culprits, however, in order to avert the chastisement they so richly merited, deemed it advisable to make themselves known, and announced that they belonged to the noblest families attached to the Court: one of them was the Duke de Crillon; another, the Marquis de la Fare; and the greatest offender of the party was the Count de Lally Tollendal.*

‘Gentlemen,’ said the master of the house to them, with dignity, ‘the higher your rank is, the greater is the obligation it imposes

* See *Notes and Queries*, Third and Fourth Series.

upon you to inspire respect by your conduct. That which you have just manifested would be unbecoming in the lowest and most ignorant class of society ; in *you* it is unworthy of pardon, and I ought to suffer my friends to avenge the insult you have offered to my children, and which not even the sacredness of the tie which has just united them, nor the laws of hospitality which you have so shamefully violated, could induce you to forego. But when, at your early time of life, young men betray such lawless inclinations as you this night have evinced, they, sooner or later, bring dishonour and disgrace upon the name they bear ; from fault to fault the descent is rapid, until they sink into crime ; and, at last, they fall into the hands of those whose province it is to fulfil the justice which the laws of men have meted out to them in this world. You say that you are noblemen belonging to the Court : *I am the EXECUTIONER OF PARIS !* Leave this house instantly, and reform your conduct, or tremble lest we should one day meet again—tremble lest the hand of the executioner should once more be laid upon you !

‘Ay,’ exclaimed the young bridegroom, echoing the last sentiment, ‘go ! and pray to God that this may be the last time you pass through the bourreau’s hands !’

Saying which, the father and son thrust the Count de Lally Tollendal cavalierly out of their house ; and his friends having been ejected in the same unceremonious manner, the door was closed upon them, and they found themselves in the street.

‘Well !’ said Le Fare to Lally, ‘this is an affair that will not redound much to our credit at Court. To be kicked out of the bourreau’s house like mad dogs is but a sorry joke ! *Pardieu !* I would willingly give a thousand louis d’ors, if I had them, to bribe these people to silence.’

‘Pooh, pooh !’ replied Lally, ‘let them boast if they will ; it can only be among themselves ! There is a devil of a distance from the bourreau’s circle to that of the Palais Royal !’

The subsequent adventures of Arthur, Count de Lally Tollendal, the vicissitudes of his eventful career, and the misfortunes which led to his death, have become subjects of history. Descended from a distinguished Irish Catholic family, his father, Sir Gerrard Lally, was one of the faithful adherents of the Stuarts, and, having accompanied James the Second into exile, settled in France, and became naturalized there. Arthur was born in France, and, at a very early age, entered into the military service of that country, his first appointment being captain of grenadiers in Dillon’s Irish regiment. His remarkable abilities soon attracted the notice of Cardinal Fleury, who entrusted him with a mission to the Court of Russia, where his talents and accomplishments,

joined to the most fascinating personal graces, completely captivated not only the Empress Anne, but her favourite Biron, Duke of Courland.

This mission having been fulfilled to the perfect satisfaction of the French Court, the young Count was, on his return to France, raised to the rank of Colonel of an Irish regiment, bearing his own name. At the battle of Fontenoy his chivalrous gallantry and scientific manœuvres contributed materially to the success of the French arms; and, such was his prowess on that day, that, according to the statements of Marshal Saxe, he was made a Brigadier on the field of battle. It was in that rank that he attached himself to the fortunes of the young Pretender, Charles Edward, whom he followed into Scotland, and served as aide-de-camp during the disastrous period of the rebellion. Once more in France, he was made *Maréchal de Camp*; and, after the taking of Maestricht, was further promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General. Finally, he was nominated to the distinguished post of Commander-in-Chief of all the French settlements in the East Indies, and embarked for Pondicherry. His first steps on landing there were followed by those brilliant results which had hitherto invariably set the stamp of success upon all his undertakings; for, in thirty-eight days after his landing, he made himself master of Fort St. David's (commonly called the *Bergen-op-Zoom* of India) and of the whole southern coast of Coromandel. But here the prosperous career of Lally Tollendal, having attained its extreme height, received a sudden and unlooked-for check, which shook to its very foundation the brilliant and solid reputation that he had achieved for himself at the point of the sword. Although enabled to vanquish the obstacles which were opposed to his military skill and courage, he found that he could not so easily triumph over the enmities which he drew upon himself by his ungovernable character and the haughtiness and impetuosity of his disposition. On his arrival at Pondicherry, he had found that numerous abuses had crept into the administration of the colony; and, inflexible in his principles, and guided in every action of his later life by the most uncompromising probity, he determined to effect a complete reform by cutting at once at the root of the evil. Unfortunately, so many persons were interested in opposing these salutary measures, that he met with no honest co-operation in his efforts, and soon found himself left to his own resources, and not only isolated, but set up as a mark against which the basest intrigues were systematically directed. The tide of his good fortune having thus turned, an uninterrupted succession of unlooked-for misfortunes speedily followed.

Pondicherry was attacked by the English. After having

defended it to the last extremity with his accustomed gallantry, Lally Tollendal was obliged to surrender, and having been made prisoner of war, was immediately sent to England. There he heard that a dreadful cabal had been organized against him in France, and that the bitterest of his enemies were in the ministry, and openly triumphed in his misfortunes. He obtained permission from the English Government to go over to Versailles on parole, and justify himself from the mass of inculpations that had been accumulated against him ; for, strong in the consciousness of his innocence, he demanded only that his conduct should be fully and impartially investigated ; and, without fear of the consequences, laid his fate and his conscience at the feet of his sovereign.

He was immediately thrown into the Bastille, and preparations for his trial were forthwith made, upon the triple charge of collusion with the enemies of France, high treason, and having sold Pondicherry to the English. Counsel was refused to him, and he was obliged to plead in his own defence. The impolitic impetuosity, which had ever been his leading characteristic, breathed in every syllable of this defence, and served only to augment the general irritation against him ; in short, his destruction had been previously determined on ; and, notwithstanding his long and brilliant services—notwithstanding the eloquent conviction of the Attorney-General, Seguier, his enemies triumphed, and the gallant Lally Tollendal was condemned to be dragged on a hurdle to the Place de Grève, there to undergo a traitor's death.

When the Count's sentence was communicated to him, he was alone in his prison, employed in tracing out a military plan ; and unable to subdue the indignation and despair which such cruel injustice called forth, he, in a moment of frenzy, plunged the compass which he held violently into his breast, and, drawing it forth covered with blood, would have inflicted a second blow, had he not been quickly seized and handcuffed. The scaffold, however, was not to be cheated of its prey ; the wound was not a mortal one : and this incident served only to accelerate the preparations for his execution.

At last the fatal day arrived. Alone with his confessor in his cell, abandoned by the whole world (for among his former friends and associates there were none possessed of moral courage sufficient to induce them to mark their sympathy for this ill-fated victim of political intrigue, by bestowing the consolations of friendship upon his last moments), the once-brilliant, ever-brave Lally Tollendal—the flattered, the followed, and the admired, *now* reviled, deserted, and condemned—with a last effort endeavoured to abstract his thoughts from the bitter retrospection that

crowded upon them, and to yield up his undivided attention to the holy words which his confessor breathed to him of hopes which the injustice of man could not deprive him of—hopes which could alone enable him to support, without shrinking, the terrors of the last scene! Suddenly the door of the cell was thrown open, and a man with grave and downcast mien entered, bearing in his hand a gag, which had been prepared for the prisoner's mouth; for his enemies, fearing that he would raise his voice upon the scaffold to make a public protest against the iniquity of his sentence, had, in the plenitude of their malignity, devised this cruel method of insuring the silence of their victim. The man silently approached, and prepared to accomplish his terrible office; but the Count, yielding to an irrepressible burst of indignation, started back, and haughtily waved him from him.

'My son,' said his confessor, 'let this one last act of submission prove the entireness of your resignation to the Divine will! Remember that our Blessed Lord and Saviour suffered even greater indignities than this.'

The unfortunate Count bowed his head in token of submission, and, without further resistance, allowed the man to approach; then for the first time looking into his face, their eyes met, and a long scrutinizing gaze passed between them. A cry of horror burst from the lips of the doomed man: no sound, no exclamation from the other responded to it; but there was that in his look which had rendered words superfluous, and which told that the recognition had been mutual. It was the executioner's son, whose young bride had been insulted so many years before by the Count de Lally Tollendal, in the wanton flush of youthful spirits!—and the ominous words that had accompanied his expulsion from the scene of his delinquency returned to the recollection of both at the same moment, and with the same startling distinctness.

But this was not all. Half stifled by the gag which had been applied to his mouth, his head uncovered, and his hands bound behind his back, the fallen hero was placed in an open cart, and conducted to the Place de Grève, where malefactors are condemned to die. His courage did not desert him in that awful moment. Arrived at the place of execution, he quitted the cart unassisted, ascended the steps of the scaffold with the tread of one to whom fear was a stranger, and, kneeling down, laid his head upon the block, and gave the signal to strike. Two executioners stood by, the youngest of whom, a mere youth, who was destined to officiate, raised his axe, and aimed a blow at the victim, but so ill directed, and with so unsteady a hand, that it fell upon the skull, and merely wounded him. The elder one, angrily pushing away his awkward assistant, seized upon the axe

with his two hands, and directed his stroke with such vigour and dexterity, that the sufferer was at once put out of his pain, and the head of Lally Tollendal rolled upon the scaffold.

The inexperienced youth who had made his first professional essay upon the ill-fated hero was *the son* of the young woman whose feelings he had outraged; he who had come to his assistance was *her husband*: and thus awfully had the prediction of the old executioner been doubly fulfilled.



Illustration of a domestic scene.

1840.

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The Disappointed Man.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, September, 1837.]



AM a disappointed man—nay, I was even a disappointed baby; for it was calculated that the parental anticipations of my forebears would have been realized on the 1st of May, 1792, whereas, by some contradictory vagary of Dame Nature, I entered this valley of tears on the 1st of April! This ought to have been considered prognosticatory of my future disappointments, and the law of Sparta should have been rigidly enforced; for what are crooked limbs to a crooked destiny?

It was the intention of my father (whose name was Jacob Wise) to have had me christened after my maternal uncle, Theodosius Otter, Esq.; but, having selected a stuttering godfather, I was unfortunately baptized as 'The-odd-dose-us Oth-er Wise.' Nor was this the only disappointment which attended me on this occasion, for the pew-opener having received instructions to clean the copper coal-scuttle in the vestry-room, the basin which contained the vitriol necessary for that purpose was by some means or other placed in the font; and to this day I have more the appearance of a tattooed Indian than a Christian Englishman.

My babyhood was composed of a series of disappointments. My hair was to have been, in the words of the monthly nurse, 'the most beautifulest horburn,' but sprouted forth a splendid specimen of that vegetable dye called carroty. I was to have been 'as straight as an arrow;' but a cup of tea having been spilled over me as I lay in the servant's lap before the kitchen fire, I became so dreadfully warped that I am now a sort of demi-parenthesis, or, as a malicious punster once called me, 'a perfect bow.'

I had the measles very mildly, as it was affirmed, for the whole virulence of the disorder displayed itself in one enormous pustule on the tip of my nose. This luminary so excited my infant wonder, that my eyes (really fine for green) were continually riveted to the *spot*, and have never forgotten it, for one or other of them is invariably engaged in searching for the lost treasure.

I was not in convulsions above a dozen times during teething ; but no sooner had I completed my chaplet of pearls, than the striking-weight of a Dutch clock which overhung my cradle dropped into my mouth, and convinced me of the extreme simplicity of dental surgery.

My 'going alone' was the source of an infinitude of anxieties to my excellent mamma, who was so magnificently proportioned that it was many months before I could make the circuit of her full-fledged printed calico wrapper without resting. Poor mamma ! she lost her life from a singular mistake. The house in which we lived had taken fire, and two good-natured neighbours threw Mrs. Wise out of the window instead of a feather-bed. She alighted on the head of Captain S——, who was then considered the *softest* man in the three kingdoms, and received little injury by the ejection ; but her feelings were so lacerated by the mistake, that she refused all food, and lived entirely by suction, till she died *from* it.

I will pass over my school-days, merely observing *en passant* that

' Each day some unlucky disaster
Placed me in the vocative case with my master,'

a squabby, tyrannical, double-jointed pedagogue. He was nicknamed *Cane-and-Able*, and I can testify to the justness of the nomenclature. At college the same *mis*-fortune attended me. There was ever an under-current of disappointment, which rendered all my exertions nugatory. If I was by accident 'full of the god,' I could never knock down anyone but a proctor. If I determined on keeping close in my rooms, the wind immediately changed to N.E. by N., at which point my chimneys smoked like a community of Mynheers. My maternal uncle, Theodosius Otter, Esq., had signified that my expectations from him must be regulated entirely by my academical distinctions, and I was 'pluck'd for my little-go.' This occurred three months before the old booby's death. My legacy consisted of a presentation to the Gooseborough free school.

The time at length arrived for me to fall in love. I experienced the first symptom of this epidemic at a bombazine ball in the city of Norwich. Selina Smithers was the name of my fair enslaver ; she was about nineteen, fair as Russia tallow, tall, and somewhat slender. Indeed, her condition is perhaps better described by 'the slightest possible approximation to lanky.' During one short quadrille she told me of all her tastes, hopes, experience, family connexions (including a brother at sea), expectations probable and possible, and of two thousand seven hundred and forty-five pounds, fourteen shillings, and sixpence standing in her own name in the three and a half per cents.

With the last *chassez* I was a victim. At the close of the ball I handed Selina and her mamma into a green fly, and found the next morning that I had a violent cold in my head, and a violent heat in my heart.

As I flourished the brass knocker of Mrs. Smithers' door on the following day, the clock of St. Andrew's church struck two; and chimed a quarter past, as a girl strongly resembling a kidney-potato, red and dirty, gave me ingress into a room with green blinds, seven horsehair-bottomed chairs, a round mahogany table, four oil-paintings (subjects and masters unknown), two fire-screens of yellow calico fluted, and a very shabby square piano. On the music-rest was the song, 'We met—'twas in a crowd.' Singular coincidence—*we* met in a crowd!

The door opened, and Selina bounded into the room like a young fawn. Our eyes met, and then simultaneously sought the carpet. I know not what object her pale blue orbs encountered; but mine fell on the half-picked head of a red herring! 'Can it be possible,' thought I, 'that Selina—Pshaw! her brother has returned from sea:' and to his account I placed the body of the vulgar fish. I took her hand, and gracefully led her to a chair, and then seated myself beside her. Our conversation grew animated—confiding. She recapitulated the amount of her three and a half per cents., and in the most considerate manner inquired into *my* pecuniary situation. I was then possessed of seven thousand pounds; for my father, during the three last years of his life, had been twice burned out, and once sold up, and was thus enabled to leave me independent. She could not conceal her delight at my prosperous situation—generous creature! Possessing affluence herself, she rejoiced at the well-doing of others. Day after day passed in this delightful manner, until I ventured to solicit her to become my wife. Judge of my ecstasy when, bending her swan-like neck until her fair cheek rested on the velvet collar of my mulberry surtout, she whispered almost inaudibly:

'How can you ask me such a question?'

'How can I ask you such a question? Because—because it is necessary to my happiness. Oh! name the happy hour when Hymen's chain—that chain which has but one link—shall bind you to me for ever!'

She paused a moment, and then faltered out:

'To-morrow week.'

I fell upon my knees. Selina did the same; for, in my joy at her compliance, I had forgotten that one chair was supporting us both.

Oh, what a busy day was that which followed! I entered

Skelton's (the tailor's) shop with the journeymen. I ordered three complete suits!

As the rolls were taken into Quillit's parlour, I was shown into the office. The worthy lawyer thrice scalded his throat in his anxiety to comply with my repeated requests to 'see him immediately.' He came at last. A few brief sentences explained the nature of my business, and he hastened to accompany me to Selina. I was so excited by the novelty of my situation, that I fell over the maid who was cleaning the step of the door, and narrowly escaped dragging Quillit after. Had he fallen, I shudder at the contemplation of the probable result; for he was a man well to do in the world, and enjoyed a rotundity of figure unrivalled in the good city of Norwich. His black waistcoat might have served for a bill of fare to an eating-house, for it exhibited samples of all Mrs. Glass's choicest preparations.

I led in the perspiring lawyer, but looked in vain for that expression of admiration which I fondly anticipated would have illumined his little grey eyes at the sight of my Selina.

'This is Mr. Quillit,' said I.

'Indeed!' replied Selina.

'We have come, Mrs. Smithers,' said Quillit, 'to arrange a very necessary preliminary to the delicate ceremony which my friend Wise has informed me will take place on this day week.'

Selina blushed. Her mother (bless me! I've quite overlooked her!) screwed up her face into an expression between laughing and crying; and I—I pushed one hand through my hair, and the other into my breeches pocket.

'Madam,' continued Quillit, 'our business this morning is to make the arrangements for your marriage-settlement; and my friend Wise wishes to know what part of your two thousand—'

'Seven hundred and forty-five pounds, fourteen shillings, and sixpence,' said I *sotto voce*.

'—You wished settled upon yourself.'

'Oh, nothing—I require nothing!' exclaimed Selina.

'Hurr——!' said I, half rising from my chair in ecstasy at her disinterestedness.

'Hem!' coughed Quillit, and took out his toothpick.

'Nothing!' I at length ejaculated. 'No, Selina; you shall not be subject to the accidents of fortune. Mr. Quillit, put down two thousand pounds.' And so he did.

The day before my intended nuptials I had paid my customary visit to Selina, and it was arranged that the *settlement* should be executed (what a happy union of terms!) that night. I had left but a few minutes when I missed my handkerchief. I returned for it. I found the door ajar, and, not considering any ceremony

necessary, I walked into the parlour. I had put my handkerchief into the left pocket of my coat when I was somewhat startled by a burst of very boisterous male and female merriment. I paused. A child's treble was then heard, and in a moment after *a child—a live child*—entered the room crying most piteously. It ceased on beholding me; and when its astonishment had subsided, it sobbed out :

'I want mamma!'

'Mamma?' said I. 'And who's mamma?'

My query was answered from the first floor.

'Come to mamma, dear!' shouted—Selina!

I don't know what the sensations of a humming-top in full spin may be, but I should imagine they are very similar to those which I experienced at this particular moment. When I recovered, I was stretched on the hearth-rug with my head in the coal-scuttle, surrounded by my Selina, her mother, the maid, and, I suppose, her 'brother at sea.'

'What is the matter, love?' said—You know whom I mean—I can't write her name again.

'Nothing, madam,' I replied, 'nothing; only I anticipated being married to-morrow—but I shall be disappointed.'

The ensuing week I received notice of action for a breach of promise of marriage; the ensuing term the cause was tried before an intelligent jury; and the ensuing day Quillit handed me a bill for seven hundred and sixty-two pounds, one shilling, and eightpence, being the amount of damages and costs in *Smithers versus Wise*. I paid Quillit, sold my house and furniture at Norwich, and took up my abode at Bumbleby, in Lancashire, resolving to be as love-proof as Miss Martineau, which resolution I have religiously observed to this day.

I was, however, involved in one other tender affair, by proxy, which produced me more serious annoyances than even my own.

I became acquainted with a merry, good-looking fellow, of the name of Thomas Styles, who had come from somewhere, and was related to somebody, but no one recollected the who or the where. In the same town lived an old gentleman, who rejoiced in the unique name of Smith. He was blessed with one daughter and a wife. The latter did not reside with him, having taken up her permanent residence in a small octagonal stone building in the Dissenters' burial-ground. Styles, by one of those accidents common in novels, but very occasional in real life, had become acquainted with Miss Smith. They had gone through those comparative states of feeling—acquaintance, friendship, love; and when I was introduced to him, he was in want of a good fellow to help him into matrimony. I was just the boy; my

expensive experience, my good-nature, my leisure—in short, there was nothing wanting to fit me for this confidential character. Now, be it known that old Smith had very strong Parliamentary predilections, and one of his *sine quâ non*s was, that his son-in-law should be M.P. for somewhere—Puddle-dock would do, but an M.P. he must be. Politics were of no consequence; but he must have a decided opinion that the Bumbleby railway would be most beneficial if carried through a swampy piece of ground which Smith had recently purchased. Styles was of the same opinion; but then he was only a member of the ‘Bull’s-eye Bowmen,’ and Mr. Snuffmore’s sixpenny whist club. I had made myself particularly uncomfortable one afternoon in Styles’ summer-house, with three glasses of brandy and water and four mild havanas, when old Smith rushed in to announce the gratifying intelligence that Mr. Topple, the member for our place, had fallen into the crater of Mount Vesuvius, and that nothing had been heard from him since but a solitary interjection, in consequence of which there was a vacancy in the representation. The writ had been issued, and so had an address from Mr. Wiseman, a gentleman possessing every virtue under the sun, save and except a due sense of the advantages of Smith’s swamp to the railway. This was conclusive. Smith made a speech, which, being for interest and not for fame, was short and emphatic.

‘Tom, you must contest this election, or never darken my doors again.’

‘My dear sir,’ said Tom, ‘nothing would give me greater pleasure; but——’

‘I’ll do all that. I’ll form a committee *instantly*,’ replied Smith; ‘leave all to me. Capital hand at an address—pith, nothing but pith. Ever see my letter in support of the erection of a pound for stray cattle?—pithy and conclusive:—“Inhabitants of Bumbleby, twenty shillings make a pound.” The motion was carried.’

‘One moment,’ said Tom. ‘It will appear so presumptuous on my part, unless a deputation waited on me.’

‘Certainly—better, by all means; I’ll form one directly,’ said Smith.

‘In the meantime, issue a placard to prevent the electors making promises, and——’

‘I will,’ said Smith. And so he did; for in an hour afterwards there was not a dead wall in Bumbleby but was papered from one end to the other.

‘Other Wise,’ said Styles, as Smith waddled up the garden, ‘this won’t do for me. I couldn’t make a speech of ten consecutive lines, if the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall were depending upon it.’

'Pooh!' replied I, rolling my head about in that peculiar style which an over-indulgence in bibicals will induce.

'It's a fact,' replied Tom. 'Now, my dear fellow, you can serve me and your country at the same time. Smith would be equally gratified at your return for Bumbleby; your opinions are the same as my own, and your abilities require no panegyric from me.'

Whether it was the suddenness of the probable glory, or the effect of the tobacco and brandy and water, I sat speechless. Silence gives consent, says an old adage, and so did the town of Bumbleby the next morning, for every quarter cried out, 'Other Wise for ever!' It was too late to retract; and accordingly I was nominated, seconded, and unanimously elected by a show of hands. A poll was demanded; and, after a short contest of two days, it was announced in very large letters, and still larger figures:

Wiseman	786
Other Wise	92
Majority	—694

I was satisfied, and so was my party. During the preparation for this unfortunate contest I had allowed Styles to draw *ad libitum* upon my banker. His friendship knew no bounds; his liberality was as boundless; and so chagrined was he at the defeat I had experienced, that he left the next morning without an adieu. I must confess that I was rather disappointed at his sudden retreat, and considerably more so on finding that his exertions in my behalf had reduced my income from four hundred pounds to forty pounds per annum. For the first time I doubted his friendship. Subsequent inquiries convinced me he was a scoundrel, and I commenced an immediate pursuit of him, and an action at law.

Some three months afterwards, I was sauntering about the streets in the neighbourhood of St. James's Square, when I encountered Styles. His surprise was as great as mine, but not so enduring; for, advancing towards me with all the coolness of the 1st of December, he exclaimed:

'Other Wise, how are you? I dare say you thought my sudden departure odd; I did myself; but I couldn't help it. I'm sorry to hear how much your contest has distressed you. I was the cause. Give me your cheque for fifty pounds, and here's a bill for five hundred, due to-morrow.'

Suiting the action to the word, he handed me an acceptance for that amount inclosed in a dirty piece of paper. All this was so rapidly said and done, that before I was aware of it I had

given him a draft on Drummond, shaken hands with him, and was mechanically discussing a mutton-chop and a bottle of sherry, which I had unconsciously ordered in the delirium which succeeded Styles' unheard-of generosity.

I went the next day to Messrs. Podge and Co., in Lombard Street, with my promise-to-pay Eldorado in my pocket. I entered the counting-house, presented my bill, and fully expected to have received either bank-notes or gold in exchange. I waited a few minutes, and was then ushered into a back-room, and politely requested to account for this money-promissory document.

'From whom did you receive this bill?' said a gentleman with a powdered head and an immense watch-chain.

'From Mr. Styles.'

'Where does he live?'

'I don't know exactly; but I hope there is nothing irregular.'

'You can step in, Banks,' said the powdered head; and a stout well-fed man, in a blue coat, with the City arms on the button, *did* step in, and very unceremoniously proceeded to inspect the contents of my various pockets. 'Conclusive!' said the powdered head, as he minutely examined a small piece of crumpled paper which had occupied one of the pockets of my small-clothes.

I was handed into a hackney-coach, and then into the Mansion House, where I was informed that I was to live rent-free for the next week in his Majesty's gaol of Newgate. The bill was a forgery!

The day of trial approached. I walked into the dock with *mens conscia recti* depicted on my countenance. I knew I was innocent of any felonious intention or knowledge; and was certainly very much *disappointed* at being found guilty upon the silent evidence of the little piece of crumpled paper, which was covered with pen and ink experiments on the signature of John Allgold and Co., whose name occupied the centre of Styles' bill. The recorder (in a very impressive manner, I must allow, for his white handkerchief was waving about the whole time) passed sentence of death upon me, and I was ordered to be taken from thence, and on the Monday following to be hung by the neck till I was dead. A pleasant termination, truly!

I was led, stupefied by the result of my trial, back to the prison. When I regained the use of my faculties, my awful situation became horridly apparent. There was I, an innocent and injured man, condemned to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. For endeavouring to gain possession of my own, I was about to become a spectacle for the fishfags and costermongers of London—to have my name handed down to posterity by that undying trumpeter of evil-doers, Mr. Catnach, of the Seven-dials, who

alternately delights the public with 'three yards long of every new song, and all for a penny,' and 'the last dying speech and confession' of those who, dreading to be bedridden, and possessing an unconquerable aversion to doctors' stuff and virtue, have danced upon nothing, and died with their shoes on.

The morning at length arrived for my execution; but, oh! the horrors of the night that preceded it! Young, and in the full enjoyment of life, the morrow was to bring me death! In a little week the hand which I then gazed on would be a banquet for the red worm of the grave. Even the mother who watched the cradle of my infancy would have turned loathingly away from the corrupted mass; the earth which covered me would be thought unhallowed, and my name would become symbolical with crime. But even this was nothing to the contemplation of the scene I had still to enact. To be led forth, 'the observed of all observers,' who would look on me with an eye, not of pity, but of morbid curiosity—to hang quivering in the air—and to feel, while consciousness remained, that each shuddering of struggling nature was imparting a savage delight to those who could be the willing witnesses of the sacrifice of a fellow-creature! My brain sickened with its agony, and I fell into a stupor which my gaoler called sleep. I was pinioned, and led forth to die. Life had now no charm for me—I was beyond the reach of hope, and death was a desired blessing. The hangman's hands were about my neck—the blood curdled in my veins as I felt the deadly embrace of the cord. I longed for the signal of departure; but I was again disappointed. I was reprieved—for I awoke, and found that the bill and all its frightful consequences were but the result of—having eaten a hearty supper of pork-chops very much underdone! So I was once again a disappointed man, though, on this occasion, I must own, most agreeably so.



Confessions of an elderly Gentleman.



The Elderly Gentleman.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, October, 1837.]



THE Countess of Blessington need not be afraid that I shall interfere with her work in the unhappy tale which I am about to begin; my scene will be laid in a very different walk of life, and the lady whose charms have wounded my heart bear no resemblance whatever to the aristocratic beauties which grace the book of the Countess.* My arrangement even goes upon an opposite principle to hers; her elderly gentleman proceeds from first to last, getting through his fates and fortunes in regular rotation, as if they were so many letters of the alphabet, from A to Z: I read mine backward, in the manner of Turks, Jews, and other infidels; for worse than Turk or Jew have I been treated by the fair sex!

When I confess to being an elderly gentleman, I leave my readers to their own conjectures as to the precise figure of my age. It is sufficient to say that I have arrived at the shady side of fifty—how much further, it is unnecessary to add. I have been always what is called a man in easy circumstances. My father worked hard in industrious pursuits, and left me, his only son, a tolerably snug thing. I started in life with some five or six thousand pounds, a good business as a tobacconist, a large stock-in-trade, excellent credit and connexion, not a farthing of debt, and no encumbrance in the world. In fact, I had, one way or another, about a thousand a year, with no great quantity of trouble. I liked business, and stuck to it; became respected in my trade and my ward; and have frequently filled the important office of common-councilman with considerable vigour and popularity. As I never went into rash speculations, and put by something every year, my means are now about double what they were some thirty-five years ago, when Mr. Gayless, sen., departing this life, left the firm of Gayless, Son, and Company to my management.

On the 23rd of last December, just before the great snowfall, I had occasion to go on some mercantile business to Edinburgh, and

* Alluding to a novel by Lady Blessington just then published.

booked myself at a certain hotel, which shall be nameless, for the journey—then rendered perilous by the weather. I bade adieu to my friends at a genial dinner given, on the 22nd, in the coffee-room, where I cheered their drooping spirits by perpetual bumpers of port, and all the consolation that my oratory could supply. I urged that travelling inside, even in Christmas week, in a stage-coach, was nothing nearly so dangerous as flying in a balloon; that we were not to think of Napoleon's army perishing in the snows of Russia, but rather of the bark that carried the fortunes of Cæsar; that great occasions required more than ordinary exertions; and that the last advices concerning the house of Screw, Longcut, and Co., in the High Street, rendered it highly probable that their acceptances would not be met unless I was personally in Edinburgh within a week. These and other arguments I urged with an eloquence which, to those who were swallowing my wine, seemed resistless. Some of my own bagmen, who had for years travelled in black rappee or Irish blackguard, shag, canaster, or such commodities, treated the adventure as a matter of smoke; others, not of such veteran experience, regarded my departure as an act of rashness not far short of insanity. 'To do such a thing,' said my old neighbour, Joe Grabble, candlestick-maker and deputy, 'at your time of life!'

I had swallowed perhaps too much port, and, feeling warmer than usual, I did not much relish this observation. 'At my time of life, Joe,' said I; 'what of that? It is not years that make a man younger or older; it is the spirits, Joe—the life, the sprightliness, the air. There is no such thing now, Joe, as an old man, an elderly man, to be found anywhere but on the stage. Certainly, if people poke themselves eternally upon a high stool behind a desk in a murky counting-house in the city, and wear such an old quiz of a dress as you do, they must be accounted old.'

'And yet,' said Joe, 'I am four years younger than you. Don't you remember how we were together at school at old Muddlehead's, at the back of Honey Lane Market, in the year seventeen hundred and eighty-four—?'

'There is no need,' said I, interrupting him, 'of quoting dates. It is not considered genteel in good society. I do not admit your statement to be correct.'

'I'll prove it from the parish register,' said Joe Grabble.

'Don't interrupt, Joe,' said I; 'interrupting is not considered genteel in good society. I neither admit nor deny your assertion; but how does that affect my argument? I maintain that in every particular I am as young as I was thirty years ago.'

'And quite as ready to go philandering,' said Joe, with a sneer.

'Quite,' replied I, 'or more so. Nay, I venture to say that I

could at this moment make myself as acceptable to that pretty young woman at the bar, as nine-tenths of the perfumed dandies of the West-End.'

'By your purse, no doubt,' said Joe, 'if even that would obtain you common civility.'

I was piqued at this; and, under the impulse of the moment and the wine, I performed the rash act of betting a steak and dozen for the present company, against five shillings, that she would acknowledge that I was a man of gaiety and gallantry calculated to win a lady's heart, before I left London, short as was the remaining space. Joe caught at the bet, and it was booked in a moment. The party broke up about nine o'clock, and I could not help observing something like a suppressed horselaugh on their countenances. I confess that, when I was left alone, I began to repent of my precipitancy.

But 'faint heart never won fair lady'; so, by a series of manœuvring in which long practice had rendered me perfect, I fairly, in the course of an hour, entrenched myself in the bar, and, at about ten o'clock, was to be found diligently discussing a fragrant remnant of broiled chicken and mushroom, and hobnobbing with the queen of the pay-department in sundry small glasses of brandy and water, extracted from the grand reservoir of the tumbler placed before me. So far all was propitious; but, as Old Nick would have it, in less than ten minutes the party was joined by a moustached fellow, who had come fresh from fighting—or pretending to fight—for Donna Isabella, or Don Carlos—Heaven knows which (I dare say he didn't),—and was full of Bilbo, and San Sebastian, and Espartero, and Alaix pursuing Gomez, and Zumalacarregui, and General Evans, and all that style of talk, for which women have open ears. I am sure that I could have bought the fellow, body and soul—at least all his property, real and personal—for fifty pounds; but there he sat, crowing me down whenever I ventured to edge in a word, by some story of a siege or a battle or a march, ninety-nine hundred parts of his stories being nothing more nor less than lies. I know I should have been sorry to have bulled or beared in Spanish on the strength of them; but the girl (her name is Sarah) swallowed them all with open mouth, scarcely deigning to cast a look upon me. With mouth equally open, he swallowed the supper and the brandy for which I was paying; shutting mine every time I attempted to say a word, by asking me had I ever served abroad. I never was so provoked in my life; and, when I saw him press her hand, I could have knocked him down, only that I have no practice in that line, which is sometimes considered to be doubly hazardous.

I saw little chance of winning my wager, and was in no slight

degree out of temper ; but all things, smooth or rough, must have an end, and at last it was time that we should retire. My Spanish hero desired to be called at four—I don't know why—and Sarah said, with a most fascinating smile :

‘ You may depend upon ’t, sir ; for, if there was no one else as would call you, I’d call you myself.’

‘ Never,’ said he, kissing her hand, ‘ did Boots appear so beautiful !’

‘ Devil take you !’ muttered I, as I moved upstairs with a rolling motion : for the perils of the journey, the annoyance of the supper-table, the anticipation of the lost dinner and unwon lady, aided, perhaps, by what I had swallowed, tended somewhat to make my footsteps unsteady.

My mustachioed companion and I were shown into adjacent rooms, and I fell sulkily asleep. About four o’clock I was aroused by a knocking, as I at first thought, at my own room, but which I soon found to be at that of my neighbour. I immediately caught the silver sound of the voice of Sarah summoning its tenant.

‘ It’s just a-gone the three ke-waters, sir, and you ought to be up.’

‘ I am up already, dear girl,’ responded a voice from inside, in tones as soft as the potations at my expense of the preceding night would permit ; ‘ I shall be ready to start in a jiffy.’

The words were hardly spoken when I heard him emerging, luggage in hand, which he seemed to carry with little difficulty.

‘ Good-bye, dear,’ said he ; ‘ forgive this trouble.’

‘ It’s none in the least in life, sir,’ said she.

And then—god of jealousy !—he kissed her.

‘ For shame, sir !’ said Sarah. ‘ You mustn’t. I never permit it ; never !’

And he kissed her again ; on which she, having, I suppose, exhausted her stock of indignation in the speech already made, offered no observation. He skipped downstairs, and I heard her say, with a sigh, ‘ What a nice man !’

The amorous thought rose softly over my mind. ‘ Avaunt !’ said I, ‘ thou green-eyed monster ; make way for Cupid, little god of love. Is my steak and oysters yet lost ? No. As the song says—

‘ When should lovers breathe their vows ?
When should ladies hear them ?
When the dew is on the boughs,
When none else is near them.’

Whether the dew was on the boughs, or not, I could not tell ; but it was certain that none else was near us. With the rapidity of thought I jumped out of bed, upsetting a jug full of half-frozen

water, which splashed all over, every wretch of an icicle penetrating to my very marrow, but not cooling the ardour of my love. After knocking my head in the dark against every object in the room, and cutting my shins in various places, I at last succeeded in finding my dressing-gown, knee-smalls, and slippers, and, so clad, presented myself at the top of the staircase before the barmaid. She was leaning over the balustrade, looking down through the deep well after the departing stranger, whose final exit was announced by the slamming of the gate after him by the porter. I could not help thinking of Fanny Kemble in the balcony-scene of 'Romeo and Juliet.'

She sighed, and I stood forward.

'Oh!' she screamed. 'Lor' have mercy upon us! what's this?'

'Be not afraid,' said I, 'Sarah; I am no ghost.'

'Oh no,' said she, recovering, 'I didn't suppose you were; but I thought you were a Guy Fawkes.'

'No, angelic girl, I am not a Guy Fawkes; another flame is mine!' and I caught her hand, endeavouring to apply it to my lips.

'Get along with you!'

'Sarah,' said I, 'let me press this fair hand to my lips.'

Sarah saved me the trouble. She gave me—not a lady's 'slap,'—which we all know is rather an encouragement than otherwise—but a very vigorous, well-planted, scientific blow, which loosened two front teeth; and then skipped upstairs, shut herself in her room, and locked the door.

I followed, stumbled upstairs, and approached in the dark towards the keyhole, whence shone the beams of her candle. I was about to explain that innocence had nothing to fear from me, when a somewhat unintelligible scuffling up the stairs was followed by a very intelligible barking. The house-dog, roused by the commotion, was abroad,—an animal more horrid even than the schoolmaster,—and, before I could convey a word as to the purity of my intentions, he had caught me by the calf of the leg so as to make his cursed fangs meet in my flesh, and bring the blood down into my slippers. I do not pretend to be Alexander or Julius Cæsar, and I confess that my first emotion, when the brute let me loose for a moment, and prepared, with another fierce howl, for a fresh invasion of my personal comforts, was to fly,—I had not time to reflect in what direction; but, as my enemy came from below, it was natural that my flight should be upwards. Accordingly, upstairs I stumbled as I could, and the dog after me, barking and snapping every moment, fortunately without inflicting any further wound. I soon reached the top of the staircase, and, as further flight was hopeless, I was obliged to throw myself astride

across the balustrade, which was high enough to prevent him from getting at me without giving himself more inconvenience than it seems he thought the occasion called for.

Here was a situation for a respectable citizen, tobacconist, and gallant! The darkness was intense: but I knew by an occasional snappish bark whenever I ventured to stir, or to make the slightest noise, that the dog was couching underneath me, ready for a spring. The thermometer must have been several yards beneath the freezing-point, and I had nothing to guard me from the cold but a nightgown and shirt. I was barelegged and barefooted, having lost my slippers in the run. The uneasy seat on which I was perched was as hard as iron, and colder than ice. I had received various bruises in the adventures of the last few minutes, but I forgot them in the smarting pain of my leg, rendered acute to the last degree by exposure to the frost. And then I knew perfectly well that, if I did not keep my seat with the dexterity of a Ducrow, I was exposed by falling on one side to be mangled by a beast of a dog watching my descent with a malignant pleasure, and, on the other, to be dashed to pieces by tumbling down from the top to the bottom of the house. The sufferings of Mazeppa were nothing compared to mine. He was, at least, safe from all danger of falling off his unruly steed. They had the humanity to tie him on.

Here I remained, with my bedroom candle in my hand,—I don't know how long, but it seemed an eternity,—until at length the dog began to retire by degrees, backwards, like the champion's horse at the coronation of George the Fourth, keeping his eyes fixed upon me all the time. I watched him with intense interest as he slowly receded down the stairs. He stopped a long time peeping over one stair, so that nothing of him was visible but his two great glaring eyes, and then they disappeared. I listened. He had gone.

I gently descended; cold and wretched as I was, I actually smiled as I gathered my dressing-gown about me, preparatory to returning to bed. Hark! He was coming back again, tearing up the stairs like a wild bull. I caught sight of his eyes. With a violent spring I caught at and climbed to the top of an old press that stood on the landing, just as the villanous animal reared himself against it, scratching and tearing to get at me, and gnashing his teeth in disappointment. Such teeth too!

'Why, what is the matter?' cried the beauteous Sarah, opening her chamber-door, and putting forth a candle and a nightcap.

'Sarah, my dear!' I exclaimed, 'call off the dog, lovely vision!'

'Get along with you!' said Sarah; 'and don't call me a lovely

vision, or I'll scream out of my window into the street. It serves you right !'

'Serves me right, Sarah !' I exclaimed, in a voice which I am quite certain was very touching. 'You'll not leave me here, Sarah ; look, look at this dreadful animal !'

'You're a great deal safer there than anywhere else,' said Sarah ; and she drew in her head again, and locked the door, leaving me and the dog gazing at each other with looks of mutual hatred.

How long I continued in this position I feel it impossible to guess ; it appeared to me rather more than the duration of a whole life. I was not even soothed by the deep snoring which penetrated from the sleeping-apartment of the fair cause of all my woes, and indicated that she was in the oblivious land of dreams.

I suppose I should have been compelled to await the coming of daylight, and the wakening of the household, before my release from my melancholy situation, if fortune had not so far favoured me as to excite, by way of diversion, a disturbance below stairs, which called off my guardian fiend. I never heard a more cheerful sound than that of his feet trotting downstairs ; and, as soon as I ascertained that the coast was clear, I descended, and tumbled at once into bed, much annoyed both in mind and body. The genial heat of the blankets, however, soon produced its natural effect, and I forgot my sorrows in slumber. When I woke it was broad daylight—as broad, I mean, as daylight condescends to be in December. An uneasy sensation surprised me. Had I missed the coach ? Devoting the waiters to the infernal gods, I put my hand under my pillow for my watch ; but no watch was there. Sleep was completely banished from my eyes, and I jumped out of bed to make the necessary inquiries ; when, to my additional horror and astonishment, I found my clothes also had vanished. I rang the bell violently, and summoned the whole *posse comitatús* of the house, whom I accused, in the loftiest tones, of misdemeanours of all descriptions. In return, I was asked who and what I was, and what brought me there : and one of the waiters suggested an instant search of the room, as he had shrewd suspicions that I was the man with the carpet-bag, who went about robbing hotels. After a scene of much tumult, the appearance of Boots at last cut the knot. I was, it seems, 'No. 12, wot was to ha' gone by the Eddenbry coach at six o'clock that morning, but wot had changed somehow into No. 11, wot went at four.'

'And why,' said I, 'didn't you knock at No. 12 ?'

'So I did,' said Boots ; 'I knocked fit to wake the dead, and, as there warn't no answer, I didn't like to wake the living. I didn't knock no more, specially as Sarah——'

‘What of Sarah?’ I asked in haste.

‘——’Specially as Sarah was going by at the time, and told me not to disturb you, for she knowd you had been uneasy in the night, and wanted a rest in the morning.’

I waited for no further explanation, but rushed to my room, and dressed myself as fast as I could, casting many a rueful glance on my dilapidated countenance, and many a reflection equally rueful on the adventures of the night.

My place was lost, and the money I paid for it: that was certain; but going to Edinburgh was indispensable. I proceeded, therefore, to book myself again; and, on doing so, found Joe Grabble in the coffee-room talking to Sarah. He had returned, like Paul Pry, in quest of his umbrella, or something else he had forgotten the night before, and I arrived just in time to hear him ask if I was off. The reply was by no means flattering to my vanity.

‘I don’t know nothink about him,’ said the indignant damsel, ‘except that, whether he’s off or on, he’s a nasty old willin.’

‘Hey-day, Peter!’ exclaimed Joe. ‘So you are not gone. What is this Sarah says about you?’

‘May I explain,’ said I, approaching her with a bow, ‘fair Sarah?’

‘I don’t want your conversation at no price,’ was the reply. ‘You’re an old wretch as I wouldn’t touch with a pair of tongs!’

‘Hey-day!’ cried Joe. ‘This is not precisely the character you expected. The steak and dozen——’

But the subject is too painful to be pursued. My misfortunes were, however, not yet at an end. I started that evening by the mail. We had not got twenty miles from town when the snow-storm began. I was one of its victims. The mail stuck somewhere in Yorkshire, where we were snowed up and half starved for four days, and succeeded only after a thousand perils, the details of which may be read most pathetically related in the newspapers of the period, in reaching our destination. When there, I lost little time in repairing to our agent—a W.S. of the name of M’Cracken—who has a handsome flat in Nicholson Street, not far from the College. He welcomed me cordially; but there was something dolorous in his tone, nevertheless.

‘Sit ye down, Master Gayless; sit ye down, and tak’ a glass o’ wine; it wull do ye guid after yer lang and cauld journey. I hae been looking for ye for some days.’

‘What about the house of Screw and Longcut?’ I inquired, with much anxiety.

‘I am vera sorry to say, naething guid.’

‘Failed?’

'Why, jest that; they cam' down three days ago. They struggled an' struggled, but it wad no do.'

'What is the state of their affairs?'

'Oh! bad—bad—saxpence in the pund forby. But, why were you no here by the cotch o' whilk ye advised me? That cotch cam' in safe eneuch; and it puzzled me quite to see yer name bookit in the waybill, and ye no come. I did no ken what to do. I suppose some accident detained you?'

'It was indeed an accident,' replied I faintly, laying down my untasted glass.

'I hope it's of nae consequence elsewhere,' said M'Cracken, 'because it is unco' unlucky *here*; for if ye had been in E'nbro, on the Saturday, I think—indeed I am sure—that we would hae squeezed ten or twelve shillings in the pund out o' them—for they were in hopes o' remittances to keep up; but, when the Monday cam', they saw the game was gane, and they are now clane dished. So ye see, Mr. Gayless, ye're after the fair.'

'After the *fair*, indeed,' said I; for men can pun even in misery.

What my man of business told me proved to be true. The dividend will not be sixpence in the pound, and it is more than six hundred and fifty pounds odd out of my pocket. I had the expense (including that of a lost place) of a journey to Edinburgh and back for nothing. I was snowed up on the road, and frozen up on the top of a staircase. I lost a pair of teeth, and paid the dentist for another. I was bumped and bruised, bullied by a barmaid, and hunted by a dog. I paid for my steak and oysters amid the never-ending jokes of those who were eating and drinking them; and I cannot look forward to the next dog-days without having before my eyes the horrors of hydrophobia.

Such was my last love!



The good-for-nothing

London: Richard Borden, July 1, 1838



The Good-for-Nothing.

BY EDWARD MAYHEW.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, 1838.]



AN old convivial proverb asserts, 'You shall know a man by his cellar.' Perhaps it was Mr. Edwin Jackman's naturally modest and retiring disposition which induced him originally to fix his abode as far from the above proverbial point of inspection as possible. He was not partial to the cellar. His coals, for instance, used to be carried to him 'fresh and fresh' by a great unwashed, who, after stamping slowly up the hollow stairs, would rattle the dusty burden on the floor, and then doggedly stand beside the rubbish for cash on delivery. But time, which abases all things, did not spare Mr. Edwin Jackman. Gradually that gentleman's habitation sank lower and lower, till at last he regularly dined in the *parlour*. Gradually also had the naturally modest and retiring disposition sunk with the body. From an honest desire (wanting more brilliant qualifications) to be esteemed for his genuine *good nature*, Jackman descended to petty cares for his *respectability*; and when, in his own opinion, this middling honour was established, he felt a longing after the genteel.

A waggon and four proportionable horses, stationed before his door, was an object for lofty contemplation as he stood at the window, his nose flattened against the glass, carelessly dallying with the silver in his pockets; and, remembering the days long past, he thought of those whose abilities and prospects were still *high* in the sloping chambers of some dismal inn of court, whose pecuniary resources were the lawful discussion of the chandler and the laundress, and swellingly compared them with his own present importance. It was a pleasant sight to see the passengers duck and run to avoid the spray of 'the very best autumnal Wallsends,' which were trickling over the pavement into the ample abyss beneath; but when the climax arrived, and one sturdy fellow bravely smacked the emptied sacks upon the pavement, while another in lusty accents announced their numbers to

the neighbourhood, Edwin Jackman would prudently retire to conceal his feelings, and order beer for the men.

To those who enter the legal profession without other resources than their own abilities, there is a 'great gulf' lying between the disreputable retailer of the coal-shed, who receives orders with suspicion, and the complacent dapper merchant, who never *thinks* of his bill even when the fuel is consumed. Mr. Jackman had, unassisted, leaped this gulf. He had a right to feel *proud*; but as he now kept a man-servant, he could not help also feeling *genteel*, in which sentiment the gentle partner of his bed and fortune amply participated. Thus the domestic circle of the conveyancer might have been harmonious, had an only child, now in his fifth year, been of a tractable disposition; but Master Frederick was rudely healthy. It was a trying affliction to his parents when, beholding other children walk stiffly on without rumpling their collars by looking either to the right or left, they contrasted the prim gentility of these little dears with the offensive activity of their own offspring, who was ever pointing at this, running after that, patting the dogs that passed him, or making advances to little animals, in his parents' eyes, still lower in the scale of creation. Nor was this the whole of his misbehaviour. At home, if a little choice lace (the finest Brussels), too sacred even for Sundays, was left soaking in his mother's wash-hand-basin, there was Master Frederick surely to be found, with a dirty tobacco-pipe, endeavouring to blow bladders for his amusement.

'Ah!' would the sorrowing mother cry, 'nothing escapes that boy; he destroys everything. He ought to have been bred in a bear-garden. He'll never make a gentleman! There was not such lace as this in London; the Queen has not any like it, and he has purposely tried to destroy it. The good-for-nothing!'

Should the clean Hollands have been put down to save the staircase carpet, ten minutes afterwards a stream of water would be discernible up the middle, while the sides were profusely decorated with little dirty shoe-marks. Master Frederick had converted the filter into a bath for the kitten, and there could be no water for his father's dinner that day.

'A nasty little fellow!' cried his mother, twittering with passion. 'So nice as they looked! But he can't bear anything that is clean: filth is what he delights in—a pigsty would please him. Was there ever a child born with really such disgraceful propensities?'

Thus, though his parents would have laughed at any mention of expecting a child to be born with innate conventional decorum and knowledge of genteel usages, they nevertheless persisted in

proclaiming every boyish mischief or infantine indiscretion Master Frederick was guilty of, as an additional proof that their son could never be made a gentleman; nor did the parents use any caution to avoid the probable consequences of the lad's natural activity.

Mrs. Jackman now gave the finishing touch to her gentility by a declared passion for glass and cracked china; and her lord, to encourage the delicate aspiration, crowned her desires and her collection with a glass pitcher of exquisite workmanship and unusual dimensions. It was such a specimen of art as any lady in Mrs. Jackman's station of life must have felt proud in possessing and pleasure in washing. She was, in fact, impatient for its display, and a party was invited for the express purpose.

The day arrived. Sundry clients, with one or two relations (to soften down the positive look of business, and make up numbers), sat down in the parlour, while Master Frederick waiting in the passage to come in with the dessert, fingered every dish that went in, and clawed every fragment that came out. Dinner being ended, and the cloth removed, the boy, having been re-washed, bounced into the room, but had hardly insisted on being noticed by all present, before the glass pitcher was placed in the middle of the table, and attracted general attention, all with one accord bursting into a chorus of admiration.

The Jackmans were in their glory; the company restless through a wish to be amiable; and Master Frederick being the most commonplace mark for the display of this desire, they commenced a scramble for possession of the child. Each baited his plate with some trifling delicacy, requesting the boy's attention to the fact; and, as if urged by his parents' repeated requests '*not* to give him wine, as Frederick would be ill,' no one was content till the young gentleman had done him or her 'the honour'; and, to do the boy justice, he certainly exhibited on this occasion the most polite alacrity, till (unaccustomed to a more potent beverage than milk and water) the little fellow became flushed and noisy; and the digestive serenity of the gentlemen was gratefully relieved when the ladies, retiring, took the child with them.

Frederick, on reaching the drawing-room, to his mother's horror, fell asleep, and snored 'like a pig'; while, on awaking, the first words he uttered were an urgent request, or rather petulant demand, for 'something to drink.'

'Goodness me, child!' whispered Mrs. Jackman, 'you do nothing *but* drink! Be quiet, sir!—you've had too much to drink already!' After this she indulged in a series of frowns, nods, and contortions, and quoted freely from those maxims which constitute

the code of mammas, ultimately making her son's deficiencies an excuse for ordering the announcement of coffee.

This latter effect was by no means pleasing to Mr. Jackman. He was free with his wine, and wanted opportunity only to be equally so with his tongue; and when his health was drunk, the peculiarly emphatic sincerity with which he poured forth his 'want of words to express'—the 'proudest moment of his life,' and his 'wishes for the prosperity of all present,' must have provoked a most complimentary discussion on the host's oratorical powers, if the servant had not bobbed in, almost before the applause had subsided, and blurted out 'Coffee!' thereby distracting the ideas of the company; nor, afterwards, could a moment's pause take place in conversation without the fellow's again intruding, till, fairly baited from the wine by these incessant interruptions, Mr. Jackman led the way to the drawing-room.

A short *tête-à-tête* between the parents occasioned sundry glances towards their thirsty child, and the father took an opportunity of whispering in his ear with threatening face, 'You'll please to behave yourself, sir,' as, passing rapidly by, he hastened to do the hospitable.

Frederick now saw coffee handed to all but himself, who, of all, had most need of it. His voice assumed a touching pathos as he timidly ventured to utter, 'Please, ma!' But 'Little boys,' he was told, 'should see company helped first;' and then, 'Little boys should never ask;' and, 'Little boys ought to wait to be served, and say nothing.' At length the little boy in question, instead of studying to benefit by the instruction thus timely conveyed, took advantage of an open door to escape downstairs.

The family filter, which for the kind of thing was certainly handsome, stood, partly for convenience but chiefly for ornament, on the landing-place at the top of the kitchen stairs; and before this the parched child presently stood, listening most attentively to the music made by the water dropping through the stone into the receptacle beneath. Feeling that servants are equally vigorous in imitating and abusing the harshness of their superiors, Frederick's hope of procuring a mug to drink from rested on his being able to take one unobserved; and while looking round for this purpose, his eye rested on the glass pitcher, which now, standing on the mahogany slab in the hall, proudly surmounted a heap of dirty plates filled with fruit-parings.

Its cool and liquid appearance was decisive; conscious of doing wrong, but unable to resist, our hero mounted a chair, and, fluttering with apprehension, lifted, though not without difficulty, the weighty vessel from its exalted situation, and had

just borne it safely to the filter, when the man-servant (to whose care it had been specially entrusted) approached, and with horror beheld his young master thus employed. Place—character—wages (with an indirect glance at paying for breakages), floated before the menial's eyes; he involuntarily cried:

'Ah! *you've* no business to *lay hold* of that.'

So probably thought the child, for he no sooner heard the words than he *let go* the handle; and the jug, complying with the law of gravity, commenced descending the kitchen stairs.

Paralyzed at the sight, both Frederick and the man watched it as it leisurely hopped from one stair to another without sustaining the slightest damage. Seeing this, a tumultuous hope arose that it might miraculously escape altogether; when, just at that moment, as if exulting in the feats it had performed, it playfully sparkled with more than ordinary lustre, while, rolling on to the stones at the bottom, with a loud crash it shivered into a thousand pieces.

'That's done for! There'll be a jolly row!' mournfully ejaculated the servant.

To prove these words true the little delinquent tuned *his* strong lungs for the celebration of the misfortune, and in a few moments the space around him was thronged. Mrs. Jackman heard the tale—looked upon the fragments—pronounced rivets and Chinese cement of no avail—and hastily retired. Mr. Jackman was equally distressed—not for his loss—this he at first did not so particularly consider; but he was distressed to know in what manner he ought to comport himself. In his own mind he had, by his speech of thanks, given the surrounding guests a magnificent opinion of his mental resources, and he was anxious to confirm the impression thus created by the loftiness of his bearing on the present trying occasion. How to do this was all he wanted to know. He accordingly thrust one hand within his vest, and the other into his pocket, and with a decided look of nothingness waited for a cue from the conduct of those around.

'It's very vexatious,' said one.

Mr. Jackman thrust his hand a little further into his waistcoat, and sighed.

'Don't distress yourself about it,' considerably murmured another.

'Thank you! thank you!' cried the host in violent emotion.

'I'm his father; but, however, I'll bear it! I'll bear it!'

'What could the child have been doing?' inquired a third.

'Heaven only knows. I can't tell. If he had spoken to me,

sooner than this should have happened I'd have denied him nothing. My heart, to the fullest extent of my means, he knows is his. What then could he want with *that pitcher*? But go, sir, go!' added Jackman, turning to the culprit; 'I shall never make you a gentleman. Go, sir, and get another father who can tolerate your acts, and put up with your extravagance. You'll find the difference, sir. I renounce you. You have severed yourself from me for ever. There take him, take him, some one; take him from this house. I *give* him to you. Let me never see the boy again!'

And thus saying, Mr. Jackman strutted away with the air of a man who heroically sacrifices feeling to duty.

His audience were all astonishment. 'Could the father be serious?' each seemed by his looks to ask of the other. 'And if,' thought they, 'he *is* serious, which of *us* does he expect is to be burthened with the mischievous child whose tricks have sundered the affections of his natural father?' A simultaneous uneasiness pervaded the group, which, however, soon gave place to a desire of further consoling the afflicted parent, in which kind purpose they so speedily embarked that Master Frederick found himself shortly after his father's departure standing by the side of his uncle, Mr. Alexander, alone.

Alexander was a kind-hearted man. He was a Scot, without one of those bad qualities which some think characterize a whole nation.

He, from a feeling of compassion lest the child might be too severely chastised for his error, took him home, and (being a dealer in canvas and sailcloth) turned the young scapegrace into his warehouse with full permission to do all the damage he was able. The boy was delighted with his liberty, and by next morning had made a bosom friend of the only constant inhabitant and guardian of the place, a huge Newfoundland dog—Lion by name—a massive beast, of grave and shaggy aspect, who passed his life chained to an enormous kennel, so placed as to command the principal entrance. Here Master Frederick romped with the brute, and tumbled about the heavy bales which were everywhere strewn over the place, nor for a moment thought how far his parents had become reconciled to his last night's adventure.

'He's not at all like other children, he is so mischievous,' remarked Mrs. Jackman at her breakfast-table.

'If he'd only do as I tell him,' responded her lord; 'Heaven knows I never speak but for his good. That child, Jane, has, I'm afraid, a natural disposition for blackguardism. I don't see the end of him.'

'Everybody *would* let him drink,' rejoined the lady, 'though

I kept begging of them not to do so. I never saw a child take strong wine as he did; and, when he was asleep in the drawing-room I felt quite ashamed, he looked so red and vulgar. I thought then something *must* happen; and what the servants could have been about! But London servants are getting so religious, they can think of nothing but wages and perquisites and their Sundays out.'

'Twenty pounds!' cried the father. 'There isn't a gentleman in London can produce its fellow! Could he find nothing to break but *that*? Give me my hat! I'll teach him to behave himself! I'll make a gentleman of him, or he shall smart for it!'

And the report of a door slammed violently announced Mr. Jackman's departure.

As he went his pace increased beyond all common ambulatory movements; snorting and jumping he passed along, as though he sought to illustrate the turbulence of his passions by unevenness of motion. Thus proceeding, his eye caught a horsewhip ticketed for sale at two-and-sixpence in a saddler's window. Mr. Jackman paused. It was decidedly *cheap*; nevertheless, after a solemn shaking of his head, he slowly walked on, then stopped again, looked back hesitatingly, and, retracing his steps, scrutinized the article for a considerable time with the profoundest gravity. It was a cruel weapon to lay upon so young a child, but the weight of the hand *might* do him a greater injury. The idea of humanity was lugged in to justify severity. He bought the horsewhip; and, did he entertain any doubt as to the propriety of his conduct, he gave his indignation towards his son the full benefit of his uneasiness, and soon stood at the warehouse door, flourishing his new purchase before the child.

'You will come here, sir! Come here, Frederick!'

The summons was certainly productive of a movement, but in the opposite direction to that pointed out by filial obedience.

'You had better come here, sir! You had better come here, Frederick!'

The child evidently entertained a different opinion: he quickened his retreat.

'Look sharp, little 'un, or you'll want no fire to warm ye this day. Now keep your eyes open, and hop for it; and if ye rin, isn't there a chance he'll not catch you for once, darling?' cried some one.

Mr. Jackman drew himself up, and, looking with savage pride towards the place whence the words proceeded, beheld an Irish porter, whose face was glistening in the expectation of amusement

from the proposed chase. Keenly sensitive to a parent's natural dislike to any interference, and peculiarly alive to the mortifying idea of his anger being food for an *inferior's* low amusement, Jackman muttered something 'not loud but deep,' and darted vigorously after his son, thinking to decide the question at once by a *coup de main*; but the child had considerable advantages—he could glide in between bales of canvas, or creep through holes, which his father either could not penetrate, or was forbidden by dignity to attempt in the presence of a menial.

'Only let me catch you, you young villain! To expose your own father thus! Come here, sir!—will you come here?—ugh!—only let me catch you, sir!'

'Only do that thing, and *you'll* catch it, little 'un!' jeered the Hibernian, capering with delight at witnessing Jackman's irritation. 'Och! rin for the life of ye, rin! Iligant! If the ould 'un don't see whisky till he whacks ye, sure there's a dry wake for him. Ah! missed that same, now—luck's on the side of ye! Rin, jewel!—och! ha! ha!—rin, honey, rin!'

Goaded by the man's coarseness, what remained of Jackman's temper entirely forsook him. Blind with passion, he rushed wildly forward, cutting with the horsewhip without aim on all sides; but hardly had he gone a dozen paces ere, stumbling over a heap of goods, he measured his length upon the ground. The Irishman fairly yelled with delight; while Jackman, bounding from the floor, saw his son toddling almost leisurely along at a considerable distance. Become now from rage regardless of dignity, the father leaped over several intervening obstacles, and once more neared the boy, who was imprudent enough to quit his cover and cross the open floor of the warehouse. It was evident that here he had no chance. With a short, involuntary cry of exultation, his loving papa sprang forward, and had almost grasped Freddy by the hair, when, as if by magic, the urchin suddenly disappeared, and Mr. Jackman shot some distance past the spot before he could check himself and return to examine it. He was hurrying to do this, when a huge black nose, reposing between two formidable paws, warned him to proceed no farther. Master Frederick had, in fact, for refuge, entered the kennel, at the extremity of which he was discovered crouching behind the dog.

'Lie down!' said Mr. Jackman, as, resolved on punishment, he slowly advanced, though with considerable doubt as to what part the new actor intended to take in the scene; 'lie down, Lion!—fine fellow!—good old doggy!—poor old Lion!—lie down!'

Notwithstanding this insinuating language, the dog remained,

to all appearance, ignorant even of Mr. Jackman's vicinity. Once, indeed, the deep muzzle slightly quivered; but it was hardly perceptible, and did not interrupt the settled expression of grave meditation which characterized the countenance of the brute. Emboldened by this stillness, Jackman approached nearer and nearer still, and from the spot where he now stood might, if the animal should continue to act in the true spirit of neutrality, drag forth his rebellious offspring. However, previously to attempting this, he deemed it prudent to reconnoitre farther, and bent his body for the purpose. The dog instantaneously raised his small, expressive eyes, looked Mr. Jackman stedfastly in the face, and then slowly closed the orbs in apparent slumber.

'There's a good dog!' cried Jackman, recovering his self-possession.

The sound of the voice now seemed to irritate the animal, and this alarming the child, Master Frederick patted the broad back of the brute with his little hand, which Mr. Jackman perceiving, misconstrued into an attempt to make the dog attack him.

'You little blackguard!—set the dog at your *own* father!' cried Jackman, his rage aggravated beyond even its former excess.

Thrusting forth one arm, he seized his son by the neck, but in an instant released him again, for he heard the Irishman shout, a chain rattle, and the deep grinding of a dog's growl. He felt that there was danger; yet, before he could avoid it, a sudden agonizing pain demanded his immediate attention.

When the first flash of fear had passed away, Mr. Jackman perceived that the dog was in his rear, and, what more nearly touched him, in possession of a considerable portion of his flesh. With consciousness returned his regard for the opinion of other people, and his sensitiveness to anything bordering upon the ridiculous; and apprehending that his present predicament was liable, if known, to become a jest among his friends, he struggled to restrain the cries that rose thickly in his throat. He remembered that the Irishman was present, and, notwithstanding the pain which it occasioned him (as every movement on his part was now answered by fresh furor on that of the animal), he managed to turn his body so as to face the porter, when, to add to his grief, he discovered the fellow, disabled through laughter, leaning for support against the wall. Resolved rather to be eaten up alive than call on others for assistance, what could the unhappy Jackman do? Hope was not a feeling to be cherished by a man whose body was detained by a Newfoundland dog. It was

too quiet a sensation for one who every moment felt the beast batting at him, as it were, with his nose, to renew his bite, or shaking him in an endeavour either to tear off the flesh or prove the firmness of his grip.

No means of escape presented themselves to the hurried glance of the sufferer, whose only chance, indeed, was through the interference of the porter. Stifling the hatred that this man's conduct had created, Jackman at length called to him for help; but the fellow only lifted up his head, and seeing Jackman's face, fell into another such excessive peal of merriment as precluded all hope from that quarter.

Pride, the proverb says, has no feeling; but those who indulge it have; and Mr. Jackman grew faint as a probability of the dog's ultimately throwing him down and mangling him occurred to his imagination. Every moment his fears increased; even his desire to avoid exposure passed away; and, after making one or two strange, guttural sounds, the voice at length burst forth in a volume that defies description.

The place was soon crowded. People passing in the street rushed to the entrance; the inmates of Mr. Alexander's house hurried to the spot; while a sudden energy of terror lent Jackman strength to free himself from the animal, though at the loss of a considerable portion of that garment peculiar to his sex.

Any other man under such circumstances would have hastily sought concealment, availing himself of Mr. Alexander's pressing invitation to 'step indoors'; but Mr. Jackman's character was not of the ordinary stamp. When the immediate danger had passed his conceit returned; and catching a glance of two servants who were tittering and whispering at the extreme end of the place, he resolved not to quit that spot before he had lent a dignity to misfortune.

'Alexander!' cried he, endeavouring to look firm, though his every nerve was in motion, and the tears standing in his eyes, 'Alexander!—d——n the dog! The good-for-nothing! Alexander, you see what a state I'm in; and I request you will pull that boy out. Oh!'

'I dare na do it,' replied Mr. Alexander, with difficulty suppressing his laughter; 'besides, any friend even o' yours is welcome to my *house*, and I canna, therefore, refuse your ain son the use o' my *kennel*.'

'Now, mark me—that boy will ruin me if he's not corrected; no friend of mine shall interfere. Now, Alexander, either drag him out, or, as I'm a mortal man, I'll leave your house this instant for ever!'

'What! in those breeks?' drily asked the Scot, pointing to the drapery that hung in picturesque tatters.

'It is dacent he is for travelling, sure enough, masther!' bawled the Irishman, emboldened by observing his employer smile.

This was no brilliant jest, but it came in just when one of some sort was wanted; and the bystanders now beginning to understand circumstances, the Hibernian's remark was, to the confusion of Mr. Jackman, received with shouts. During their continuance, that gentleman thus addressed his son, who remained crouching, the picture of infant dread, in his humble asylum:

'You see what you're doing, young rascal! Will nothing but my positive degradation satisfy your blackguard propensities? To expose me first to that ruffian's laughter, then set the dog at your father, and now cause the mob to hoot him! Come out, sir, or I'll be the death of you!'

And, in proof of sincerity, he shook the whip wrathfully at the child.

The heedless populace, having chosen to side against 'the old 'un,' yelled when they observed his threatening action, and their remarks (such as could be heard) being forcibly expressive of indignation, Mr. Jackman was soon glad to avail himself of the Scot's repeated invitation.

Weeks, months passed on, and the outraged dignity of the father would not listen to a thought of reconciliation. 'That boy had *proved* himself a *blackguard*! He would renounce him for ever!' Mr. Alexander was becoming loud in his remarks on the evils of bearing malice, when Mrs. Jackman presented her husband with another hope. Masculine dignity is incompatible with these occasions; the father struggled hard to maintain it; till, one day, dining off an ugly bone of mutton and clammy potatoes in the back drawing-room, he felt suddenly overwhelmed by a rush of softness, and hastening to the second floor, communicated his intention of having Frederick home and sending him to school.

At the appointed time, his uncle took the boy home, and both were shown upstairs into the mother's bedroom, who was beginning to 'sit up a little every day.' There things had evidently been prepared for a scene. Mr. Jackman, effectively serene, was attitudinizing in an arm-chair. The occasion, indeed, called for his grandest powers of speech.

After having been caressed by mamma, and remarked on by Mrs. Dobson, the monthly nurse, Frederick was placed upon a

high stool, which had been put purposely for him, directly fronting his papa.

It was time to begin. Mrs. Jackman, who had experience in her husband's humours, looked the picture of patience, trying to go to sleep; while Mrs. Dobson, feeling that something was going to take place in which *her* importance was no consideration, became obstreperously attentive to the wants and wishes of the little stranger.

Just as Mr. Jackman had wiped his face and blown his nose, and was sighing deeply while pocketing his handkerchief with an exuberance of action, the footman brought the hackney-coach to the door which was to take his young master to school. The man had been told a coach *would* be wanted, and had mistaken the intimation for an immediate order. The blunder lost him his situation. He left the family that day month.

Thus Mr. Jackman's ideas were likely to be nipped in the bud, unless he could muster sufficient magnanimity to pay the coachman for resting the miserable horses at his door. This, however, he could not easily bring himself to do: if he had an aversion, it was to part with money, the full value for which he had not received; but, on the other hand, was the wisdom he had concocted to be stifled at the very moment of its birth? was the pathos he himself almost wept to think of, not, after all, to astonish the monthly nurse? Mr. Jackman pulled out his watch, and placed it in such a position that the index exactly fronted him. He would sacrifice one half hour; and with desperate generosity, the fervour of which made him grasp hard the elbow of his chair, and emphatically thrust his face close to that of his son, he thus began:

'Frederick, my dear child!'

The dear child was stupidly watching the gambols of a blue-bottle buzzing against the window.

'Frederick, my dear child,' began Mr. Jackman, solemnly pathetic; 'you do not know what it is to be a father.'

'Arn't in natur' he should yet; but give the little rogue time, and he'll learn as well as the best of you, I warrant me,' loudly interrupted Mrs. Dobson, who was jolting her interesting charge upon her knees.

'Silence, if you please, madam!' cried Mr. Jackman, turning his back upon the speaker that he might the more effectually stare at her over his shoulder.

Then, having bustled himself once more into composure, he again commenced:

'My dear child, Frederick! To feel like a father is a very serious consideration.'

'There, do you hear that, you little beauty's beauty?' shouted the nurse, at the same time indulging in one of those sonorous smacks of the lips which are peculiar to ladies of her sedate employment.

'It is not three minutes ago,' fired Mr. Jackman, rising and standing angrily before Mrs. Dobson, 'by any watch in the kingdom—I repeat, that three minutes have not elapsed since, in the politest way imaginable, I troubled myself to tell you to hold your tongue. *Now, I command silence!*'

'Mr. Jackman,' replied the monthly nurse, looking at the gentleman from under her brows, and speaking in a suppressed voice, 'I'm sure there's plenty of room in the house without your coming *here* to make a disturbance, just when my poor dear lady ought to want to get to sleep.'

'Do you know, Mrs. Dobson, who you are? I'll tell you, ma'am, that I'll do as I like in my own house.'

And to give effect to this determination, Mr. Jackman slightly raised his voice, which Mrs. Dobson no sooner heard than she gave loose to her loudest powers, actually bawling.

'Shame on 'e! shame on 'e! ugh!' here she indulged in a sound between a scream and a grunt, of so emphatic a nature that the delivery fairly shook her ponderous frame. 'Shame on 'e! You must have a bad heart to make a noise like this when you knows my lady didn't scarce touch a mouthful o' dinner. Ho! now mind my words, I won't take none o' the consequences, come what may of it. If the dear soul *dies*—you may laugh, Mister Jackman, but it's no laughing matter to a woman o' my years. Thank Heaven, my character's established. Oh! when the doctor said, only this very morning, quiet and good nursing was everything to us now—when you might have had the whole house to yourself! I never was interfered with by no gentleman afore. I've attended rich and poor—ah! though I say it, the *best* of people. Lady Emily Smithson will speak to my character any day; I was with her as last June; we had nothing of this sort there; and if you'd known to behave like a——'

A very natural consequence here interrupted this discursive harangue; Mrs. Jackman, overpowered by the noise and confusion, had fainted.

All crowded to the bedside; and her husband, who was really hurt at the result of the disturbance to which he had been a party, bore Mrs. Dobson's glances and remarks with repentant humility, while the nurse, no way moved by his sorrowful looks, made him hurry up and down stairs for sundry trifling articles; nor was it till he became incapable of further exertion that she

thought 'the poor, dear, sweet sufferer might *do now*;' then, treading with such extreme caution as fully impressed the necessity of preserving silence, she advanced to where the gentleman stood panting, and assuming an air of parental forgiveness, laid her hand upon his shoulder.

'Now, as I'm a Christian woman,' said Mrs. Dobson, in a voice barely audible, 'let us hope, for the love of heaven, my dear Mr. Jackman, you will another time——'

But he who delighted in lecturing had an abhorrence of being lectured; and as any further dispute with Mrs. Dobson was out of the question in that apartment, he cast his eyes round the room, and perceiving that Mr. Alexander had taken the boy downstairs, and that the half hour he had so gloriously devoted to other purposes had expired, he hastily said:

'My dear Mrs. Dobson—there—say no more about it. *You are not a father!*'

The woman stared, and was about to reply, when Jackman darted out of the room, crying that 'the coach was waiting, and he must see the child off.'

As he descended the stairs, he thus soliloquised:

'Was ever parent so afflicted with a child? He will thrive under no treatment; I allowed him to come down after dinner—gave him fruit, wine, and all he could ask for—then he destroyed my property. I tried severity, he set the dog at me—made me the butt of that Irish beast, and caused me to be hooted at by a mob. Now, when, with my heart overflowing, I endeavour to awaken him to something like a sense of respectability, there's his poor mother fainting—the whole house is disturbed—me with a dreadful headache owing to that old woman's infernal clatter, and he himself the only person who has not been 'put out' by his dreadful low predilections. The child is evidently unfit for genteel society; I don't know what can be done with him. It's madness attempting to instruct him, so he must go to school—the Good-for-nothing!'



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H



Midnight Mishaps.

BY EDWARD MAYHEW.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, August, 1837.]



H the rural suburbs of London!—the filthy suburbs!—where nothing is green but the water, nothing natural but the dirt,—where the trees are clipt into poles, and the hedges grow behind palings,—where ‘no thorough-fare’ forbids you to walk in one place, and the dust prevents you from walking in another,—the filthy suburbs!

It was these delightful precincts of peace and ‘caution,’ retirement and ‘handsome rewards,’ that Mr. Jacob Tweasle honoured with his decided preference. This gentleman had inhabited a small shop at the foot of Snow Hill for more than forty years, retailing tobacco to the tradesmen, and cigars to the apprentices; and, having by supplying other people’s boxes gradually filled his own, he, now in his sixtieth year, declined the manufacture of weeds for the cultivation of exotics.

An ‘Italian villa,’ beautifully situated in a back lane near Hornsey, was pointed out to the tobacconist by a house-agent as particularly ‘snug and retired.’ Before the ostentatious white front of this ‘enviable residence’ were exactly twenty square yards of lawn, ‘delightfully wooded’ by a solitary laburnum, which was approached over a highly ‘ornamental Chinese bridge,’ crossing ‘a convenient stream of water.’ The interior of the building it was ‘impossible for the most fastidious to object to’; the rooms were so low, and the windows so small, that the happy occupant always imagined himself a hundred miles from the Metropolis; the prospect, too, from the upper stories ‘revelled in all the luxuries of the picturesque’; the dome of St. Paul’s lent magnificence to the distance, while the foreground was enlivened by a brick-field.

Mr. Tweasle saw, approved, yet doubted. He did not know what to say to it. There was, he acknowledged, everything that heart of man could desire; the garden was walled in, and the

steel-traps and cabbages might be taken as fixtures. Nevertheless, he reached the bridge without having made up his mind. There he paused, and gazed in anxious meditation upon the black and heavy liquid that stagnated beneath. 'Can one fish here?' suddenly asked the tobacconist, at the same time leaning over and disturbing the 'convenient stream of water' with his cane.

'I never do myself,' replied the agent, in such a manner as to imply that other people frequently did; for Tweasle instantly inquired:

'What do they catch?'

The agent was puzzled. Was the Londoner really ignorant, or was this a design to test the truth of all his former assertions? It was a case which required extreme caution. 'I am no angler myself,—I have no time for that delightful recreation; but—I should think—that eels—eels—probably—eels—might——'

'Stewed eels make a nice supper,' interrupted Tweasle with gluttonous simplicity. 'Fish arn't to be got fresh in London.'

'Fish ought to be eaten the moment it is taken from the water,' cried the agent with decision.

'My boy's got a fishing-rod,' said Tweasle; and he took the Italian villa on a repairing lease.

The announcement of this event created a 'sensation' at the foot of Snow Hill; the Rubicon was past; the business *was* to be disposed of; and, that no time might be lost, Mr. Tweasle, without taking off his gloves, began to scribble an advertisement, while Mrs. Tweasle waddled into the shop and insulted a customer.

All was confusion. To fly from the paternal protection of the Lord Mayor, and emigrate off the stones, was no casual event to him who had hitherto proudly exulted in the freedom of the City. Much was necessary to reconcile the mind to so bold a measure. The lady undertook to pack up everything that could be got in London, and purchase everything that could not be got in the country. The gentleman, acting as a man should, wholly neglected the domestic. He gave his attention to the noble arts of agriculture and self-defence, botanical theories, treatises, and directories. Horticultural implements, instruments, and improvements, swords and pistols, guns and blunderbusses, detonating crackers for the shutters, and alarums for the bedrooms, he spared neither trouble nor expense to procure.

'Now, Hanney dear,' said Tweasle to his wife, surveying the weapons which had just been sent home, 'I thinks here's everything a contented mind could desire: the thieves will know better than to come where we are.'

But the timid woman's ideas of defence were concentrated in a flannel gown and a rattle; she looked more terrified than

assured :—firearms and accidents were, in her mind, synonymous; and her only answer was an urgent entreaty that 'those nasty things might be always so locked up that *nobody could* get at them.'

In due time everything that the family thought they could possibly want was procured; and when, to render the whole complete, Master Charles, only son and heir, was commissioned to procure live stock from St. Giles's, the boy returned with almond tumblers for pigeon-pies, and bantam-cocks for poultry.

'New-laid eggs for breakfast!' chuckled his papa.

All being at length ready for starting on the following day, and as the house was dismantled even to the junction of the bed-posts, the family determined to pass their last evening in London whispering soft adieus to their more intimate acquaintance. At first Tweasle conducted himself with becoming hypocrisy. He lamented his separation from the 'friends of his youth,' and ate cake and drank wine with imposing solemnity; but, as the ceremony was repeated, he committed himself by an occasional smile, and at last slipped out something about 'poor devils, who were smoked to death like red herrings.' Mrs. Tweasle was shocked, and hurried her husband away, who, however, warmed into truth, would not acknowledge his error or go to bed, but insisted on saying good-bye to his old friend Gingham. They found the Ginghams preparing for supper; and, on company arriving, the servant was whispered 'to bring up the beef,' which Tweasle overhearing, he turned to the hostess, and exultingly cried:

'Come and see us in the country, and I'll give you stewed eels and chicken for supper.'

'I'm very sorry *we've* nothing *better* than cold beef to offer *you*, sir,' replied the lady with a look; 'but I can send out.'

'Not for the world!' shouted Mrs. Tweasle, who was rejoiced when a request to be seated relieved her from reiterating her conciliatory wishes that nobody would mind her good man, who during supper would converse on no other subject than the pleasures of new-laid eggs and the country, till, having finished one glass of gin and water, he undertook to explain to his friend how it was that *he* also could leave off business like a squire. Nor was this personal investigation of private family affairs rendered less unpleasant by the indelicate egotism which induced the exhibitor to illustrate his friend's faults by his own virtues; till, though repeatedly requested to 'drop it,' Tweasle wound up his harangue by calling his host a fool.

'You're a fool, Gingham. You might ha' been as well off as I am at the present moment, if you hadn't lived at such a rate, like a fool.'

The lady of the house instantly arose, and left the room in company with her daughters, telling Mr. Tweasle '*they* were going to bed'; and Mr. Gingham leant over the table to inform his guest 'he had no wish to quarrel.'

Of the rest of that evening Tweasle the next day retained a very confused recollection. He thought some one pushed him about in a passage, and remembered his wife's assisting him to put on his great-coat in the middle of the street.

At the appointed hour, the glass-coach which was to convey the family from London stopped at the foot of Snow Hill. Mr. Tweasle was the first to jump in; the person to whom the business had been advantageously disposed of gave his hand to Mrs. Tweasle, and then turned to say farewell to her husband.

'All I've got in this blessed world I made in that shop,' said Tweasle, anxious to give his successor a high opinion of the bargain, and leave a good name behind him. 'The many—many—happy—peaceful days I've seen in it!—I can't expect to see them again!—On a Saturday and on a Monday I've often been fit to drop behind my own counter, quite worn out with customers. I'm afraid I've done a rash thing; but I've this consolation, I've left the business in good hands.'

'Come, don't look dull, Tweasle,' cried his wife, who was imposed on by her husband's pathos; 'cheer up! You know trade ain't what it was, and I'm sure the two last years must have been a "losing game."'

It is impossible to say whether he who had bought or he who had sold the business looked most appalled by this untimely truth. However, Tweasle was the first to recover himself: he took his victim affectionately by the hand, and, leaning forward, whispered in propitiatory confidential accents, 'Always put a little white pepper in Alderman Heavyside's Welsh, or he'll think you've adulterated it.'

But the successor was hurt past such slender consolation. With lofty integrity he spurned the advice of his deceiver; for, jerking his hand away, and looking Tweasle sternly in the face, he said, 'Sir, I shall do my duty!' and he strutted into the shop; whereupon the coach began to move.

Disposed by this little incident to sadness, its late occupant looked at the house till his eyes watered. He was no longer a 'public man'; his opinion of the weather was now of no importance; he might henceforth loiter over his dinner undisturbed by any thought of the shop! Feelings such as these could not be suppressed, and Tweasle was about to apostrophise, when his gentle partner startled him by exclaiming:

'Thank our stars, we're off at last!' and, catching a glimpse of

the house as the coach turned into Hatton Garden, she added, 'There's the last of it, I hope; I never wish to set eyes on the hole again!'

'Don't be ungrateful,' said Tweasle chidingly. 'That roof has sheltered me near forty years.'

'Well, it was a nuisance to live in it,—no place to dry a rag in but the servant's bedroom.'

'And Martha made you give her rum and water, mother, or else she *would* catch cold,' added the son.

'Stop there!—stop there!—stop!' a voice was heard to cry.

'That can't be for us,' observed Mrs. Tweasle.

As if in the spirit of matrimonial contradiction, her husband the next moment exclaimed, 'By George! it is, though!'

It proved to be a debtor, who had journeyed to London in consequence of some information which had been afforded him by an attorney. Three hundred and odd pounds were in his pocket ready for disbursement, if Mr. Tweasle would accompany him to an inn in the Borough, and there go through the account. This was vexatious. The *fear* of losing the money had long disturbed the late tobacconist's mental monotony, and now the *certainly* of its payment absolutely angered him. He turned to his lady, and said to her in a voice of positive wrath:

'Hanney, I shall go. Don't you wait for me, do you hear? I shall walk probably in the evening down to Hornsey,—when I've given a receipt for the money. Now, sir, I'm at your service. Will you show the way?'

'Please to remember a poor fellow who wants work,' said a florid muscular mendicant, thrusting his huge hand close to the late tobacconist's face.

'The fellow must have overheard the arrangement,' thought Tweasle; and an undefined feeling of alarm took the roses from his cheeks. As he hastily threw the man a few pence, he delivered some very profound remarks upon the Vagrant Act.

'Hanney dear,' cried he in a loud voice, while the beggar was stooping for the money, 'don't make yourself uneasy, but set the steel-traps. I have pistols,—mind that, love,—I have pistols!' for, afraid to acknowledge his own terror, he found relief in supposing that others were more timid than himself.

Leaving his wife, Tweasle walked to the inn, where he remained till all the items of a long bill had been discussed, when the clock announced the hour of nine, and then the debtor insisted on being asked to supper, so that it was fairly half-past ten before Tweasle left the Borough.

So long as the lights of London illumined his way, he proceeded in comparative composure, only occasionally feeling at his coat-

pockets to assure himself that the pistols were safe; but when the unaided darkness announced that he had quitted the extremest outskirts of the Metropolis, Mr. Tweasle paused, and audibly informed himself that 'he was not afraid': on receiving which information, he buttoned his coat closer, slapped his hat firmer on his cranium, frowned, and shook his head; and, endeavouring to act bravery, took a pistol in either hand as he marched onward with every symptom of excessive alarm.

He had not more than two miles farther to proceed, when the distant notes of St. Paul's Cathedral announced the hour of midnight. At this time Tweasle was creeping along a lane rendered gloomy by high and parallel hedges, which enclosed fruitful pastures, and prevented grazing cattle from being impounded; at a little distance from him, behind one of these 'leafy screens,' stood a 'pensive brother,'—a fine he-ass, which had retired thither to nibble the tender shoots of the mellifluous hawthorn.

As the last vibration died away, he stumbled into a cart-rut. On recovering his perpendicular, panting from the unnecessary exertion he had used, the poor traveller stared around him, and endeavoured to survey the place whereon he was standing. It was a gloomy spot,—one unrelieved mass of shade, in which the clouded heavens seemed to harmonize; everything was in awful repose,—the night was cold, but not a zephyr was abroad. Painfully oppressed by the utter loneliness of his position, a sense of extreme lassitude gradually crept over Tweasle,—he closed his eyes, and shuddered violently; he could have wept, but the fear of being afraid made him suppress the desire.

'This is a dreadful place!' he said aloud, with much gravity; 'just such a spot as a murder might be committed in. I'm very glad I'm armed.'

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when the donkey thrust forward his 'pensive nose,' and shook the hedge by pulling at a switch of more than common luxuriance. 'I'll sell my life dearly!' was Tweasle's first sensation,—it could hardly be called idea, it was too confused,—as, preparing for attack, he instinctively clapped one hand upon his money, while with the other he presented a pistol towards the spot whence the noise proceeded. Not being, as he expected, immediately assaulted, he by a violent exertion of his mental powers so far mastered his bodily alarm as to gulp first and then breathe. He listened,—all was still. 'They didn't know I was armed,' thought Tweasle; 'it was lucky I showed them my determination:' and, in something bordering upon confidence in the effects of his own courage, he ventured to whisper, 'Who's there?' when, receiving no answer, he increased his demand to 'Who's there, *I say?*' in a somewhat louder voice. He

was anxiously waiting the result of this boldness on his part when the animal, probably attracted by the sound, slowly moved towards the spot where Tweasle was standing. 'Ah! come—d——n—don't—now—I—I'm armed, you know!' screamed the traveller, running about and wildly striking right and left with the pistol, confident that the action this time had positively commenced; but after some interval, becoming gradually convinced that he remained unhurt, he was quite satisfied that nothing but the extraordinary courage he had displayed could have saved him from this second desperate attempt on his life; and, somewhat anxious to support the first dawn of his heroism, he said, or rather stammered, in a voice not always distinct, 'Now—now,—whoever you are,—don't go too far, because it's no pleasure to me to shoot you;—but I will, if you do:—so, in the King's name, who are you?—I *must* fire if you won't speak!'

The last appeal was made more in the tone of entreaty than command, for Tweasle beheld a black mass thrust itself against the hedge, evidently inspecting him. A rush of confused ideas, a tumult of strange suspicions and surmises, a 'regular row' of contending emotions, deprived him of all self-control; and, if the pistol had not just at that moment accidentally exploded, he had probably fallen to the ground. As it was, the noise revived him; and, taking advantage of the circumstance, with a ready conceit he cried out '*There!*' for he had seen the object disappear, and heard a faint cry as of one in agony,—whereon he walked from the place with every appearance of impertinent composure.

But this simulation did not long continue. As he became more conscious, he grew more agitated: he had probably shot a robber. For this he felt no remorse, and was persuading himself he would repeat the act, when he discovered that he had lost his pistols. This discovery gave him a fearful shock,—he was unarmed! Now came another dread.—Was the miscreant he had killed alone? or had he companions? Did not robbers usually congregate in bands? and might he not be pursued? But Tweasle was adopting the very best mode of avoiding such a danger, as, long before he asked himself the question, his walk had quickened into a sort of hand-gallop, which this fresh terror increased to the wild speed of utter despair. Without slackening his pace, the affrighted man had nearly reached his home, when a sharp blow across the shins brought him to the ground, and, looking up, Tweasle perceived the mendicant of the afternoon and two other suspicious-looking fellows standing over him. He could not speak; but, turning his face downwards, stretched himself upon the earth.

'*Are you going to sleep there?*' inquired the beggar, with a kick that was violently anti-soporific; and, seeing that Tweasle natu-

rally writhed under the infliction, the fellow vociferated, 'Come, that didn't hurt you. It's no use shamming here.'

'I shan't wait about all night for him,' cried a diminutive gentleman, disguised in a coalheaver's hat worn jockey-fashion, who, seizing Tweasle by the collar, lifted him from the ground, and giving him a shake that was sufficient to render any human nerves unsteady for eternity, asked the tottering man in a voice of angry expostulation, 'Why the devil he couldn't stand still?'

Too terrified to offer the slightest opposition, the unhappy Tweasle endeavoured to obey, which spirit of accommodation was repaid by the most scrupulous attentions. With a delicate dexterity that scarcely acquainted the owner of the abstraction, everything that his pockets contained was removed without unnecessary delay; and Tweasle was beginning to hope that the robbers would be content with their booty, when one of the fellows, anxious to have his clothes also, told him in the slang phraseology to undress, by shouting:

'Come, skin yourself.'

'Skin *myself*!' cried Tweasle, understanding the words literally, and bounding from the place in horror of what appeared to him a refinement on even fictitious barbarity. 'Skin *myself*! You can't mean it. I couldn't do it, if you'd give me the world. It's impossible. Oh, heavens!'

'No flash—it won't do—you'll undress,' said the taller of the three, with a calmness that thrilled his auditor.

'Oh! good gentleman,' continued Tweasle, wishing to touch their hearts by saying something pathetic, 'do consider I'm a married man!—think of my poor wife!—think of my poor wife!'

'Carry her that 'ere with my compliments,' cried the beggar, dashing his fist into Tweasle's face; an act which was received by the rest as an excellent joke.

'It will do you no good to ill-use a fellow-creature,' replied Tweasle distinctly, as though the blow had refreshed him. 'Don't think I shall resist; take what you please; only, as you are a man—in human form—in this world and in the next——'

'Sugar me! You're just a-going it nicely!' interrupted the mendicant. 'I'm blowed if ve pads don't teach more vartey than a bench of bishops. Never in all my born life *borrowed on a friend* that the beggar didn't funk pious and grunt gospel.'

'But it is a natural impossibility for any man to skin himself.'

'We'll do it for you, if you don't begin.'

'Oh, my heart! No! Think of something else; I'm willing to do anything but that.'

'Stow that! Skin yourself—shake them rags off your ugly pig of a body—undress, and be d——d to you!'

Mr. Tweasle, who from this last speech gathered enough to remove his more horrible misgivings, delicately hinted at the inappropriateness of the place for such a purpose, the coolness of the night, the dislike he had to spectators at his toilet, and other things objectionable, but without effect; his opposition only confirmed the robbers' resolution, till a smart blow on the left cheek showed that they were inclined to silence, if they could not convince him.

Reluctantly the old man began to unrobe, parting with his garments one by one, and begging as a favour he might be allowed to retain only his waistcoat, on the worthlessness of which he expatiated till he convinced the plunderers it was of more value than its outside promised, as proved to be the case, notes to the amount of several hundreds being found pinned to the lining. They made many mock apologies for depriving him of this; sarcastically complimenting him for his modesty, which easily parted with other coverings, but blushed to expose his bosom; then, kicking him till he fell to the earth, there they left him.

Mrs. Tweasle reached the Italian villa as it was getting dusk, and the family sat up till midnight expecting Mr. Tweasle's arrival. As the hours advanced, the lady became alarmed, and sent Charles with a tumbler of rum and water into the kitchen, who, on his return, announced that Martha had declined the kitchen chair in favour of John's knee. 'Never mind,' cried the lady, made considerate by her fears; 'such things are thought nothing of in the country.' Whereupon she proceeded, with a strange concatenation of ideas, to state her opinion of second marriages; lamented that widows' caps were so difficult to get up; drank a little more rum and water; endeavoured to divert her mind with the Newgate Calendar, but could not enjoy it for thinking how cruel it was of Mr. Tweasle not to come home earlier, and openly protested against sleeping alone in a strange house; then took upon herself, in Mr. Tweasle's absence, to read prayers and lock up for the night. The signal for retiring being given, each took a candlestick; but, before they separated, the mistress entreated all of them to be very watchful in their sleep for fear of robbers, as she was certain Mr. Tweasle would not be home that night, and did not know what his absence might bring about.

The subject being once started, everyone tarried to relate some tale of midnight assassination; and all of them selected a strange uninhabited dwelling as the scene of their agitating incidents. The straw and half-opened packages which strewed the apartment gave the place where they were congregated a cheerless aspect; and they were excited to a degree of listening silence, and staring inquisitively at one another, while John recounted how a lady of

high respectability chanced to be sitting by herself in the kitchen of a dilapidated mansion about two hours after midnight, and looking thoughtfully, not knowing what ailed her, at a round hole where a knot in the wainscot had been thrust out, when she saw the large dark sparkling eye of a most ferocious assassin peeping at her through the opening.

Just as John had reached this point of painful interest, the heavy foot of a man was heard to pass hastily over the bridge, and the next moment the front-door was violently shaken. The two females instantly pinioned John by clinging round him with all the tenacity of terror, while at the same time they were loud in their demands for that protection which, had they needed it, he was by them effectually disabled from affording; while Master Tweasle, seizing the rattle, and aiding its noise with his voice, in no small degree increased the family distraction; above which, however, was plainly heard some one without, using his best endeavours to force the entrance. Whoever that some one was, he appeared wholly unmindful of secrecy; which palpable contempt of caution, and open disregard of whatever resistance the inhabitants might be able to make, greatly increased their fear of the villain's intentions. At each shock the door sustained, shrieks were uttered by the women, accompanied by a very spirited movement by the boy upon the rattle; and the interval between these assaults Mrs. Tweasle employed in murmuring prayers and complaints to Heaven and John for the protection of her life and property.

At last the assailant appeared to get exhausted; his attempts gradually became weaker and less frequent. Emboldened by this, the family ventured to the first-floor window, whence they could plainly see what all agreed was a countryman in a white smock-frock pacing to and fro in front of the house in all the bitterest rage of excessive disappointment.

'Oh, the wretch!' cried Mrs. Tweasle. 'What a good door that is! I make no doubt he knew the furniture was not unpacked; and, if he could only have got in, he would have carried it all off before morning: he must have known Mr. Tweasle was not at home. Oh, dear me!'

Soon after she had spoken, the man seemed to have conquered his vexation, and, approaching the door, he gave a very decent double knock; but not receiving an answer, he knocked again somewhat louder, and then with all his former violence frequently returned, making actions as if he were vowing vengeance against the family, or calling imprecations down upon their heads for their resistance; but of what he said nothing could be heard, for this conduct so terrified the women that they screamed and

shrieked, and Master Tweasle, as before, accompanied them on the rattle.

At length the robber, as if despairing of entrance, was seen to retire, but it was only to change the point of assault. They watched the villain move towards the back of the house; saw him, with a lofty courage that disdained broken bottles, scale the garden wall; and to their extreme delight, just as they were certain the *back-door* would not hold out, beheld him approach the jessamine bower where John had on the previous evening set one of the man-traps—and there he stayed.

A council of war was now held, which would have lasted till morning had it not been interrupted by Master Charles's firing a blunderbuss out of the window, thus bravely endeavouring to bring down the robber at a long shot; and he would have repeated his aim till he had hit his object, who might be distinctly seen making various strange contortions near the jessamine bower, had not his mother forbidden him. The boy, vexed by the check he received, mistook his ill-humour for bravery, and pettishly volunteered to advance to the thief, if John would accompany him on the expedition; but Mrs. Tweasle asked in surprise, 'Was she to be left alone at the mercy of Heaven, without protection?' and John, with strong moral courage preferring duty to honour, rejected the proposal.

'Well, then,' said the lad, 'come along, Martha.'

'Oh!—*me*?' cried the girl. 'Oh, Master Charles!' for the boy, when he requested her company, only thought that the exchange of a woman for a man was a vast sacrifice on his part; he never once considered how the substitution might affect the party it principally concerned.

Thus abandoned, he had stayed within, had not his mother insisted that he should not stir out. Filial obedience supplied the place of resolution; he unbolted the back-door, and in a state of obstinate alarm issued into the garden.

Advancing cautiously, and by a most circuitous way, the boy approached the jessamine bower, and there discovered *his father* writhing and moaning, with one leg fast in a trap, which, according to his own orders, had been set for the protection of the cabbages.

'Oh! my dear boy, don't fire any more. It's me, Charles! let me out of this—I'm dying!'

'Why, if it isn't you, father!—only wait a bit——'

'*Wait!*—don't talk nonsense!' cried Tweasle, looking at his unfortunate leg, which was held in the trap, and feeling his condition aggravated by the supposition that it was one of choice.

'Yes, I'll fetch mother.'

'Hang your mother! let me out of this!' ejaculated the poor man, who was no way desirous of continuing his agony that it might be made a kind of domestic exhibition of; but, deaf to his parent's entreaties, the boy ran away, quite full of his discovery. On the steps he met the maid-servant, whom he rebuked with much raillery for appearing alarmed, and presently returned, marching like a conqueror at the head of a triumph.

All were much surprised at beholding Mr. Tweasle in such a situation, unrobed and wounded, shivering from cold and terror, and deprived of all self-command by exhaustion and a man-trap. Mrs. Tweasle was quite overpowered by the sight: her feelings rather claimed pity than bestowed it; for while John was removing the steel trap from his master's legs, she kept moaning, and entreating her husband *only* to consider how his conduct had pained *her*. The poor maid-servant displayed great goodness of heart; she tenderly bound her master's naked legs, gently lifted him into the chair that was brought to convey him into the house, and appeared quite to overcome the natural delicacy of her sex in the praiseworthy endeavour to render a fellow-creature every possible assistance; while John and Master Tweasle seemed more inclined to converse on what had happened than to mingle in what was taking place, repeatedly putting questions which the sufferer was incapable of answering, as to wherefore he did that, or why he did not do this.

Tweasle's injuries were rather painful than dangerous; in a few days he was convalescent, and was beginning to grow valiant in his descriptions of his midnight mishaps, when the following handbill was submitted to his notice:

£5 REWARD.

'Whereas a valuable male donkey, the property of Stephen Hedges, was on the night of the 6th of May last maliciously shot at and killed by some person or persons unknown; this is to give notice, that whoever will render such information as shall lead to the conviction of the offender or offenders, shall receive Five Pounds reward.'

For some time after reading this, Tweasle appeared full of thought, when he surprised his family by a sudden resolution to send Stephen Hedges five pounds; nor could any remonstrance on the part of his wife change his charitable purpose. No one could account for this: in pence the late tobacconist had always been a pattern of benevolence; but to give *pounds* was not in the ordinary scale of his charity. None could assign a reason for so boundless a beneficence, more than they could comprehend why Tweasle should, whenever the subject was mentioned, expatiate with so much feeling on 'What the poor ass must have suffered!'



The Curious Case of the

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A Marine's Courtship.

BY MICHAEL BURKE HONAN.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, October, 1837.]



HAVE the honour to be one of that class of amphibious animals called in his Majesty's service *sea-soldiers*; that is to say, I have the honour to hold a commission in the noble, ancient, and most jolly body of the Royal Marines. I am by profession, therefore, as well as by nature, a miscellaneous individual; and circumstances have more than once thrown me into situations where the desire to support the credit of the cloth, added to my own stock of cheerful impudence, have carried me through, in spite of difficulties which would have appalled another man. I had the misfortune to be employed on board one of the ships of the inner squadron in the Douro during the siege of Oporto. I do not say misfortune out of any disrespect to the commodore, or to the captain under whose command I was immediately placed, or to my brother-officers, for a more generous, convivial set of fellows could not be got together; but I speak of the place, and of the people, and of the few opportunities which were afforded me of showing off a handsome uniform, and, I must say, rather a well-made person, which it inclosed. Besides, I was kept on hard duty; and though there were some pretty women who appeared on Sunday during the cessations of the usual shower of shells from the Miguelite camp, yet there were so many competitors for their smiles, that I really could not take the trouble of making myself as amiable as I otherwise should, and, as I flatter myself, I could. Don Pedro the emperor, who now sleeps with his fathers, and whose heart is deposited in the cathedral of Oporto, was then without the society of his imperial and beautiful wife; and, whether it was to set a good example to his court, or to prevent his mind from dwelling on the absence of his true love, he was one of the most active of my rivals, and I protest there was not a pretty face in the whole town that he had not the pleasure of paying his addresses to. The Marquis de Loulé, his brother-in-law, also

separated from that most lovely and most generous of Portuguese princesses who now sits nightly at Lisbon, smiling on all the world from her box at the French theatre in the Rua dos Condes, was regularly employed in the same operations; and I never took a sly peep at a pair of dark and bewitching eyes that I did not find the emperor or the marquis also reconnoitring. The marquis is one of the handsomest men in Europe, but with the most vacant expression possible. He wins every heart at first sight, but he loses his conquests as fast as he makes them. Women may be caught by glare; and a man of high rank, an Adonis in face and person, must tell: but I'll be hanged if the dear creatures are such fools as we think them; and the marquis's wife first, and every other flame of his after, have dismissed him, on finding that his good looks and brains were not measured by the same scale. Then there was the Count Villa Flor, and several other martial grandees; not to speak of the generals and colonels of regiments, and the well-built and well-whiskered officers of the British and French legion, and the captains and first-lieutenants of our squadron. I run over this list just to show what difficulties I had to contend with; and that, if I did not turn the head of the whole town, there was a numerous list of operative love-makers who shared the market with me.

About this time the senior captain of the squadron determined to establish a signal-station to communicate with the ships of his Britannic Majesty outside the bar; and, no fitting place being found on the Pedroite side of the river, an application was made to General San Martha, who commanded for the Miguelites, for permission to erect a post on the left bank, which permission was most liberally granted. A party was instantly set to work, and in the course of a few days a flag-staff was hoisted, and a large house and courtyard given for the accommodation of the officer and men who were to work it. As luck would have it, I was selected for this service, in company with a wild lieutenant of the fleet, and we soon established ourselves in a comfortable quarter, having the permission to rove about among the Miguelite grounds where we pleased, and to cross as usual to Oporto, when leave of absence was to be procured.

We had not been long established at this fort when the batteries which the Miguelites had established at the mouth of the river began to do their work in good earnest, and so effectually to close the bar, that not only was the usual supply of provisions cut off, but strong fears were entertained that the city would be reduced by famine to capitulate. There was an abundance of salt fish, or *bacalhao*, and a superfluity of port wine; but even the best fare will tire on repetition, and you may be assured that salt fish for

breakfast, dinner, and supper was not very acceptable to the officers or the men. Our commodore, with the foresight that distinguishes a British officer, had provided for the coming difficulty, and had arranged with the Miguelite general for an abundant supply of fresh provisions, meat, poultry, and vegetables, for all the ships' crews, on the distinct understanding that no part of it was to be passed over to the besieged city. The squadron therefore lived in abundance, while the garrison was half starved; and as we passed through the streets with our shining red faces and sleek sides, puffed out by the good cheer our commodore had provided, we formed a strong contrast to the lean and shrivelled soldiers of glory, who were starving in honour of the charter. The private families of the town also began to suffer, and the beauty of many of the most admired sensibly to diminish; salt fish and port wine did not in combination make a healthy chyle: and I could observe that the Oporto ladies, more carefully than before, wrapped their long dark cloaks about them, to hide the ravages which short commons was making in the plumpness of their persons.

It was at this moment that I conceived and executed the bold plan which forms the subject of this paper, and from which all learned communities may be informed that, for originality of thought and ability in the execution, no adventurer can compare to a British marine.

The most beautiful maiden at Oporto was a Spanish girl called Carolina. She was the daughter of the alcade of Ponte Vedra in Galicia, who had fled some time before from the retributive justice of the law which he himself had so long administered; he had died months before the present period, leaving Carolina exposed to all the privations of a besieged town, and to the temptations of a profligate and military court. I never saw a more lovely creature: her eyes were as dark as night, and her cheeks glowed with a warmth unknown in the cold complexions of the north. Her person was faultless; her feet and her hands were small; one could span her waist; and she walked with that combination of majesty and grace which a Spanish woman can alone assume. Poor Carolina was as good as she was beautiful; and though the emperor, and his hopeful brother-in-law, and all the gay cavaliers of the camp, were ready to throw themselves at her feet, she behaved with a discretion which won her the good opinion of the whole army, not to speak of the fleet, where such remarkable virtue could be fully estimated. I, among the rest of the inflammable multitude, had been struck with the magic charms of the angelic Carolina, and devoted every moment of the occasional leave of absence which I procured to promenading up and down

before her window, in the hope of catching a glance of her beautiful eyes, and of attracting her regard to my own beloved person. I was as much in love with her as a marine could be, and my hopeless passion became so well known that it was a standing joke at the mess-table, and our wicked wag of a commodore, who I fancied was a little caught himself, never failed to inquire if I had taken my usual walk, and met with the same good fortune.

You can easily imagine my delight when I heard that a scarcity was making such rapid progress in the city, and when I found that even the emperor's table was limited to the ordinary rations of *bacalhao*, black bread, and port wine. I will own that my heart leaped for joy when I ascertained from an emissary employed to watch the house of Carolina that she too was experiencing the pangs of want, and that with her scanty means she was unable to procure the common necessities for her sustenance. Our ships were abundantly supplied, as I have before informed you; and the little signal-station which I occupied was the abode of plenty. The Miguelites faithfully performed their engagement; and day after day the regular supplies of beef, poultry, vegetables, and fruit came in. The commodore, of course, respected the contract that he had entered into; and though the emperor made several advances to his favour, and though he was openly solicited on his behalf by various officers of the staff, he refused to allow a pound of meat to be passed into the city. Several of the British residents represented their claims in a formal manner for his protection; but he did his duty like a man, and he resolutely determined not to break the engagement he had entered into with the general of Don Miguel, or compromise the safety of his own crews by giving way to his good-nature. The value of a leg of fowl may therefore be estimated; and it immediately occurred to me that I could soften the obdurate heart of the beautiful Spaniard by secretly conveying to her some portion of the stock which was appropriated to our own table.

I therefore set about purloining a capital *gallina*; and when I had secured it, in defiance of the jealous watch of the steward, I crammed it into my pocket, and, asking leave to go on shore, started about the close of day to try whether hunger, which breaks through stone walls, would open the oak door of the charming Carolina. I soon found myself in the well-known quarter, and before the house that contained my love; and, after reconnoitring for an instant to see that the emperor or his staff were not in the way, ran up to the first landing, where she lived, and pulled the little bell-string which hung at the door. In an instant I heard the pretty feet tapping along the passage, and

the soft voice of Carolina herself exclaiming, '*Quien es ?*'—'Who is there?'

'It is I, a British officer, and a friend of yours,' I replied; 'I want particularly to speak to you.'

'Sir,' said Carolina, 'I have not the honour of your acquaintance.'

'It is true, señorita; but I come to serve you, and my good intentions will excuse the absence of ceremony.'

'Sir, I must wish you a good day: I cannot accept a service from strangers; I have not asked you for any.'

'Stay, beautiful Carolina,' I exclaimed; 'I adore you.'

'Sir, I have the honour to wish you good-evening.'

'Stay, angelic vision: I am an officer of Marines.'

'What have I to do with the Marines?'

'I come to devote myself to you.'

'Sir,—really, sir, you carry the joke too far; I must dispense with your unseasonable visit. I have again the honour to wish you good-evening.'

Carolina was about to close the little slide of the door through which this brief conversation had been carried on, when, growing desperate with vexation, I held the slide open with one hand, while with the other I pulled the fowl from my pocket, and held it dangling before her face. Oh! if you had seen her look!—her eyes were fixed as Hamlet's when he sees his father's ghost, her mouth opened, and two little rivulets of water ran down at each side as when an alderman gets the first odour of a well-kept haunch.

'Señorita,' said I, eager to take advantage of the favourable impression the vision of the fowl had made on my beloved, 'this bird is a proof of the warm interest which I take in your welfare. I have heard that you were suffering from the severe affliction that has fallen on this city; and, though I risk my character and the safety of his Britannic Majesty's fleet by bringing into Oporto any part of the provision allotted for the crews, I could not resist the impulse of stealing this bird, which I now have the honour to lay at your feet.'

The señorita answered not: pride on the one hand, and hunger on the other, were struggling. The physical want prevailed over the moral feeling.

'Señor,' said she, 'I will accept the fowl, and cannot but feel obliged by the interest you have taken in my welfare. Good-night, señor; it is getting late: I am certain you are anxious to return to your ship.'

With these words she shut the little slide of the door, and I remained in the passage, gaping with astonishment, confounded

with delight, and wondering at the new recipe I had invented for making love. I waited for some time, hoping that the little wicket would be again opened; but Carolina, I presume, was too much occupied with the present I had made her to think of returning to bid me a second farewell; and I descended the staircase, charmed beyond expression with the result of my stratagem.

I kept, of course, my recipe for making love a profound secret; but I did not venture to put it again into operation for two or three days. I made, however, the accustomed regular survey of the street in which Carolina resided, and watched with much interest for the reception given to my rivals. I cannot express the delight with which I witnessed them all, one after the other, refused admittance to her house. 'She is picking the bones of the fowl,' thought I; 'that is a much better employment than listening to their stupid declarations. I must take care to keep my mistress in good humour, and to improve the favourable opinion she has already formed of me.' I therefore watched my opportunity, secured a duck out of the next basket of poultry, and hastened on the wings of love to lay my treasure at her feet. No sooner did my trembling hand pull the bell-cord, and my eager voice announce my name, than I heard her gentle step in the passage, and soon the little slide of the door was opened, and I felt my heart leap to my mouth as I beheld her beautiful eye beaming on me with undisguised satisfaction. To ensure my welcome, and to save the dear creature from the pangs of expectation, I produced the duck, swinging it to and fro before the wicket, as a nurse does a pretty toy that she offers to the longing wishes of the child. Carolina smiled her sweetest smile; and, when I pushed in the prize, she returned me thanks in so endearing a manner, that I lost all command of my reason, and poured out upon the staircase a volume of protestations of eternal love which might have served for the whole ship's company. From that hour my affair was done. Carolina could not resist the voice of truth, and the tender proofs of esteem which I alone had the power to offer. She refused to admit me then, but promised to consult her aunt on the propriety of receiving my visits; and that, if the discreet matron permitted it, she would be too happy in my acquaintance. I entreated the dear girl not to delay my happiness, and I fixed the following Thursday for the formidable interview with the aunt.

I lay the whole of the next night awake, thinking over the present which would be most acceptable to the old lady. I finally resolved to purloin a small leg of lamb, which I observed hung up in the steward's pantry; and, in order to make room for it in my pocket, I cut a great hole in the bottom, so that the handle

of the leg would hang down, while the thicker part prevented it from slipping through. Armed with my leg, I asked leave to go to Oporto, and received with joy the accustomed friendly nod. I soon landed at the arsenal, and mounted the long hill which led into the town, holding myself as straight as possible, so that the exuberance of my pocket should not be perceived. Unfortunately for me, a score of hungry dogs, which infest all Portuguese towns, were holding a council of war at the quay when I stepped on shore; and one of them, getting scent of the end of the leg of mutton which hung through the hole in my pocket, gave a hint to the rest of the contraband which was going on, and I soon had the whole train after me, sniffing at my tail, and making snaps at the tempting morsel. I would have stooped to pick up a stone, which is the only way of frightening a Portuguese street dog, but I was afraid to disarrange the perpendicular, recollecting that, as I bent down, the end of the leg of lamb would be visible. I therefore bore the annoyance as well as I could, kicking out behind from time to time when my friends were most troublesome.

Carolina and her aunt were at the window, probably expecting my arrival, and enduring the grumbling recollections of an ill-digested dinner of *bacalhao*, in the hope of a more wholesome supper being provided for them through my care; but when they saw me turn the corner of the street, and at least two dozen dogs smelling and sniffing at my skirts, they both burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and roared and roared again in a paroxysm of mirth. A crowd of dandies were passing at the moment, watching the window of Carolina, each hoping to be the favoured man; but when they heard the sudden burst of merriment which proceeded from her window, they looked round naturally for the cause, and they soon joined in the same chorus at my expense, on seeing me parade, with all the gravity of a drum-major, at the head of a legion of filthy curs.

To make my situation worse, I dared not enter the house of Carolina; her character would be compromised by a visit in presence of so many admirers: and I had the additional mortification of being obliged to pass her door, and to walk a considerable distance until I escaped the impertinence of the sneering puppies, though I could not shake off the annoyance of those that followed at my heels. How gladly would I have drawn my sword, and challenged the whole party! how cheerfully would I have drawn the leg of lamb from my pocket, and stuffed it in the mouth of each impertinent dandy! but not only was my own honour at stake, but that of the British fleet, and I bore all in the king's name, and for the credit of the service. I have been in many a hot engagement, but I never suffered more than I did that day.

At length, after doubling through two or three by-streets, I got rid of my impudent macaroni, and traced my way back again to the house of my beloved. She, with the old lady, was watching me from the window; but, grown wiser by experience, and probably afraid of losing a good supper, they did not laugh again with the same violence. I observed, however, the wicked smile with which my fair one retired to receive me at the door, and the suppressed titter with which the maiden aunt pulled her head from the window.

The cursed dogs followed me upstairs, and it was with considerable difficulty I could prevent the most insolent from forcing their way with me into the presence of my mistress; but, after I got in, I heard them growling and barking on the stairs. The neighbours wondered what the deuce was the matter with the curs, or why they had come from their usual haunts to that unfrequented quarter.

The señorita presented me in due form to her aunt.

'Allow me,' said she, 'to introduce to you, dear aunt, this gallant English cavalier, Señor *Gallina*—I beg pardon, Señor *Marinero*—and permit me to present to you, señor, my respected aunt, Donna Francisca Azanares.'

I made a low bow, but said nothing, seeing that my mistress thought more of the fowl than of me; such is the way of the world, and those who will win women must endure to have their pride occasionally mortified. The old lady, however, covered me with compliments; she was delighted to make my acquaintance; her niece had told her what an amiable and gentlemanlike young man I was. I could observe, while the aunt was hard at work overloading me with compliments, that Carolina was taking a sly peep at the bulk of my pockets, and wondering what kind of commodity it was that produced so misplaced a swelling on so well-formed a young man as I flatter myself no one can deny I am; but, just at this moment, the bevy of hungry curs at the door set up such a howl in concert, that my angel was fain to cram her handkerchief into her mouth to conceal her laughing, and I thought the old dame would go into a fit, so violent was her merriment. Finding the case going thus hard against me, I determined to strike a bold stroke for conquest; so, slipping out my penknife, I slit up the pocket where the treasure lay, and down fell the leg of lamb in all its natural beauty on the floor. I thought the aunt would have fainted with delight, such an unexpected vision of glory dazzled her understanding and her sight. The *bouquet* of the meat was, I supposed, conveyed through the keyhole to the canine multitude that still lined the stairs, and another universal howl proclaimed their despair that it was beyond their reach.

I soon took my leave, to the delight of Carolina and her aunt. I think I showed considerable tact in so doing, well knowing that a slice off the leg of lamb would be more acceptable to both than all the professions of admiration which I was prepared to make. I ventured on two or three civil things, but I could see my beloved's eyes fixed upon the handle of the leg; and it was evident the aunt was carrying on an internal debate whether it should be boiled, broiled, roasted, or stewed, or served up, according to the fashion of the province, with a mass of garlic. The dogs were waiting for me in the passage, and they eagerly followed me as I went downstairs; even the smell of my pocket had its attraction for them, but they dropped off one by one when they found the reality was gone. One old savoury rogue alone persecuted me to the river-side, and though I pelted him with stones, and kicked him when I could, he still hung on my rear with his tongue out, licking the shreds which dangled from my torn pocket.

The next day, when I went on board ship to make the usual report to the captain, I found that a court of inquiry was going on into the disappearance of the very leg of lamb which I had feloniously purloined. The steward had reported the accident to the purveyor of the mess, and he had called a council of war, who thought fit to make an official report to the skipper; so that the readers will readily imagine the agony of my feelings when I was asked to join the board, and to assist in the investigation. Fortunately for me, one of the aides-de-camp of the emperor had that morning come on board to request of the captain some provision for the imperial table, protesting that Don Pedro and his staff had nothing better than salt fish for rations; which request the captain was compelled, by a strict sense of duty, to refuse; and everybody set it down as certain, the instant the circumstance was brought to mind, that it was the aide-de-camp who stole the lamb. He had come wrapped up in his cloak, which was a circumstance fatal to his character; and it was agreed by the whole conclave that the gentleman with the gold-laced hat and large cloak had been the thief. I blushed up to the eyes at the consciousness of my guilt, and the dishonourable part I was playing in allowing an innocent person to be wronged for my misdeed; but I recollected that the young man was one of the party who ridiculed me the day before in the presence of Carolina, and wounded vanity made me disregard the twitchings of conscience.

In order to avoid suspicion, I lay quiet for a day or two, and allowed Carolina and her aunt to feel the value of such an acquaintance as I was, under existing circumstances. While engaged with the captain on some official duty, the following morning, in his cabin, a young officer was introduced who solicited an im-

mediate audience. The young man appeared buried in grief, and every now and then applied a handkerchief to his eyes, to wipe off the unbidden tears which mocked the sword which hung at his side. His profound sorrow and gentlemanlike appearance interested the good heart of our excellent captain; he begged him to be seated, and wished to know what service he could render him. The young man could with difficulty master his emotion, and the only words that were heard from him were, 'My aunt!—my aunt!'

'Pray, sir, be composed,' said the captain, a little tired of the display.

'I will, sir,' replied the young man, giving a great gulp, as if to swallow his misery, and applying his handkerchief to wipe off the tears from both his swimming eyes. 'Oh! sir,' he continued, 'my poor aunt, she who reared me from a child, when I was left an unprotected orphan, and has placed me in the station which I now hold, is at the point of death, and the doctors all agree that nothing but *caldo di gallina* (fowl broth) can save her life. You know the state which we are in at Oporto, and that not a fowl is to be had if one offered a thousand milreas for it. I come to you, as a man and a Christian, to beg you will give me one single chicken from your larder.'

'It is impossible,' said the captain; 'you know the convention we have made with Santa Martha.'

'I know all that,' resumed the young man; 'but you must admit, my dear captain, that the convention is directed against the troops of Don Pedro, and the inhabitants at large who support him; but surely an old woman at the point of death was not contemplated by the treaty, and I entreat you to save the life of this most deserving and venerable of aunts.'

With these words the young officer again took out his handkerchief, and gave way to a flood of tears that would have moved the strictest disciplinarian that ever commanded a ship.

It was not to be wondered at that the soft heart of our benevolent skipper was affected. He took the young man by the hand, and said:

'My dear fellow, I can do nothing for you; I have signed a convention, and I cannot break it, were it to save the emperor's life. But go you to my steward, and if you can manage to extract a fowl from what he has prepared for my table, you may do so; but take care, I am not to know anything about it.'

I fancied the young fellow smiled in the midst of his grief at the mention of the emperor; but he dried up his tears in double-quick time, and soon made his way to the steward's room, where I suppose he contrived to settle his affair to his satisfaction. He

called on the following day to return his grateful thanks; but the captain would not hear a word. I observed, however, that he went down to the steward's cabin, and took a hasty leave as he went over the ship's side on his return. He scarcely failed to pay us a daily visit, and made us all take a strong interest in him and the recovery of this favourite aunt to whom he was so devotedly attached.

This aunt, we found out afterwards, was the emperor; and so reduced was the imperial table for a short time, that Don Pedro must have starved, or lived on *bacalhao*, if this stratagem had not been adopted. The young fellow acted his part in a consummate manner, and I am told he boasts to this day of the trick he played the British squadron in the Douro. The captain, I am also told, gave him a little of his mind, having met him last year near the Admiralty, dressed out in fine feathers, and swelling with the importance of new-born greatness.

'How is your aunt, you d—— lying Portuguese?' said the skipper. 'If I ever catch you on board my ship, I'll give you a rope's end, you dog!'

The more you beat one of the class of which this hero was a specimen, the more he likes it. So our Pedroite friend shrugged up his shoulders, and vanished in double-quick time, the captain vociferating after him, 'How is your aunt, you lubber?'

Afraid of the consequences in case a discovery should take place, I kept quiet for nearly a week together, until a little note, written in a cramped hand, was brought for me to the signal-station, from which I found by the confession of the aunt that Carolina was in despair at not seeing me again, and that she was very ill from a salt-fish diet. I was conscience-stricken at the consequences of my neglect, and determined not to lose a moment in carrying provisions to my starving beauty; so, running to a basket that had just been brought in from the Miguelite market to be passed on board the commodore, I seized a turkey-poult, feathers and all, and thrust it into the same coat-pocket which had been enlarged to hold the leg of lamb. I asked and received leave to go on shore, and pushed as fast as four oars could impel me to the usual landing-place near the old nunnery. I saw some of the idle dogs basking in the sun, but did not heed their presence, so filled was I with the idea of my Carolina; and, jumping out of the boat, I ran along the quay, totally unconscious of the sneers that my presence excited. At last, when I got to the open ropewalk where the market is usually held, the number of my canine assailants became increased; and one of them, bolder than the rest, making a sudden snap at the head of the young turkey, which hung down through the fatal hole in my pocket, dragged its long

neck to view, and exposed my shame to the assembled multitude. A crowd immediately gathered round me, and a score of other dogs began to contest the prize with him that held the head of the turkey in his mouth. I was in despair, and drew my sword to rid me of the cursed assailants; when, on the instant, as if to overwhelm me with disgrace, the captain of the ship to which I belonged forced his way through the crowd, and, laying his hand on my arm, told me to consider myself under arrest.

The turkey-poult had by this time been torn from my pocket by the perseverance of my tormentors. It was pulled from one to the other on the ground; while the hungry citizens endeavoured to save its mangled remains, and a running fight was kept up between them and the dogs, which under other circumstances would have been highly amusing. My heart was heavy, and I was incapable of enjoying the most palpable joke. I walked slowly to the quay side, threw myself into the first boat that offered, went on board my ship, gave up my sword to the senior officer, was placed under a formal arrest, and told to prepare myself for a court of inquiry. I must say that I felt more for poor Carolina than I did for myself; and I could not help expressing my anxiety on her account to one of the brother-officers who came to condole with me on my situation. The false friend, I was told afterwards, profited by the hint; and, instead of committing himself as I did, he hired a little cottage at the Miguelite side of the river, under cover of the guns of the fleet, where he placed Carolina and her aunt, and soon taught them to forget me. The worst of the affair was, that General Santa Martha sent in a formal complaint to the consul and the commodore of the squadron, and threatened to stop the usual supply of provisions for the ships' use. A long correspondence took place on the subject, which may be found now in the records of the Foreign Office. I am glad to say, for the credit of the service, that the affair was hushed up in the end, and the Miguelites consented to give the required number of rations. I was made the victim of that arrangement, and was glad to retire from the service on half-pay, to escape being ignominiously dismissed by a court-martial. I now live a miserable example of the doctrine of expediency. I entertain a horror of young turkeys and of dogs, and would be gladly informed of some land where neither of those odious creatures is to be met with.

Jack in Disguise.

BY W. H. BARKER.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, May, 1837.]

 BELONGED to the *Tapsickoree*, two-and-thirty; and, though I says it myself, there warn't many more sich tight-looking clean-going lads as ould Jack Sheavehole—though I warn't *ould* Jack then, but a reg'lar smart, active young blowhard of a maintopman. Well, we'd just come home from foreign, and got three years' pay and a power o' prize-money; and so most o' the boys goes ashore on liberty, and carries on till all's blue. This was at Plymouth, but as we wur expecting to go round to Spithead, I saves my cash—'cause why? I'd an old father and mother, from whom I'd parted company when a boy; and I thought, if I could get long leave—thinks I, mayhap I can heave alongside of 'em, with a cargo o' shiners, and it'll cheer the cockles o' their ould hearts to see their son Jack togged off like a jolly tar, and captain of a frigate's maintop; and soon arter we goes round to Portsmouth, I axes for long leave; and, as I'd al'ays done my duty to Muster Gilmour's—he was first leefteenant—to Muster Gilmour's satisfaction, I gets my fortnight and my liberty-ticket, and the large cutter lands me at Sallyport; so I hauls my wind for the Blue Postesses on the Pint, and enters myself on the books of a snug-looking craft, as was bound through my native village, and buys a few duds for old dad, and a suit of new sails, and some head-gear for the ould woman: for, thinks I to myself, mayhap we shall cruise about a bit among the neighbours, and I'll let 'em see we arn't been sarving the king or hammering the French for nothin'. And mayhap, thinks I, they arn't never got too much to grub; so I gets a bag, and shoves in a couple of legs of mutton and a whole shoal of turnips, a full bladder of rum, and, as I knew the old uns loved cat-lap, there was a storage of sugar and tea, with a bottle o' milk: and, having plenty of the ready, I buys a little of everything useful in the small way, that the ould chap at the shop showed me: and, my eyes! but there was thousands of packages

twisted and twined in true-blue paper. There was 'bacca, mustard, snuff, salt, soft tommy, pepper, lickrice, matches, gingerbread, herrings, soap, pease, butter, candles, cheese—in short, something of everything, not forgetting a Welsh wig and a mousetrap; and I'm blowed if I warn't regularly fitted out for a three months' cruise!

'Well, by the time I'd got all my consarns ship-shape, I twigs the signal for sailing, and so I gets aboard; and in course, in regard o' my station in the maintop, I goes aloft, as high as possible upon the upper-deck, and claps myself upon the luggage: but when the governor as had charge comes to take the twiddling-lines, he axes me to berth myself on the fokstle, and so, not to be outdone in civility, or to make 'em think I'd let slip my edication, I comes down, and goes forud, and stows myself away just abaft the pilot. When we made sail, there was a party o' liberty boys from the old *Hibernia* gives me three cheers, and I waves my bit o' tarpaulin, sports a fresh morsel o' bacca, and wonders what made the houses and everything run past us so quick; but I soon found out it was the craft—for I remembered the comb of the sea did just the same when the frigate was walking along at a spanking rate. So, for the first hour, I sits quiet and alone, keeping a sharp look-out on the pilot, to see how he handled the braces, rounding 'em into starboard, or to port; for, thinks I to myself, it's best to larn everything—'cause why? who can tell but Jack Sheavehole mayn't some day or another command just sich a consarn of his own! and how foolish he'll look not to know which way to shape his course, or how to steer his craft! But, I'm blowed! if the horses didn't seem to savvy the thing just as well as the man at the helm; for the moment he tauten'd the gear, the hanimals slued round o' themselves all ship-shape, and Bristor-fashion.

'When we'd run a league or two out of Portsmouth, we hove to at a victualling port, and I spied a signal for good cheer hanging out aloft; and so, without any bother, I boards them for a reg'lar stiff nor'-wester, more nor' half-and-half, and says I to the pilot, "Yo-hoy, shipmate!" says I, "come, and set up the standing back-stays o' your heart a bit; and here, ould chap, is someut to render the laneard;" and so I gives him a share out o' the grog-tub, that set his eyes a-twinkling like the Lizard Lights on a frosty night. Well, just as we were going to trip the anchor again, a pretty, smart-looking young woman rounds to under our stern, and ranges up alongside; and she says to the pilot, says she, "Coachman, what'll you charge to take me to —?" and I'm blessed if she didn't name the very port I was bound to!

"Coachman," says she, "what'll you charge to take me

to ——?"—"Seven shillings, ma'am," says he.—"Carn't you take me for less?" axes she; "I've ounly got five, and I'm very tired with walking."—"Not a halfpenny less, ma'am," says he, just as cool as an iceberg in Hudson's Bay; "carn't do it, ma'am."—"Oh, do try!" says she, and I could see sorrow was pumping the tears into her eyes; "I would give you more if I had it," says she.—"Carn't help it, ma'am," says old surly-chops, "carn't help it; grub for the hanemals is very dear."—"Oh, what shall I do!" says she so piteously; "night is coming on, and it's a long way to travel on foot: I shall sink under it; do take the money!"—"Werry sorry, my dear," says he, shaking his blubber-head like a booby perched on a rattlin, "werry sorry, but never takes under price. You must use your trotters if you arn't never got seven bob."—"Then I'm d—— if she does!" says I, "for you shall carry her."—"Gammon!" says he, as spiteful as a pet monkey; "who's to tip the *fare*?" So I ups and tells him a piece o' my mind, and axes him if he ever know'd anything *unfair* by Jack Sheavehole, or if he thought I wanted to bilk him out o' the passage-money.—"Will you stand the two odd bob?" axes he.—"And d'ye think I won't stand as much as Bob or Dick, or anyone else?" says I in a bit of a passion. "Avast, ould chap!" says I; "humanity arn't cast off the mooring lashings from my heart yet awhile, and I hopes never will;" and so I gives him a seven-shilling bit without any more palaver; and, "Come, my precious," says I, houlding out my fin, "mount areevo"; but I'm blessed if she didn't hang back till the pilot sung out for us to come aboard! And, "Lord love you!" says I, "you arn't afeard of a man-o'-war's-man, are you?"—"Oh no," says she, brightening up for all the world like the sun coming out of a fog-bank; "oh no, you have been my friend this night, and God reward you for it!" So we soon clapped one another alongside upon the break of the fokstle, and got to overhauling a little smattering o' larning, by way of being civil, seeing as we'd ounly just joined company. "I'm thinking that's a pretty village you're bound to," says I in a dubersome way; "I was there once," says I, "when I was a boy about the height of a tin pannikin;" for, shipmates, I didn't like to overhaul how I'd run away from home. "Pray, is Ould Martin Joyce alive?" says I.—"He was when I left yesterday morning," says she; "but he is confined to his bed through illness." "And the ould woman," says I, "does she still hould on?"—"Yes," says my companion; "but she's lame and almost blind."

'Well, I'm blow'd, if I didn't feel my daylights a-smarting with pain with the briny water that overflowed the scuppers—cause why? them there wur my own father and mother, in the regard of my having been entered on the muster-books in a purser's name,

my reg'lar right-arnest one being Jack Joyce. "And what makes you cruising so far away from port?" says I, all kindly and mess-mate-like.—"It's rather a long story," says she; "but as you have been so good to me, why, I must tell you, that you mayn't think ill of me. You shall have it as short as possible."—"The shorter the sweeter, my precious," says I, seeing as I oughtn't to be silent. Well, she begins: "Sister Susan and I are orphans; and when our parents died, ould Martin and his dame, having no children, took us under their roof."—"No children!" says I. "Why, I thought they had a young scamp of a son." I said this just to hear what she would log again me.—"Oh yes!" says she; "but he ran away to sea when a boy, and they never heard from him for many years, till the other day they received a letter from Plymouth, to say he was in the *Tapsickoree* frigate, and expected to be round at Spithead before long. So, the day before yesterday, a sailor passing through the village told us she had arrived; and so his parents getting poorer and poorer, with his father sick and his mother lame, I thought it would be best to go to him and tell him of their situation, that, if he pleased, he might come and see them once more before they died."

'I was going to say, "God A'mighty bless you for it!" but I couldn't: she spoke it so plaintively, that I felt sumeut rise in my throat as if I was choking, and I gulped and gulped to keep it down till I was almost strangled, and she went on.—"So yesterday I walked all the way to Portsmouth, and went aboard the frigate; but the officer tould me there was no man of the name of Joyce borne upon the books."—"It was a d—— lubberly thing!" says I, "and now I remembers it."—"What," says she, "what do you mean?"—"Oh, nothing, my precious," says I, "nothing in the world;" for I thought the time warn't come for me to own who I was, and it fell slap across my mind that the doctor's boy who writ the letter for me had signalised my right-arnest name at the bottom, without saying one word about the purser's consarn of Sheavehole. "And so you've had your voyage for nothing," says I, "and now you're homeward-bound; and that's the long and the short on it. Well, my precious, I'm on liberty; and as ould Martin did me a kindness when I was a boy, why, I'll bring up for a few hours at his cottage, and have a bit of a confab consarning ould times." And the young woman seemed mightily pleased about it; so that by the time we got to —, I'm blessed if, in all due civility, we warn't as thick as two Jews on a pay-day.

'Well, we landed from the craft, and away we made sail in consort for ould dad's cottage; and I'm blessed if everything didn't look as familiar to me as when I was a young scamp

of a boy! but I never said not nothing; and so she knocks at the door, and my heart went thump, thump. By the hookey! ship-mates, but it was just as I've seen a bird try to burst out of its cage. Presently a voice sings out, "Who's there?" And such a voice! I never heard a fiddle more sweeter in the whole course of my life. "Who's there?" says the voice, in regard of its being night, about four bells in the first watch.—"It's Maria," says my convoy.—"And Jack Sheavehole," says I. "Heave ahead, my cherub! give us a clear gangway and no favour."—"Oh, Maria, have you brought him with you?" said a young woman, opening the door; and by the light she carried in her hand, she showed a face as beautiful—I'm d—— if ever they carried such a figure-head as that in any dockyard in the world!—"Have you brought him with you?" says she, looking at me, and smiling so sweetly, that it took me all aback, with a bobble of a sea running on my mind that made my ideas heave and set like a Dutch fisherman on the Dogger Bank.—"No," says Maria, with a mournful sigh, just as the wind dies away after a gale, "no; there was no such person on board the frigate, and I have had my journey for nothing."—"Nonsense!" says the other; "you want to play us some trick. I know this is he;" and she pointed to me.—"Lord love your heart!" says I, plucking up courage, for I'd flattened in forud, and fallen off so as to fill again; "Lord love your heart! I'd be anything or anybody to please you," says I; "but my name, d'ye mind, is Jack Sheavehole, at your sarvice in all due civility. But let us come to an anchor, and then we can overhaul the consarn according to Hamilton Moore."

'So we goes in; and there sat my poor ould mother by the remains of a fire, moored in the same arm-chair I had seen her in ten years afore, and by her side was an ould wheezing cat that I had left a kitten; and though the cabin-gear warn't any very great shakes, everything was as clean as if they'd just washed the decks. "Yo-hoy, dame!" says I, "how do you weather the breeze?"—"Is that my John?" says she, shipping her barnacles on her nose, like the jaws of a spanker-boom on the saddle; and then Maria brings up alongside of her, and spins the yarn about her passage to Portsmouth, boarding the frigate, finding that she was out in her reckoning, and her return with me; and ould dad, who was in his hammock in the next berth, would have the door open to hear it all. And I felt so happy, and they looked so downcast and sorrowful, that I'm blessed if I could stand it any longer: so I seizes Susan round the neck, and I pays out a kiss as long as the main-t'bowline, till she hadn't breath to say "Don't;" and then I grapples 'em all round, sarving out hugs and kisses to all hands, even to the ould

cat ; and I danced round the chairs and tables, so that some of the neighbours came running in ; and " Blow me tight ! " says I, " side out for a bend ; here I am again, all square by the lifts and braces ! "—and then I sings :

" Here I am, poor Jack,
Just come home from sea,
With shiners in my sack ;"—

and I whips out a handful of guineas from my jacket-pocket, and shows 'em :

" Pray what do you think of me ? "

" What ! mother," says I, " don't you know me ? Why, I'm your true and lawful son Jack Joyce ; though, arter I run away, the purser made twice-laid of it, and chrissened me Sheavehole, in regard of his Majesty liking to name his own children. Never say die, ould woman ! there's plenty o' shot in the locker. And come, lasses," says I to the young uns, " one on you stand cook o' the mess ; " and I empties my bag on the floor, and away rolled the combustibles, matches, and mutton, and mouse-traps, and all, scampering about like liberty-boys arter a six months' cruise ; and I picks up the bladder o' rum, and squeezes a good drain into a tea-cup, and hands it to the ould woman, topping up her lame leg while she drinks.

' And, my eyes ! there was a precious shindy that night : the ould uns were almost dying with joy, and the young uns had a fit o' the doldrums with pleasure. So I gets the big pot under weigh, and shoves in both legs o' mutton and a full allowance o' turnips, and I sarves out the grog between the squalls ; and old dad blowed a whiff o' bacca, and mother payed away at the snuff ; and nobody warn't never happy if we warn't happy that night. Well, we'd a glorious tuck-out o' mutton, wi' plenty o' capers ; and arter that I stows the ould woman in along-side o' dad, kisses the girls in course, and then takes possession o' the arm-chair, where I slept as sound as a jolly on sentry.'

' Well, we keeps the game alive all hot and warm, and we sported our best duds, and I makes love to Susan, and we'd a regular new fit-out at the cottage, and I leaves fifty pounds in the hands of the parson o' the parish for the ould folks, and everything went on in prime style, when one day the landlord of the public comes in, and says he, " Jack, the lobsters are after you."—" Gammon ! " says I ; " what can them fellows want with me ? "—" Arn't your liberty out ? " says he. " I never give it a thought," says I.—" Where's your ticket ? " says he. So I showed him the chit ; and I'm blessed, but it had been out two days !

‘ Well, there I was in a pretty perdiklement ; and the landlord, says he, “ Jack,” says he, “ I respect you for your goodness to the ould uns ; though I suspects they arn’t altogether the cause of your losing your memory ;” and he looks and smiles at Suke. “ Howsomever, the lobsters are at my house axing about you ; and I thought I’d slip out and let you know, so that you might have time to stow away.” — “ Thanky, my hearty,” says I ; but I’m blessed, if I warn’t dead flabbergasted where to find a stow-hole, till at last I hits upon a scheme to which Susan consented ! And what do you think it was ? Why, Suke slips on a pair o’ my canvas trousers, and comes to an anchor in the arm-chair with a blanket round her, below, and I stows myself under her duds, coiling away my lower stanchions tailor-fashion ; and the doctor coming in to see the ould folks, they puts him up to the trick, and so he brings up alongside of her, and they whitens her face, to make her look pale, as if she was nigh-hand kicking the bucket ; and there I lay, as snug as a cockroach in a chafing-mat, and in all due decency, seeing as Suke had bent my lower casings hind part afore, and there warn’t a crack nor a break in ’em. Presently in marches the swaddies, and “ Pray whose cottage is this ?” axed the sergeant as stiff as a crutch. — “ It’s Martin Joyce’s,” says Maria. — “ Ay, I thought as much,” says he : “ pray where is his son, Jack Joyce, or Jack Sheavehole ?” says he. — “ He left us three days ago,” answered Maria, “ to join his ship : I hope nothing has happened to him ?” — “ Indeed !” says the sergeant. “ Now, pretty as you are, I know that you are telling me what I should call a very considerable —” Suke shrieked out, and stopped what he was going to say : for, she sat so quiet, that, thinks I to myself, they’ll find out that she’s shamming ; so I gives her a smart pinch in an inexpressible part that made her sing out. Well, the long and the short on it is that the party, who were looking out sharp for “ stragglin’ money,” had a grand overhaul ; but the doctor would not let them interfere with Susan, who, he declared, was near her cushionmong ; and at last, being unable to find me, they hauls their wind for another port.

‘ Well, as soon as possible arter they were gone, why, Suke got rid of her trouble, and forth I came, as full-grown and handsome a babby as ever cut a tooth. But I warn’t safe yet ; and so I claps a suit of Suke’s duds over my own gear, and being but a little chap, with some slutching, and letting out a reef or two here and there, I got my sails all snugly bent, and clapped a cap with a thousand little frills round my face, and a straw hurricane-house of a bonnet as big as a Guineaman’s caboose

over all, with a black wail hanging in the brails down afore, and my shoes scandaled up my legs, that I made a good-looking wench. Well, I bid all hands good-bye. Suke piped her eye a bit; but, Lord love you! we'd made our calculations o' matrimony, and got the right bearings and distance (else, mayhap, I should never have got stowed away under her hatches), and she was to join me at Portsmouth, and we were to make a long splice of it off-hand; but then, poor thing! she thought, mayhap, I might get grabbed and punished.

'Up comes the coach; but the fellow wouldn't heave to directly, and "Yo-hoy!" says I, giving him a hail.—"Going to Portsmouth, ma'am?" says he, throwing all aback, and coming ashore from his craft.—"To be sure I am," says I.—"What made you carry on in that fashion, and be d—— to you!—is that all the regard you have for the sex?" says I.—"Would you like to go inside, ma'am?" says he, opening the gangway port.—"Not a bit of it," says I; "stow your damaged slops below, but give me a berth 'pon deck."—"Werry good, ma'am," says he, shutting the gangway port again; "will you allow me to assist you up?"—"Not by no manner o' means," says I.—"Why, what the devil do you take me for! to think the captain of a frigate's maintop can't find his way aloft!"—"You mean the captain of the maintop's *wife*," says Susan, paying me back the pinch I gave her.—"Ay, ay, my precious," says I; "so I do, to be sure. God bless you! good-b'ye! Here I go like seven bells half struck! Carry on, my boy, and I'm blessed if it shan't be a shiner in your way." And so we takes our berths, and away we made sail, happy-go-lucky, heaving-to now and then just to take in a sea-stock; and the governor had two eyes in his head, and so he finds out the latitude of the thing, but he said nothing; and we got safe through the barrier and into Portsmouth, and I lands in the street afore they reached the inn; for, thinks I to myself, I'd better get berthed for the night and go aboard in the morning. Well, I parts company with the craft, and shapes my course for Pint; 'cause I knew a snug corner in Capstan Square, and I was determined to cut with all skylarks, in regard o' Suke.

'Well, just as I was getting to steer with a small helm, up ranges a tall man who had seen me come ashore from the coach, and, "My dear," says he, "what! just fresh from the country?" But I houlds my tongue, and he pulls up alongside and grabs my arm. "Come, don't be cross," says he; "let me take you in tow; I want to talk with you, my love." I knew the voice well; and though he had a pea-jacket over his uniform-coat, and, take him "half way up a hatchway," he was a d—— good-looking fellow, yet nobody as ever had seen him could forget

them "trap-stick legs;" and so, thinks I to myself, Jack, you'd better shove your boat off without delay; for I'd sailed with him when I was a mizen-top man in the ould *Stag*, and I well remembered Sir Joseph Y—ke. But I'm blessed if he didn't stretch out arter me, and sailed two foot to my one; and, "Come, come, my darling," says he, "take an honest tar for your sweetheart. Let's look at that beautiful face;" and he catches hould o' the wail and hauls it up chock ablock; but I pulls down my bonnet so as he couldn't see my figure-head, and I carries on a taut press to part company. But, Lord love yer hearts! it warn't no manner o' use whatsoever: he more than held his own; and, "A pretty innocent country-wench, indeed!" says he. "What! have you lost your tongue?"—"No, I'm d—— if I have!" says I; for I forgot myself, through vexation at not being able to get away. "Hallo!" says he, gripping me tight by the shoulder; "who have we here?" And I'm blessed, if, what with his pulling at my shawl, and my struggling to sheer off, my spanker-boom didn't at that very moment get adrift, and he caught sight of it in a jiffy. "Hallo!" says he, catching tight hold of the pig-tail, and slueing me right round by it. "Hallo!" says he, "I never see an innocent country-wench dress her hair in this way afore; rather a masc'line sort o' female," he says. "Who the devil are you?"—"It's Jack Sheavehole, your honour," says I, bringing up all standing; and, knowing his generous heart, thinks I, Now's your time, Jack; overhaul the whole consarn to him, and ten to one but he pulls you through the scrape somehow or other.

'So I ups and tells him the long and the short on it, and he laughs one minute, and d——ns me for a desarting willun the next; and, "Come along!" says he; "I must see what Captain B——n will think of all this." So he takes me in tow, and we went into one of the grand houses in High Street; and, "Follow me!" says he, as he walked upstairs into a large room all lighted up for a sheave-o; and there wur ladies all toggged out in white, and silver and gold and feathers, and navy officers and sodger officers; a grand dinner-party. "B——n," hails Sir Joseph, "here's a lady wants you;" and he takes me by the hand, all complimentary-like, and the captain of the frigate comes towards us, and I'm blessed if every soul fore and aft didn't fix their eyes on me like a marine looking out for a squall.

"I've not the pleasure of knowing the lady," said the skipper; "I fear, Sir Joseph, you're coming York over me. Pray, ma'am, may I be allowed the happiness of seeing your countenance and hearing your name?"—"I'm Jack Sheavehole, yer honour," says I, "captain o' the *Tapsickoree's* main-

top, as yer honour well knows."—"I do, my man," says he with a gravedigger's grin on his countenance; "and so you want to desert?"—"Never, yer honour," says I, "in the regard o' my liking my ship and my captain too well."—"No, no, B——n," says Sir Joseph, "I must do him justice. It appears that he had long leave, and onknowingly overstayed his time; so he rigged himself out in angel's gear to cheat them devils of sodgers. I'll vouch for the fact, B——n," says he, "for I saw him myself get down from the coach——" "All fresh from the country, yer honour," says I.—"Ay, all fresh from the country," chimes in Sir Joseph. "He's an old shipmate o' mine, B——n; and I want you, as a personal favour to myself, to back his liberty-ticket for to-morrow. Such a lad as this would never desert the sarvice."—"If I would, then I'm d——! saving yer honour's presence," says I.

'Well, there I stood in the broad light, and all the ladies and gemmen staring at me like fun; and, "Come, B——n," says Sir Joseph, "extend his liberty till to-morrow."—"Where's your ticket?" axes the skipper; and so, in regard of its being in my trousers' pocket, I hauls up my petticoats to get at it; and, my eyes! but the women set up a screeching, and the officers burst out in a broadside o' laughing, and you never heard such a bobbery as they kicked up: it was a downright reg'lar squall.'

The Devil Skipper.

BY W. H. BARKER.

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 HE schooner was black all over,' began Bob Martin-gal, as he recounted some of his old adventures to an admiring circle at the *George and Dragon*—'all but a narrow fiery red ribbon round her sides as looked for all the world like a flash o' lightning darting out of a thunder-cloud; and her name was the *In-fun-ho* (*Infernaux*), but I'm d——d if there was any fun in the consarn arter all. Well, d'ye see, the hands were a jolly, jovial set, with dollars as plentiful as boys' dumps, and they pitched 'em away at the lucky, and made all sneer again. The skipper was a civil-spoken gentleman, with a goodish-sized, ugly figure-head of his own, one eye kivered over with a black patch, and the other summut like a stale mackerel's; but it never laid still, and was al'ays sluing round and round, 'cause it had to do double duty. Still, he was a pleasantish sort of a chap, and had such a 'ticing way with him, that when he axed me to ship in the craft, I'm blow'd if I could say "No," though I felt summut dubersome about the consarn; and the more in regard of an ould tar telling me the black patch was all a sham, but he was obliged to kiver the eye up, 'cause it was a ball o' fire as looked like a glowing cinder in a fresh breeze. He'd sailed with him a voyage or two, and he swore that he had often seen the skipper clap his cigar under the false port and light it by his eye; and one night in a gale o' wind, when the binnacle-lamp couldn't be kept burning, he steered the ship a straight course by the compass from the brightness of his eye upon the card.

'Howsomever, I didn't give much heed to all that 'ere, seeing as I know'd how to spin a tough yarn myself; and then there was the grog and the shiners, a sweet ship and civil dealing; and I'll just ax what's the use o' being nice about owners, as long as you do what's right and ship-shape? "Still, messmate," thinks I to my-

self, "it's best not to be too much in a hurry;" so I backs and fills, just dropping with the tide of inclination, and now and then letting go the kedge o' contradiction to swing off from the shore; and at last I tould him "I'd let him know next day."

'Well, I goes to the ould tar as I mentioned afore, and I tells him all about it. "Don't go for to sign articles in no such a craft as that 'ere," says he in a moloncholy way.—"Why not?" says I, quite gleesome and careless, though there was a summut that comothered me all over when he spoke.—"I mustn't tell you," says he; "but take my advice, and never set foot on board a craft that arn't got no 'sponsible owners," says he.—"You must tell me more nor that," says I, "or you may as well tell me nothing. You've been to sea in her and are safe enough, why shouldn't I?"—"I advise you for your good," says he again, all father-like and gently; "you can do as you please. You talk of my safety," and he looked cautiously round him; "but it's the parson as has done it for me."—"Oh! I see how the land lies," says I; "you're a bit of a Methodish, and so strained the yarns o' your conscience 'cause you made a trip to the coast o' Guinea for black wool."

He shook his head. "Black wool, indeed," says he; "but no man as knows what I knows would ever lay hand to sheet home a topsel for a commander who——" and he brought up his speech all standing.—"Who what?" axes I; but he wouldn't answer; and so, being a little hopstropulous in my mind, and willing to try the hooker, "It's no matter," says I, "I'll have a shy at her if I loses my beaver. No man can expect to have the devil's luck and his own too."—"That's it," says he, starting out like a dog-vane in a sudden puff.—"That's what?" axes I.—"The devil's luck!" says he; "don't go for to ship in that craft. She's handsome to look at, but, like a painted scullerpar, or sea-poll-ker, or some such name, she's full o' dead men's bones."—"Gammon!" says I boldly with my tongue, though I must own, messmates, there was summut of a flusteration in my heart as made me rather timbersome; "gammon!" says I, "what 'ud they do with such a cargo even in a slaver?"—"I sees you're wilful," says he angrily; "but log this down in your memory; if you do ship in that 'ere craft you'll be d——d!"—"Then I'll be d——d if I don't," says I, "and so, ould crusty-gripes, here goes."

'And away I started down to one of the keys just to take a look at her afore I entered woluntary; and there she lay snoozing as quiet as a cat on a hearthrug, or a mouse in the caulker's oakum. Below, she was as black as the ace o' spades, and almost as sharp in the nose; but, aloft, her white, tapering spars showed like a delicate lady's fingers in silk-net gloves. Well, whilst I was taking a pretty long eye-drift over her hull and rigging, and casting my

thoughts about the skipper, somebody taps me on the arm, and when I slued round, there he was himself, *in properer personce*, and, "Think o' the devil," says I, "and he's over your shoulder, saving your honour's presence, and I hopes no offence." Well, I'm blessed but his eye—that's his onkivered one, messmates—twinkled and scaled over dark again, just for all the world like a revolving light, and "Not no offence at all, my man," says he; "it's al'ays best to be plain-spoken in such consarns; we shall know one another better by-and-by. But how do you like the ship?"—"She's a sweet craft, your honour," says I; "and I should have no objection to a good berth on board her, provided we can come to reg'lar agreement."—"We shall not quarrel, I dare say, my man," says he, quite cool and insinivating; "my people never grumble with their wages, and you see yourself they wants for nothing."—"All well and good, your honour," says I; "and, to make short of the long of it, Bob Martingal's your own." Well, his eye twinkled again, and there seemed to be such a heaving and setting just under the tails of his long-togs, and a sort o' rustling down one leg of his trousers, that blow me if I could tell what to make on it; and "I knew you'd be mine," says he; "we shall go to sea in the morning, so you'd better get your traps aboard as soon as possible."

'Well, messmates, I bids him good-morning; but, thinks I to myself, I'll just take a bit of a overhaul of the craft afore I brings my duds aboard; and so, jumping into a punt, a black fellow pulls me alongside, and away I goes on to the deck, and there the first person I seed was the skipper. How he came there was a puzzler, for no boat had left the key but our own since we parted a few minutes afore.

"And now, Bob," says he, "I suppose you are ready to sign?"—"All in good time, your honour," says I. "You're aboard afore me, but I'm blessed if I seed you come."—"It warn't necessary you should," says he; "my boat travels quick, my man, and makes short miles."—"All's the same for that, your honour," says I, "whether you man your barge or float off on the anchor-stock—it's all as one to Bob."—"You're a cute lad," says he, twinkling his eye, "and must rise in the sarvice. Go below and visit your future shipmates."—"Thanky, your honour," says I, and down the hatchway I goes; and there were the messes, with fids o' roast beef and boiled yams in shining silver platters, with silver spoons, and bottles o' wine, all in grand style, as quite comflogisticated me; and "What cheer—what cheer, shipmate!" says they; and then they axed me to take some grub with 'em, which in course I did.

'She'd a noble 'tween decks—broad in the beam, with plenty o'

room to swing hammocks ; but, instead of finding ounly twenty hands, I'm blowed if there warn't more nor a hundred. So, arter I'd had a good tuck-out, I goes on deck again and looks about me. She was a corvette, flush fore and aft, with a tier of port-holes, but ounly six guns mounted ; and never, even in a man-o'-war, did I see everything so snug and neat.

"Well, your honour, I'm ready to sign articles," says I.—"Very good," says he. And down we goes into the cabin ; and my eyes ! but there was a set-out—gold candlesticks and lamps, and large silver figures, like young himps, and clear looking-glasses, and silk curtains, and handsome sofas ; and there upon one on 'em sat a beautiful young creatur, with such a pair of large full eyes as blue as the sky, and white flaxen hair that hung like fleecy clouds about her forehead—it made a fellow think of heaven and the angels ; but she never smiled, messmates—there was a moloncholy about the lower part of her face as showed she warn't by no manner o' means happy ; and whilst the skipper was getting the articles out of the locker, she motioned to me, but I couldn't make out what she meant. The skipper did, though, for he turned round in a fury, and stamped on the cabin deck as he lifted up the black patch, and a stream of light for all the world like the glow of a furnace through a chink in a dark night fell upon her. He had his back to me, so I couldn't make out where the light came from ; but the poor young lady gave a skreek and fell backard on the sofa.

'Now, messmates, I'd obsarved that when he stamped with his foot that it warn't at all like a nat'ral human stamp, for it came down more like the hoof of a horse or a hox ; and thinks I to myself, "I'm d——, Bob, but you're in for it now ; the skipper must be a devil of a fellow to use such a lovely creatur arter that fashion."—"You're right, my man," says he, grinning like one o' them faces on the cat-head, "he *is* a devil of a fellow."—"I never spoke not never a word, your honour," says I, thrown all aback by the concussion.—"No, but you thought it," says he ; "don't trouble yourself to deny it ; tell lies to everybody else, if you pleases, but it's no use telling 'em to me."—"God forbid, your——" I was going to say "honour," but he stopped me with another stamp, and "Never speak that name in my presence again," says he ; "if you do, it ull be the worse for you. Come and sign the articles."

'My eyes, messmates, but I was in a pretty conflobergastication ; there stood the skipper, with a bright steel pen in his hand as looked like a doctor's lancet, and there, close by his side, upon her beam-ends, laid that lovely young creatur, the sparkling jewels in her dress mocking the wretchedness of her countenance.

"Are you ready?" says he; and his unkivered eye rolled round and round, and seemed to send out sparks through the friction.—
 "Not exactly, your honour," says I, "for I can't write, in regard o' my having sprained both ankles, and got a twist in my knee-joint when I warn't much higher than a quart pot."—"That's a lie, Bob," says he; and so it was, messmates, for I thought I must make some excuse to save time. "Howsomever," says he, "you can make your mark."—Thinks I to myself, "I would pretty soon, my tight 'un, if I had you ashore."—"I know it," says he; "but you're aboard now, and so you may either sign or not, just as it suits your fancy, my man; ounly understand this—if you don't sign, you shall be clapped in irons, and fed upon iron hoops and scupper-nails for the next six months, and I wish you a good digestion."—"Thanky, your honour," says I: "and what if I do sign?"—"Why then," says he, "you shall live like a fighting-cock, and have as much suction as the Prince of Whales."

'Well, messmates, I was just like the Yankee's schooner when she got jammed atwixt two winds, and so I thought there could be no very great damage in making a scratch or two upon a bit o' parchment; and "All right, your honour," says I; "hand us over the pen; but your honour hasn't got not never an inkstand."—"That's none o' your business," says he; "if you are resolved to sign, I'll find materials."—"Very good," says I; "I'll just make my mark."—"Hould up!" says he to the young lady; and she scringed all together in a heap, and shut her large blue eyes as she held up a beautiful white round arm, bare up to the shoulder; it looked as solid and as firm as a piece of marble stationery.

"Are you quite ready?" says the skipper to me, as he raised the pen.—"All ready," says I.—"Then hould up," says he to the young lady, and she raised her fair arm. "Come here, my man," says he again to me, and I clapped him close alongside at the table; "be ready to grab hould o' the pen in a moment, and make your mark *there*," and he pointed to a spot on the parchment, with a brimstone seal stamped again it—you might have smelt it, messmates, for half a league—and I'm blessed if I didn't have a fit o' the doldrums; but, nevertheless, I put a bould face upon it, and "Happy-go-lucky," says I, "all's one to Bob!" and then there was another rustling noise down the leg of his trousers, and his eye—that's his unkivered one—flashed again, and took to rolling out sparks like a flint-mill. "Listen, my man," says he, "to what I'm going to say, and pay strict attention to it."—"I wool, your honour," says I; "but hadn't the lady better put down her arm?" says I; "it 'ull make it ache, keeping it up so long."—"Mind your own business, Bob Martingal," says he, quite can-

tankerously ; “ she’s houlding the inkstand.”—“ Who’s cracking now, your honour ?” says I, laughing ; “ the lady arn’t got not nothing whatsoever in her hand. I’m blowed if I don’t think you all carries out the name o’ the craft *In-fun-ho*.”—“ Right,” says he ; “ and now attend. If, after I have dipt this here pen in the ink, you refuse to sign the articles—you have heard o’ this ?” and he touched the black patch. I gave a devil-may-care sort of a nod. “ Well, then, if you refuse to sign, I’ll nillyate you.”—“ Never fear,” says I, making out to be as bould as a lion, for there was ounly he and I men-folk in the cabin, and, thinks I to myself, “ I’m a match for him singly at any rate.”—“ You’re mistaken,” says he, “ and you’ll find it out to your cost if you don’t mind your behaviour, Bob Martingal.”—“ I never opened my lips, your honour,” says I.—“ Take care you don’t,” says he, “ and be sure to obey orders.”

He turned to the lady. “ Are you prepared, Marian ?” axes he ; but she never spoke. “ She’s faint, your honour,” says I, “ God bless her !” The spiteful wretch gave me a red-hot look, and his d—— oncivil cloven foot—for I’d swear to the mark it made—came crushing on my toes, and made me sing out blue blazes. “ Is that obeying orders ?” says he ; “ didn’t I command you never to use that name afore me ?”—“ You did, your honour,” says I ; “ but you might have kept your hoof off my toes, seeing as I haven’t yet signed articles.”—“ It was an accident,” says he, “ and here’s something to buy a plaster ;” and he throws down a couple of doubloons, which I claps into my pocket.

“ You enter woluntarily into my sarvice, then ?” says he.—“ To be sure I do,” says I, though I’m blessed if I wouldn’t have given a treble pork-piece to have been on shore again.—“ And you’ll make your mark to that ?” says he, “ and ax no further questions ?”—“ To be sure I will,” says I ; and I’ll just tell you what it is, messmates, I’m blowed if ever I was more harder up in my life than when I seed him raise the pen, as looked like a sharp lanchet, in his infernal thieving-hooks, and job it right into that beautiful arm, and the blood spun out, and the lady gave a skreek.

“ Sign—sign !” says he ; “ quick, my man—your mark !”—“ No, I’m d—— if I do,” says I ; “ let blood be on them as sheds it.”—“ You won’t ?” says he.—“ Never, you spawn o’ Bellzebub !” says I, for I’d found him out, messmates.—“ Then take the consequences,” says he ; and up went the black patch, and, by the Lord Harry ! he sported an eye that nobody never seed the like on in their lives ; it looked as big and as glaring as one o’ them red glass bottles of a night-time as stands

in the potecarry's windows with a lamp behind 'em ; but it was ten thousand times more brilliant than the fiercest furnace that ever blazed—you couldn't look upon it for a moment ; and I felt a burning heat in my heart and in my stomach as if I'd swallowed a pint of vitriol ; and my strength was going away, and I was withering to a hatomy, when all at once I recollects a charm as my ould mother hung round my neck when I was a babby, and I snatches it off and houlds it out at arm's-length right in his very face. My precious eyes and limbs ! how he did but caper about the cabin, till his hat fell off, and there was his two fore-tack bumkins reg'larly shipped over his bows and standing up with a bit of a twist outwards just like the head-gear of a billy-goat. "Keep off, you willain !" says I, for he tried onknown schemes and manceuvres to get at me ; till suddenly I hears a loud ripping of stitches, and away went the casings of his lower stancheons, and out came a tail as long——'

'Almost as long as your'n, I suppose,' said old Jack Sheavehole ; 'a precious yarn you've been spinning us, Mister Bob !'

'But what became of the lady ?' inquired Tommy Ducks ; 'and what a lubber of a tailor he must have been to have performed his work so badly !'

'The lady ?' repeated Bob ; 'why, I gets her in tow under my arm and shins away up the companion-ladder, the ould fellow chasing me along the deck with a boarding-pike, his tail sticking straight out abaft, just like a spanker-boom over his stern ; but the charm kept him off, and away I runs to the gangway, where the shore-boat and the nigger were waiting, and you may guess, messmates, I warn't long afore we were hard at work at the paddles ; for I laid the lady down in the bottom o' the punt, and "Give way, you bit of ebony," says I, "or Jumbee 'ull have you stock and fluke." Well, if there warn't a bobbery aboard the *In-fun-ho*, there never was a bobbery kicked up in the world ; and the skipper himself bounded over the side in chase of us. A stern chase is mostly a long one, but this time the Devil Skipper got alongside in a brace of shakes. Just as he cotched us up, and I felt his fierce scorching breath over my shoulder on the lee bow, and the sparks were rushing out of his eyes like fireworks on Guy Fawkeses Day, I bethought myself of the charm again, and I ups and flings it, with all the strength I had left, full in his figgerhead.

'With a skreek louder than any boatswain's whistle, and a noise like the blowing-up of the *Orient* at the battle of the Nile, he started back, and a blinding cloud of sulphur rose up betwixt us. When this had partly cleared away the Devil Skipper had wanished, and I towed the swounded lady ashore.

‘I was half spifflicated myself by the murky fog, and many a watch had passed and many a keg had been broached before I cleared the flavour out of my throat. You may laugh at holy water if *you* like, messmates; but shiver my timbers if I don’t always maintain it was the ould woman’s charm as did for the Devil Skipper.’





Jack among the Mummies.

BY W. H. BARKER.

[*Bentley's Miscellany*, December, 1837.]



ONE cold winter's evening in Portsmouth, with snow and sleet falling, my friend Brown and I turned into the cosy bar-parlour of the *Admiral Benbow*. By the side of the fireplace a gallant but somewhat battered tar rested his wooden leg, Yankee fashion, on a long table, on the other side of which sat a no less battered veteran, whose frayed and faded scarlet jacket and well polished medal betokened old experience in the sister service. Each was furnished with a sturdy flagon, already more than half emptied, and as we entered peremptory orders were going forth for further reinforcements. Pending their arrival, the tar, whose name, it transpired, was Joe Nighthead, volunteered a yarn, and after a few meditative whiffs at his yard of clay, and a wistful glance at the rapidly diminishing contents of his tankard, he began :

'I was coxswain in the pinnace of the ould *Ajax*, the Honourable Captain C——, at that 'ere time when Sir Richard Bickerton took command of the fleet, and a flotilla was employed in co-operating with the troops again' Alexandria. I was always fond of a bit of gab; and so, the night we lay at a grapplin', waiting for daylight to begin the attack, my officer gets to talking about the place, and what a grand consarn it was in former days for gould and jewels, and sich like; and thinks I to myself, mayhap the Lords of the Admiralty will take all that 'ere into account in regard o' the prize-money: and then he overhauls a good deal about the hobbylicks and Clipsypaddyree's Needle, and what not, that I'm blow'd if it didn't quite bamfoozle my larning. Well, we'd four or five hard days' work in the fighting way, and then there was a truce, and my officer run the pinnace aboard of a French prize, laden with wine and brandy; so we starts the water out of one of the breakers and fills it with the real stuff, and I man-handled a

pair of sodgers' canteens chock-full; and the prize-master, Muster Handsail, an old shipmate of mine, gives me a two-gallon keg to my own cheek, and I stows 'em all snug and safe abaft in the box, and kivers 'em up with my jacket to keep 'em warm. Well, it was just getting dusk in the evening when the skipper claps us alongside, and orders the lieutenant to land me well up the lake, so as I might carry a letter from him across to a shore party as manned one of the heavy batteries away inland, at the back of the town.

'Now, in course, I warn't by no manner o' means piping my eye to get a cruise on *terror firmer*, seeing as mayhap I might chance to pick up some "o' the wee things aboot the decks" as likely wud get me a bottle o' rum in England—for my thoughts kept running on the gould and jewels the lieutenant spun the yarn about, and I'd taken a pretty good whack o' brandy aboard the prize, though I warn't not in the least tosticated, but ounly a little helevated, just enough to make me walk steady and comfortable. So we runs the boat's nose on to the beach, and I catches up my jacket and my canteens, leaving the keg to the marcy of Providence, and strongly dubersome in my mind that I had bid it an eternal farewell. Howsomever, I shins away, with my two canteens filled chock ablock; and "Bear a hand, Joe!" says the lieutenant, "though I'm blessed if I know what course you're to take, seeing as it's getting as dark as a black fellow's phisog."—"Never fear, yer honour," says I, "ounly let me catch sight o' Clipsypaddy-ree's Needle for a landmark, and I'm darned if I won't find myself somewhere, anyhow;" and away I starts, hand over hand, happy go lucky—all's one to Joe! But it got darker and darker, and the wind came down in sudden gusts, like a marmaid a-sighing; so, to clear my eyes, and keep all square, I was in course compelled to take a nip every now and then out of the canteen, till at last it got so dark, and the breeze freshened into such a stiff gale, that the more I took to lighten my way, and enable me to steer a straight course, I'm blessed if I didn't grow the more dizzy; and as for my headway, why, I believes I headed to every point in the compass:—it was the dark night and the cowl'd breeze as did it.

'Howsomever, there I was—not a sparkler abroad in the heavens, not a beacon to log my bearings by; and, as I said afore, there I was in a sort o' no-man's-land, backing and filling to drop clear of shoals, sometimes just at touch-and-go, and then brought-up all standing, like a haystack a-privateering. At last the weather got into a downright passion, with thunder, lightning, and hail; and "I'm blessed Joe," says I to myself, "if snug moorings under some kiver or other, if it's only a strip o' buntin', wouldn't be wastly superior to this here!" But there was no roadstead or place of

I; "that's gammon you're pitching, and I thinks it's hardly civil on you to try and bamboxter me arter that fashion. Why, didn't I see you myself just now, when you spliced the main brace? Dead men don't drink brandy."—"We're privileged," sings out a little cock-eyed fellow up in one of the niches; "we're the ould ancient kings of Egypt, and I'm Fairer."—"If there warn't many more fairer nor you," says I, "you'd be a cursed ugly set, saving your majesty's presence," for I thought it best to be civil, seeing as I had got jammed in with such outlandish company, and not knowing what other privileges they might have had sarved out to 'em besides swallowing brandy.

"Will your majesty like just to take a lime-burner's twist, by way of warming your stumack a bit, and fumigating your hould?" says I, as I poured out the stuff.—"Give it to King Herod, as is moored alongside of you," says he, "and keep your thumb out of the measure;" for, messmates, I'd shoved in my thumb pretty deep, by way of lengthening out the grog, and getting a better allowance of plush. How the ould chap came to obsarve it, I don't know, unless it was another of their privileges to be up to everything. "Keep your thumb out!" says he.—"All right, your honour," says I, handing the little ould fellow the tot; and he nipped it up, and knocked off the stuff in a moment.

"Pray," says I, "may I make bould to ax your honour how long you've been dead?"—"About two thousand years," says he; and, "My eyes!" thinks I, "but you're d—d small for your age."—"But, sailor," says he, "what brought you here?"—"My legs, your honour," says I, "brought me as far as the hatchway; but I'm blowed if I didn't come down by the run into this here consarn."—"You mustn't stop here, sailor," says he—that's King Herod; "you can have no business with us, seeing as we're all mummies."—"All what?" says I, "all dummies?" for I didn't catch very clearly what he said; "all dummies?" says I. "Well, I'm bless'd if I didn't think so!"—"No, no! mummies," says he again, rather cantankerously; "not dummies, for we can all talk."—"Mayhap so, your majesty," says I, arter taking another bite of the cherry, and handing him a third full tot, taking precious good care to keep my thumb out this time; "but what am I to rouse out for? It ud take more tackles than one to stir Joe Nighthead from this. I'm in the ground-tier," says I, "and amongst all your privileges, though you clap luff upon luff, one live British tar, at a purchase, is worth a thousand dead kings any day."—"Haugh!" says he, as he smacked his leather lips, and the noise was just like a breeze making a short board through a hole in a pair of bellows; "haugh!" says he,

says the voice; "he killed them all, and now he's got a cruising commission to keep me out o' my just rights, and I daren't attack him down below here."—"The ould cannibal!" says I: "what! murder babbies?—then I'm blowed if he gets a drop more out of my canteen."—"Who's that you're meaning on?" says King Herod; "who isn't to get another taste?"—"Not nobody as consarns you, your honour," answers I, for I didn't like to open my broadside upon him, in regard of not knowing but he might have a privilege to man-handle me again.—"I think you meant me," says he; "but if you didn't, prove the truth on it by handing me over a full gill." Well, that was bringing the thing to a p'int, and it put me into a sort of quandary; but "All in course, your honour," says I; "but I'm saying, your majesty, you arn't never got such a thing as a bite o' pigtail about you—have you? seeing as I lost my chaw and my 'bacca-box in the gale—hove overboard to lighten ship."—"Yes, I can, my man—some real Wirginny," says the king.

'As for the bacca, I'm blowed if I don't wouch for the truth on it, for out his majesty lugs a box as big round in diameter as the top of a scuttle-butt, and, knocking off the lid, "There's some of the best as ever was manyfactor'd," says he. "I love a chaw myself, and there's nothing whatsoever as 'ull beat the best pound pig-tail."—"Sartinly not, in course, your honour," says I; "but I'm blessed if it doesn't double upon my calculations o' things to think how your majesty, who ought to be in *quod* in t'other world, should take your *quid* in this."—"We're privileged, my man," says he; "we're privileged and allowed to take anything, in reason;" and he fixed his glazed eyes with a 'ticing look at the canteen. "You know," says he, "that it's an ould saying aboard, 'The purser makes dead men chaw tobacco.'"

'Well, that was a clencher in the way of hargyfication that brought me up all standing; so I hands King Herod the tot again, and I rouses out a long scope of pigtail out o' the box, and takes another nip at the brandy.—"You won't do it, then, Joe," says the whisper t'other side of me.—"What is it?" axes I.—"The best pound pigtail," says King Herod, as if he thought I was speaking to him.—"It's ounly to borrow one of these here mummies for me for about half an hour," says the voice.—"Which on 'em?" says I.—"This here in the box," says King Herod. "Why, I'm thinking your brains are getting all becalmed." And so they was; for, what with the voice at one ear that I couldn't see, and his majesty at the other, who often doubled himself into two or three, I'm blowed if I warn't reg'larly bamboozled in my upper works.

'Well, I was reg'larly bamblustercated when one of the gentlemen up in the niches squeaks out, "King Herod, I'll just thank

with one on 'em, and so I catches up King Herod, and away I starts up some steps, for the moon had got the watch on deck by that time, and showed her commodore's light to make everything plain.

' Away I starts with King Herod, who began to hollo out like fun, "Stop—stop, sailor! stop! where are you going to take me? I'm Corporal Stunt."—"Corporal Dash!" says I; "you arn't going to do me in that way—you said yourself you was King Herod."—"It was all a trick," says he again, kicking and sputtering like blazes; "I'm not King Herod; I'm ounly Corporal Stunt," says he.—"That be d——d!" says I, "you're convicted by your own mouth. And didn't the woice tell me you was the barbarous blaggard as murdered the babbies?"—"Yes—yes; but I did it myself," says he.—"I know you did," says I, fetching him a poke in the ribs; for, I made sure he warn't privileged above ground—"I know you did," says I, "and I'm blessed if the first lieutenant shan't bring you to the gangway for it!"

' And then he shouts out, and I hears the sound of feet astarn coming up in chase, and I carries on a taut press, till I catches sight of Clipsypaddyree's needle, that sarved me for a beacon, and I hears the whole fleet of mummies come "pad-pad" in my wake, and hailing from their leather lungs, "Stop, sailor, stop!" but I know'd a trick worth two of that; so I made more sail, and the little ould chap tries to shift ballast so as to bring me down by the head; but it wouldn't do, and he kept crying out, "Let me down! pray, let me go; I'm ounly Corporal Stunt!"—"Corporal Stunt or Corporal Devil," says I, giving him another punch to keep him quiet, "I knows who you are, and I'm blessed if the ould woman shan't have you packed up in a glass cage for a show! You shall have plenty o' pigtail and brandy;" and on I carries, every stitch set, and rattling along at a ten-knot pace, afeard o' nothing but their sending a handful of monyments arter me from their bow-chasers, that might damage some of my spars.

' At last I makes out the battery, and bore up for the entrance, when one of the sodgers as was sentry hails, "Who goes there?"—"No—no!" says I, seeing as I warn't even a petty officer.—"That won't do," says the sodger; "you must give the countersign."—"What the blazes should I know about them there things?" axes I; "you may see I'm a bluejacket."—"You can't pass without the countersign," says he.—"That be d——d!" says I; "arn't I got King Herod here? and arn't there King Fairer, and King Dollyme, and King Hangabull, and a whole fleet more on 'em in chase!" says I.—"Oh, Tom Morris, is that you?" says King Herod.—"Yes," says the sentry; "why, I say, sailor, you've got. hould o' the corporal!"—"Tell that to the marines,"

the mummies by way of amusement, little expecting the fun that it was afterwards to produce. When Joe came in as he has described, we all hid ourselves, and, if truth must be spoken, he was more than half sprung.' (Joe grumbled out an expletive.) 'Stunt went to him, and we had as fine a piece of pantomime——'

'Panter what?' uttered Joe, with vehemence; 'there's no such rope in the top, you lubber! and arter all you can say, I werily believe it wur King Herod; but you see, messmates, what with running so hard, and what with losing my canteens, I got dumb-founded all at once, and then they claps me in limbo for knocking down the sentry.'

'And the officers begged you off,' said the sergeant, 'on account of the fun they'd enjoyed; and you was sent away on board, to keep you out of further mischief, Joe, and to prevent your going a mummy-hunting again. As for Corporal Stunt——'

'Corporal D——n!' exclaimed Joe in a rage, 'it's all gammon about your Corporal Stunt; and in regard o' the matter o' that, what have you got to say in displanation o' the woice? There I has you snug enough, anyhow; there was no mistake about the woice,' and Joe chuckled with pleasure at what he deemed unanswerable evidence in his favour.

'It may be accounted for in the most sensible way imaginable,' said the sergeant; 'Corporal Stunt was what they call a ventriloquist.'



George Cruikshank

at parental notice

THE END OF THE MATTER



escaped. "Do you see yon giant?" said O'Brien, looking towards a tall, muscular, dark-looking majestic man, gorgeously dressed in green with broad gold lace and embroidery, and decorated with stars and orders: he was nearly seven feet high, stout in proportion, and his olive-coloured face had a terrific appearance from his enormous whiskers and moustache. "That is the Marquis Pistazzi," continued O'Brien, "an Italian, the bully of the *salons*, a professed duellist, and—— But, hallo! what the powers is the fellow at?"

'The marquis had been standing near Lamont, occasionally joining in the conversation, and O'Brien's exclamation was caused by seeing the giant catch hold of the little count with one hand and carry him towards the wall of the apartment, where, having removed a large and superb timepiece from a lofty bracket, he quickly enthroned Lamont in its place, leaving him to dangle his heels, to the great amusement of the company, the principal portion of which, especially the females, actually screamed with delight; in fact, it was beyond the power of human control to refrain from laughing at the ridiculous figure the unfortunate Frenchman cut, whilst his antagonist, throwing his huge limbs into the attitude of the bolero, imitated the rattling of the castanets with his fingers and thumbs, as any person would who wished to amuse an infant.

'To my surprise, the count retained his position, awkward as it was, with the utmost coolness; indeed, he would have hazarded the breaking of his limbs had he attempted to jump down; but he uttered no invective, and though there was a flashing fierceness in his eyes—and very quick and piercing eyes they were—yet he did not give the slightest indication that he was annoyed or alarmed, but rather entered with some degree of glee into the sport that he had excited, and remarked to the marquis, "What a capital old nurse you would make." This roused the Italian's ire to fury, and seizing one of the wax-lights, he was about to apply it to the count's dress, when O'Brien stepped forward: "The big blaggaard!" said he, and, with one fillip of his hand, he sent the candle practising somersets in its progress to the far end of the room.

'The marquis turned short round upon the Irishman, and drawing his sword, made a furious pass at my friend, which he very cleverly avoided by stepping aside, and the glittering weapon was thrust through the *toupée* and enormous head-dress of an antiquated dowager. This rendered the fellow still more infuriated, and before he could extricate his sword, O'Brien dexterously gripped him by the wrist and disarmed him in an instant; he then disengaged the weapon and snapped it across his knee,

the count, bowing with the most easy grace, exclaimed, "Non, monsieur! do you think so meanly of me as to suppose I will allow another to occupy my ground?" "By the powers!" said O'Brien, "I thought you were——" "Afraid," uttered the count, filling up the pause my friend had made. "Did you imagine that my quiet demeanour was the offspring of fear? You are mistaken; I am no poltroon to flourish my sword before ladies so as to terrify them by gasconade; I would have endured the martyrdom that wretch designed for me without a groan rather than have alarmed the dear creatures. But allons, monsieur! we have not a moment to lose; Fouché was in the room, and his men will speedily find us out, if they are not now upon our track." He drew his sword, bent the point with his hand, threw off his coat and sprang out of his shoes, cast a look round the room, and chose his position. A contest arose between Lamont and O'Brien as to which should face their terrible opponent; whilst the latter, taking up a sword that lay upon a couch, addressed a few words to the stranger who had tendered his offices as second, and seemed perfectly indifferent as to which he was to encounter. The Frenchman certainly had the priority, and I was not sorry to see it decided on his side, for I made certain of the impossibility of his surviving against such a giant, and my friend O'Brien, in the event of the marquis becoming victorious, which I did not entertain a doubt of, would have some knowledge of his practice previous to the set-to.

'But I was mistaken; the combatants took their places as appointed by the stranger, who showed himself perfectly conversant with all the rules of duelling. O'Brien was second to the count; and when the principals stood opposite each other, you may form some guess of the amazing and really ridiculous contrast that was presented—the head of the marquis towering at least two feet, if not more, above that of the diminutive count. Their swords crossed, and grated with that peculiar sound which comes distressingly upon the ear, causing the sensation styled by the old women as "making the blood run cold;" though it quickens the pulses and clears the sight of the individuals engaged. In a few seconds the weapons clashed together to distract the attention, and the marquis made a vigorous thrust, which would have instantly terminated the affair but for the astonishing quickness and agility of the count, who not only avoided it by a spring like a grasshopper—for parrying against such violence was out of the question—but actually bounding back again to his position, the moment his feet had touched the floor, he wounded his assailant between the ribs.

'The fencing was extremely beautiful and scientific, and I soon

us from M. Talleyrand's, and, in the Chief Consul's name, to order the marquis to quit the French territory within twenty-four hours. The agent, however, had received no directions to prevent their fighting, and, being a Corsican, had aided the marquis.

'We afterwards heard that the wounds of the marquis confined him for a short time to his bed, and that on recovery he left quietly for Italy. His opponent meantime had joined his ship, neither the marquis nor the count having been called upon to pay any legal penalty for their duel.'



THE LIONEL LINCOLN

THE LIONEL LINCOLN



was covered with flowers, every one on 'em as big as a cabbage; and her bonnet would have shelter'd the frigate's marines in a snow-storm. Then she'd pink silk stockings upon her legs, as warn't like yer kickshaw-spindle-shank sliding-gunter ladies', but a reg'lar pair of good, stout lower-deck stancheons, as 'ud howld up stiff in a squall. She wanted boots, but I thought it 'ud be a sin and a shame to hide such handsome and proper consarns in leather-casings, so I stepped her heels into pink long-quartered pumps with blue sandals, in regard o' the colour o' the jacket. Then she'd a broad red band round her waist, with a fathom and a half of the same towing over her stern, and when the wind caught it, why it blow'd out like a pennant from the peak as a signal for going to church. She'd blue at her main, and a banging gold watch hanging a cockbill under one of her cat-heads; and a smarter-looking frigate—ownly she was pimpled a little about the nose with grog blossoms—I never set eyes on.

'Well, shipmates, so she said she'd show me Lunnun; but, Lord love yer hearts! I couldn't never make out nothing but a big church as they called Sam Paul's, booming up in the air so as you couldn't see anybody in the tops. At last we got to Bart'lemy Fair, and then there was som'ut to look at, for I'm blow'd if they hadn't turn'd the hands up to skylark, or rather to mischief. There was such a halloo-bulloo, and some of the lubbers began to overhaul their jawing gear so as to pay out the slack of their gammon, that I should have been dead flabbergasted if it hadn't been for Sal, who pitched it at 'em again, sometimes sending a long shot a-head, and then giving 'em round and grape from her stern-chasers. As for the shows! well then, I'm bless'd if there warn't a little som'ut of everything! At last I spies outside one of the booths "The Battle of the Nile to be seen here!" with some more lingo about machinical figures and tommytons: but, "Blow me tight, Sal!" says I, "that 'ere's just what I must see, in regard o' the owld *Goliath* and Lord Nelson." So I tips the blunt to a fellow in a box and walks in, with Sal alongside of me, and a woman comes round with a basket of oranges, and axes me to buy. Well, shipmates, seeing as I'd plenty o' dumps, I buys the whole cargo, and sarves 'em out to all hands, young and old, whilst the fiddles struck up "Jack's alive;" and presently they mans the fore-clew garnets, buntlings, and leechlins, and up went the foresel in a crack, and the music changed to "Come cheer up, my lads," and says I to Sal, "Then I'm — if I don't, owld gal, and so here goes!" and I took a precious nip from a bottle of rum she'd stowed away in her ridicule. And there was the sea all pretty and picter-like, and the shore beyond; but the devil a bit could I see of the French fleet at anchor, or a craft of

to my having the Frenchmen stowed away in my lockers. And the big-wigs laughed ; and one on 'em says to me, says he, "Now, sailor, let us hear what you've got to say for the *defence*."—"The *Defence*, yer honours?" says I, glad to find they know'd som'ut about the squadron ; "the *Defence*," says I, "why, yer honours, she came up a-starn of the *Minnytaw*, though she arterwards took her station a-head of her, and engaged the *Franklin*, French eighty—"—"All very good," says the genelman, "but we want to know what you've got to say for yourself?"—"Well, yer honour," says I, "it arn't altogether ship-shape for a fellow to blow his own trumpet, but I was stationed the fifth gun from chock aft on the lower-deck, and I hopes I did my duty."—"We've no doubt on it, my man," says another on 'em ; "but how come you to attack this man's *expedition*?"—"Oh, yer honours, if it's ownly an expedition," says I, "then I got nothing to say again it, ownly he'd chalked up that it was the Battle o' the Nile, and there warn't one of the French fleet at anchor, but all under way, and giving chase to the English."—"He mistakes, yer worship," says the man ; "I brought the English fleet on first out of compliment to 'em."—"And a pretty compliment, too, ye lubber, to make 'em be running away!" says I.—"But you have done wrong, sailor, in mislesting him," says one of the big-wigs. "Let us see the vessels you have taken."

'So, I hauls 'em out of my pocket, and I'm blessed if they wur anything more nor painted pasteboard as went upon wheels, and "Here's the prizes, yer honours!" says I, handing 'em over ; "it's easy enough to see the wagabone's a cheat."—"Still, he's entitled to his expedition," says the mag'strate ; "and I'm sure one of Nelson's tars wouldn't wish to injure a fellow-countryman!"—"Lord love yer honour's heart ! no, to be sure I wouldn't," says I, "and so he may have the prizes back again."—"But you have done him some damage, my man, and you're too honest not to pay for it," says he.—"All right, yer honour," says I, "in course I'll pay. What's the damages, owld chap?" So the fellow pulled a long face ; and at last the big-wig axed him whether ten shillings would satisfy him ; and he makes a low bow as much as to say "Yes."—"All square," says I, and I pitches a guinea on the table. "Take it out o' that," says I ; "and, yer honours, he may keep the whole on it if he'll let me go and have another shy at the French." But the gentleman laughed me out of it, and the lubber had his ten shillings ; and Sal and I made sail for a tavern, where we got all happy, and then bowled home in the cabin of a coach singing "Rule Britannia."



At the Meeting.

1712

1712

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[illegible]



now, purvided it warn't for my legs."—"Oh, d——n your legs!" says I, for I thought he meant them as had cut his acquaintance on the first of June; "the wooden pins 'ull do well enough, and a rope over the outrigger o' this here tree, with the soft sweet grass underneath, where there's not no danger whatsoever in a tumble. What do you say, my hearties—who's for a game of *sling the monkey*?"

'Well, I'm blest if there warn't more nor twenty on 'em all mad for it; some had one leg, some two, carried away; ever so many had lost an arm; and there was a flourishing o' three-cornered trucks, and a rattling among the wooden pins, and "Who'll get a rope?" was shouted as they danced about the ground. So, d'ye see, I got a good scope of two-and-a-half inch, and passes one end over the arm of the tree, that was rigged out like a lower yard, and makes a bowline noose all ship-shape below, and gets a piece of chalk, and the ould 'uns makes up their hankerchie into knots, and at it we got like fighting-cocks. At last old Nunky gets to be monkey, and I'm blow'd if I didn't warm his starn for him, anyhow. And ever so many nob's comed to look at us, and so we got 'em to chime in, and one spindle-shank, sliding, gunter-looking chap was cotch'd, and I'm a tinker if he didn't shell out a guinea to get off, and the rest o' the gentry giv'd us some more money; so that arter the game was out we had a jolly sheaveo, and then I'm blest if we didn't sling the monkey in fine style, and treat the landlud into the bargain too.'



whilst I was, as I thought, harmlessly amusing myself and filling up the ennui of doing nothing by talking nonsense to Susette, she was imbibing a deep and impetuous passion, which death alone could dissolve.

'My parole extended no farther than the boundary of the town, and one day I expressed my intentions to Susette to put on a disguise and make an excursion amongst the plantations, and perhaps visit the Bellevue of Monsieur Leffler. Never shall I forget the change in Susette's countenance. From the extreme of gaiety it saddened into an expression of deep affliction, which I construed into fears for my personal safety, and the fact opened my eyes at once to the state of the poor girl's heart. Still, I could not bear that she should suppose me capable of yielding to apprehensions of any sort—it seemed like an impeachment of my courage; and consequently, though she urged me in the most energetic terms not to go, I resolved to put my scheme into execution.

'I speak the French language as fluently as a native, and therefore cared nothing upon that score; and my days began to get so excessively dull through monotony, that even if detected and sent to prison, the change would be relief by its novelty. I mentioned my intention to Monsieur Leffler, who confirmed my purpose by endeavouring to dissuade me from it; but he certainly staggered my resolves when he appealed to my generosity as an Englishman not to involve him in ruin by clandestinely quitting his house, as the authorities would immediately apprehend him as having connived at it.

'Now, Monsieur Leffler was a good sort of little Frenchman, quiet and obliging, never interfering with my actions, or intruding himself upon my privacy when I wished to be alone. All the tricks I played him, and they were not few, were forgiven with the utmost good-humour; and my numerous pranks—for I was always in some mischief or other—drew down either a kind caution or a melancholy smile, though amongst the more crabbed of his countrymen I was called *Le Diable Anglais*. Susette was delighted when she found that my design was for the present abandoned. I had not, however, given up my plan, but only manœuvred so as not to bring my kind friend into trouble. I had a double object in my enterprise: I wished to be a free ranger in the air of heaven, and I wanted to make my escape.

'In a few days afterwards I was attacked with violent illness, which brought on delirium. The doctors were called in, and wanted to bleed me; but the paroxysms were so fierce whenever they approached, that, having armed myself with a brace of pistols,

ing my face and hands, I bundled up my Turk's robes, and slid quietly down the upright of the balcony to the ground. The coast was quite clear, and I walked off to a shed at the bottom of the garden, where I stowed myself away amongst a heap of loose cotton. The back of this shed adjoined some stables, and I had not been long concealed before three or four persons entered them, and by their conversation, which was in French, I took them to be negroes. They were speaking of my mad pranks in the afternoon, but none of them seemed to be aware that I had made my escape.

"Where you for go to-night?" said one of the party; "dis proper night for Bellevue."

"Tan you please, Misser Peter," uttered another; "we no for go dere but on safe ground."

"Fool too much!" exclaimed a third; "whar for ground not safe? Eberyting peak for we go to-night. Massa neber sabby till de ting be done, and den we safe wid toder side. No?"

"Pose you no get de plate to-night, Cumby he gone to-morrow," said a third.

"Oh, ho," thought I, "these scoundrels are going to rob their master of what little store he has left! but I'll be close aboard of you, ye villains."

"Me sabby well where dey put de plate," continued the same voice as had spoken last; "dere plenty dollar too lib dere."

"Wy you all bery cleber," said the second voice; "but you no for tell me how you get pass da buckra sodger."

"Heara dat nigger!" exclaimed the first; "we free men now. Pose you no like for go you 'top here, and where de dollar for you den? Da buckra sodger shut him eye for keep 'em warm. He sleep too much for catchee we."

"Haugh, boy, dat all fine for talk; but Missy Julia at Bellevue. What you do for Missy Julia?" remonstrated the disaffected member.

"Chaw! we no can sabby dat till we get dere. Pose you for make her Mamma Cæsar?" said another, at which there was a general laugh.

Farther conversation ensued; the rascals arranged their plans; and about an hour before midnight saw them stealing along (for they were thieves in all their ways) under the shade of the fence, and I followed at a convenient distance, just so as to keep them in sight.

The weather was delightfully serene, the sky was beautifully clear, and studded with its myriads of sparkling gems, and the lovely planet Venus was descending in the west. Which way we were going I could only tell by the stars, and certainly our course

they carried I saw them cautiously enter with that stooping gait which marks a villainous intent. In an instant the foremost caught sight of me, as with fixed but staring eyes I gazed full upon him. He fell back upon his companions, who became immediately aware of the cause of his terror, and the fellow who carried the light in his trepidation let it fall, and for a second or two we were in darkness, except the luminous appearance overhead, which strongly resembled a flaming eye.

'The decisive moment had arrived; I dexterously disengaged the lamp from its concealment, and holding it out at arm's length, so as to throw the light upon myself, I still kept that part which was nearest to them under cover. The effect upon their superstitious minds was exactly what I anticipated. The rascals were terrified beyond measure—for they made sure it was a visitation from the grave. One by one they fell upon their knees, and the noise they made awoke the lovely girl, whose piercing shriek at so horrible a spectacle induced me again to conceal the light, which I silently replaced upon the table, and grasping a pistol in each hand, I advanced to the rascals, and giving the nearest a hearty kick, he tumbled backwards over his comrades, and together they all rolled out of the room, and on to the sleeping negresses in the corridor.

'A wild shrieking and hallooing now commenced, in the midst of which the conspirators contrived to find the stairs, and were not long reaching the bottom, for I heard them roaring and lumbering down, and looking from the window, I saw them scrambling over the fence, and making as rapid a retreat as their legs would allow them. I really don't know that ever I enjoyed a thing more in my life. But the frightened lady still kept imploring for help, and the negro girls were shrieking and crying in the corridor. I approached the bed, and tried to allay her fears by assuring her all danger was past, and that a friend was near who would protect her with his life.

"But the spirit—the spirit!" said she; "oh, I saw it but too plainly to be deceived!"

"Indeed, lady," urged I, "there was no spirit but that of my enacting. Let me implore you to tranquillize your mind, and I will explain everything. Your lamp is still burning—will you sanction my producing it, and in a moment you will be convinced?"

I then explained the plot I had overheard, and the course I had taken.

"Can this be true?" said she. "I saw nothing but that terrific figure, which still haunts my mind. Who are you?"

"I am a stranger, lady," answered I, "a persecuted stranger

the flowers came with delicious sweetness to the sense. I divested myself of my unnecessary garments, and stood before the lady a dark-skinned creole.

"Stranger," said she, "I have granted your request, and given you sanctuary. Relate to me the whole particulars of last night's adventure; and conceal nothing of the transaction from my knowledge."

'I readily complied with her command, and went over the various occurrences, taking care, however, not to betray myself or my real character. I told her I was a prisoner-of-war, but had effected my escape, and, should she yield me up to the authorities, certain death would be the consequence.

'Julia tended me with kindness; she sympathized with my sorrows, and gradually she became pleased with my conversation, and the delicacy of my conduct towards her; but the colour of my skin was a barrier to love. Monsieur Leffler was her father, her mother was in the grave; she said she had been sent to Bellevue to be out of the way of a crazy Englishman, whom the Government had quartered upon her parent; but she expressed an earnest desire to see the *pauvre prisonnier*, and thought it hard that he should be deprived of the happiness which her society must have afforded him in his captivity. He was ennobled, too, and report spoke well of his qualifications. My ears tingled, and I felt myself blush, though the black paint concealed it from the penetration of Julia.

'Monsieur Leffler visited his daughter the day but one after the attempt of the thieves, and with him came the disconsolate Susette, who narrated to the young lady (with sundry fanciful embellishments, little thinking that I was within hearing) the amiable qualifications, et cetera, of the young English prisoner, his madness, his escape, and, ultimately, his death.

"*Pauvre garçon!*" said Julia; "and where have you buried him?"

"*Pardonnez, ma'mselle,*" returned Susette; "the body is not found, and none of us know where to look for it."

"Then he may still be living," said Julia, "and perhaps——" she ceased, and it struck me that a suspicion of my identity had crossed her mind. "When did he quit you?" inquired she.

"On the evening of the affair at Bellevue," returned Susette. "*Mais, ma'mselle,* he must be dead, or he never would have stopped away from me so long."

"Oh, oh! *ma pauvre Susette!*" uttered Julia; "*c'est une affaire du cœur.* Upon my word you have managed it well to drive your lover mad! Such an insignificant being as myself, I suppose, was not known to be in existence."

short distance from the wayside. These latter I approached with a very unnecessary caution, for the ravages of intestine warfare had left them desolate. Into one of these buildings I quickly made my way—for it would have been madness to have continued in my course—and, depositing myself in the lower apartment so as to command a view of the road, as well as of the approaches to my garrison, I sat down on a heap of dry plantain leaves, which I suppose some poor unfortunate, when placed as an out-post, had made up for a dormitory. Something struck me that this was the road which Julia would have to travel to the town, and, probably, I should see her pass; whilst watching as anxiously as any look-out man at a weather cat-head, I fell fast asleep, but in my dreams my solicitude was renewed, and I fancied that I was still earnestly on the gaze for Julia Leffler.

‘My dream of Julia was suddenly broken by a loud scream. I started from my place of rest, and, looking through the dilapidated window, saw a carriage on the road attacked by negroes. They wore a sort of uniform, and an officer richly dressed was at their head. At the same time I noticed a small party of French soldiers stealthily advancing through a cane-patch towards them. A skirmish was inevitable, and I quietly berthed myself so as to become an observant spectator of the event. The negroes had turned the carriage round, by the directions of the officer, and were preparing to move off with their prize, when a female threw herself partly out of the vehicle, but was instantly thrust back again with considerable violence. This was a spectacle I could not witness unmoved. A woman in the hands of such ruffians was quite enough to arouse all my energies; and, springing through the window, I got unperceived, by a short cut, to a bush by the roadside, and close to which the carriage must pass in its retrograde movement. I had scarcely stationed myself, with my pistols in my hands, when the French party opened a smart fire upon the negroes, who for a minute or two were thrown into disorder, but they soon recovered, and discharged their muskets at their opponents, who foolishly quitted the cane-patch, and exposed themselves to view. At the same instant the black officer gave directions for one of his men to mount the carriage and drive off, whilst he covered the retreat. The fellow whipped the poor animals most unmercifully; they started off; but, on passing my place of concealment, I rushed out, and shot one of the horses, which instantly fell, dragging the other with it to the ground.

‘The driver fired, but missed me; he then jumped to the ground and made off as fast as his legs would carry him. I might easily have done for him, for I seldom miss my man; but he was not worth the only defence that was left me, as I had

hastened forward for the purpose of assisting them; but the attack was so impetuous that the negroes gave way and fled, and were closely pursued by the French, dealing death at every blow.

'I returned to the house and released the terrified Julia, who expressed the deepest gratitude.

"But yourself, Henri—yourself?" said she; "will they not take *you*?"

'That circumstance had never once entered my mind, but now it recurred to me in full force that I was a prisoner of war, on my *parole d'honneur*, yet was wandering about the country. Another thought also crossed me: the colour I had assumed might bring me under imputation as a spy, and it was probable that on the return of the victorious party I might be led out and shot off-hand either in that character or as a negro. I saw that Julia would be perfectly safe with her countrymen, and the consequent inutility of risking my life by delay.

"You are right, Julia," said I, with emotion; "self-preservation urges me not to remain; but can I leave you unprotected? You, who have indeed been my guardian angel?"

"Fly, Henri; to God and the Virgin I commend you!" said she, vainly endeavouring to suppress her sobs. "Here is a small token of my gratitude. Wear it, and if my slender services can at any time avail you, it shall be the passport to my best exertions."

'It was a ring of no great pecuniary value, but to me it was inestimable. I took it, placed it on my finger, pressed her hand to my lips, and after waiting a few minutes to see her join the few who surrounded the wounded officer, I passed out the back way into the bush, and at length, about dusk, after encountering many strange adventures, I reached the garden of Monsieur Leffler's house, and got to the outbuilding where I had overheard the plot of the negroes and had stowed away my Turkish dress. My first effort was to get rid of my black colour, which I found no very easy task, nor could I tell how far I had accomplished it. In some parts the skin had come entirely away, and the whole felt very sore. As soon as it was dark I ascended to the balcony of the house, arrayed myself in the fantastic habit I had made, and went quietly to my chamber.

'A diminutive gong had been my usual signal for summoning Susette, and I struck it loud enough to be heard all over the building. A confused noise instantly followed, busy feet were heard near the door, but no one durst enter, till Susette, bolder than the rest, and possibly far more interested, pushed in and saw me sitting very tranquilly on the floor.

was complied with. But Susette was on the watch, and, as I passed along the gallery, she fell on her knees, and clung to me with desperate energy, at the same time pouring out the most passionate exclamations of grief.

"You have deluded me, monsieur," said she, with a fresh burst of anguish, mingled with resentment, "basely deluded me!"

"No, no, Susette, you have deceived yourself. But come, come, do not be a simpleton, and indulge in useless regrets. I leave you to-day, and perhaps we may never meet again."

"You know but little of my heart if you can think so meanly of me," she quickly replied. "Who is to visit you in prison if I do not? Who will attend to your necessities, and administer to your comforts? No, monsieur; though you love me not, yet it shall never be said that *my* affections withered in your adversity."

"But, Susette," said I, "they will not allow you to enter the gaol; and if they would, I ought not to give my sanction to it. No, no, Susette, you must not run any risk for me. It will not be long before I shall be exchanged or at liberty. You may, however, materially serve me."

"How?—in what?" inquired she, eagerly catching hold of my arm, and gazing in my face. "Ask my life, and it is yours! What is there in Susette's power that she would not readily undertake to prove her love? You may, you must confide in me. I will perish rather than betray you."

"Time was getting very precious to me—I had no other chance of gaining access to Julia; and, observing that Susette was more placid, I said, "Well, then, I will put trust in you; and, though the task may be painful, yet I am certain you will not shrink—Ma'mselle Julia——"

"Ha!" shrieked the unhappy girl, as she drew herself rigidly up, and her countenance assumed a livid whiteness. She pressed her hands upon her forehead, and her look was wild despair—the next instant a poniard gleamed for a moment in the air—it descended erringly and harmlessly, and Susette fell prostrate on the floor. The shriek and the noise alarmed several of the household, and both Monsieur Leffler and his daughter hastened to the spot. I endeavoured to make it appear that I had been drawn thither by a similar impulse; but Julia looked incredulous, and the poor girl was carried away to her own apartment. Leffler, with the *politesse* of his nation, could do no other than introduce me to the beautiful girl before me; and, as accident had thus brought us together, I endeavoured to improve the opportunity by conversation. I could see that my voice was familiar to her ear, by the sudden start which she gave when I addressed her, and the earnestness with which she frequently gazed at my

Had I been your deliverer, could you"—I lowered my voice to deep pathos—"would you have loved me?"

"*That* is an abrupt question, monsieur," returned she, smiling through the gloom of sorrow that hung upon her brow; "perhaps Susette could best afford you a reply;" and she rose to depart.

"Stay—one moment stay, Miss Leffler," said I, as I caught her hand with ardour. "Susette is no more to me than Henri is to you." She gently tried to disengage herself. "Nay, nay," continued I, "my honour, my oath shall convince you of the truth of my assertion. I am——" Her father's footstep was heard at the door, and the intended announcement was instantly silenced as Julia, trembling with emotion, immediately withdrew.

"Monsieur must depart," said my guard; "I cannot admit of longer delay."

"I am prepared," replied I proudly; and, bidding farewell to my worthy host, in another quarter of an hour I was securely immured within the walls of the gaol. A few hours afterwards I was called before an officer, who questioned me as to the cause of my absence. I refused to state particulars, but briefly pleaded brain fever, and again demanded my parole.

"Does monsieur know nothing of an English fleet upon the coast?" inquired the interrogator.

"On my honour, nothing whatever," answered I; "but I sincerely hope it is true, and that they will blow the place about your ears, so that I may once more swing in my cot."

"A thousand thanks, monsieur," returned the officer, smiling bitterly; "*mais*, you must take care you are not blown up with us."

After a few more questions, not of an amicable kind, I was conducted back to solitary confinement in a wretched dungeon, where scarcely a ray of light entered, and the heat was perfectly intolerable. A scanty portion of bread and water was my only fare, and no human voice except my own did I hear for a whole fortnight. At the expiration of that time I was again summoned to appear before the general. I entered the apartment, assuming a bold and determined look; but oh! what a sudden change came over my heart when I saw the generous-minded Leffler loaded with heavy fetters. He had been arrested on a charge of holding intercourse with the royalists of Jeremie, who were strongly suspected of encouraging the English to make a landing, and I was supposed to have aided in his designs. I approached my unhappy friend, and offered him my hand. He took it, bowed politely, but said nothing, and the general directed him to be removed to another part of the room.

A military tribunal was assembled, composed of the creatures

Julia, took her delicate white hand between his, and expressively shook his head. "Enough!" said Leffler, a pallid hue spreading over every feature; "they are not content with robbery, but must add murder to their crimes!"

"Can I see the commissioners?" demanded I.

"The officer shook his head as if afraid to speak. "I fear it will be of no avail," said he; "but I will endeavour to ascertain."

"Monsieur Leffler," said I, with deep feeling, "I am now a prisoner of war, and unable to render much assistance either to yourself or daughter. If I can see these commissioners, I will plead with them; and, if they will not grant my request, will Miss Leffler believe that she has a friend who will peril life itself to secure her safety? I trust I shall not always be powerless, and my every effort shall be used to promote the well-being of your daughter."

"I am grateful—very grateful, my friend," returned he, with much emotion; "but Julia must return to France. She has relations there; and perhaps justice may be done to my memory when the winds of the Atlantic are sweeping over my grave." The poor girl sobbed hysterically. "Come, come, Julia," continued he, "the young Englishman means you well; suppress this agony, and try"—his voice was tremulous and mournful—"try, my love, to be calm."

"I do not doubt monsieur's generosity," said Julia, looking towards me as I still retained her hand; "it is not unknown to me"—and I felt a gentle pressure, which at once informed me my incognito had been discovered; "but, oh! my heart will break! I cannot—cannot be tranquil, and you, my father, to be taken from me for ever! O God, support me in this hour of trial!"

"After a lapse of about a quarter of an hour the mulatto aide-de-camp returned, and a suspicion that he aspired to the hand of Julia caused me to take greater notice of him. He was about two-and-twenty years of age, superbly dressed, rather below the middle stature, slender in figure, and with a face, if not absolutely ugly, yet far from prepossessing; but his eyes were particularly keen and piercing, and his look had a strange effect upon those who came beneath his glances.

"Will the commissioners grant me an interview?" inquired I.

"No, monsieur," returned he stiffly; "and I am directed to send you forthwith to your own place of confinement."

"Must you, too, be taken from me?" exclaimed Julia in tones of deep affliction. "Am I to be left without one friend—one protector?"

"Never shall I forget the fierce glare of that black fellow's eyes as Julia uttered this; but softening their expression, he mildly

my parting with Leffler, and by some means we came in contact. I was in the jail-yard, and noticed an individual who seemed to be watching me with more than usual interest; but it was done so indirectly as not to excite the attention of others. He was a robust, well-made man, about five-and-thirty years of age, of handsome features, and with a cast of benevolence on his countenance; his dress was studiously neat, with a cut of the seaman about it, that could not be mistaken. At length he approached me somewhat cautiously, and whispered, "Monsieur wishes to be free!" The thoughts he had excited by this brief appeal brought a rush of blood to my face, but more so that which followed. "He is too generous to go alone. Can I assist him?"

"I do not understand you," said I. "Liberty must be dear to everyone—it is peculiarly so to me; but who are you who thus address me?"

"Look at this, monsieur," answered he, presenting to my view the ring which had been given to me by Miss Leffler, and which I had missed the previous evening immediately on my return to my dungeon.

"It is mine," said I. "How came you by it? I lost it somewhat mysteriously last night."

"Retire to your room," replied he, retaining the ring; "the jailer is my intimate friend; we can converse more at our ease alone."

Still strongly suspecting the motives of the man, curiosity prompted me to accede to his request, and shortly after entering my cell he joined me. "This is but poor accommodation for a British officer," said he mildly.

"I have acquiesced in your desire," said I; "but before we enter into conversation, I must be informed who and what you are."

"As I really wish to serve you, I shall use no deception. I am an agent for procuring seamen for the French marine, but they are not always shipped under the tricolour flag."

"Are you the person, then," exclaimed I, "who has been tampering with my men? You are a scoundrel, and I will hold no more communication with you."

He shrugged his shoulders, looked rather deprecatingly, and showed the ring: I was tranquil in a moment. "Monsieur must hear before he condemns," said he; "I have not acted with concealment, nor will I, for I have something at stake as well as himself. Are you content to hear me?"

"How came you by that ring?"

"The occurrence forms part of my narrative, monsieur," returned he mildly, "and you must hear none or all."

lecture it was so arranged by the scoundrel who had entrapped us, and who had professed such devoted regard for the poor girl. To save appearances, however, he pretended to return to the quay, but just before daylight he again came on board, and in a well-acted paroxysm declared his wretchedness at being compelled to get under way directly.

'From my heart I believed the fellow lied, but what could I do? I was more powerless than when on shore; and in less than an hour we were clear of the land. It was then the villain's scheme became fully apparent; it was Julia on whom his hopes had been fixed, and, confining me below, he pestered her with his addresses, which were scornfully rejected. I need not tell you that I did not tamely submit, and perhaps the scoundrel would have at once taken my life, but that he entertained hopes of obtaining a ransom, and the fear of falling in with the British cruisers. Before long I discovered that the fellow who had entrapped us was the celebrated pirate, known in those seas by the name of Blueblazes. On the second day after our flight the pirate schooner encountered the *Clinkem*, which chased her into Cuba; and we were rescued. But Julia did not for a long time recover from her grief for the terrible death of her father, and the shock of painful events which followed.

'The remainder of the story need not be dwelt upon. I shall hope to introduce her to you as Lady Bluewater as soon as you are able to pay your promised visit to our little country house in the west of England.'



W. A. Smith & Co.

1852



gus was Gravesend, fresh-cut, high-flavoured, and tender; the Dublin stout out-Guinnessed Guinness; the sauces Burgess; the pickles Lazenby; for a little of a good thing I can afford, and make it a rule to buy of the best.

I am not a rich man myself—merely comfortable; when I invite a friend—which happens rarely—to my humble board, I am anxious to let everything there appear in strict keeping with my pretensions in society; but when, perchance, a humble, good-hearted fellow, like Muggleton, favours me with his company, I strain a point to make him more satisfied with himself and his reception, and spare no reasonable expense to make him welcome.

‘Clubs,’ said Muggleton at last,—‘clubs are proofs demonstrative of the social tendency and constitution of man. I am a friend to clubs—clubs are trumps!’

‘Clubs,’ observed Jack Singlestick, ‘are congregations of idle donkeys, who have no resources within themselves, and who herd together to eat, drink, gossip, and spell the newspapers from morning till night.’

‘The choice of a club, as I told you the last time we met,’ said Muggleton, ‘is, without doubt, the gravest, most important, most momentous business of life.’

A satirical emission of smoke from Singlestick.

‘Well, and what club, Muggy, would you recommend?’ I saw he was fairly entering his subject, and vainly hoped to cut him off at the threshold.

‘I was coming to that,’ replied Muggleton, ‘as soon as I have lighted my cigar. Now then, you must know that the club to which I have the honour to belong is designated and known as the “Harmonious Owls.”’

‘By all that’s ridiculous,’ observed Jack Singlestick, ‘this beats all! I thought I knew all the absurd associations of boozy songsters, spouters, and drinksters from the Cogers, the Odd Fellows, and the Ugly Club, down to the Never-frets and Free-and-easies; but the Harmonious Owls I did not believe, in the nature of things, to have been capable of existence.’

‘Capable of existence, sir!’ exclaimed Muggleton, with animation. ‘The Harmonious Owls have existed, sir, are now existent, and will exist, sir, till owls themselves shall be no more. And, now that I bethink me, this very evening—Wednesday it is—this very evening the Owls assemble,—and by the time we reach Whitechapel in a coach—’

‘Whitechapel!’ exclaimed I, horror-struck, as may well be supposed, living in Elway Street, Pimlico.

‘Whitechapel!’ re-echoed Muggleton, with emphasis. ‘We meet in that locality, by reason that several of our most harmonious

While Muggleton was engaged in shaking hands and reciprocating compliments with the other Owls, I had leisure to glance round the room. A deal table extended from end to end of the apartment, upon which the beverages indulged in by the Owls appeared in all the various shapes that spirits are supposed by superstitious people to assume.

Around the room were several glass cases filled with stuffed owls of all sorts and sizes, from the five quarters of the globe, looking out of their glass eyes upon the proceedings of their unfledged representatives with great apparent complacency. Over the President's elevated chair was perched, very appropriately, an enormous horned owl, with a stuffed cuckoo mounted on his back. Over the chair of the Vice was a plaster statue of Minerva, with an owl on one shoulder.

The Owl in the chair (Moses Solomon) was elderly and rather apoplectic, with a very large carbuncle, or rather precious stone, set in the surrounding copper of his beak, which had that precise aquiline inclination which the bird-fanciers lay down as the exact angle of incidence of the proboscis of Owls and Israelites. He was perched upon a roost more elevated than the rest. In his gizzard-wing he brandished an auctioneer's hammer, while his liver-wing sustained a ruby goblet of brandy and water, hot, with sugar. His little owlish eyes twinkled with drink and good-humour, and the expression of his countenance, taken altogether, was eminently characteristic of the species over which he seemed so worthily appointed to preside.

The *Vice* was a thin-faced Owl, of a saturnine aspect. He was the personal friend and representative of the landlord of the Ivy Bush, indulging but little in general conversation, the only observation I noticed to fall from him in the course of the night being 'Gemmen, orders, if you please,'—an expression which he did not fail to repeat when he observed the tumbler of any Owl drawing near the bottom.

Glancing round the room, I observed that all the birds at the table wore a sort of kindred expression of face to the owls on the wall,—that muddle-headed, sententious, bombastic expression of countenance, which so distinguishes the 'solemn bird of night,' as Milton calls her.

By the time I had furtively glanced round the room, and made the above-recorded observations, my friends Muggleton and Jack Singlestick had ordered something comfortable, at the suggestion of the hatchet-faced Owl at the foot of the table,—Muggleton whispering in my ear, as I took my tumbler, not to make any allusion to the owl over the President's chair, which might be con-

CHORUS OF OWLS. To-whit-to-who—to-whit-to-who—to-whit-to-who—o—o—o!

AN OWL. I sees strangers in the house.

CHAIR OWL. Strangers must withdraw!

Jack Singlestick left the room in high dudgeon, and descending the stairs of the Ivy Bush, was soon lost in the wildernesses of Whitechapel. I was about to follow his example, when Muggleton informed me that clearing the house was a mere preliminary form to my being elected an Harmonious Owl;—which happy event was in a few moments after finally consummated, and I have remained a faithful and constant participator in the vicissitudes of the Harmonious Owls from that day to this.

The reader who may wish further to gratify his curiosity in respect to this learned society has only to call upon me, when I shall be most happy to introduce him as a visitor at the Ivy Bush.



G. H. M. 1844

Illustration of the scene in the cave

THE END OF THE WORLD
 PART I. and II. 1844

+



drew and drank about a quart of small beer. Then, filling the measure again, he betook himself to the chimney-corner, filled his pipe, and entered on the confines of Elysium.

It is not our business to record how many times Master Jacob visited the cellar during the afternoon, nor how often he replenished his jug or his pipe; it will be sufficient for the reader of this veritable history to know that by the evening, owing to the combined effects of drink and tobacco-smoke, he plainly saw two jugs, two pipes, two tables, in short, duplicates of everything around him, which he thought devilish funny, attributing it to a weakness in the eyes. The clock had two faces, there were a couple of cats lying before the fire, whereas they usually had but a solitary tabby, well stricken in years. Moreover, there were two candles burning at the same time—a piece of extravagance which would have driven his brother mad had he witnessed it—so Mr. Jacob essayed to blow one of them out, but, somehow or other, it wouldn't go out; and, after puffing till he was out of breath, he abandoned his economical intention, and resolved to ask Giles to do it when he came in to supper.

'Gi-l-es' (hiccup!), 'Giles!' said the pursy yeoman—'Giles—blow out thuck candle—my m—an!'

'Lor' bless 'e zur,' cried Giles, 'e wouldn't zit in th' dark, zurely.'

'Blow un owt, I tell 'e—blo—w un owt,' repeated Master Jacob, with another hiccup. 'If Willum comes whoam and zees two a burnin', he'll make a vi—vi—vine caddle' (hiccup).

'There ain't but one, Maester Jacob,' said Giles, perceiving with half an eye the state of affairs.

'He! he! he!' laughed Master Jacob; 'dald if I didn't thenk zo. My eyes gets uncommon bad. Zi—t down, Giles, zit down, do 'e. Ye'll vind a pipe a top a' thuck cupboard, and there's the backur—vill un up, and dwont 'e be aveard on't.'

Giles did as he was bidden, and filling his pipe, soon enveloped himself in a cloud of smoke, through which he perceived at intervals the sleek shining face of his master, puffing away like a lime-kiln, or, to borrow a modern metaphor, like a locomotive engine.

'Giles,' said Master Jacob, after a pause, 'you're a ver—ver—y'—(hiccup)—'good lad, and deserve encourage'—(hiccup)—'ment!—very zoer, too. I likes a zoer, industrious young man, as a body can trust wi' the kay o' the barrel' (hiccup). Here the interlocutor rummaged in his ample pocket, from which he extracted the key of the cellar. 'Go and draw us a leetle drop more o' Willum's rot-gut.'

Giles required no pressing, and having procured a fresh supply

invective were therefore directed against his brother, who, however, was insensible to all reproach. Having assisted in removing the drunkard to his bed, Giles crept to his own, blessing his stars that he had not been introduced to the barrel of strong beer an hour earlier.

The good folks of the neighbourhood did not fail to have many a hearty laugh at the expense of the Messieurs Twink; and Master Jacob's attack on his brother's cherished treble X was a subject of never-ending banter and raillery whenever he went abroad; for the elder brother in his wrath had told the whole story to a neighbour, who in his turn had told it to another, who told it to a third, until it had spread in less than a week all over the village, from whence it was soon carried to the neighbouring town. William Twink at length began to perceive that it would have been much better had he kept the story to himself; for people, after a time, proceeded to joke him on the subject. On market-days especially, he was subjected to a good deal of coarse raillery, which, however, he always took in good part, observing that he now gave Master Jacob his daily allowance, and kept the key of the cellar himself.

But one day, having drunk more than his usual quantity at market, he was taken off his guard, and induced to join several young farmers, who had resolved, if possible, to send 'Old Skin-vlint' as they called him, home drunk. They succeeded so well, that Master William's tongue was unloosened, and he laughed and joked, and even sang, for their amusement. Suddenly, however, he recollected that the money he had received was still in the pocket of his leather inexpressibles. It was at the close of the day, and the bank was shut, so there was no leaving it behind him; and when our farmer mounted his horse amid the bantering of his friends, he bethought himself of the chances of being robbed on the road, and the possibility of his being maltreated or murdered into the bargain, reflections which caused him to feel anything but comfortable. As he jogged along, he muttered to himself that the road was 'uncommon hunked,' and that it was 'the very pleast vor a man to get 's droat cut in.'

Before he had got half way home it was pitch dark, so that he could scarcely see his bridle-hand. His horse, however, knew the road as well, or better, than its master, and in this assurance Mr. William Twink considered himself tolerably safe, at least so far as his neck was concerned. He now moved on at a trot; but suddenly his steed stopped and snorted, and our farmer became aware that he had nearly ridden over somebody lying in the road.

'What bist a layin' there vor?' cried Farmer Twink, in an angry tone. 'Dost want thee brayns kicked out, mun?'

ridden over, and who had returned his kindness by abusing and charging him with robbery, be his hopeful brother? The voice was not like his, certainly; but then drink might have disguised it, and his own hearing was a little obscured by what he had imbibed at market.

Notwithstanding these uncomfortable reflections, Mr. Twink was too much incensed against his brother to send or go in search of him; so, bidding Giles go to his cock-loft, he determined to bolt the door and get to bed.

Strange dreams haunted the slumbers of Mr. William Twink. At one time he was seated in the parlour of the inn at Highworth, singing lustily 'The Leathern Bottle,' his favourite ditty; then the scene changed, and he was fighting a round with a man whom he had nearly ridden over in his way home. Suddenly he awoke; loud thumpings were heard at the door of the house, mingled with the voices of men who desired admittance. Amazed and bewildered, our farmer leaped from his bed. His head ached sadly; for he had not slept long enough to abate the effects of the gin and water he had discussed that evening. His first care (supposing the men below were thieves come to rob the house) was to secrete the money he had brought home with him. The passage from his bedroom communicated with the mill, and Mr. Twink, stealing thither, deposited the cash in the mouth of one of the sacks of wheat; then, returning to his chamber, he opened the casement, popped out his head, and demanded what was the matter.

There was a loud 'Haw! haw!' at the question, and two or three voices cried out, 'It's Maester Jacob, zur!'

Mr. Twink muttered a terrible anathema against his brother.

'I won't own un,' said he wrathfully; 'a's no brother o' mine! Take and drow'n into th' ospond!'

'Noa, noa, maester,' cried the same voices; 'dwon't'e—dwon't'e be zo hardhearted.'

'I dwon't kear what comes ov un; a shall never come into my house agen,' continued Mr. Twink.

'Then what be *we* to do with un, maester?' asked the men.

Mr. Twink mused a while. 'Drow'n in among the pegs,' said he, after a pause, 'or put un up in th' tallet! A shan't come in here to-night, if I lives.' And, shutting the casement in a passion, he proceeded to call up Giles, who was snoring away unconscious of what was passing.

Giles, yawning and scratching his head, descended at his master's bidding, and proceeded to make a bed for Master Jacob (who was in that state which a Wiltshire man pronounces 'thoroughly drunk,' *i.e.*, unable to 'zit, stand, or lay down wi'out being held') in the loft over the stable, while Mr. Twink

entire, and cried out to his master to come down, for he had found the money.

Mr. Twink descended with a heavy heart, and looked sorrowfully on the wreck of his property. Then he commenced abusing Giles for an officious meddler, swearing that he had told him not to touch any of the corn he had ground. Words led to words, and in a short time the serving-man returned some of the compliments which his master so liberally showered upon him. This was adding fuel to fire; and Mr. Twink, forgetting their relative situations, dealt his malapert servant a smart cuff on the face, which Giles returned; and master and man, grasping each other by the throat, tried a fall. Although Giles was the younger man, he had yet a nimble and wiry antagonist—moreover, that antagonist was his master, which somewhat cowed his spirit; nevertheless, he struggled hard to prevent Mr. Twink getting his head in chancery, and essayed to throw him on the floor. The contest lasted some minutes, when both the combatants, losing their footing, came down together in the midst of the flour which contained the relics of Mr. Twink's cash deposit. Here they floundered for some time, each endeavouring to get uppermost, when, in the midst of the scramble, something darkened the doorway. It was a neighbour of Mr. Twink's. His opportune arrival put an end to the struggle; and master and man, relaxing their hold, and regaining their feet, looked like a couple of white poodle-dogs. Shaking himself, and wiping his eyes, which were filled with flour, Giles bolted out of the mill, leaving Mr. Twink to relate his misfortunes and the cause of the combat.

About an hour after Giles's 'turn-up' with his master, he was seen to leave the house with a chopfallen air, and with a bundle, which contained all his personal effects. Mr. William Twink had paid him his wages, and ordered him off the premises, threatening, besides, to commence an action against him for assault and battery.

Giles was, as yet, not hackneyed in the ways of the world, and consequently was not callous and insensible to his situation. He quitted the residence of his masters with mortification and regret; for, notwithstanding the parsimonious habits of Mr. William Twink, he had upon the whole been very kindly treated, and, moreover, had always plenty to eat—a matter of no trifling importance to one whose appetite had often furnished matter for invective at home. Having strolled into the high-road, he sat himself upon a gate, and mused for some time on the mutability of human affairs. While thus occupied, a carter going to Highworth offered him a lift on the way, which he accepted.

Arrived at the town, poor Giles wandered about, scarcely know-

a brave man. Come, let's have a quart of ale, and drink success to your new profession.'

The drum and the fife struck up; and the sergeant placing himself at their head with the air of a brigadier major, the party marched off to their quarters.

The next morning Giles, and about a dozen of his fellow clodpoles, with colours flying in their hats, and each with a stick and a bundle, were marching for the Metropolis. Their subsequent drillings in Bird Cage Walk; their shipment for the Peninsula; and the battles in which they were engaged, form no portion of the present story; but as military men of all ranks nowadays write their memoirs, we should not marvel to see 'The Adventures of Giles Chawbacon in the Peninsula' advertised in the daily papers during the publishing season.



The Englishman and the Irishman

1842

1842



adept in the legerdemain of the dice-box and the pea and thimble, and succeeded to admiration in fleecing the poor clowns with whom he mingled at home. With this ill-gotten money he purchased a pig or two, which turned out profitably; for—

‘Satan’s wiser than in days of yore,
And tempts by making rich, not making poor;’

and when his foster-mother died, Dick Dafter rented the cottage she had occupied, and thrived beyond the comprehension of his neighbours. Some persons, however, shrewdly conjectured that he was occasionally assisted by Master Radaway, and this perhaps shielded him from the more rigid scrutiny of the suspicious. But when Dick quitted the cottage, and took a larger habitation, with an outhouse adjoining it, some of his neighbours did not fail to indulge in remarks anything but favourable to his character.

Everybody knows that in remote country places a wary cunning rogue has, under cover of the night, abundant opportunity of robbing his neighbours. Dick Dafter knew this well; for he had often proved it to his own satisfaction, and the loss of those whose homesteads he visited. There was not a padlock in the parish of which he had not a key, and his nocturnal visits had caused the dismissal of more than one honest servant. Of course Farmer Radaway was honoured above all others, and contributions were every week levied on his hen-roost, his barn, his faggot-pile, or his hay-rick. Still the thief remained undiscovered; and those who took upon themselves to watch at night soon gave it up, so wary was the plunderer.

The only creature with whom Dick Dafter was upon terms of intimacy was one Mr. John Eagleton, or, as he was styled by his neighbours, Jack Eagleton, a man who followed the vocation of a wheelwright, but who, like his friend, jobbed in anything likely to be profitable. This fellow also had a kind of general store-house which was filled with more than the honest earnings of its tenant. Between Dick Dafter and this man there was a very close friendship, if the unhallowed compact of the dishonest may be so designated. If they were at the neighbouring town on a market-day, they came home together, and they were often seen to visit each other at a late hour in the evening; still nothing more than vague and general suspicions were entertained of them by the majority of their neighbours.

At length the farmer’s increasing years and infirmities rendered it necessary that he should have assistance, and accordingly one of his nephews, a powerful resolute young man, came to live with him and look after the farm. This was almost a death-blow to Dick Dafter; and, as may be expected, a mutual and settled

could scarcely repress the joy he felt at perceiving that his trumped-up story had the desired effect.

'Let un try't—let un try't,' vociferated Jack, 'and if I dwon't put a ball drough 's yead, I wish I may be shot m'zef zome day!'

'A zays a 'll transport th', Jack.'

'He!' vociferated the ruffian, '*he!* transport m'! Noa, noa, not quite so vast. If *I* be transported, *he'll* never live to zee 't.'

'What do 'e mean, mun?' inquired Dick, with scarcely suppressed exultation.

'Mean?' replied the other, with a savage scowl, and in an audible whisper; 'why, that if I *be* transported, 'twill be vor riddin' the world of such a varment as he!'

'You dwon't mean to zay you'd murder un?'

'I mean to zay so, and I means to do 't, too,' said Eagleton, pulling out the table-drawer, in which lay a couple of horse-pistols, with a bullet-mould, powder flask, etc. 'Here's the tackle to work wi'. You'll help m', Dick?'

This question was a poser. Dick had never anticipated being thus invited, and he made several awkward attempts to wriggle out of his dilemma.

'Coom, coom,' said Eagleton, in a determined tone, 'this won't do, Dick. This is as much your bus'ness as mine; for if he ain't put out o' th' way, he'll ruin bwoth on us vor a zartinty.'

'But how be we to do 't?' inquired Dick, with a rueful look, perceiving that he was entangled in the meshes of his own net. 'How be we to do 't, Jack?'

'Do 't!' vociferated Eagleton, 'why, when a 's comin' whoam vrom markut, to be zure. A 'll ha' zome money about un then?'

'Hush!' said Dick: 'speak gently, or zomebody'll hear 'e;' and drawing his chair nearer to that of his friend, they proceeded to discuss the best method of destroying their common enemy.

Two or three days after the conference described in the preceding chapter, Mr. Ned Radaway was at the market of the neighbouring town. In the evening several farmers were assembled at the inn, among whom was Mr. Ned Radaway, who during the day had received a considerable sum of money on account of his uncle.

'A lonely road that o' yourn, Maester Etherd,' said one of the company; 'I shouldn't like to travel un wi'out company.'

'Ha, and wi' zo much money about m',' remarked another.

'I shouldn't mind it, though, if I had such a hos as his'n,' said a third.

'Oh, ye needn't be afeard o' me,' cried the young man, drawing

'O Lar', noa, noa; what be *I* to do? If I gwoes for help they'll seize m'!

'And zarve 'e right, y' cowardly dastard!' groaned Eagleton—'they'll hang th', and I shall die happy to know that thee'st bin caught!'

Dick believed every word of this; and fear for his own safety prompted him to fly. Eagleton perceived his intention, and grasping him by the leg, with a convulsive clutch, cried:

'Noa, noa, cuss th'!—ye bean't gone 'et! I'll hold th' till zomebody comes.'

Frantic with terror, Dick struggled to release himself, while the wounded wretch grasped him with all his remaining strength, and strove to call out and give the alarm; but his voice, becoming each moment more feeble, could not have been heard a hundred yards off.

'Let go,' at length Dick said, 'and I'll vetch zomebody to 'e.'

The expiring villain smiled bitterly and shook his head, for the power of speech had now forsaken him. He knew his man; and, though dying, he held on tightly.

'Let go!' roared Dick again; but still the grasp was firmly fixed on his leg. 'Let go, I tell th'.'

With these words, he renewed his endeavours to escape.

'Well, then, if th' woot ha' 't,' he cried, raising his foot, 'take 't, and be cussed to th'!' and dealing the dying man a violent kick in the face with the toe of his heavy-nailed laced boot, he freed himself, and fled into the copse by the side of the road.

That instinctive cunning which always availed Dick Dafter in extremity, stood him in great stead at this critical juncture. He saw that his only chance of safety was to make for home with all the speed he could use. The high road to the village was circuitous, but the distance was inconsiderable across the fields, and over these he flew on the wings of terror, bounding over ditches and through hedges with the speed of a hunted hare.

He soon reached his house, and, entering at the rear, he unbolted the front door, lit his pipe, and sat himself down in the chimney-corner, in anticipation of a visit, for he felt assured that the young farmer could not have recognised him, and hoped, in the event of a neighbour calling, to make it appear that he had been at home for some time. This artful trick succeeded to admiration, as will be seen hereafter.

Meanwhile, the young farmer had reached home, and related his adventure on the road, to the great consternation of his uncle and aunt. The news soon spread through the village, and every

until nearly the whole of it had been measured, when it plainly appeared that the heap had been visited by some creature larger than a rat.

Ned Radaway scratched his head, and was sorely perplexed at this discovery, for he was convinced that his uncle had been plundered; and he was considering how the place could have been entered (the door having a patent lock which could not be picked) when one of the men struck his corn-shovel on a *cork* sticking in the floor.

'Hallo!' cried the fellow, 'what be this, Maester Etherd!'—then, stooping down,—'danged if it bean't a *cark*!'

'A *cork*! no?'

'Eez it be, though,' said the man, drawing it out; 'and there's another, and another! Cunnin' wosbirds as did this, Maester Etherd!'

Ned Radaway scratched his head a second time, and shook it, too. The discovery was confounding: he saw in a moment that with all his vigilance the granary had been robbed, and that to an extent difficult to be calculated. The thief, by boring holes in the floor with an auger, had helped himself whenever he pleased, and stopped the apertures with corks, which could be quickly removed, and returned as soon as he had filled his sack.

Our young farmer having recovered a little from his surprise at this curious discovery, began to consider how he might set a trap for the thief.

'I'd give a pound bill to anybody as 'ou'd find out the rascal,' observed he.

'Wou'd 'e, Maester Etherd?' said one of the men: 'then I'll be bound ye'll vind un out if 'e keeps this a zecret, and takes no notice ov't. A'll zhure to come agen if 'e put zome more carn over they carks.'

'A capital thought, Tom,' said young Radaway; 'but mind, if we dwon't find out the thief I shall think zomebody's been blabbing.'

'Oh, never vear we,' cried the men in one breath. 'We'll take care o' that, maester.'

The men, who knew that they might be suspected of the robbery, were delighted at the opportunity of discovering the depredator, and accordingly the matter was kept a secret even from Farmer Radaway himself, the remainder of the corn being left over that part of the floor which had been perforated.

Ned Radaway felt assured that the thief would not renew his operations until the change of the moon, and accordingly deferred his watch till the first dark night, when, provided with cudgels, a pair of handcuffs, and a dark lantern, the party stole unobserved

sack.' He suffered himself to be handcuffed without uttering a word. What, in fact, *could* he have said for himself, thus caught in the very act of plundering his best benefactor? As they led him into the house, to secure him for the night, he mentally wished that he had met the fate of his old associate in villainy, Jack Eagleton.

The next morning the whole village was in an uproar. Everybody had heard of the capture of Dick Dafter in the very act of robbing Farmer Radaway's granary, and scores of people crowded round his house, which was undergoing a search by the constable. It would be tedious to recount what was found on the premises; and it will be sufficient to say that the plunder hidden in various ways comprised specimens of every portable object. Missing utensils of husbandry were found secreted in the most artful manner. Bacon, cheeses, grain of various kinds—some of which could be identified—were discovered in places which could never have been suspected by those unaccustomed to such searches. The place was justly likened to the nest of a magpie, for some of the articles could have been 'of no use to anyone but the owner,' and must have been taken for thieving's sake.

Dick Dafter was that day examined before a magistrate and committed to the county jail. His trial followed shortly after, and the evidence was so conclusive that the jury had no difficulty in agreeing on a verdict. The result was, sentences in those days being usually severe, that Dick Dafter was duly hanged, as a warning to evil-doers, and an example to the rising generation of clodpoles. On the morning of his execution he made to the chaplain of the prison a full confession of all his robberies, and gave an account of his participation in the attempt on young Radaway.

Thus ended the career of a rustic scamp of the first water. Probably some novelist yet unborn may hereafter write his history in livelier colours, and prove him to have been the son of a great man, possessed of generous sentiments, all which may be very edifying; but be it remembered that our history is the *true one*.



Illustration of the 1848 Revolt

1848



'Errah, is it me ye mane, sir? Now lave off yer jokes, if ye plase, Masther Brine. I'm up to your thricks, ye rogue ye!'

'Well, never mind my tricks; but walk in here, and attend to what I have to say. I think, Patrick'—I became deferential—'you had a distant relative, a sort of third cousin, in the West Indies.'

'Iss, I had, sir,' said Pat, humouring what he thought a joke.

'You know, of course, he was very rich?'

'So I always heerd.'

'I think his name was Mic Carroll?'

At this Paddy started and turned pale, and I thought he crossed himself, but soon rallying, he replied:

'Iss, sure enough that's he, my poor cousin, Mic. But tell me, darlint, is there anything ails him? I am quite unasy! You look so sarious and pious like, avourneen!'

'There is nothing the matter with him now, Pat, for he's at rest. He went off last winter when skating in Jamaica; and just before he sunk—for the ice is rather thin in those parts—he made his last will and testament, bequeathing the whole of his immense property to you.'

'Errah, did he in arenest, sir?' said the poor fellow, half inclined to believe me.

'And this hundred-pound note'—I held up one between both hands, and made it crack like a pop-gun—'has been transmitted to us as a kind of pocket-money for you till everything is settled.'

'Give it to me!—give it to me! Asthore! I should like imma-diately to have a mass or two said for the repose of his soul.'

'Ah! man, leave his soul in peace, and hear me. One of the executors, an agent of ours, instructs us to hand over this trifle to the lawful heir, when discovered.'

'And very dacent of the eggs-ater. I suppose hins are plinty there. May the Lord reward him for his thought for a poor ould man!'

And then, leaping up in a frenzy of joy, which none but a piper and a poor man made suddenly rich could feel, he rushed round and round the room, playing away with the heart-thrilling energy of a madman.

'Compose yourself, Mr. Carroll,' said I, holding up the note again to his dancing eyes.

He eagerly stretched forth his long fingers to receive it.

'A second, Pat. You know that I believe you to be Paddy the Piper?'

'The divil a doubt of it!'

'And I also think you had a third cousin, called Mic Carroll, in Jamaica?'

'Not a dhrop, thank 'ee, sir; there's no speret in it. Musha, I'd rather have one thimble of yellow whisky thin all the red wather in France or Portigal ather.'

'Well, Pat, and have you the evidence?' I asked.

'Enough to satisfy the Pope in council, sir. There is Father Tom O'Shay's sartyficut,—he married the father and mother, and chrishened me; and there's the ould gintleman's signayture in black and white for it. This is Nelly Malowney's—the craythur; she was the nurse-tinder, and brought yer humble sarvint into the world; and here's the blessed cross of salvation for her name. This deeny little bit is from Jimmie Reardon, who stood for me, and is now throubled with the fallen-sickness, God betune us and all harm! And by it, ye'd have poor Joan's, only she's gone—may the seraphs give her pleasant drames this night! This is—'

'Oh! that will do; you are strong enough to weigh down the whole bench of judges.'

'Och! I go bail for that, with the bishops and thir consciences to back thim. But do now, Masther Brine, give us the hundert; ye knows my pious intintions, jewel.'

'I do, Patrick, and should be delighted to aid them by immediately handing over the note. But, you see, we must have proof as to the identity of the dead man.'

'Oh! by the Holy! d'ye hear that!' roared Paddy, with a spring into the middle of the room, which was large. 'Errah! bad look to ye for a chate and vagabone! Do ye want to rob a poor ould man of his own, becasse the bones and ashes in Jimaky can't spake?'

'Come, no insolence, Paddy!'

'Well, I ax pardon; but isn't it enough to make a cat cracked to see the way ye humbug me?'

'Pray be calm, and hear reason. I have no intention whatsoever of keeping back the money till the buried man speaks.'

'I declare ye're mighty good, sir!'

'But I have in my cabinet a portrait of your deceased cousin Mic.'

Here Paddy ran his right thumb across his forehead, and muttered something about 'Preserve us!'

'Now, all I require is, that as many as possible of your very ancient and very respectable family may bear testimony to the likeness.'

'Why, that's anither guess thing, to be shure; but supposing they never seed him, which is by no manes impossible, how can they spake to his fatures?'

'Ah, man! let them only stand out that the portrait is his—the dead tell no tales—you understand me, Paddy?'

When the bonfire was lighted, and a few benches got together, the treating commenced. But Terence Tyrconnell, who, with the skill of an experienced general, did not allow the ardour of his men to cool when the drink, of which he took care to appropriate to himself a captain's full allowance, was exhausted, commanded, in a voice that roared far above the rush of the blaze, the crackle of the flame, the braying of instruments, and the hubbub of a screeching, fighting, dancing, scolding, singing, shouting multitude, 'The cheering!'

A lighted tar-barrel and four blind pipers were soon hoisted, and the musicians performed every unknown tune on all possible unmusical instruments: to wit, griddles, tin-kettles, horns, and wooden platters, with here and there a sprinkling of a regular fife and a genuine drum. This arrangement made, out drove in a potato-butt, from Larry Hoolaghan's yard, Paddy Carroll, as drunk as a piper ought to be on such an occasion, with Biddy and the children, even to the 'darlint babby,' around him. To unyoke the old stageen,* and for twelve of the stoutest of the boys to attach themselves with a well-twisted hay-rope to this primitive state-carriage, was but the work of a moment.

The line formed, on the glorious procession moved townward, till the tar-barrel, burnt to an ember, was capsized into the Blackwater, and sent down the stream to roast the fishes for the mermaids' supper that night—till the aged pipers dropped off the shoulders of their *pai* *Aneades*, bag and bellows, into the gutter—till the musicians fell asleep on the roadside over their soft lulling recorders—till all vanished, save stern Tyrconnell, to wail over his destiny as mob-leader, when his great soul told him he had the genius for a field-marshal; and Paddy, his spouse, and the treasures, to get home how they could at the dawn of blessed St. John's morning.

For a full fortnight after these memorable proceedings, I saw nothing of Paddy. The truth is, he had so often been schooled by myself and family on his imprudence, that he felt ashamed to show himself after his recent fooleries. However, his amiable consort, Biddy, who felt no such conscience-qualms, applied the full force of a tongue, of power to raise cucumbers in January, to compel him to action.

When Paddy appeared before me, with all the Carrolls in the county, male and female, for the life of me I could not resist playing them off a prank or two. There they were, the burlesque of ugliness! Mob-caps, high-combs, blue and red cloaks, cocked noses, and teeth as long and yellow as the prongs of a salad-fork: this for the fairer portion of the group. While the gentlemen

* A horse not far from the hack's consummation—the knacker's.

Kitty set up a *hullagoan* that would have brought the bones of Mic Carroll himself from Jamaica, if really there, and soon have attracted the town to my unpretending, quiet house of business.

'You think, then, Catherine, it is like him?'

'Is it the black man ye mane, asthore?'

'Why, no; but the little gentleman with the cocked-hat in the corner.'

'Mic Carl! Mic Carl!—'tis sure enough the dead image of ye! Eh! thin may the farmamint cradle ye, and all the Holy Innocents rock ye to rest, for yer thought for that dacint sprig of the family, good-natered Paddy, who won't forgit ould Kitty Haggerty, I go bail! May the Lord reward ye, sir! I've done.'

* * * * *

After this, Paddy was doomed: every step I took to retrieve him from his error was but a lapse made in deepening conviction. Whether it was ill-luck, or fate or chance, or what you will, I could never satisfy him that he was not the rightful heir to thousands.

He went to Father O'Shea, who advised him to give up money-hunting and go to confession. He went to honest Jack Sweeney; and the sagacious lawyer, perceiving it was a hoax, sent him straightway about his business, crying out, 'Och! I see it all as plain as a pike-staff; the thief o' the world bribed ye to sell me!' He went to jail, whence I could free him only by compounding the debt which gave him so safe a lodging. He went, like many more in the world, in search of riches, and found only ruin and despair. And finally—*he went mad!*

He is now a white-haired old man, in good physical health, and as harmless and contented as a child. He conceives he is rich beyond the dream of the poet or the insatiable grasp of the miser, and plays his pipes with the calm delight of a mind at rest from its labours. As to Bidy, she is as kind a wife and as good a mother as affection and duty can make her.

THE END.

[IN THE PRESS.]

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