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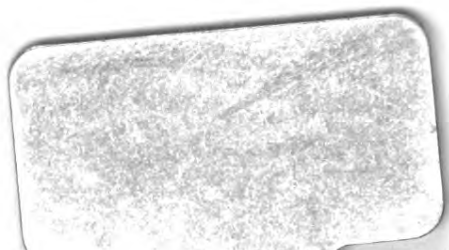


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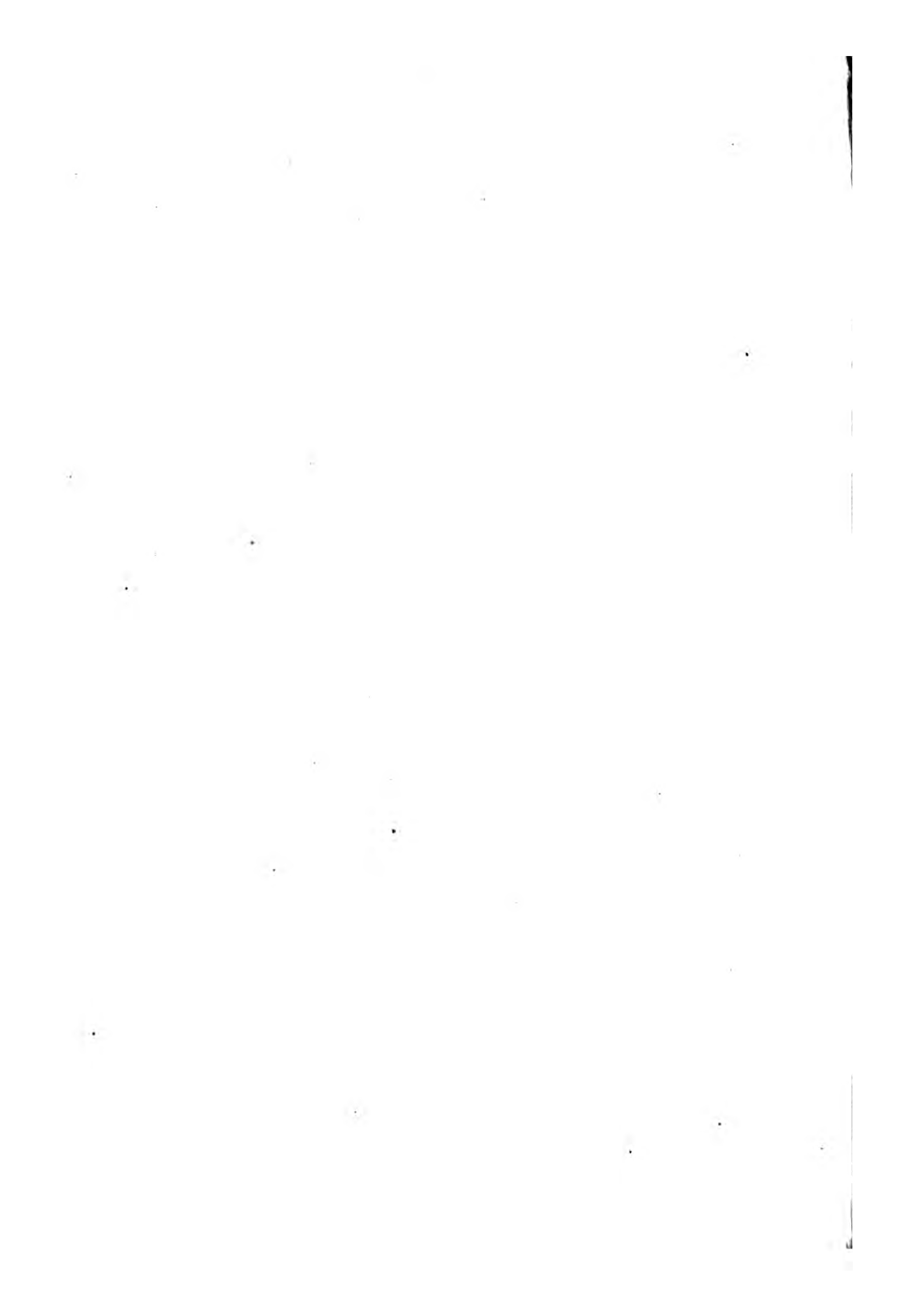
Lawrence Loftewalde



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LAWRENCE LOFTEWALDE.

A Tale.

BY

ARTHUR HAMILTON.

“Hath he not galled my spirit to the quick?
And with a sullen rigour obstinate
Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults?
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,
Driven me to the very edge o' the world,
And almost put a price upon my head?”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



London :

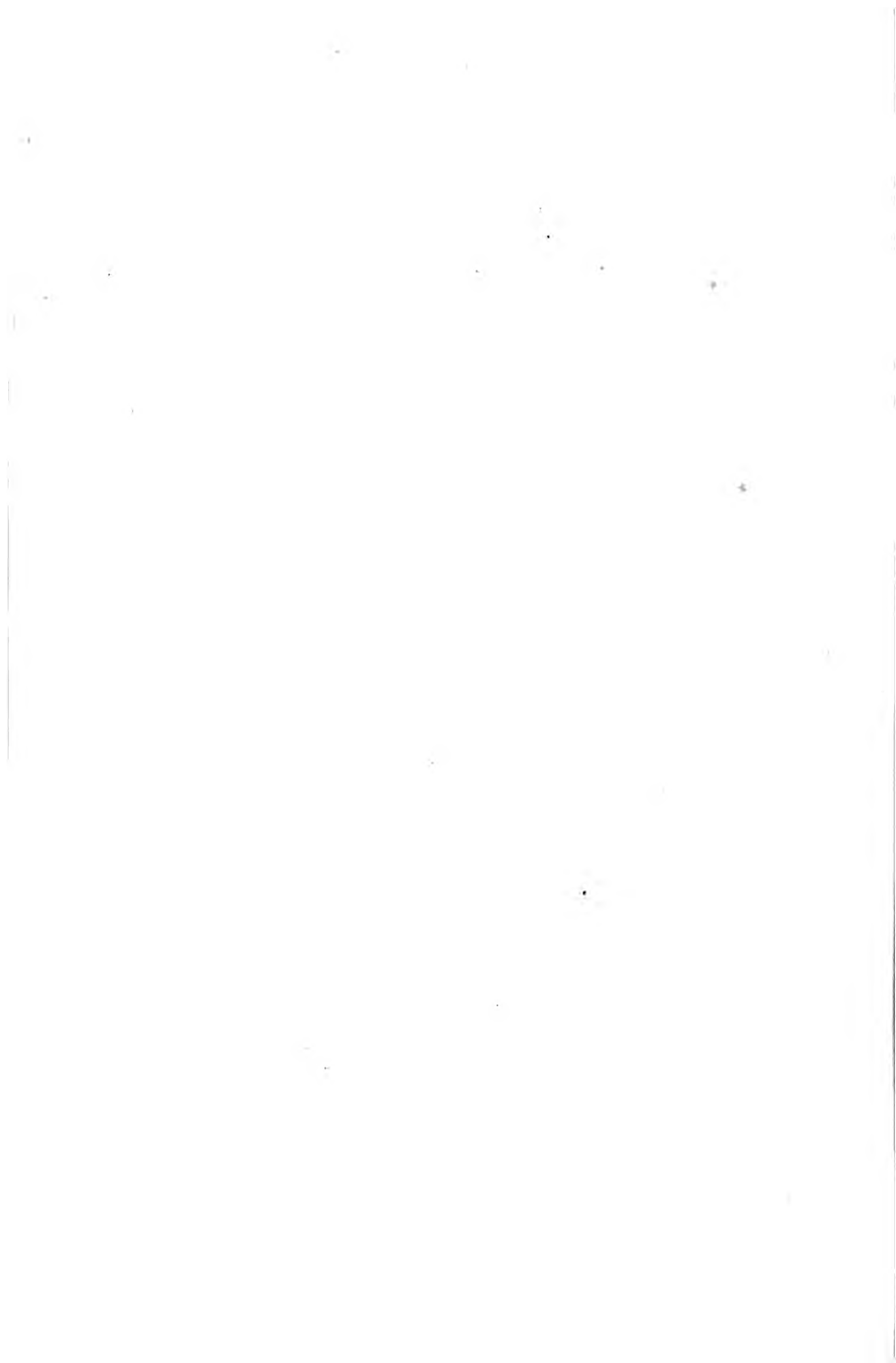
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1878.

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LAWRENCE LOFTEWALDE.

CHAPTER I.

“ Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,
Roll o’er the blackened waters ; the deep roar
Of distant thunder mutters awfully ;
Tempest unfolds its pinion o’er the gloom
That shrouds the boiling surge ; the pitiless fiend,
With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey ;
The torn deep yawns—the vessel finds a grave
Beneath its jagged gulf”

SHELLEY.

“ It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
Where rarely ceased the haughty billows’ roar.”

BYRON.

READER ! transport thyself in imagination with us to some such wild and dreary shore as the lines of the poet last quoted have pour-

trayed. The *locale* of our scene and that of the one chosen by the poet lie very wide apart, but both are renowned in song and story. The valour of their sons, the beauty of their daughters, the divine fire of their bards and minstrels from the far-off dawn of ages have been wafted down to us over the stream of time in a breeze of praise.

Higher upon the pedestal of fame than those of the land through some portions of which we must ask the friends whom we are addressing to accompany us, let us at once allow the poets and heroes of classic Greece to be standing ; but that success was never over-fond of wooing retiring merit, and that strength of lung is oftenest required to sound upon Fame's brazen trump the loudest, longest blast, are truths which the world has known before to-day, we suspect.

But we are writing a story, and we have no desire to frighten readers from a perusal thereof by a long course of moralising at the very outset.

Our curtain rises when the present century was younger by a good many years than it is at the time of this writing, and upon an expanse of sea coast which appears as cheer-

less and dreary in the faint twilight of a louring September day, as the heart of the greatest misanthrope the world ever saw could wish. Towards this coast, at a moderately brisk pace, a party of four might have been seen wending their way. Dressed alike in almost every particular, we do not intend troubling the reader with a description of their attire, but we would draw attention to the fact that each was muffled almost to the eyes in a somewhat heavily folded cloak, and that his sou'wester was drawn over his head with a peculiar slouch, which plainly indicated that the wearer had every desire to preserve the strictest *incognito*, even in such a solitary region as that. With their persons the reader, if he will have the patience to travel over our pages, will become better acquainted as he goes along. The tallest of them, who was a little in advance of the rest, presently turned to his companions, and in a kind of suppressed growl bade them, with an authoritative air, to hold their tongues, chattering magpies that they were.

“Know you not,” he continued, in the same tone, “that there are hawks abroad, and for aught we are aware they may at this very

moment be waiting to pounce upon us. Not a mother's son of you seems to have in memory the proverb that 'a silent tongue makes a wise head.'"

"Well, well, captain," responded the youngest of the party, "we were only having a palaver upon the state of the weather."

"Always debating everything with everybody," dryly observed the individual addressed as captain. "And what, pray, do you, in your wisdom, think the night will be—calm or stormy, Master Jack? But, hush, lads, speak softly. I've reason to think that the Philistines are out."

"Calm, to be sure, with that red sky which we watched as we came along," replied the latter. "It does blow a little, but nothing to speak of," he added, carelessly.

"You'll never get old heads on to young shoulders, strive as you may," remarked a man whose grizzled beard and hair betokened him to have reached a period of maturity far more advanced than either of the party, the captain himself not excepted. "If you had lived as long, and seen such weathers as I have, my lad," he continued, "you wouldn't say what you have just said about a sky like

that. Believe me or not, before—long before—morning there'll be the devil's own rant played on the coast here. I remember in the year——”

“I think Lumpkin is right,” broke in the captain, who experienced an instant dread lest that individual should inflict upon them a repetition of one of the long yarns for the recital of which he had become notorious; “I think our friend is right—ugh! the very stones seem to smell of sulphur; the air is unmistakably full of it, and there will be, if I am not greatly out in my calculations, some cannonading in the sky before the night is over. But enough of this, lads. As I said before, there is danger abroad, and it behoves us to be silent and watchful.”

Ere the conversation which we have recorded was quite ended, the wind, which before had contented itself with the utterance of a series of low moans, began to assume a tone of anger. Large drops of rain descended, leisurely at first, but anon with increased celerity. A thunderclap, which reverberated through the heavens with a sound like the simultaneous discharge of a park of artillery, brought our party unmistakable in-

formation that nature was about giving vent to a storm which she had long been brewing.

“Now will you believe?” asked Lumpkin of his young companion, in a tone of triumph.

“To the Crow’s Nest, my lads,” responded the captain. “This is no time for wasting words about the weather. Grumbling against a storm was never known to keep a man’s back dry. Everyone must by this time see, even our young friend Jack here, what is in store for us. Seek we, therefore, a refuge until the hurricane—for such, it seems to me, it is going to blow—has spent itself.”

The Crow’s Nest, to which the captain referred, and towards which he and his party were now making at a double, was a recess in a ledge of rocks which formed the base of a very high hill which shot abruptly and precipitously from the beach—a gigantic pyramid of granite perched upon a wilderness of mud—to which the natives had given the name of Castell-y-frän, or Crow’s Castle. The Nest itself was perfectly unapproachable, except by one tortuous, narrow, and exceedingly dangerous path. Properly victualled and armed, ten men might have held it against a thousand for any length of time they chose. It was a

favourite haunt with smugglers, although the fact was not until several years later known to the Commissioners of his Majesty's revenue, for the simple reason that it was not known to their subordinates stationed upon the coast.

Return we to our party, who may now be seen watching the progress of the storm, safely ensconced behind a rocky screen, which, while it partially barred entrance to the cavern, afforded those within it the most perfect shelter against the driving, blinding mist and spray. The scene which shortly presented itself to them could not have failed to impress them greatly. Its sublimity was perfectly startling. Beneath them from deep Cimmerian chasms of profound, unknown depths, the sea rushed up, lashing itself into foam. Like a furious beast of prey, it returned again with plunder in the shape of dislodged stones and grit in its bosom. The clouds above frowned in gloomy grandeur whilst gathering to do battle. The thunders of their war chariots rumbled angrily over Heaven's murky firmament, and the distant hills, as the fearful rolling wave of sound approached them, answered back in terrific echoes. The howling wind flying over the

waste of waters, drove clouds of spray in the faces of beetling cliffs which seemed to stand like sentinels placed by nature to guard the earth from invasion. The destructive element, as it fell back into the awful abyss whence it had rushed, roared and shrieked as with disappointment at having once again failed in an oft-repeated endeavour to pass a barrier which had opposed its progress from time immemorial ; the yell of the tiger balked of his victim could not be half so horrifying as this frightful indescribable sound from the sea. The rain now came down in torrents, and its splashes upon the surrounding rocks added a thousand sounds to the wild *melée*. The earth was clothed in darkness, save at intervals when lightning lit up the scene, and disclosed the mountain standing in ghostly shadow, the only thing unmoved amidst a general conflict. At last a rift in the flying clouds, through which the moon poured down a passing ray of light, enabled our party to perceive in the trough of the angry sea the dim outline of a schooner-rigged ship. In a moment afterwards there was heard, notwithstanding the discordant noises of the tempest, a firing of guns. Then all about the storm-

tossed bark became enveloped in a pall of cloud, from which the lightning belched forth in a perfect stream. A ball of fire was seen to burst over the ill-fated vessel, whose masts at once went by the board. Then high above the furious blast was heard the wild and harrowing scream of human despair—broken off, however, at its highest note with a suddenness terribly significant of the whelming of the wretches who had uttered it in the watery ruin. The listeners felt their hearts sink within them. Young Hartington, grasping his leader's hand, looked up into his face with an expression of commingled pity, horror, and dismay. He essayed to speak, but finding the attempt too much for his over-charged heart, he subsided into silence. Ultimately, his pent-up feelings found vent in a copious flow of tears. Lumpkin, too, though pickled and case-hardened by a forty years' constant acquaintance with salt water, showed himself the possessor of a heart soft and tender as a woman's. He mopped his eyes repeatedly with his sleeve, hitched up his trousers, blew his nose, and went through a number of other evolutions, but finding he could not, do what he would, repress his emotion, he wisely gave

way to it. Jack felt the old salt's arm resting lovingly upon his shoulder, and heard the old salt himself sobbing like a child.

"Lord have mercy on that 'ere crew!" he at length found voice to say; "Death has taken their craft in tow. Let us all hope that they've a pilot aboard as'll find them the best uv anchorage at last."

"Amen," responded the captain and Hartington solemnly, after which there was a silence between them of several minutes' duration.

"Lads!" at length broke out the captain, whose voice, notwithstanding that he had made a speaking-trumpet of his hands, was scarcely audible above the tumult, "the bark which we have been waiting for has foundered. There is an end of all our hopes, and the plans which we have formed, for many a long day to come."

"Sailed on a Friday!" muttered Jerry Lumpkin moodily; "who ever knowed a ship as sailed on a Friday come safe into port?"

"But it is no use groaning under a stroke of ill-luck," continued the captain, upon whom Jerry's observation was entirely lost. "Cry-

ing over spilled milk is a very foolish thing to do."

"But cryin' over dead shipmates isn't," shouted Jerry, in a tone of bitter severity.

"No, no," returned the captain hastily; "I didn't mean that, Jerry. All I meant to say was that we must be moving as soon as this tornado is over. I think before we go, though, we might as well give a turn along the beach. It is just possible that we may be of assistance to some poor wretch or other who may chance to be cast ashore."

"You may make your mind easy on that score, I think," remarked the hitherto silent member of the party. "'Lost with all hands' will describe that ship and crew, whether it is yours or not."

"Men have been known to escape even a storm like this," returned the captain shortly.

"Well, perhaps so," replied the other; "you know more about such matters than I do. Perhaps it *would* be as well if we searched a bit of the coast. There's sure to be something worth picking up, and if the vessel belonged to our captain's employers, why, of course, he wouldn't be doing his duty if he didn't look after their property; while, if it

doesn't we have as much right to the swag as anybody else."

"Have you ever tried your hand in the wrecking line, Simeon?" queried Lumpkin at this juncture. "Your words sound uncommonly as though you knew some'at about it, and you have been a great many things in your time, they say."

"He, he, he!" returned the individual addressed as Simeon, with a grin. "What a funny man you are, to be sure!"

That he believed Jerry on this occasion to be anything but funny, Simeon, by his manner, abundantly showed. He prudently avoided any direct discussion of Jerry's observations.

The storm continued with unabated fury for several hours, but with the approach of morn there came a comparative calm. The watchers now descended from their perch, and were enabled to perceive with tolerable distinctness the effects of the tempest. Scattered plentifully about the beach, almost at their very feet, were casks, spars, hencoops, cordage, sailcloth, and the thousand and one other belongings of an ordinarily well-found ship; but what was more noticeable than all was the

number of fruit-boxes, Esparto fig-baskets, orange-cases, etc., which they met with.

“Not our vessel after all,” exclaimed the captain, in a tone of relief, directly these indications of the nature of the ship’s cargo met his view. “Some fruit-laden craft or other, that’s quite clear,” he added.

“Yes ; and what is much clearer is this, or my knowledge of Portuguese goes for nothing, she’s the schooner *Donna Maria*, of Oporto, owner Manuel Roderigo, if this board belonged to her ;” and Jack Hartington, as he spoke, handed his leader a square piece of wood, apparently one of the sides of a clothes’-chest, whereon the words which he had quoted were painted.

“Heavens and earth !” he exclaimed suddenly, “what can that be ? Did you hear it, captain ? There it is again. A groan, as I’m a sinner !” and he turned his head in the direction from which the sound appeared to proceed. “Some poor fellow in distress,” he added immediately. “Lockbolt, Hartington, Lumpkin, Grubbum, to the rescue !” he halloed wildly, and with a bound he made for a spot where the *debris* lay thickest, but which an arm of rock had hitherto screened from their

view. The others followed close at his heels, and after a very short search they discovered a human being lying extended upon the beach. His unmistakably gipsy cast and hue of countenance would not have escaped eyes less searching and quicksighted than those which were now bent upon him. His long black locks were matted no less with gravel than with blood, which seemed to flow in profusion from a wound above his right temple, inflicted, apparently, by some projecting ledge of rock which the waves had dashed him against, in the desperate struggle which he had made for his life. Beside him, and encircled by his left arm, lay the seemingly lifeless form of a boy, whose age might be about five. The child's complexion was of a hue scarcely less dark than that of his protector, but his features seemed cast in a more classical mould. The nose inclined to the Roman, while the well-chiselled lips, parted as though in anguish, disclosed a double row of teeth of dazzling brilliancy. His dress, also, both in texture and ornament, betokened him to be of a rank far superior to that of the elder castaway, his tunic being composed of richly-embroidered velvet, with lace trimmings and buttons of solid silver

curiously wrought ; while his shoes, which had buckles of pure gold, contrasted as strongly as was possible with his companion's shaggy, rudely-dressed goatskin buskins. Our adventurers having taken note of all this, proceeded to calculate upon the possibility of restoring to consciousness one or both of the helpless beings ; and by way of a preliminary, the captain, after hastily binding his neckerchief round the head of the elder of the two, applied his hand to the man's heart, and his fingers to his pulse. Not only did he discover a faint beating at both these points of vitality, but his ears almost immediately caught the sound of a sigh from the poor fellow's lips.

" He lives, by Jupiter !" exclaimed Jack, who had been watching the proceedings with the most eager anxiety. " Cheer up, hearty, and never say die, as the old song says. While there's life there's hope, you know."

At this juncture there was a slight movement of the man's lips, observing which, the captain drew from his pocket a spirit-flask, and poured a portion of its contents down his throat. This proceeding had the effect of partially rallying the sufferer, who began to mutter incoherently in a tongue either un-

familiar to or not comprehended by at least two of the party, who with one accord bestowed upon the captain looks of enquiry, as though he alone could satisfy the question which had arisen in their minds respecting not only the man's nationality, but his immediate wants.

"Spanish," said Lockbolt, for such was the captain named, "and he murmurs something which I have failed to catch about 'Alberto'—the boy by his side there, I presume."

"Dose him again, captain, with the same medicine. It's very good and very easily taken, and perhaps we'll be able to get a little more out of him," exclaimed Lumpkin.

"Capital idea," returned the captain, who forthwith proceeded to act upon it.

This time the patient so far recovered himself as to be able to point with outstretched arm and finger to the figure of the child beside him.

"Ah, I see. Here have a lot on us been standing a gaping like fools, without making any attempt to save the lad," observed Lumpkin, who had seen the motion.

"Not quite," answered Jack, "or you would see that I have dragged the little chap aside,

and have been chafing him as hard as I can, while you have been listening to a lot of talk which you don't understand;" and verily, there was Jack, who was considered the most thoughtless of the lot, busily engaged at the task to which he had referred.

"I vote," put in the sallow-faced, sour-dispositioned Simeon Grubbum, "that we carry the pair into the camp, and give this business up to old Mother Coltsfoot, or Carey, or Hellcat, whatever you like to call her, or to that Frenchified Punch-and-Judy man, Gentleman Loftewalde, both of whom are reckoned mighty clever in the doctoring line. We can then look after the valuables, for there's a lot on 'em here. If we don't march from this place pretty quick, somebody else may look after them and us too."

The proposition was immediately seconded by Lumpkin, and carried *nem. dis.*

Looking about him, the captain espied a piece of boarding which had the appearance of having once formed the door of a cabin, lying amongst the wreckage. He then set to work with his knife, and cut into convenient lengths a quantity of sailcloth, with which, after he had wrung out of it as much

salt water as was possible, he made a pillow for the head of the board. Upon the litter thus formed the shipwrecked couple were tenderly placed, and then hoisted on to the shoulders of the quartette.

Their conveyance turned out to be a very difficult piece of business. Our adventurers, in order to escape notice as much as possible, determined upon taking a different route to that by which they had gained the coast on the previous night. In order to do this, they were obliged to make a detour over the beach of about a mile and a half.

Had the ground proved of the ordinary character, they would have covered it with a precision nearly military; but as it was, its rough, broken nature, and the presence of little pools of water, which the uncertain light did not always enable them to perceive, cost them many a stumble, and elicited from them growls and imprecations deep and long; while from the wounded man more than once proceeded a groan of intense agony. The burden which they bore proved exceedingly troublesome, too, in point of weight. Stalwart, active, and inured to all kinds of toil, they considered it a mere nothing at first;

but the unevenness of their road, coupled with its length, wrought by-and-by a wonderful change in their opinions. Large beads of perspiration began to roll down their faces, despite the fact that they had divested themselves of their cloaks for the covering of the castaways. More than once they were compelled by sheer fatigue to put down their burden, and take what Lumpkin termed a "spell." During one of these, Grubbum, whose patience seemed exhausted, proposed leaving the sufferers where they were, and returning to "the camp," of which he had spoken, for aid. The proposition was, however, immediately overruled, on account of the extra amount of pain and suffering which would be entailed upon the unfortunate couple by any further exposure to an atmosphere misty and chill at all times, but particularly so on this morning.

"No, no, Grubbum," observed the captain, "it would never do. It wouldn't be human, much less British, to leave the poor beggars in such a spot and in such a condition as this. Let's shoulder arms, boys, once more, and march, as a captain of marines once said to

me the only time I was ever locked up for trying to avoid paying taxes.”

“Well, but couldn't I take the youngster and leave you behind with the other?” suggested Simeon. “The lad begins to show lively, and doesn't appear to be much hurt. Fright is what he suffers most from, if my observation goes for anything. I was not brought up a carrier; and, besides, I'd bring you help in no time.”

This cold-hearted proposal—for it was easy to perceive the motive which had given rise to it—was resented very warmly by the captain.

Although the expedition on which the party had been bound could not, in the strict and conventional acceptation of the term, be deemed *honest*, yet the hearts of the adventurers—that of Grubbum excepted—were, when a fellow-creature needed succour, or there was a wrong to be righted (at no matter what personal risk), their hearts, we say, were in the right place.

Lockbolt fairly boiled over with rage at the persistent manner in which Simeon urged the desertion of the helpless beings under their care.

“Curse you for a cold-blooded son of a gun!” he at length thundered, advancing to Grubbum, and shaking a huge shoulder-of-mutton fist in his teeth. “Treat us to any more of your infernally long-calculated suggestions unasked for, and I’ll pound you to a mummy. Say another word about leaving anybody or anything when I give you orders to the contrary, and I’ll so thrash you that your own mother wouldn’t know you ten minutes afterwards!”

“Really, captain,” returned Simeon meekly, “I didn’t mean you to take the thing in that light, or I would never have opened my mouth.”

“Say no more about it, then. Rest yourself while I give this poor fellow another drink,” rejoined Lockbolt; and he knelt down and placed his flask once again to the gipsy’s mouth.

Directly his back was turned, Simeon shook his fist at him.

“Have your own way!” he muttered fiercely; “you, like every dog, must have your day. It is yours now—mine is to come!” and here his eyes sparkled, and his face assumed a look of diabolical ferocity. “And then,” he went

on, and as the words were uttered he made a movement with his hand as though he were clutching an imaginary enemy by the throat —“and then,” he repeated, opening his hand and casting his eye upon his palm, as though to satisfy himself of the tenacity of his grasp. The flesh bore the livid impress of four talon-pointed fingers. “And then !” His rage would not allow the utterance of further words, and he closed his mouth with a snap like that of a well-sprung gin. When the teeth unclosed themselves, there issued from between them a peal of fiendish laughter.

The captain, astonished, nay, startled to a greater degree than he would have cared to confess, looked up towards Simeon, and, addressing him, said :

“It strikes me that our burden will be added to instead of lessened if you go on in that way. If ever there was heard a laugh from a corpse it was in this very spot. What the devil ails you, man? Drink, and be hanged to you !”

Simeon waved from him the extended favour, and said, apologetically, that he could not have helped himself in what had just happened.

“It is over now ; it was only one of my old fits, and if you let me rest a bit I shall be better. It was your conduct which brought it on, I think, capt’n.”

“And if we had been at sea my conduct would have brought you out of it, and that doubly quick, or my name is not Lockbolt !” returned the other.

“Didst ever see the devil show in a man like that, old boy ?” said Jack, in an aside to Lumpkin. “His eyes turned green and fiery, and he looked for all the world like a mad tom-cat.”

“I s’pect,” returned the other in the same tone, “he’s descended from that family. His grandmother must have been a tabby. Lord ! he’s bin watching that poor kid’s buttons and buckles ever since he first clapped eyes on ’em, just as a cat would watch a lot of mice in a place where she couldn’t get at ’em. If the cap’n orders ’em to be divided, why he’ll get his share like the rest on us, and what more should he want, the greedy lubber ?”

“Yes, but just to think of the rascal’s attempt now,” said young Hartington. “If he could have persuaded us to let him take the kid away, why he’d have robbed him of the

valuables, and perhaps knocked him on the head or thrown him over a cliff into the bargain. But the governor saw through the dodge nicely—eh, Jerry? and came down upon him with a broadside before he could manœuvre.”

“Frightened him rather, eh, Master Jack?” returned the other, with a comical leer.

“Aye, old boy—got him to show his true colours unawares. But mum; he and the captain, who stick to our friends on the plank there like bricks and mortar, are beginning to look this way, as though they wished our confab at an end. ‘Fall in,’ as the bo’sen used to say to his dinner.”

Having by this time sufficiently rested themselves, they resumed their burden, and without further incident deserving of note arrived, well-nigh exhausted from the length of their watch and the fatigue of the journey, at the camp to which reference had so often been made in the course of their conversation, and between the dwellers in which and themselves there existed a bond of brotherhood, the nature of which we do not care to discuss at the end of what we believe has been a rather long chapter.

CHAPTER II.

“No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour of life.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“Fear no more the frowns o’ the great,
Thou art past the tyrant’s stroke ;
Care no more to clothe and eat ;
To thee the reed is as the oak :
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.”

Ibid.

THE tents of the gipsy fraternity, ten or a dozen in number, were pitched in a gorge of truly picturesque ruggedness. Far up the mountain, a little to the westward of the encampment, a savage stream seemed engaged in noisy combat with everything that obstructed its progress. Like a troop of romping fays, with silvery wings and misty veils, its graceful waters leaped from rock to rock, until, after a wild, mad plunge, they found comparative rest in a dark pool below. Giant pieces of rock lay scattered around as though the place had in former ages been the scene of a Titanic battle. The gloom of night was being dispelled by the light of another day.

A misty cloud which had long lain upon the bosom of the lake, and in the arms of the surrounding mountains, now became agitated as though with a desire to seek a fresh resting-place. Gradually the sun peeped from his bed in the east, tipping the highest peaks with gold, while a light breeze just then awoke, and, rolling up the grey fleecy mist like a curtain, left Mother Earth fairly open to a morning salute from his majesty old Sol.

The storm of the previous night had not left the camp, sheltered as was its situation, scatheless, as might be perceived by the rent and tattered condition of some of the most exposed of the tents. Ample evidence of the seriousness of the elemental war was also furnished by the huddling together of the carts on that flank of the encampment which had to bear the brunt of the breeze from the sea, and the extra pegs and cordage which had been employed for the better security of the tents on that side. The male members of the tribe, who for the greater part of the night remained on the *qui vive* for the return of Lockbolt and his companions, had long since retired to rest. Even those faithful sentinels the dogs had been by sleep relieved

of their duty. A few shaggy hill ponies were browsing quietly around on the scanty herbage, and this was about the only sign of animation visible when our adventurers approached.

“Camp ahoy there! Wake up; turn out of yer hammocks for a set of lazy lubbers that ye are!” roared Lumpkin with all the voice which was left in him, as he and his comrades drew near with their burden.

In response to this call there arose a chorus of barks, yells, objurgations, growls, crowings of cocks, screamings of newly-disturbed infants, chucklings of hens, and bawlings of women, enough to rouse the dead. Before this chaos of sounds had subsided, the captain was heard in clear and distinct tones requesting a young gipsy lad, who was about the first to appear outside his tent, to “run to Mother Carey’s shanty and knock the old witch up.”

“And is it Mother Carey’s crib ye’re after axing far,” exclaimed an individual with a shock red head of hair, which he had only just popped beneath the blanket covering of his tent, “bedad ye’ll find yer way there sure enough if ye’ll but just falley yer noase wid divil a bit more bother. Faith an’ it’s yourself, now, that’s one of the old mother’s

chickens, Captain Lockbolt, intirely, or ye'd not be disturbing a lat av peaceable divils at sich an hour as this."

"Hold your tongue, you jabbering monkey," retorted Grubbum. "D'ye see that we're knocked up with this cursed load?"

"Faix," replied the other, "but it's myself that can see the same. Holy Mother, but you've a man there. And who the divil may he be, pray? Is it the exshiseman, now?"

"No such luck," responded Grubbum; "but come, Racing Pat, show us a clean pair of heels; run to Mother Carey's, and tell her we have brought her a patient."

"Two, if I'm nat mighty mistaken," returned Pat; "but begorra it's meself that'll wake the ould crone up," saying which he bounded towards one of the smaller tents, the covering of which he drew slightly aside. After a shrill prefatorial whistle, he summoned the occupant to appear forthwith, and attend upon a "sick turkey."

Mother Carey was considered by the tribe as a sort of "wise woman." Wideawake enough in deceiving the poor simple villagers with pretensions to witchcraft and divination—powers which they knew they never

possessed, the whole of their art consisting in giving to stupidly-put questions skilfully-worded answers which might mean anything or nothing at all—yet were most of the gipsies of a turn of mind highly superstitious, and these thoroughly believed that Mother Carey possessed supernatural powers. Her appearance and manners really would seem to justify such a belief on the part of the ignorant and credulous. The oldest inhabitant of the camp only remembered her as an old woman. At the time when we introduce her to the reader her skin had as many wrinkles in it as a piece of half-burnt parchment, while her upper and lower lips were covered with such a quantity of hirsute excrescences as would have rendered it doubtful, were her face only considered, to which of the sexes she really belonged. The few straggling iron-grey locks of hair which Time had not as yet despoiled her of were enclosed in a hood with which her cloak was supplied, while, in order to support her bent form and steady her tottering footsteps, she carried an unusually long stick which she grasped by the middle. Such, in brief, was the general appearance of the old woman when she showed

herself outside her tent on the eventful morning to which we have referred.

The camp now became a scene of bustle and hurry. The shipwrecked pair having been laid upon the grass, were, of course, the centre of attraction, and various were the surmises made concerning them.

“Bet you, as the captain says, that the old ’un is a Spaniard,” said one of the fellows.

“Too dark,” replied another. “A Zingara of the true breed, I should say.”

The mention of the word seemed to have an effect almost electrical upon the wounded and helpless man. By a sudden and evidently painful effort he raised himself upon his right elbow, pointed with the forefinger of his left hand to the east, in which the sun was now shining with considerable splendour, and uttered but one word, when he sank again, apparently more exhausted than ever. That one word, however, influenced strangely those who surrounded the prostrate figure. Each at once bent himself with bared head until his forehead touched the ground. All then turned simultaneously towards the God of Day, before whom they knelt in reverence, and some words were uttered in chorus which

were utterly unintelligible to any save themselves.

The wounded man was at once taken up with the greatest care and tenderness, and borne to a tent in which some freshly-laid logs were beginning to crackle brightly, while the boy, by the direction of Mother Carey, was taken into another tent, where he was well dosed with one of the old woman's favourite decoctions, and also laid near a fire.

"The reed has outlived the blast by which the oak was uprooted. The linnet has escaped well-nigh unhurt, while the eagle will perish ere it sees another sun," was the opinion which the old woman shortly afterwards expressed to one who had inquired of her the probable fate of the sufferers. "The stronger bird," she added (as though anxious to impress her audience with an idea that her knowledge approached the limitless) "sheltered the weaker beneath its wings until the storm which dealt the protector a mortal blow had passed away. Mourn, my children, that those wings are broken, and that to the mid day sun they shall soar no more," saying which she entered the tent where the Zingara was lying.

Tenderly was the wounded man watched for the whole of the day, but it was evident from the first that he had been hurt past all hope. Lockbolt, to whom he seemed to entertain a peculiar attachment, remained by him throughout, and repeatedly urged that a surgeon from the village should be called in. But his proposals were opposed by the tribe in general, and by Grubbum and the dying man in particular. The latter, making a sign to the captain to approach, whispered something in his ear in Spanish which neither Simeon nor the rest could understand, and then motioned every one to leave the tent with the exception of Lockbolt. The request was obeyed, but not without a growling protest from Grubbum. The captain and the castaway were closeted until the evening, when the former, coming out of the tent with a face of impressive solemnity, explained to the assembled gipsies that the soul of the stranger had taken flight.

The sun now went down in clouds of fire, and with the reflection of its glories the mountains gleamed like molten gold. Then came twilight, shutting out the day, while following in its footsteps crept the shadows of night,

enveloping all in funereal gloom. To a white lincnt tent near the lake was the Zingara moved, and there laid upon a bed formed of branches of the pine, festooned with wild flowers. He was wrapped in a cloak of blue, fastened at the throat with a clasp of gold, beneath which was disclosed a crimson vest. Near his right hand was placed a Toledo blade of highly-polished steel, which had been, however, somewhat clouded by the action of the water. Indeed it was a wonder how he had managed to retain the weapon at all, and the fact can only be accounted for by supposing that the suddenness of the calamity which had overtaken the wearer had excluded from his mind all thoughts of divesting himself of what must have proved a serious encumbrance to him in his battle with the waves. At any rate there it lay, and its exquisitely wrought and jewelled handle was the admiration of every beholder. The hand which had wielded it was now clenched in the cold rigidity of death. The eye which had many a time and oft looked upon it with pride was now closed for ever. A mightier than he had wielded against him a weapon which his own had less chance of withstanding than a child's toy the

battle-axe of a giant. The face which had kindled with enthusiasm at the prospect of battle, when life and vigour animated the frame, was now repose itself. The thick moustache and heavy masses of wavy black hair gave to the bronzed features a still darker hue. The silken sash of many colours, the produce of an Oriental loom, which girdled his waist, and the massive rings with which his ears were pierced, and with which his fingers were encircled, were strictly characteristic of the love of ornament inherent in his race. Less noticeable, but not less worthy of record, than all, was the fact that his long, dark eyelashes contained a tear—bright, translucent, gemmy—welled from the fountains of a heart yet vibrating with recollections of his sunny, far-off country, and deposited in its present resting-place by the last efforts of a departing soul.

The dead stranger, after lying upon his bed of pine branches until midnight, was carried to a grave which had been prepared to receive him upon a plateau above, and at a distance of about a mile in a direct line from the camp. Preceding the rude bier upon which he was laid, walked, in Indian file, at least a score of

torchbearers, who performed useful service in guiding the footsteps of those who had charge of the body through a region so wild and dreary.

The moon peeping from behind a cloud shed a ray of spectral light across the pale face of the Zingara as his body was lowered upon a bed of moss which had been prepared for its reception by the women of the tribe. Forming a circle round the grave to take a last look at him who had but so recently passed through the grim portals of death, the assembled party were addressed by the one whom they considered their chief and king after this fashion :

“ Children of the desert ! Descendants of the great chief Ishmael ! know that to-night we have laid to rest in the finery of his nation a true Diddikoi. He was one of our own ancient race ; a dweller in tents, and a wanderer upon the face of the earth. His dark eye glanced lightning upon his foes—melting love upon those of his tribe and kindred. He spoke to me in our common tongue ; there was magic in the utterance. The sound was to mine ears like the notes of a lute beside a stream of running waters. I replied in words

of assurance and of affection, and his troubled spirit was quieted; nay, his heart rejoiced that he had found himself in the arms of a kindred people. But Death came like a shadow and bore him away, and we mourn to-night for a departed chief and friend. Mihir! receive back that spark of thy glory which thou didst lend to illumine this piece of mortality."*

As these last words were spoken a weird and prolonged wail was uttered by the women, of whom many had assembled to solemnise the funeral rites of the chief. The mountain beyond (at the opposite base of which it was that the now buried man had been cast by the waves), rendered discernible by the glare of the torches, frowned like a giant spectre upon the scene which was being enacted. Its crags and precipices, catching up the mournful cry, sent it back in softened, broken echoes,

* In order to render this, and at least one other passage in the present chapter intelligible, the author thinks it right to say that he has adopted the idea that the gipsies were sun-worshippers. To Mythras, or Mihir, the sun, the fountain-head of all mundane blessings, they pay (or the reader will be kind enough to suppose them to pay) the highest reverence, the most abject homage.

over the face of the dead. A silence, awful in its profundity, but of short duration, followed, when a nightingale which the echoes had awakened poured forth a flood of melody, filling earth and sky with a more than seraphic requiem for him who had passed away.

CHAPTER III.

“ The best laid schemes o’ mice and men
Gang aft agley,
And leave us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.”

BURNS.

WE will now pause a while in order to give our reader a fuller description of Grubbum. He sits to us for his portrait, and the picture which he presents to our mind’s eye we will endeavour to reproduce as faithfully as we are able; but it will be necessary to inquire a little into his previous history in order to render intelligible that which follows.

In the early days of boyhood he acquired such adroitness and dexterity in managing little predatory excursions into neighbouring orchards and fowl-cots that he was christened

by his associates "Thieving Simeon." As he attained manhood's estate his operations were carried on upon a more extensive scale, and so inveterate were his light-fingered propensities that he became known at last even to the thieving fraternity as "the thief of thieves." That he had not earned the epithet undeservedly the following incident will show. Happening one day to drop upon a fellow-craftsman reclining in the arms of Morpheus near a hedge, with a bag of geese at his side, it struck him that its acquisition might prove of value to him in more respects than one.

"Honour among thieves" was an aphorism the principle of which Simeon held to be entirely fanciful, and unworthy the notice of an "out-and-outer" like himself.

He fell to musing, and his thoughts clothed themselves in words, of which something like the following was the import: "A bag of four fat geese and two hopeful goslings, carried by a thief, and, therefore, stolen. Stealing from a thief is no sin, therefore will I steal, for does not the law say, 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' and what the law says must be right; if it isn't, that's not my fault. I don't know

who's the owner of these birds. How should I? I know who is *not* the owner. It isn't 'Cock-a-roosting' who is sleeping by them at this minute. If 'Cock-a-roosting' isn't, then he has no more right to them than this chick. He might say that we ought to divide—if he was awake; but then he isn't awake, and can't say anything, so a man who does not take his own part deserves to be a loser. If I was to wake him up, perhaps he'd claim all, which clearly wouldn't be fair, considering that I am willing (if he was awake) to divide. If I take three I must take the bag, or how otherwise could I carry them? If I take the bag 'Cock-a-roosting' will lose the other three, which would be a pity, for they would then be no good to either of us. Nay, they might prove the Rooster's ruin, for they may give the alarm, in which case the poor devil may make the acquaintance of the beadle or the hangman. Then it would be doing the man a charity if I was to grab the lot. I've been searching my knowledge-box all this time for an argeyment in the poor chap's favour, but when I comes to examine 'em one by one they all cuts the other way—in favour of me. Let me see, though. There is one.

Possession is nine points of the law, and he's got them. No, by Jove, he hasn't, either! His fingers have forgot their cunning; the cord tying the bag has slipped through them. The last resource has failed me; I must take them; I am driven to it. All he can do is to rely on my generosity! I won't laugh at him at all when I meet him at the Pig and Whistle, and, surely, that'll be a sufficient reward.—Besides," he went on to mutter, after a long pause, "I am really beginning to think that I shall hurt my prospects in life by all this self-denial. Here have I been all this time thinking only on 'Cock-a-roosting.' Now, if many fellows had been in my place they would have thought only of themselves, and collared the swag at once. 'Tain't fair towards Number One to be always thinkin' on what's best for your neighbour. It is true that I shall benefit myself in a commercial sense; but then I shall benefit others as well. I'll sell them at the very next town I come to at an immense reduction off cost price; I'll continue to supply the market with poultry at a rate which will bring the luxury within the reach of all! They'll vote me a public benefactor; I shall be made an

alderman, perhaps a mayor, and have my statue stuck gracefully over a pump."

Full of these noble feelings, he advanced towards the sleeping man. In this supreme moment his habitual caution displayed itself to the greatest advantage. His movements had all the stealthiness of a cat, the patron and mother of all thieves. He knelt by the sleeping man, gently disengaged from his hand the little of the cord which it still held, and walked away with the bag in triumph. But, alas for the vanity of human calculations! The village which he was approaching happened to be the identical one from whence the geese had been stolen. When passing by the "Jolly Millers" (renowned, as its projecting sign-post announced, for the good entertainment which it could provide for both man and beast), as fate would have it, one of the imprisoned geese managed to force its head through the bag and give a loud cackle, as though saying "beware" to all other geese in that particular neighbourhood. A fat butcher, whose ears caught the sound whilst he was regaling himself with a jug of home-brewed in the shade of the very tree from which the signboard of the "Jolly

Millers" was slung, walked up to the bearer of the abducted birds, touched his forelock, and inquired, with apparently the politest concern, whether he had the honour of addressing a feather merchant.

"Oh," groaned Simeon internally, "my goose is cooked now, and no mistake." He added aloud, and with all the urbanity at his command, "Not hexactly, sir; I'm a poultry dealer, sir."

"Yes, no doubt, every bit as much as a hoss-stealer buys helephants," quoth the butcher, who, observing the pallor of his countenance, gave a wink which froze the blood in Simeon's veins. "My friend," continued the knight of the cleaver, "my honourable friend, p'r'aps I should have said, I think a little blood-letting would do you good," and as he spoke the words he drew a huge knife from a leathern sheath which hung at his side. Grubbum noticed the movement at once, and in mortal terror dropped to his knees. The butcher instantly collared him, gave a loud whoop, and described in the air with his knife a series of concentric circles, which had for their common centre his victim's head. The kneeling man believed that

he was to be scalped on the spot. He raised both his hands, and begged that the descending vengeance should be averted from him. The butcher laughed outright at the grotesque attitude and frightened looks of the detected rascal, who, in attaining this supplicatory posture, was obliged to relinquish the bag.

“Preying and praying,” exclaimed the butcher, “praying and preying; a thief’s tricks all over. Hold your hat to your throat now, for I means to cut it, and as I’ve a new pair of trousers on, I don’t want to spile ’em,” and as he spoke the words he drew the back of his knife sharply across Simeon’s throat. Grubbum, screaming with terror, started to his feet with a bound; the suddenness of the spring made the butcher almost turn a somersault; the geese at the same moment broke their prison and went scudding and flying through the town, which became as thoroughly alarmed as though an invading army were at its gates. There was a general turn-out of the inhabitants to greet Grubbum’s entrance, and the cause of the panic having been discovered, a chase of a very exciting character took place. Simeon ran for dear life, and so did every dog in the town, from

the biggest Newfoundland to the tiniest poodle. Brickbats flew about in such abundance that one might have imagined the place visited by a second plague of hail. Before reaching the end of the street Grubbum was, to use the expressive words of the butcher, who afterwards described the scene at the taproom of the "Jolly Millers," "downed" in style by the butcher's own "bull," that sagacious brute being about the only one in the town, his master excepted, who knew what he was running after.

"Thundering sneak," exclaimed the butcher, who had by this time arrived, perspiring at every pore, and blowing like a grampus. "He's been—and robbed—stole every goose—in the place—and I—I propose that we—shall—I think we ought—oh dear, I'm just dropping—to try him on the spot," panted the burly fellow.

"Was it he what stole my old Timmy?" asked one of the women who had assembled. Timmy, it should be explained, was an antiquated gander very well known, and very much venerated, at Clodholme-on-the-Sea, as the little town was called.

"Yes," replied the butcher, who had by

this time considerably recovered himself, "and but for Timmy we should never have known who it was as had stole the others. It was he as sounded the alarm like, when the murdering thief was passing."

Without waiting to hear any more, for the mention of Timmy had been the last straw that had broken the laden back of their patience, the infuriated citizens fell upon the hapless Grubbum tooth and nail, and when he was eventually rescued by a series of most desperate charges on the part of the parish constable, and an assistant (an old charwoman who lived close by, and who, in colloquial English, looked after the house for him), he was in a very sorry plight indeed. He was marched to the lock-up, a sort of round tower with a thatched roof, there to be kept until he should be thence delivered by due course of law, that is to say, until the holding of the next petty sessions of justices for the hundred of Clodholme, at the sessions court, in the town of that name (said court being the bar parlour of the "Jolly Millers").

Poor Grubbum, this indeed was a sad end to all thy dreams of the El Dorado which thou didst think would accrue to thee from

the sale of the geese thou didst so dexterously purloin. Alas! that for human ingenuity of which thine acts had given such an ennobling example should be reserved a fate like this. But, as for the deepest wound there is a balm, so there is hope for thee even yet. Although thou wast persecuted well-nigh unto death by a rabble, of whom a just appreciation of thy genius was no more to be expected than a treatise on æsthetics of hogs before whom were cast the brightest gems e'er dug from mine, yet hast thou a friend left thee whose face thou mightst even now perceive peering in upon thee from between the bars of thy prison house.

“What, Grubby, old boy! I heerd in the taproom of the ‘Jolly Millers’ that you had been nabbed. And what have you been a doing, lad, to get into a stone jug like this here?”

Thus spoke the voice, which proceeded from a mouth which the owner had placed to the keyhole of the round tower.

“No gammon now, Cockie,” growled Simeon from the interior. “If you heard at the pub that I was here, you must have heard what I was here for as well.”

“Why, yes, now I recollect it. Some of the chaps said as how you had been found carrying some geese as flew away with a bag as was stolen from the town, which I wondered very much at 'earing of such a honest man as yerself, Grubby.”

“May the devil fly away with *me* if I ever have anything to do with such a trader as you another time,” responded Grubbum.

“Me, Simeon, me jewel? Surely there must be a mistake 'ere. Come, old boy, tell us as how the fact of your being imprisoned has brought about a fit of nervous hexcitement and I'll say no more about it,” replied Cock, with a mock air of offended dignity.

“Are you much hurt, my chick?” he continued with very great gravity. “Don't be sulky—I always takes great pity on those what robs me. Besides, lad, you have no occasion whatsoever to grumble, for they have found you a hunfurnished apartment free of charge for the night. They are very mindful of you. But I say, Grubby, old feller, have you got the latchkey—this door seems to shut too close to suit my ideas of convenience.”

Stung to madness at this chaff, Grubbum

thundered out a malediction which made the listener positively start back with affright.

“Grubby, my boy,” he presently began, “yer preaching is very edifying ; but come, I wants you to cut your lucky out of this, and the sooner I commences operations the better.” So saying, he drew from a capacious pocket on the inside of his coat a steel bar, with which he quickly managed to force open the door. Grubbum might have been heard in the meanwhile offering some very devout ejaculations concerning his speedy deliverance. Kneeling at his side, “The Cock” produced from the same interminable pocket a couple of files, and set to work to free his friend of the “Darbies,” as he called them. This was no easy matter ; but after an hour’s hard and skilful labour the object was accomplished, and the fetters dropped, leaving Grubbum once more a free man. As may be supposed, they lost no time in leaving a place which had proved so full of misfortunes for one of them. It was at a rendezvous at a town some twenty miles off, the veritable “Pig and Whistle” of which Grubbum had spoken, when the story was afterwards told by Cock-a-roosting (with sundry additions

which an inherent inventive faculty rendered highly attractive) that Grubbum received the appellation of "the thief of thieves."

Notwithstanding this signal failure in such an ordinary walk of the art, Simeon, after resting himself for a week or two, during the course of which he was visited by numerous sympathising friends, whose expressions of pity and concern well-nigh drove him mad, determined upon striking what he called another "lay." And certainly his next did seem at first sight an exceedingly ambitious attempt. It would not benefit either ourselves or the reader to enter into detail concerning the way in which he managed this expedition. It will be sufficient to say that at a court of Oyer and Terminer and General Gaol Delivery, held in and for the county of Chester, he was brought up to answer a charge of burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling-house of Farmer Goodboy, and attempting to steal divers articles therefrom (in which attempt the evidence disclosed that he had been caught and roughly handled by the farmer himself, assisted by a dog named Nep), and sentenced by Mr. Justice Broad-sides, the presiding judge, to transporta-

tion beyond the seas for a term of fourteen years.

Even under circumstances as inauspicious as these, however, Grubbum did not despair. His spirits and certain faculties of invention with which he seemed pretty liberally endowed rose equal to the occasion. Van Diemen's Land—or at least as much of it as was then inhabited—presented by far too limited an area for the workings of such an imagination as his. After an imprisonment of about nine months he contrived to ingratiate himself into the favour of his overseer, whom he made drunk upon the occasion of their going to Hobart Town with some half-a-dozen other fellows of the gang wherein he worked, after which he very charitably gagged and bound him, seized a boat, rowed with his companions down the Derwent, broke into more than one farmhouse lining the river's bank, and, after effecting the necessary changes in his and their apparel, and stocking themselves with provisions, gained, though not without considerable hardship and suffering, Hobson's Bay, where they were picked up by an English ship, the *Mary Ann*, of Liverpool.

Stress of weather and other considerations

compelled them to put into Malaga, on the Spanish coast. Here happened to lie the *Spanking Sally*, a well-built lugger of 14 guns, with a full complement of dashing, rollicking hands, commanded by a personage whom the reader has already met, yclept Mark Lockbolt. With a little persuasion from Grubbum he and his comrades were taken on board, and a cargo having been secured, sail was made for, and a successful landing effected at, a cove on the Irish coast.

Here Lockbolt, who was part owner of this and another vessel (a schooner, also engaged in the contraband trade, which at that time, despite the risks with which it was attended, was a very profitable one), quitted the lugger, which was to return to Spain in charge of the first mate for another cargo. Lockbolt, by a previous arrangement, was to make his way into North Wales, where the schooner was to run to, and there make such dispositions upon shore for the landing of the cargo as he thought proper.

With this end in view, Lumpkin, Jack, and Grubbum were allowed to accompany him. After a sojourn of nearly a week at the gipsies' camp, during which every preparation

was made for the conveyance of the contraband goods into the interior, the coast was visited night after night by himself and his associates, and the most anxious watch kept for the arrival of the vessel.

It was on one of these occasions that the storm arose which we have attempted to describe in the first chapter of this work.

But where have we drifted to? We ask of the reader ten thousand pardons. Grubbum's career, although we intended to give only a sketch of one or two of the principal incidents in it, has so grown under our hands that, like the schoolboy's snowball, it has become too large in its dimensions to be pushed any farther—that is to say, within the limited space of the present chapter which remains at our command.

Instead, therefore, of being able to give our readers the promised picture of the worthy just named (not the schoolboy, be it remembered), we have to relegate that portion of our task to the commencement of another chapter; and while trusting that our indulgent friends will not suffer from that deferred hope which is said by a poet of glorious memory to make the heart sick, we

beg of them, as an excuse for our frailty, to remember that promises, like pie-crusts, are made to be broken.

CHAPTER IV.

“A false-hearted rogue, a most unjust knave; I will no more trust him when he leers than I will a serpent when he hisses.”—SHAKESPEARE.

SIMEON GRUBBUM was not gifted by nature with a countenance that any one would have fallen in love with at first sight. The organ of smell by which his face was graced (?), although originally of considerable width, had, owing to a battery sustained at a very early period of its owner's career, thrown off all restraint, and chosen to wander *abroad* in preference to keeping in that straight and narrow path which noses with any pretensions to propriety always follow. A kick, which some well-wisher or another had at one time administered to him, broke his jaw and divided his lower lip at one and the same time. The surgeon's art failed to put together again that which an infinitely more clumsy operator had sundered. Paradoxical

though it may seem, what the one had *heeled* the other could never completely cure. Hence was it that the lower teeth on one side of the man's mouth were always in view, even though the lips in front and on the other side of the jaw were closed. This peculiarity, when its possessor was at all ruffled, served to give his countenance a diabolical appearance, for with the workings of the face might be seen and *heard* those of teeth, just as though they were being whetted preparatory to biting off his victim's head. His eyes were small, of a dull grey colour, and set far back in the head.

We reject all the stories which were told concerning them by some of the most unscrupulous of Simeon's enemies. It was stated by some that these orbs could be perceived in a dark night long ere the body of the owner became visible, while others averred that whenever Simeon fell into one of his horrid fits of passion (which, as regards mere frequency, were the very reverse of angels' visits), they would turn green, and give out sparks of fire. These statements we believe to be inventions of malicious detractors, for, although we have had innu-

merable opportunities of watching Simeon in every mood of his temper, and of studying his features closely, we have never, upon our conscience, witnessed either of the phenomena to which we have referred.

True it is, that his visual organs, upon some occasions, became exceedingly bright, and he had a knack of moving them with a swiftness which gave them the appearance (and beyond this, in truth, we cannot go) of a scintillant action, which peculiarity, we strongly suspect, gave rise to some of the stories concerning them.

Strikingly singular, also, was the disposition of each of his shaggy eyebrows to culminate in a point, and to curve over the centre of each eye. His eyes, in consequence, appeared to be constantly peeping from behind these hairy screens, and a merely casual observer might be inclined to think that Grubbum possessed that obliquity of vision which the vulgar term a squint.

Superadded to these natural defects was the impress which an evil life had left upon his features. Surrounded by a company made up of gipsies and smugglers, he, scamp and ruffian that he was, stood alone and un-

rivalled in wickedness and evil. Justice having more than once laid hands upon him had consigned him to a dungeon, and there was bred that scowl which set upon his countenance the stamp of a being whose hand was against every man's, and against whom every man rose his.

As to the general form of the fellow, he was slightly above the middle height, and of by no means heavy build; but he was possessed of a set of muscles such as might render him in a personal encounter the very reverse of a pleasant antagonist. Agile he was as a monkey, whose length of arm and hand nature seemed to have copied when moulding him.

With such a tolerably full description of this important personage, we think that the reader cannot fail to recognise him when next he crosses his path.

Retrace we now our steps in order to pursue the even course of our narrative, which broke off at the burial of the Zingara, at and from which point we will take it up again.

The mourners tramped in solemn silence down the hill, the obscuring of the moon by

clouds, and the moaning of the wind around them, according fitly with the gloom of their thoughts. But theirs were natures which could not long be overcome by melancholy, no matter what the circumstances in which they were placed.

One of them broke the silence by observing that come what may they had done their duty by the dead man.

“Who questions that?” asked, in a rather severe tone, the chief of the band.

“Nobody,” returned the other one, “but you see,” he continued, “these house-dwellers may get wind of what has been done, and then the body would have to be taken up again, and a crowner’s quest held upon it.”

“What!” exclaimed one of the women in amazement, “what! would the quest be held upon the body, Obadiah?”

“Yes, the crowner and his twelve men would sit upon it,” returned Obadiah, coolly.

This reply elicited a shriek of horror from some of the listeners, who thought that the fact announced by Obadiah was to be taken in its literal sense.

“Ah, now, Oby is trying to make fools of us,” said another woman; “the poor dead

man was not long enough for thirteen men to sit upon him all at once."

"Thirteen, indeed! No, nor three of the size of Crowner Bigmann," exclaimed another. "I know'd him, 'cause I told the fortin of his daughter, her as had red hair and one eye chaney."

"All the crowners as ever I cum across was fat," put in a third woman. "They looks to me as if they belonged to them tribe of vultures as Loftewalde was reading to us about; them birds as he was saying thrived on carrion."

"Crowners is very good, faith!" exclaimed an Irishman who has already been introduced to the reader. "Crowners is very good now, ye noisy divils, and I'll tell ye why. I had a grandmother who died in the year seventeen hunder and ——, well, the exact date, ye see, slips me mind just at thish minit; but, begorra, it was seventeen hunder and something, and that's near enough. Well, the ould lady died, as I said before, and well she might, faith, because had she lived much longer she'd have been as ould as Father Methusalem himself—rest his ashes. But I was talking about me grandmother. Shure,

some divil of a nabor of ours went and tould the crowner that the ould woman had turned up her toes, so one day his clerk comes there, and, says he, 'Paddy, me boy,' to my father, 'Paddy, me boy, we musht hould a quesht on the ould woman.' 'An', faith, what in the divil far now?' axes me father. 'Oh,' says the clerk, 'she didn't die in her bed, but in the cheer—accidental loike!' 'May the divil take me,' says me father, 'but she couldn't well have died annywhere else, because it is in the cheer she's bin for the lasht two year.' 'Oh, that's no matter,' says he, 'we musht have you, Pat, to say so upon yer oath,' and he gives me father half-a-crown. 'Long life to yer hanner,' says me father. 'It's mesilf will iver pray for ye, and sware annything ye'd loike. God bless yer rivrence; you may hould a quesht on ivry man in the cabin, my wife, and the grunTERS into the bargin at that rate.' Oh, shure now, at the wake that follid, me father got drunk; me mother was very little bether. Old Bryan, the mason, couldn't have seen the holes in his own ladder. Young Tam Duffy, the pig-drover, wanted to kiss Biddy Maloney, the wife of Tiddy the thatcher, and this brat out

ould Tid with a remonshthration. 'Hould on, Tid ye divil,' says Biddy, 'what bishness 'av ye to interfare wid a gintleman (Tam had money and good looks too, d'ye see), who's always civility itself to me and every other woman who has a bit of shpirit in her?' 'Oh, an is it taken his part ye are aginst yer own husband, Biddy?' says Tid, and wid that he strikes Tam across the nut wid a bit shtick as he carried. Tam returns the blow wid interesht. Tid goes down; Tam is about to give him a kick, when up jumps Barney McHugh, and gives Tam a poke in the ribs. 'Two to one is it?' says Murty O'Flanagan, who hits Barney a downer, and the resht not loiking the foighting to be all on one soide joined in—for love loike—and, be jabers, the crowner's half-crown brought him other queshts than me grandmother's. So long life to the crowner, says I."

"But, friends, that may do well enough for a yarn, as sailors say. Now listen to one of another kind," said a man who had only just joined them from the hill above. "That cat-faced thief Grubbum, is he among you? I see he is not. He went to witness the dead man's funeral, didn't he?"

Now, he told you that he came out of curiosity——”

“Well, and his curiosity has been gratified, hasn't it?” interposed the chief of the tribe.

“I have not finished yet,” dryly observed the previous speaker, who was no other than our young friend Jack Hartington. “If you wish to keep that dead man in the hole into which you put him, why you had better keep an eye upon Grubbum, that is all.”

“Young man,” said the chief, “we are in no mood for trifling. Anything you have to say to us should be spoken as plainly, and in as few words, as possible. My friends here have sworn allegiance to me, and to my father before me, and a word of mine would suffice to hunt down the most powerful enemy I ever had.”

“Tell that to the marines,” returned Jack, with an air the most imperturbable. “Your words seem to imply a threat. You should remember that he who threatens is afraid. But I came not here to preach you a sermon, and what I have to say is very quickly told. We picked up this Simeon Grubbum in the Bay of Malaga, and he has been with us ever since. The men who sailed with us

disliked him so intensely that they declared that rather than go another voyage with him they would desert the ship. Consequently our captain, to whom he sticks like wax, proposed that he should assist us in landing the expected cargo. Now comes the part of my story to which I wish you to pay attention. Not an hour ago I was on the watch with Lumpkin for the schooner, when we heard cries which rather startled us at first. Leaving Jerry to keep watch alone, I set off in the direction from which they seemed to proceed, but owing to the darkness I missed my way. At length, however, I got on the right tack again, and, after a short walk in this direction, I came very suddenly upon no other an individual than Simeon Grubbum. 'Well, Grubby, what brings you to such a spot as this, and at such an hour, too,' said I. 'Oh,' replied he, 'is it you, mate? The gipsies have been burying that shipwrecked fellow, and I came to see the fun.'"

"Curses on him for an unfeeling brute," broke in the chief. "They call me Shark. The scoundrel will yet find that I have teeth. But proceed, friend."

"Well," resumed Jack, "he gave me a

pretty long account of how you buried the stranger, and he wound up by saying that it was a pity to have clapped him under hatches in all that fine toggery, and that if he did but live within fifty miles of London he would sell the dead man's carcase to the doctors, and his finery to the waxwork people."

Here a perfect yell of fury broke from the party.

"Vengeance on the reprobate hound!" "Tear him to pieces!" "Hang him for the crows to peck at!" "Throw him over the precipice, and let his unburied bones bleach to all eternity!" were the kind of expressions which were bandied about, intermingled with groans and curses.

"Friends," said the chief, "listen to me. It is plain that an outrage is intended to him who has departed from us, an outrage which"—and here he sank his voice so low that Jack could not catch what followed—"can only be wiped out by the blood of the miscreant by whom it was planned."

Motioning to some half-a-dozen of the most stalwart of his fellows, he drew them apart from the rest, and from Jack, and held

a consultation with them, after which he turned to the others, and bade them go back to their tents, and take Jack with them.

His orders were promptly obeyed, and after waiting until the light of their torches had become scarcely discernible in the distance, he commanded those who were with him to extinguish theirs, and to follow him up the hill.

Carefully picking their way, silently, steadily, and stealthily did the seven men retrace their steps. How altered were the feelings which pervaded their breasts as they ascended the hill but one short hour before. To the minds of some of them came the recollection of the chief's words about the dead stranger having found rest in the arms of a kindred people. Now came the terrible conviction that his grave was about to be, perhaps was being, desecrated by the ruthless hands of a miscreant whose love of greed predominated over every other feeling. Death was too good for such a monster of inhumanity; but to death, as being the utmost penalty in the power of mortal beings to inflict, was he doomed by one and all of those determined men.

At length the plateau was gained, and here a moment's pause took place, as though no one had decided how to proceed. The chief, however, whispered them to go in different directions, take up certain positions which he pointed out, and not to stir until a whistle from him should be heard. Crawling to their various stations upon their hands and knees, the gipsies kept their eyes strained in the direction from which appeared to proceed sounds as of the displacement of earth and stones; but owing to the darkness nothing could be distinguished.

Presently the moon, which had been playing bo-peep with the clouds, found a rent wider than any it had theretofore sailed through, and the scene became lit up with more than usual splendour. But what a scene to shine upon! The Queen of Night should have veiled her beauty instead of lending it to disclose the horrible sight which now met the gaze of those who lay watching. There, within ten paces of them, knelt Grubbum, his features wearing a sinister smile of satisfaction—of triumph. Upon his knee he supported the body of a man whose garments were soddened with wet and begrimed

with earth—whose damp hair hung back from a face upon which the moonbeams streamed, and whose pallor was thereby intensified a hundred-fold.

CHAPTER V.

“Not so wide the world is,
Not so long and rough the way is,
But my wrath shall overtake you ;
But my vengeance shall attain you.”

LONGFELLOW.

THE watchers held their breath, and neither of them stirred a muscle while waiting for the chief's signal to attack.

Grubbum, meanwhile, was busily engaged in appropriating the dead man's jewellery, which he carefully wrapped up and placed in an inner pocket. The sword—he cast longing eyes upon that. It was evidently too conspicuous an article to carry about with him. But the jewels on the handle, why not have them? Drawing out a knife, he endeavoured to pick one or two of the most valuable of them out, but the point of the blade broke in the attempt. Uttering an

oath, he hurled it from him, and laid the sword down.

It was a pity, too, he soliloquised, that such a piece of goods should be allowed to rust. Ah! he had it—he would break off the handle. Yes, that was it.

Holding the weapon by the pommel and point, he bent it upon his knee. The ends met, but the steel remained uninjured; and when the point was released it recoiled against a piece of stone, from which it sent the fire in a tiny shower of sparks. Well, he would try again; with the foot this time.

He caught up the weapon with the right hand, and was about to place his left foot on the blade when his ears detected a movement in his immediate vicinity.

Immediately following it came a whistle, a yell, and a bound. It was the work of a moment; the chief was upon him; a bright steel blade was seen flashing in the air; a howl of mortal agony was raised.

The next moment the moon became obscured, and five or six men were struggling together, swaying hither and thither like the waves of an angry sea. Shouts, execrations, and a groan—the latter emanating from a

man who had fallen—were raised to the night air as the combatants, weary of pulling this way and that, desisted a moment to regain their breath. The moon again got clear of the clouds which had obscured her brightness, and discovered to the astonished gipsies the fact that their enemy had escaped, and that he who had been wounded was one of their own party!

Their rage now knew no bounds; the chief actually tore his hair, beat his forehead, ground his teeth, and uttered a series of the most terrible maledictions.

Kneeling beside the wounded man, each and all dipped their knives in his blood, and swore an oath of the most frightful vengeance. Their faces wore a truly demoniacal expression, as with knives reeking with the blood of their comrade uplifted in air they vowed in barbarous gibberish that they would hunt down the despoiler of their friend—the slayer of their brother.

Impulsive men that they were, the gipsies were mistaken in their first impressions of the circumstances in which they were placed. The wounded man had not been struck by Grubbum; neither was he likely to succumb

to the effects of the blow. He had fainted from loss of blood, but the wound was quickly stanchd, and water being carried by some of the party in their hats and dashed over his face he revived very considerably. The dead Zingara was then hastily re-interred, but without the sword, the possession of which Grubbum had so coveted and his hold upon which he had succeeded in maintaining.

The party held a consultation, when it was determined that two of them should assist their wounded comrade back into camp, and get the rest of the gipsies to scour the place in pursuit of Grubbum; that two should remain all night near the grave, in the event of Simeon, emboldened at his escape, paying another visit to it—a not very probable contingency by the way; and that the rest should at once give chase to the desecrator of their dead.

Give chase, did we say? How were they to proceed, and what chance had they of success? Simeon had escaped them, even when their hands were at his throat, as completely as though the earth had opened its ponderous jaws and swallowed him. How

therefore give chase to a man whose disappearance they had *experienced* rather than witnessed ?

A number of them, after searching about for a considerable time, returned in despair to the spot where the watchers were stationed. With disappointed looks and moody demeanour they sat and kept vigil with the others until day began to dawn.

Their thoughts being constantly bent upon the object of their pursuit, it was but natural that their conversation should run in the same direction.

“The sneaking cur,” remarked the chief. “But he may look well to himself. We’ll find him yet, though he may hide himself in a nutshell. There’s not a spot on earth, however secure he may fancy himself in it, that our vengeance shall not track him to. Then will he dearly rue not only the accursed work of this night, but that he was ever born.”

“Aye,” responded one of the men, who was known to his fellows by the appellation of the Keyhole Whistler, on account of a peculiar failing in this direction, “let us but once come across him, and it’s but a short shrift

he'll get for certain. But listen ; what was that ? A whistle. Some of our friends are near. The signal was repeated, and in answer to it the chief gave another in a lower key, but of longer duration. Shortly afterwards voices were heard, and their allies were seen ascending the hill in force. The newcomers were well provided with pistols, which they distributed all round. A fresh plan of operations was decided upon ; and they separated in different directions, with the understanding that they were to meet at a point far up the mountain where their various routes would naturally converge.

Let us now leave them awhile, and follow Grubbum. Having most dexterously dropped to his knees and crept away when the onset was made upon him—thus leaving the gipsies to fight it out with each other, after the manner of some of the naval battles of which we have read, in which an English frigate would sail right between two of the enemy's, give a broadside to each, and then sail off, leaving them, in the smoke, to blaze away into each other to their heart's content—having, we say, executed this little manœuvre most successfully, he made a run for dear life up the

hill. Suddenly the noises made by the combatants ceased, and by the yell which followed he knew them to have discovered their mistake.

“ Hang them !” he muttered, “ what a pity they didn’t fight it out like Kilkenny cats, until nothing was left of each but the tail. What glorious sport that would have been. Curses on them for a set of heathen ragamuffins ! They couldn’t appreciate the value of the trinkets themselves, and wouldn’t allow any one else to do so who could. Dog in the manger all over. They’ll hunt me too, will they ? Let me get fairly out of this, and I’ll turn the tables on them. The hunted shall be the hunter, and we’ll see who’ll run the game to earth best. I’ll make for the cavern yonder, and remain there until night, when I can easily manage to escape them, and then for vengeance !”

The cavern of which he had spoken was a wild, romantic spot, which had not at that time been explored. Those who knew of its existence looked upon it with eyes of disfavour, believing it to be the resort of evil spirits—some even going as far as to say that it was the entrance to the bottomless pit

itself. Grubbum, however, entertaining no such fear (never having heard, perhaps, of the evil report possessed by the place), entered it boldly. His coming was the signal for a countless flock of sea birds to take wing and leave their nests. They rose in a perfect cloud, obscuring the light, and screeching as if they desired to frighten the intruder from their domain.

With the screams of the gulls came a human shout, for one of the gipsy party had caught sight of Simeon's entrance. The scout gave a long, shrill whistle, which was immediately replied to by half a dozen others from different directions, and Grubbum felt that his doom was sealed.

He, however, determined that he would not die without an effort to save his life, and to regain liberty at the same time.

He climbed the cavern's rocky interior with the agility of a cat. Higher and higher were his daring steps taken, until at length he could scarcely see the bottom through the gloom and the mist which arose from the falling of a stream of water into the basin of the cave.

Higher and higher still; but from the

giddy eminence upon which he had now gained a footing, he could perceive the flare of torches commingling with the mist, and giving it the appearance of a cloud of fire. Higher still went the fugitive, and the flashing lights trembled in the abyss beneath him like the twinkling of so many stars. With the bead-drops of fatigue and agony chasing each other down his face like hail, Simeon paused for a moment upon a narrow ledge of rock and listened. His pursuers had not given up the chase, that was certain, for borne up to him, despite the noises of the waterfall, were their shouts and cries, and occasionally a pistol-shot—fired as though it was thought that a random bullet might hit the bird, and bring him down.

“It means no quarter, I suppose, if I’m caught,” muttered he. “They think to starve me out, by staying at the mouth of the cavern, without taking the trouble of climbing, as I have done. They believe, like a great many other ignorant fools, that the brook springs from the cave as from a well; but I know better; it has an inlet somewhere, and that I must find, and by it escape. But how am I to do it? If I

should be obliged to go down again and seek another passage I am shot for certain. Oh that the pack who run me to earth had but the courage to ferret me out again. I could deal with the whole gang if they but came on one by one. But now for another trial. It is a long lane that has no turning, they say, and I might find a way out of even such a devil's trap as this."

He now took several steps forward with all the care of which he was capable. The ledge upon which he stood gradually narrowed itself, until he was compelled to proceed by a series of sidelong movements, which rendered locomotion a matter of the most extreme difficulty and danger. Presently, however, it grew wider, and Simeon was about to congratulate himself upon his luck when, to his horror and dismay, the sound of voices came nearer to him than ever. Upon making two or three steps in advance he again discovered the torchlights of his pursuers. They had gained by another route a platform of rock immediately below him! His heart, which but a moment before beat high with hope, now sank a leaden weight within him.

“It is no use fighting any longer,” he thought. “Simeon, my boy, you have played a desperate game, and you have lost. Your enemies hold all the trumps, and you must throw up your hand. If there were only a few good-sized stones here now, I might treat the beggars to a hailstorm which they would little relish. But to die by their hands like a dog, without a shade of a chance of either fighting or running, it is terrible! It takes away all the happiness which a fellow might want to die with—the happiness of knowing that his vengeance had been a complete one; that if it could not sustain him in the fight, it could at least engulf his enemies with himself in one common ruin.”

The tiny cascade within the cavern now became illuminated by the light of the torches, and appeared to the eyes of the wretch who beheld it like a great silvery serpent that was about to devour him.

In the last extremity of his terror the idea rushed upon his mind that suicide would be preferable to death at the hands of his blood-thirsty pursuers, and he neared the brink of the precipice with a view of putting the idea into execution. One downward glance, how-

ever, cured him of the thought. It fairly made him sick. He turned his eyes to the roof of the cavern, and groaned in utter helplessness.

Like those of most slinking natures, Simeon's eyes were habitually cast earthwards; an upward glance always made him wince, or exhibit some other kind of facial contortion. Ever since he had entered the cavern he had felt himself to be in an atmosphere whose obscurity and murkiness made it peculiarly his own. To be obliged to peer, and creep, and crawl was to him a pleasurable excitement, nothing more. The addition, however, of a band of merciless pursuers formed a feature in the proceedings which, in a nature where self-interest predominated to the exclusion of every other quality whatever, heightened excitement into alarm, alarm into terror.

As we have already said, Simeon cast his eyes upwards. That one glance brought hope, and in its train a thousand schemes for deliverance, all of which a dispassionate beholder might deem trifles light as air, yet to him through whose brain they were now madly rushing they were questions more

momentous than any which had been propounded since the world began.

Descending from the roof of his rocky prison was a faint streak of light, but to the heart of the incarcerated wretch it seemed the glorious effulgence from the opening of the portals of heavenly liberty. He knelt, not in reverence, but to drink as it were the light which had just shone upon him. He rubbed his hands gleefully, as though laving them in the celestial stream which his parched spirit had but just discovered.

After these first paroxysms were over, reason, which had long been tottering upon her throne, steadied herself, and urged the wretched man to be up and doing.

He advanced slowly and cautiously towards the orifice by which not only the light but the stream entered the cavern. Suddenly he was brought to a standstill. The platform over which he had travelled had terminated, and he found himself facing a *cul de sac* of smooth, bare rock, which nothing human would ever dare to climb.

Again the tide of hope within ebbed fast and furiously, but before it had left him stranded his eyes discovered a way out of the diffi-

culty. On the opposite side of the stream to that on which he was standing he could plainly perceive a track, by pursuing which, although the venture was a highly dangerous one, he might gain the opening, and be once more free.

On the opposite side of the stream! Only seven words, dear reader, but of what terrible importance they were to Grubbum only he himself could realise. They meant a leap of a dozen feet or so, and a landing so precarious when once that leap was achieved that the leaper might possibly find himself no better off than if he had alighted midway.

The risk was tremendous, but so was the stake. Failure meant certain death; so did surrender to the revengeful beings who hunted him, and who, he was certain, could not at that moment be at any very great distance from him. He calculated with marvellous exactness the expediency or otherwise of undertaking such a daring act, and the conclusion he arrived at was that the attempt must be made.

"I can only die once," were the words which were ground out from between his teeth, "and better die this way than fall a

prey to the cursed wolves who have beset me."

Bracing up his nerves as best he could, he made a spring for the opposite side. The gipsies, who had perceived the movement, gave utterance to a loud yell of triumph; the destruction of their enemy was to their minds now accomplished to a certainty. A portion of the bank upon which he alighted, being formed of loose earth and stones, gave way, and the debris went crashing down the abyss; but Simeon, by an almost superhuman effort, managed to scramble to the portion which remained intact, and which afforded him a firm footing.

From this his passage up the side of the stream, which seemed to murmur angrily at his escape, was a comparatively easy one.

With the blood oozing from beneath his finger-nails at the violence of the clutch which he had made when springing, and hair frost-whitened by terror, he gained the opening, and was once more a free man.

CHAPTER VI.

“ A plundering race still eager to invade,
On spoil they live, and make of theft a trade.”

VIRGIL: *Æn.*

THE gipsies of melodrama, especially their Kings, Queens, and Chiefs, were very good people in their way, no doubt. They invariably swore dreadful oaths, which they invariably kept—at least, so we are given to understand. Fortunes they told with greater exactness than an astronomer could tell yesterday's weather. Whatever emanated from the mouths of any of these wondrous personages had been inscribed in the Book of Destiny, and must of necessity happen in the exact manner of the prediction. If it should, by chance, prove otherwise, the creators of the melodramatic heroes or heroines aforesaid would have one believe that there was something rotten in the state of Denmark—that nature had a screw loose somewhere, and that, as a necessary consequence, some extraordinary event must some time or another happen—the order of things must by some means or other get reversed, and nature, by

some prodigious convulsion, must set herself right again, in order to demonstrate to an unbelieving or indifferent world the physical impossibility of the existence of a state of things in the slightest degree antagonistic to what the wonderful prophets aforesaid had foretold.

Imagination, when once the reins are given to it, is a very wild horse indeed. Truth may lie in its way in rocks, in precipices, in cliffs, in mountains of the highest magnitude, but it clears them with a bound, and with greater ease than the best steeplechaser which ever human legs bestrode cleared the slightest obstacle it ever encountered.

Most of us have heard of a certain amiable gentleman of Oxford, who was so fascinated with "Robinson Crusoe" that he used to read it through every year, and think every part of it as true as Holy Writ; and how terribly cut up (to use a vulgar expression) he was when a friend, whom he must have considered more candid than kind, laid before him the facts of the case. We hope in anything which the reader may find written herein to spare him or her any unnecessary laceration of the feelings. If,

however, our book should have the good fortune to find itself in the hands of one who is a little "touched" with an idiosyncrasy of the peculiar kind entertained by the Oxford alderman, we trust that he will rise from a perusal of it a wiser, but not a sadder—no, not a sadder—man, and that he will feel that our pen has only played the part of a surgeon's scalpel, by removing an unhealthy excrescence from a body otherwise vigorous and sound.

That our legislators, and those of other countries, have not held a very high opinion of these roving gentlemen may be easily gathered from the various enactments which have been passed against them. One or two instances we will cite in proof of what we mean. In an Act passed in 1530, in the reign of bluff King Hal, they are described as "an outlandish people, calling themselves Egyptians, using no craft nor feat of merchandise, who have come into this realm, and gone from shire to shire and place to place in great companies, and used great subtle and crafty means to deceive the people; bearing them in hand that they by palmistry could tell men's and women's fortunes, and so many

times, by craft and subtlety, have deceived the people of their money, and also have committed many heinous felonies and robberies." In that statute they were commanded to avoid the realm, and not to return on pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of goods and chattels, and upon any trial for felony they were not entitled to the benefit of a jury *de medietate linguæ*.

In the reign of Mary, the daughter of this glorious monarch, it was enacted that if any such persons should be imported into the kingdom, the importer should pay a fine of £40, and if the imported party or parties, or any of their stock or kindred, remained one month in the kingdom, or if any person being fourteen years old, whether natural-born subject or stranger, who had been seen or found in the fellowship of such Egyptians, or who had disguised him or herself like them, should remain in the same one month at one or several times, it was felony without benefit of clergy. According to that eminent English jurist, Sir Matthew Hale, no less than thirteen persons were executed upon these statutes a few years before the Restoration. In 1560, by an "Ordonnance" of the States of Orleans, all

impostors and vagabonds styled Bohemians or Egyptians, were enjoined to quit the kingdom under pain of the galleys, and if the reader wishes for further information upon the subject he may consult some of those tomes of legal research which have been provided for the special delectation of persons of his particular taste by those masters of English jurisprudence whose names are known to every schoolboy, or he may, if he cannot bring himself into such a frame of mind, for the moderate fee of 6s. 8d., consult Lawyer Gripford, at his chambers in the town in which the author has the honour of residing any day in the week (Sunday excepted), between the hours of ten in the morning and five in the afternoon.

A venerable gentleman, whose sayings have charmed thousands of English readers—we allude to that respectable old Worcestershire baronet, Sir Roger de Coverley—said of these roving folk that if a stray piece of linen hung upon a hedge they were sure to have it : if the hog lost his way in the fields it was ten to one but he became their prey ; his (Sir Roger's) goose could not live in peace for them, and if a man prosecuted them with

severity his hen roost was sure to pay for it. They set the heads of servant-maids so agog for husbands that masters expected no business done as long as they were in the country. The good knight himself had a butler who was fool enough to be seduced by them, and although he was sure to lose a knife, a fork, or a spoon every time his fortune was told him, he (the butler, not the baronet) generally shut himself up in his pantry with an old gipsy for about half an hour once in a twelvemonth.

Complaints similar to these were frequently made by the dwellers in the outskirts of towns long after the worthy baronet's decease; indeed, we are not altogether sure that they have entirely ceased at the present day.

But very few of the inhabitants of our camp could lay claim to any but the predatory and fortune-telling characteristics of the gipsies of yore.

Not one of them could boast of being lineally descended from an undoubtedly pure Romany or Zincali source. The camp was made up of different ingredients to these. Even the Shark, who was their chief, was strongly suspected to be of Irish origin, or, at best, that his

mother was a gipsy and his father a native of the Emerald Isle. Paddy the Runner, whom the reader has already met, was undoubtedly and avowedly as true a son of Erin as had ever trod turf. Another individual with whom also the reader has become slightly acquainted could not be held to have anything in common with the true gipsy as regards nationality. Born in the camp, it was true he had been, but that was a circumstance over which the Keyhole Whistler could not possibly have had the slightest control. Having been shortly after his birth thrown an orphan upon their hands, he was by them reared into manhood's estate, a thorough admirer of their mode of life and a sympathiser with all their grievances.

As the reader may probably meet him again, a description of him here might not be deemed altogether out of place.

Behold him, then, standing in a group of persons round a fire which had but recently been kindled, and from a crock upon which steamed forth sweet incense to the morning air, indicative of a speedy breakfast for the party, who, despite the excitement produced upon their nerves by the pursuit of the fugi-

tive, were as impatient, and clamoured nearly as loudly for food as a pack of famished wolves.

A queer fellow was the Keyhole Whistler, in figure no less than in manner. He appeared to have been made up of odds and ends from nature's waste-basket. He walked with a wriggle, one leg being considerably longer than the other. Neither were his arms a match, for one hung down limp and listless by his side, as though he had an idea of going along without it. To this particular member he had given the name of the poker, and a tanner and dresser of hides of a verity was the poker. The other hand invariably rested upon his hip, and so placed was of great assistance to him in his peregrinations. He had acquired a standing celebrity amongst the people of his adoption by the use which he occasionally made of an enormous pair of feet which had never had a covering, but which by dint of constant exposure had become so callous that a kick from either of them was sure to prove a forget-me-not or remembrancer to its recipient. In shape these weapons (for they could be called nothing else) resembled a couple of stonemason's hammers, and it was a matter of simple im-

possibility to find a shoemaker daring enough to even attempt the manufacture of cases for them. His head, fashioned like a cannon ball, was covered with long, matted hair, which fell, with a confusion not altogether devoid of gracefulness, upon a pair of shoulders which an athlete might envy. Perched upon the top of this unkempt wilderness was a straw hat, in which the hand of time had formed a rent through which the wearer's hair shot up like the feathers of an Indian savage. He wore the cast-off red tunic of one who had once belonged to one of his Majesty's regiments of infantry, tied at the waist (for the buttons had all rubbed off with the exception of one) with a stout leathern thong. His eyes, expressive enough at all times, were bold and undaunted when at ease, though with a world of feeling in their depths. When excited, either by enthusiasm or by anger, they spoke with an eloquence which was convincing. His nose, slightly hooked, was tipped with copper, or, as Racing Pat would have it, he had given it a long dip in the Red Sea, whilst the remainder of his countenance was bronzed and tanned by constant exposure to all sorts of weather. Such

was Ezekiel Manhaggo, *alias* the Keyhole Whistler, *alias* the Break of Day Boy, and who had goodness knows how many more *aliases*, as he stood reciting to an astonished group of listeners the particulars of (as it was believed) Grubbum's death.

"Oh, daddy dear," he said, in answer to an interrogatory from one of the eldest of the listeners, "he skipped up them there rocks like a Welsh goat. Some of our boys getting warm, thought to bring him down, so they sent up shot after un thick and fast, but he dodged about the roof of the Devil's Cave like a spider. At last, when every one believed we had him safe in our grip, he jumped the falls, and in doing so brought down the top of the cavern like a clap of thunder. Oh! mighty luck had we that it fell into the hole which Gruffydd Ap Shenkyn the other day told us was called Pwll y Diawl, or I don't think that you would have had the company of ere a mother's son of us to breakfast this morning. My eye, there was a row if you like; but in the midst of it all we could plainly hear a howl from our enemy, who must at the time have been battling with his father the devil. Anyhow, the horrid

squeal stopped of a sudden, and we knew that all was over. Ah, daddy, we all looked like living corpses."

"And ye felt, I shpose, just loike as if ye'd given yer meshurs for shrouds two days before," suggested Pat.

"That's how you'd have felt, no doubt," replied the Whistler; "but you were not there, you see, so you can't say anything about it."

"Did ye ever shtudy logic?" asked Pat. "In the village of Ballymakally, where I was reared, that very question was axed me by the Riv'rend Father O'Moriarty, and me ansur was that I couldn't tell much about the study of logic in general, but that I knew how many banes made five."

"Now, Pat, shut up, and let 'Zekiel finish his story," put in Doctor Obie. "You've a word to say about everything."

"Well," resumed the Whistler, "I have but very little more to tell. We got out of the horrid hole with our hearts in our mouths, as the saying is, leaving the chap whom we had hunted lying at the bottom of the pool dead as a squashed frog.

CHAPTER VII.

“Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
Or, in romance, some spell-bound Queen,
For ne'er in work-day world was seen
A form so witching fair.”

SCOTT.

ALTHOUGH it was still early morning, the camp was thoroughly astir. Huge floating clouds of mist rested upon the bosom of the little lake, shutting out the mountains, and reflecting the glimmer of the camp fires upon the still waters, while the sun, in endeavouring to force itself through the thick atmosphere, appeared like a shield of blood nailed to the haze.

During the progress of their early meal the low hum of voices never once ceased, but the subject of conversation was changed for another not quite so disagreeable. It was now concentrated upon two points—the disposal of the cargo from the schooner, which it was thought would arrive that night to a certainty, and also of the child which fate had so strangely cast upon their hands. For Jack and Showman Loftewalde the boy already exhibited a decided predilection. Jack, ever

thoughtless and rollicking, managed to win the little fellow's favour so completely that, although neither understood a word of the other's talk, they were seldom or never apart. The Showman, on the other hand, though much more reserved, had something in his manner which went straight to the child's heart. The latter would frequently stand and look into his elder protector's eyes as though searching for a something for which he had not the power to ask; and when the Showman's face would in turn assume an expression as of inquiry into his little friend's meaning, a burst of tears at the bitterness of his disappointment would be sure to follow.

"Come, come, don't let your scuppers run in that fashion, young man," would Jack say cheerily. "It doesn't do a soul any good to be eternally piping his eye over every bit of trouble. We'll make a sailor of you, lad; we will, upon my honour. I'll ask Capt'n Mark to take you on board directly you get big enough, and who knows but that in some of our runs over to Spain we may find a father for you—a jolly old Hidalgo or Grandee, wealthy as a Jew, who would take

us to his castle, and make us happy ever after, as the story-books say."

"I think," observed the Showman, "we ought to try and learn him our tongue in the first place, and there would be some hope of his getting all the other good things after."

"You are right, sir, as you always are," returned Jack. "Capt'n Lockbolt has often found fault with me for jumping to conclusions, and here I am in this instance talking of making a man of the younker before he is well able to walk. But if you want to have a teacher for him, turn him over to your daughter, Loftewalde, because I am afraid that that business is not in my line, and she's as learned as a lawyer, I'm told. Here she comes, upon my life. Talk of the—ahem—we were talking of an angel in this instance (for what is true of the one must be true of the other; sauce for the goose is sauce for the other bird), he's sure, or she's sure to appear."

Tripping lightly over the turf towards them came a girl, over whose youthful head not more than fifteen summer suns had set. Her light brown tresses, bound by a bright blue ribbon, sported and toyed with the breeze,

which seemed to play lovingly around her, now sending them in clouds before her face, now allowing them to drop quivering and shining down her back in a stream of beautiful amber. Whether it was with the exertion of constantly keeping her hair away from her face—for she invariably gave a sharp turn about to enable the wind to perform that office for her—or from some other and more serious cause, we won't undertake at present to say, but certain it was that when she came up to her father and to Jack her face was suffused with a tint of crimson, which rendered it ten times more lovely. The flush, however, presently subsided, giving place to the normal colour, which was one in which paleness might be said to predominate. The chiselling of the features, whatever objection might have been raised to the painting, was simply faultless, and was in itself a study. Nothing finer could have been imagined than the exquisitely graceful arch of her eyebrows, or the contour of nose, and chin, and neck. The bust, not yet fully developed, gave high promise of proportions fit for any sculptor's model. The mouth—ah, that perfect coral bow of Cupid, fitting casket for the rows of pearl

which it enclosed—Juno herself could not have boasted one more bewitching and fair. Her dress had no pretension to ornament, but it was tastily made, scrupulously clean, and showed off her form to the best advantage. With her there was no straining after effect, no twisting or pinching of either head or body, but an upright, erect, stately, yet graceful carriage was preserved, such as was natural to her as a woman, and such as accorded with man's truest and purest ideas of feminine grace. Standing on tiptoe, she threw her arms round her father's neck, and bestowed upon him her usual morning greeting. To Jack she gave her hand, and a hearty "Good-morning, miss," was the response. Jack, inexperienced as he was, could not help asking himself the question, how was it that a common showman, a mere Punch and Judy man, came to possess such a treasure? but in the flurry of the moment he found that all attempts at a satisfactory solution were perfectly useless. So he contented himself, with tilting his hat on one side, and giving his head a most perplexing scratch, as he mentally ejaculated, "Hang me if the thing isn't well worth inquiring into, though."

He added aloud, "Miss Emmeline, your father and I were just talking about the boy here, who was cast upon shore the other night, and we were thinking over the best means of making a man of him."

"I as good as told my young friend," observed the Showman, "that that business must be left to time: he must be left alone to grow, you know."

"Well, well, yes," responded Jack, rubbing his head again more violently than before. "But what I meant to talk of was, how is he to be brought up, you know? Something must be done for the young gipsy in the way of shaping his course through life, and the question is, how is it to be done?"

"Mr. Hartington," remarked Emmeline, "we are poor; father and I are very poor, but whatever lies in our power we will do for your young charge faithfully, and in a spirit of love."

"Well, but if you would only let me help you," exclaimed Jack, with enthusiasm beaming from his face and sparkling in his eyes. "You know that I am very well paid, holding a sort of command in the ship, and being the nephew of one of the owners to boot.

How often is it since my acquaintance with you began that I have offered you assistance (and Heaven knows in how sincere a spirit were my offers made), and how persistently have you declined what I would have considered a favour to have bestowed, and which——”

“ Could have done you no good if you had retained, you meant to say,” broke in the Showman. “ But, my dear, generous boy,” he continued, “ we have health, we have strength left us, and while such is the case we never will see the want of a crust when hungry, or a resting-place when weary. Your gold, boy, no matter what good intentions might have accompanied it, although it would have smoothed down many a difficulty in our path, would it have made us happier? Gold could not have made us truer, more faithful or more numerous friends. Enemies it might have made us by the score and, worse than enemies, fawning sycophantic flattering professors of friendship. Gold, bah! ’tis dross. The man who loves gold for gold’s sake—who dives and delves for it from morn till eve, shut out from the beauty, from the splendour, from the glory of God’s universe

surrounding him, is more to be pitied than the bat, less to be envied than the mole. The blackest crimes ever hatched, the foulest stabs ever given to man's honour, the truckling to the most powerful, the pandering to the basest of human passions, have had their origin in a love of gold. Gold, boy, has raised the brother's hand against his brother, has made the husband cast forth the wife of his bosom, the wife desert her faithful lord ; hardened the mother's heart against the appeals of the child she has suckled, and made the child spurn from him the parent whom by every tie that ever was or ever will be held sacred he ought to have protected. It has betrayed cities, crushed the aspirations of the hero fighting for liberty and for fatherland ; delivered, bound hand and foot, to the axe of the executioner, the cord of the hangman, the best friends of their country, the noblest of all God's children. Love of gold, and of the power which it was supposed that gold could buy, has been the means of converting an earthly paradise into a howling wilderness, where hatred and revenge, tyranny and oppression, plunder and rapine, treachery and murder, have made dwelling-places for them-

selves, from which they stalk abroad—aye, and in the face of open day too—and glut themselves upon things noble, generous, pure, and true. And who,” he added, clenching his hand as the memory of past wrongs overspread his countenance like a cloud, “who more fit to talk of evil than he on whom evil hath been wrought?”

“But, really,” said Jack, “I never intended the argument to have gone that length. All I meant to say was, that having a few pounds more in my pocket than I had use for, I thought they might benefit you, who have a daughter—Heaven bless her!—dependent upon you.”

“Dependent upon me, Hartington! There you make a mistake. I could no more exist without her than I could without breath. She is the very sun of my existence, the fountain from whence now springs all the joys I have in life,” returned the Showman, gazing fondly upon his daughter.

“But, father,” remonstrated the girl, “you should not—indeed you should not—say this of one so utterly unworthy as I. All I have done, all I may yet do, however much this may be, will but poorly requite the affection

you have shown for me ; and to say all this of me—and before a stranger too. Oh, father, father, you should not really.”

“ Silence, girl,” commanded the Showman gently ; “ truth should never be ashamed to speak loudly. I repeat it, Jack, that now ”—and a tear stole down his furrowed cheek as he spoke the words—“ now that her sainted mother is at rest, my daughter has been an oasis in the desert of affliction through which my soul has passed. In all my troubles and trials—and it is not, happily, to every man that sorrow has presented such a bitter or so full a cup—in all my wanderings and heart-ranklings, and sickness and pain, she has been to me a ministering angel, for whose presence I have devoutly and often thanked that Heaven which otherwise I would have thought had deserted me.”

“ But, Mr. Hartington, I am afraid that, strive as you might, you would never get from my father the nobility of conduct, the devotion of life which has inspired me with such affection for him—that is, admitting what he has told you concerning me to be true,” said the girl.

Jack, by way of reply, gave his head a

mournful shake, and uttered with a low, though long-drawn sigh, the monosyllable, "Ah!"

Of what has the young fellow been thinking? Clearly he has not been paying proper attention to the last words of either her father or herself, or they would have interested a bright young spirit such as his sufficiently to have enabled him to make some sort of reply, no matter how irrelevant or unsuited to the subject upon which the conversation had turned.

Was it that he had felt himself led into a course through which he was afraid to pilot his tongue, for fear of striking upon a rock or grounding upon a sandbank?

Reader, we will let you into a secret—we, the magician who can read to you the very thoughts of the young sailor at the period of which we write—but a few words of explanation are previously necessary.

How, or when, or where the Showman and his daughter were introduced to the camp of the gipsy folk need not here be stated, but there did honest—aye, never mind his being a smuggler—manly, true-hearted Jack Hartington find them. The father, by

his demeanour, convinced our friend that he had, to use a common expression, "seen better days," and towards him Jack, after but a very brief intercourse, felt himself attached by a feeling which partook of the reverential. The daughter sang divinely, and Jack had a mellow-toned flute, upon which he was not an altogether indifferent performer. Add to this that both she and her father were readers of—what Jack at any rate thought to be—the first order, and what wonder was it that he should be a constant attendant upon them? Their library, it was true, was not extensive—their bookcase being no larger than a modern blacking-box, but papered over very trimly, and deposited with other effects in a kind of knapsack, which the father carried about with him; but the few books which they possessed had been written by the master minds of men whose labours had long since procured for their names a most glorious immortality, and these when interpreted by the Showman and his daughter added a new charm to Jack's life, opened out a new world to him.

"And after all this she had said, 'and before a stranger too,'" he mused. Oh, Jack,

Jack, how in the name of common sense, to say nothing of maiden modesty, could you expect her to have deemed you anything more than a stranger after so short an acquaintance? Really, but for the fact that the god of love is proverbially blind, and young men who own his sway but little sharper sighted, we would say that we expected better things of you, or perhaps even that you ought to be ashamed of yourself for feeling stung by the utterance of the very commonplace word "stranger." If the word, however, had been the quintessence of the most villainous stuff with which doctor ever poisoned patient, Jack could not have found it harder to swallow. It stuck, this nasty bitter pill did, in his throat, and in his various endeavours to get it down he took huge gulps of fresh air, wriggled uncomfortably upon the stone on which he sat, loosened his neckerchief under pretence of the heat, and gave other demonstrations of being in the last throes of suffocation when he was recalled to a consciousness of the somewhat ridiculous figure he was cutting by the Showman, who asked him if he was ill and whether he could be of any assistance to him. Jack, assuming

one of his brightest looks, declined the proffered aid, adding by way of excuse that he verily believed that in watching for that confounded schooner he had contracted a rheumatism.

“But we were talking about the child, miss,” he at length mustered up courage to say. “We thought of asking you to take charge of him, unless it would be saddling you with too much—I mean, if you could put up with such an addition to your—well, well, I am as badly off as ever for a proper phrase—(for it won’t do,” he muttered, “to say *household work*, that wouldn’t be quite the thing.”)

“Our young friend means that you should take charge of him, Emmeline, and educate him or do anything with him after the fashion you thought best until he is able to take care of himself,” said the Showman, coming to his rescue.

“Of that, old fellow, you needn’t bother yourself much about,” said a gruff voice in the Showman’s ear.

The trio with one accord turned with surprised looks towards the speaker—a rough, stalwart individual—carrying a stout, knotty

cudgel in his right hand, which was thrust into his breeches-pocket.

“ You needn’t trouble yer head about that, old boy. What do you say, mates ? ” he asked, turning towards about half-a-dozen other fellows at his heels. “ Need the old chap trouble or need he not ? I see you all mean to say he need not. So do I, gentlemen, so do I ; and in proof of what I says here is warrants for the apprehension of the whole on yer on the charge of being in possession of a quantity of jewels and other wreckage which of right belongs to our Sovereign Lord the King. Every man-jack of you in this place, and woman too, must come along with me, and Justice Oldfogie, who has signed this here paper, shall hear what you have to say about the affair.”

“ But,” said Jack, “ you are only six, and how do you expect to take about fifty of us, if we choose to resist ? ”

“ Resist ! Do you hear him, gentlemen ? ” queried the constable, turning a little white at the lips. “ Do you hear, gentlemen ? Resist the King’s lawful authority when executed by one of his sworn servants ! ”

“ Well, it wouldn’t be the first time if we

did," coolly responded Jack, who, springing like lightning to his feet before the astonished officer had time to reply, knocked him down, and stood like a tiger at bay.

CHAPTER VIII.

"His study! with what authors is it stored!
In books, not authors, curious is my lord.

* * * * *

Lo, some are vellum, and the rest as good
For all his lordship knows, but they are wood.
For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
These shelves admit not any modern book."

POPE.

IN order to explain the concluding portion of our previous chapter it is necessary that we retrace our steps a little, and take up the thread of our story at that part where we broke it off with the escape of Simeon Grubbum from his pursuers at the Devil's Cave.

The horrors of the peril which he had just experienced served only to render more vehement his desire for vengeance, and completely to banish from his breast every other feeling whatever, if indeed any other feeling

had ever dared to enter so uncongenial a dwelling. The dark gulf was still vividly pictured before the eye of his mind; its waters hissed and fretted, splashed and fumed like an enraged and baffled dragon; the terrible crash which had accompanied his leap still rang in his ears and deafened them with its thunder, and all intensified the one dominant feeling at his heart—revenge.

Here, he thought, had he, unaided and alone, escaped from as daring and merciless a set of enemies as had ever struck the trail of human creature, and was he to let them off after such a chase? Life, light, liberty, three of the most glorious of God's blessings, were left to him, but would he rest satisfied with them? No, there was another enjoyment still, sweeter to his heart than all the other three combined—VENGEANCE, and with his brain on fire with this one all-pervading idea, he sped across the mountain with the swiftness of a deer.

Making a sweep for a village through which he had many times passed, he at length descended the hill, and with hurried steps took the direction of the largest house in the place, wherein he knew lived one of

the great unpaid expounders of English law, Sir Titus Oldfogie, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace and *custos rotulorum* for the County of ——.

The village wherein this magnate held sway had a seven-syllabled name, which none but a Welsh reader could ever possibly hope to achieve, and which we, with a view to the convenience of a great portion of the constituency to whom we appeal, will call Rockington. It was situated in a dell of loveliness which contrasted strangely, though agreeably, with the barrenness of the surrounding mountain scenery. Its scattered homesteads lay like white dots along the vale, and had about them an air of peacefulness and repose. The house of the worthy himself was embowered amidst trees, which enveloped it in nearly perpetual gloom. Strong iron bars, placed across the outside of the windows, for purposes of defence, served to give the building the aspect of a prison. Along the front of the house ran a verandah, from which the view was beautiful indeed, for through the drooping boughs might be seen a lake, which, in the glory of the rising sun, seemed to be on fire, while, mirrored in

its surface, the surrounding foliage appeared to play like plumes of feathers upon a sheet of gold. Heaven and earth were bathed in the flood of glory emanating from the Eye of light.

The windows of the verandah had been thrown open to enable his worship to enjoy the morning air, Oldfogie being an early riser—although, perhaps, had he been questioned upon the merits of the practice he might have given other reasons for them than those mentioned in a very famous couplet. There had been some poaching upon his preserves the night before, and he and his head-keeper, Tom Flashford (who was also a constable of the parish), with a number of armed cronies, had been watching for the greater part of the night. Success they had had none (if we except that they picked up a few nets and wire snares); on which account, and also because the vigil had fagged them very considerably, the Mayor of Rockington (for such had he been christened by the wags of the village) was not in the very best of humours that morning.

“Tell him to go to the deuce”—indeed he used a harder word than this even—was his reply to a servant who announced that a

stranger wished to see him upon important business. "But stay," he added, "what sort of a fellow is he?"

"Well, if looks goes for anythink," returned the man, "I should think as how he was one of them there fellows as——"

"For God's sake, man, cut your story short. I haven't had my breakfast yet. On your oath now, what sort of a fellow is he?" said his worship testily.

"If yer honour," returned the man with provoking coolness, "had only waited another half a minit I should have described him to yer. As it is I forgets what I was going to say."

"Go along, idiot," urged his worship. "A fine figure you would cut in a witness-box. I would rather be from home that day, and for a fortnight to come, than sit and listen to you."

"Well, sir," replied John, "he is a most odd sort of fish altogether. I can't call him 'andsome, if I wishes to do justice to my feelin's as a man. He isn't well-dressed neither (a sort of half landsman, half sea-dog), and his clothes looks as if the tailor might be employed upon them with advantage to himself and to society at large."

“ I suppose I may as well see him,” observed the knight. “ Some lazy tramping vagabond, I’ll be bound, who wants relief in money or in kind, or a recommendation to a hospital or charity, or, or, or anything in fact besides work. Show the fellow in, John.”

John bowed, retired, and shortly afterwards returned with Grubbum, whom he ushered into the library, where Oldfogie, in his chair of state, awaited him.

From the mode in which the apartment was furnished it was evident that upon stated occasions the law was administered here, for on each side of the chair of state aforesaid were two other chairs, ranged laterally, as though they had been occupied but recently, and had not yet been removed. Various papers lay scattered about the table, which Grubbum did not altogether view with his usual tranquillity, but these the magistrate speedily collected into a heap with his own hands, after which he drew them towards him, and placed an open book face downwards upon them, as though he were desirous that their contents should not get known to everybody.

The walls of the room had hung upon them

a barometer of somewhat large dimensions, and a couple of Dutch paintings in massive frames of carved oak—Bacchanalian scenes both, by the way.

But the most noticeable object of all was the tall bookcase, surmounted by a bust of Lord Chancellor Bacon, carved by an artist whose object appeared to have been to give the features as much of the expression of those of an owl as was possible. Indeed, the disposition of the figure upon its pedestal proved beyond all question that the carver had taken that bird for his model, for the abnormally protruded breast, the shortness of the neck, and a certain leering expression about the eyes reminded one most strongly of the pose always given to stuffed specimens of the fowl of Minerva.

As to the contents of the bookcase itself, they were of a nature which would have delighted the heart of an antiquary. Ranged along the various shelves were :—an original edition of the “*Novum Organum* ;” next in order came “*A Collection of Ballads, Moral and Pathetic*,” by Tom d’Urfey ; next a folio edition of Johnson’s “*Dictionary of the English Language* ;” then “*Travels and Adven-*

tures of a Learned Pig," by Moses Benjamins ; " The Child's Own Spelling-book," by Dr. Whippemwell ; " Hale's Pleas of the Crown ;" " The Sleeper Awakened, or Cat-calls set to Music," by Lady Tabitha Grimalkin ; " The Rights, Duties, and Privileges of a Lord of the Manor," by Jacob Catchemall, of the Middle Temple, barrister at law ; " Reading made Easy," by Thomas Simpleman ; " Poetical Gems, from the Works of Wycherley, Congreve, and Colley Cibber ;" " Lives of the Lord Chancellors," by John Ketch, Esq. ; " A Critical Inquiry into the Nature of Hobgoblins, with a Circumstantial Account of the Existence and Doings of the Cock Lane Ghost," by the Rev. Hezekiah Frightenum, sometime minister of Screemwell chapel ; A rare old black letter tract, entitled " Surgery, or Dissection as practised in the Cannibal Islands ; to which is added a chapter on the benefits to the human race of a true knowledge of the proper methods of making an extract of meat," by his Royal Highness the King of Cariboo, translated from the original by O. Fyddel, D.D., author of " An Embassy to Prester John ;" Blackstone's " Commentaries on the Laws of England ;"

“To the End of the World and Back again, or Anecdotes of a Seven Years’ Walking Tour,” by Jane Biffen ; “Kyd on the Law of Corporations ;” “Voyages of Discovery,” by Paul Jones, Esq. ; “Some Account of an Attempt at Transfusion of Blood, the Subjects operated upon being a Stalled Ox, and an Alderman of the City of London,” copied from the transactions of the Royal Society, by Peter Lower, Anno 1660 ; “A Treatise on English Jurisprudence, from a French point of view, with Suggestions for its Assimilation with the Practice of the Scotch Courts,” by Sheriff Haggleton ; “The Forty Thieves, with Explanatory Notes and a Glossary, by Professor Henry Dodgem, London, imprinted for ye Author at ye Ropemaker’s Walk, Anno 1689 ;” Foster’s “Crown Cases ;” “A Three Hours’ Lesson in Botany, or the Student and the Enraged Bull,” translated from the German of Herr Von Kilforticats, by J. Wackstaff, M.A., Cantab. ; Burns’ “Justice of the Peace ;” “Modern Farriery,” by a retired horse jockey ; “Hunting,” by a member of the Breakneck Club ; “State Trials,” and the “Newgate Calendar” in six volumes.

The foregoing is, as far as we can remem-

ber, a fair sample of the contents of the library of the legal luminary of Rockington Manor. What wonder was it, then, that the people for miles around looked upon him as a prodigy of wisdom, a living encyclopædia of all the arts, sciences, and professions, a sort of walking dictionary of universal knowledge.

Eying his visitor with a keen, scrutinising glance, the magistrate sharply demanded to know his business. Grubbum looked suspiciously towards Flashford, as though his presence was neither necessary nor desirable pending the communication which he was about to make; but on this head his worship immediately set his mind at ease by bidding him not to mind Tom, and to proceed at once to explain his intrusion.

“I want to lay an information, sir. A vessel was wrecked on the coast here the night before last, and I know where a quantity of the traps are hid,” said Simeon bluntly.

“Now that’s what I call going straight to the point,” remarked Oldfogie. “We shall have an easy witness in you. Hand me down ‘Burns,’ Tom, for I’m not one of your gentlemen who decide first and look up the law afterwards. No, no; I never care about doing

anything out of book—especially ” (he added in an aside) “ when the question is such a devilishly ticklish one as that of ‘ wreckage.’ Ah, I see,” he continued aloud, “ yes, this must be it: and ‘ provided any person shall plunder’—did you say they had done that, my man ?”

“ Your honour, them was my very words,” said Simeon, with a wink at Flashford.

“ Very good, then,” replied Sir Titus, “ that’s one step on the road—‘ shall plunder, steal, take away, or destroy any goods ’ (that’s a large word ‘ goods ’) ‘ belonging to any ship in distress, or which shall be wrecked or stranded ’—your vessel was all that, I suppose, friend ?”

“ The very thing itself,” answered Grubbum.

“ Stranded, stranded,” continued his worship, “ where the deuce did I leave off? Oh, I have it, ‘ stranded (whether any living creature be on board or not).’ What say you to those words, my fine fellow ?”

“ Two on board, yer rev’rence,” replied Simeon. “ One on ’em died shortly after he came on shore. The other is alive now.”

“ Aha!” said the Knight, “ ‘ shall be guilty

of felony without benefit of clergy.' That's the ticket for the rascals. But let me see, there's a proviso, though ; 'provided' (damme, I never got across that word, but it wrung my very withers. Here you have a plain statement of law, applicable to a certain condition of things, when all of a sudden you drop across that beastly, interfering, ugly marplot, devil of a word 'provided,' bringing a string of evils in its train, any one of which is enough to twist the leg off a cast-iron pot) : 'provided that when goods of small value—'

" Begging your honour's pardon for interrupting you," broke in Grubbum, "but these were *not* goods of small value. They are real diamonds, sir; gold and precious stones of all sorts, sizes, and descriptions, your worship."

The magistrate opened wide his eyes, but upon Tom Flashford the intelligence had a much more exuberant effect, for he sprung from his chair well-nigh to the ceiling at a bound, and forgetting entirely the awful presence of his superior, capered round the room like a dancing dervish.

" Tom," roared his worship, "what the devil ails you? Sit down this moment, or I'll throw a book at your head."

“A thousand pardons, yer wurtchip,” said Flashford, “I am all hattention,” and suiting the action to the word, he allowed his arms to drop at his side, drew his feet together, and stood like a sentry on guard.

“You infernal idiot,” screamed the magistrate, “do you see that you have a poker in your hand, and that you are burning a hole in my carpet with the point, which must be red hot?”

Tom speedily lifted the weapon, examined it carefully, and said deliberately, “Well, now I thinks on it, it must be warmish too, for jist a minit ago I lighted my pipe with it and give it to Snarley to lick, and for all the beast grinned I don’t think he liked it.”

“Gave it my dog to lick, you villain! Confound your skin, if you don’t quit my sight this instant I’ll run you through the body,” said the magistrate, making towards the spot where his rapier hung.

“Take care, old man, I’ve Tickler here,” replied Tom, taking up his gun from the doorway, “and you may get them peppercorns as was intended for honest folk, if you don’t mind.”

“What!” exclaimed the magistrate,

thoroughly astounded at such a sudden display of insolence and daring. "Leave my house, you murdering brute, directly! Early as it is, I see you've been drinking a good deal too freely."

"Hark at the old Lushington," returned Tom. "Give me the devil for preaching down sin any day. There's no one as can beat him at it. Leave yer house! Who'd be the loser, eh? Don't you have me here for protection and for company, for who the devil but a fool like me would stay with you? Leave yer house, my old dodger, you wouldn't have another gamekeeper at the parish expense in a hurry, I know. Leave yer house! Who the devil ever wanted to stay here? 'Twasn't me, I'll swear, so take that now for a piece of my mind."

"The fellow is mad, stark staring mad," said the Knight. "Out of my sight, hound," he continued, addressing Tom, "or I'll pink you on the spot." Snatching up his weapon, he made a furious lunge with it at the object of his wrath, who, but that he stepped nimbly aside, might have fared badly.

Maddened at this treatment, Flashford brought his gun to his shoulder and fired.

Oldfogie, but that an arm against whom in days of yore thine own had been often raised in legal anger was now put forth in thy behalf, thou might'st "unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd" have been landed with all thy imperfections on thine head in a country where justice holds the balance fairly, irrespective of the social grade of those whom she has to try—where no splitting of straws or of hairs, no shirking responsibility by picking holes in the indictment, no escape from punishment by taking shelter 'neath the mushroom "technical objection" is allowable; but where justice, rigorous and incorruptible, is meted out to high and low, rich and poor, alike.

Simeon, swift as thought, struck the muzzle of the piece upwards, and the charge lodged itself in the ceiling. With equal expedition he sprang upon Flashford, grasped him by the throat, floored him, and held him down despite his struggles, compressing his fingers the while until the constable's tongue protruded, his eyes started well-nigh from their sockets, and he became black in the face with the agonies of suffocation.

CHAPTER IX.

“ You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch ; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge : you shall comprehend all vagrom men.”—SHAKESPEARE.

THE magistrate, who beheld this scene with the strangest of feelings—the action of his factotum Flashford having well-nigh frightened the life out of him, while that of Grubbum was scarcely less disquieting—rushed at last to the rescue of his favourite. Dragging Simeon forcibly away, he proceeded to raise the crestfallen constable and place him upon a chair.

The former, having become thoroughly heated, fixed his glittering eyes upon his antagonist with a stare that was perfectly fiendish, while Tom in his turn shook his fist at him, and muttered inaudibly, “ I owe you one for this, my fine fellow, and hang me if I don’t pay you out for it, and with interest too. I might as well have had my gizzard in a vice as between his fingers. If that chap is not second cousin to Old Harry, may I never swear another oath. Upon my soul,

now, if he were inspected carefully I do believe they would find that he has a hoof and tail."

He would probably have continued these edifying meditations to greater length had not his worship recalled him to a sense of his position by asking both himself and Simeon what the deuce they meant by behaving in such a way in his presence?

Grubbum, who by this time was beginning to perceive the error into which he had fallen—that of having made an enemy where he should have gained a friend—hastily proceeded to apologise. He would not, he said, have been guilty of any such rudeness before a gentleman like his honour but that he had perceived the danger of Mr. Constable's action. He hoped, however, now they had had time to cool, they (Tom and himself) would be no worse friends for what had just passed.

"No worse friends, certainly," returned Flashford aloud. "Nor better either," he added aside.

"You seem both of you lads of spirit, and I insist that you shake hands this minute," said Oldfogie. "If you wish," he added, looking towards the constable, whose features

indicated that he had a very strong inclination to dissent from the proposal, "if you wish me to forget the language which has been used towards me, you must do as I bid you, Mr. Flashford."

Tom, whose temper was as capricious as that of a spoiled child, ultimately declared that he thought the gov'nor was right; and hang it, when was the gov'nor wrong, when he chose to take those matters into his own hand? So forget and forgive was the word, and there was his hand upon it.

The magistrate was so pleased with his success as a mediator that he ordered each of the parties a bumper of liquor forthwith, at his own expense, too, which was a very wonderful thing. More wonderful still, this bumper was followed by another, and that other by a third, all of which were charged to the same fund.

Grubbum, under the effects of the generous fluid, became talkative, and, what was a great deal better, communicative, while the constable attained such a high notion of his own importance that he ultimately informed the gentlemen present that he was "king of the world."

Simeon, later on, had a vague idea of having signed a document termed "An information" at one time or another; he dreamt of it, perhaps, as he and Flashford lay snoring before the kitchen fire at Rockington Manor, whither they had been wafted by "John," assisted by a buxom maid-of-all-work, to whom her godfathers and godmothers had given the name of Elizabeth Jones, but which her acquaintances had since shortened to Betty Shôn.

So potent were their libations that the sun was rapidly nearing his western home when they awoke. Grubbum, who was the first to be relieved from the spell, rubbed his eyes, and, fetching a prodigious yawn, began asking himself a number of questions, as though he wished to account to a third party for his presence at such a place. Rolling over upon his side, he at once perceived that he had a companion.

Ah! he remembered; it was the parson's clerk. No, the village constable, that was it. He could tell that to a certainty, for his breath stank horribly, from hard swearing, no doubt. Holloa! would his friend oblige him by telling him the time of day, for he

(Simeon) must have gone to sleep at the wrong end of it.

Rousing Tom was no easy matter, but it was at length accomplished, and the two, as a preliminary step towards recovering their scattered wits, and their health to boot, had recourse to a pump which was situated in the back yard. After a plentiful ablution, Tom sought his master "for instructions" as to the disposal of their newly-acquired ally.

"Why, of course, Tom," said the magistrate, "you must keep him close for a while. He'll be our chief witness, you know, as to the identity of the jewels, how and by whom they were secreted, and so forth. But, Tom, don't you think it is time that Harry Davies and his men should have returned? I sent him to execute the warrant, you know, upon the gipsies, you know."

"I know!" returned Tom, in surprise. "By God, sir, I know nothing at all about it."

"I wish you would leave off that shocking habit of swearing which you have acquired, Tom," observed the Knight. "I suppose you were too drunk' to know what happened, then? It was this: your friend yonder—

now don't make faces, Tom—your friend, I say, swore to an information which I drew up with my own hand——”

“Lord,” muttered Tom, “what a nice one it must have been from such a pen as yours.”

“And you know very well that I am as neat a draughtsman as you could find,” continued his worship.

“Oh yes, very,” put in Tom, abstractedly.

“Well,” his master went on to say, “your friend signed”—(“He would sign anything, I have no doubt; he wouldn't stop at a forged note if he was scholar enough,” said Flashford, parenthetically)—and swore”—(“He'd swear the horse ate the grindstone if that article had been missed,” said Tom)—“to it. So I thereupon issued my warrant, commanding Henry Davies and all other peace officers in this county to ‘secure all goods belonging to a certain wrecked ship, to wit—’ You see, Tom, I put in a videlicet in true lawyer fashion. It is a wonderful thing, you know, to be able to use a videlicet properly; for if you should happen to mis-state all the remainder of the facts, you are quite safe in replying, ‘It only comes in under a videlicet, you know.’ But there's no use talking to

you of such a glorious institution as a videlicet; it would be like casting pearls before swine. To resume, Tom (I am reading to you from the information itself), 'To wit, the *Infanta Isabella*, of Portugal, owner Don Ludovico——'"

"Well," interrupted Tom, "the beggar told me not two minutes ago that the ship was the *Donna Maria*, of Oporto, owner Manuel Roderigo."

"His pronounciation was so thick that I must have mistaken him, then; but that is not of the slightest consequence, Tom; it comes in under a videlicet, you know," said the Knight, with a leer.

"Oh, hang the viddellysit," returned Tom, peevishly. "Does your worship mean to say that if you had nailed a man for stealing divers of the goods and chattels of Richard Fatpaunch, wild beast showman, to wit, ten elephants, you could convict him of stealing ten snakes' eggs?"

"Put like a lawyer, by Jove!" exclaimed his worship. "I had no idea, Tom, that you were so clever. You caught that trick of me, though, ha! ha! ha! Good law, now, to think that Tom Flashford should have been

so very penetrating. Ha! ha! ha! The joke is a capital one, and will bear telling for a twelvemonth. Bravo, Tom, bravo!"

"But I don't care much about jokes just now, sir," replied the constable; "so if you would not mind coming to the point without any more on 'em, I should feel obliged. Jokes is fine things, sir, like Dr. Slashem's bone-saws, to him as uses them, but the other party don't find them so very pleasant, I fancy. Besides," he added in an undertone, "I'll be hanged if I can see what joke there was in anything I said."

"Well, Tom," said his worship, "I was telling you, and I may as well cut it short, that you may understand it the better, that the warrant directed the securing of the wreckage, and the officers were to bring before me, or some other of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this county, the person or persons in whose possession such wreckage should be found, so that they might be further dealt with according to law."

"And according to the form of the statute in that behalf made and pervided," said Tom. "You put in that, sir, of course."

"No, you fool," said the magistrate, "this

is a common law offence, not a statutory one. But what is the use of explaining the difference to you?"

"Not a bit, your worship," acquiesced Tom.

"To continue," said the Knight, "Harry took the warrant, and about half-a-dozen fellows to assist him in executing it, and as he has been between seven and eight hours away, I am getting uneasy in my mind about him. I fear the beggars have trapped him, so I want to know from you, Tom, what is best to be done under such circumstances?"

"I should say, in the first place," replied Flashford, sulkily, "that the warrant oughtn't to have been given to Harry at all, and that I myself should have had the job."

"Well, well," returned his worship, "you know you were carted off to the kitchen before I was aware that you were not in a fit state to execute it, or else it was to you I thought to have given it."

"Yes," soliloquised the constable, "carted to the kitchen. You are right, sir. A wink's as good as a nod to me, sir; and although I can't see through a six-inch board, I begin to see why the brandy was so cheap this morning. Harry's green, is he? Tom's up to a

move; knows a little too much; and there was gold and diamonds in the mess; so Tom's made drunk, and Harry is sent out with the warrant, eh? Look at that for a cunning old shaver, now."

"Come, Tom," said the magistrate, "why are you silent when I want your advice so badly?"

"I was thinking of some'ut," replied Tom; "thinking on how this business has been managed, and how it is to be managed in the futur. If I'm to have any hand in it, sir, I must have things done altogether my own way. You may be very good, sir, at drawing up informations, and writing out warrants, but damme, and with all due deference to your worship, as Attorney Spouter is apt to say, the executing of them is my business, and no one knows better how to do it, which your worship will agree with me is the truth. Now I have a plan in my head which I think will do for this here affair if your honour is agreeable."

"Well, I won't hear it now," said Oldfogie. "We will wait a bit longer for Harry's return, so you may call here in two hours' time, Tom, if I don't send for you sooner."

Tom made a military salute and withdrew, leaving the magistrate alone to his meditations.

The twilight of an autumn day pervaded the room, and softened down its colour, and that of everything in it, until the whole became of one undistinguishable shade. The capacious, red, snuff-bespattered vest of the magistrate, which at first stood out in boldest relief, faded gradually, but surely, into obscurity. The owl over the bookcase made desperate attempts to emerge from the shadow, but as the contest was prolonged the bird grew feebler and feebler, and at last succumbed altogether. Upon the Dutch drunkards their potations seemed to have a very extraordinary effect. They stood out at first blurred and blotchy from their bed of canvas, the jolly old toppers that they were, but by degrees they became seized with a drowsiness, their heads and heels, the only two points about them (the rest being a mass of huge gross rotundity) seemed to be constantly changing places, until at length they vanished into thin air, the very ghosts of their former selves.

The magistrate observed not the passing

show. The calm outside was to him a source of annoyance beyond conception. Had the thunder rolled or the lightning flashed, there might then have been something for him to look at, to listen to—something to save his brain the torture of impatient longing.

At length the feeling stole upon him that he had not taken his usual post-prandial nap that day, that his slumbers of the previous night had been discounted to the tune of fifty per cent., and he sought to cast oil upon the troubled sea of his feelings by wooing Morpheus with a whisky bottle. With such *spirit* was his suit conducted that as twilight's shadows deepened into night, he nodded, winked, closed his eyes, and—tumbled off his chair to the floor. It was Tom's hand that gripped his arm, and it was Tom's voice which was soothingly saying to him :

“Master, I thought it would have come to this, for you kept wriggling about in that chair of yours like a cat on hot bricks.”

“Help me up, Tom. I was dreaming of something, and I must have fallen forward, I suppose,” said the magistrate, hardly knowing what to reply.

“Fall you did for certain, for nobody

pushed you, I swear, unless your patron saint was under your chair," said the constable.

"Well, well," returned the Knight hastily, "it's no use talking about it. Has Harry returned, Tom?"

"Yes, your worship," replied Tom.

"And with the gold, and the diamonds, and with prisoners?" queried Oldfogie in a tone of the wildest exultation.

"With neither," was Flashford's laconic reply.

"Then what the devil with?" said his worship furiously.

"With nothing," answered Tom."

The studied coolness of the constable's manner enraged Oldfogie beyond all bounds. He stamped, swore, raved, and stormed until his face became ten degrees more purple than its wont.

After he had exhausted himself, Flashford asked him "whether he would see Harry and receive from him an account of the business," but Oldfogie indignantly refused, and requested that Tom should himself relate the result of the expedition. This Tom did with various embellishments of his own, from which it was made to appear that Harry had managed matters very clumsily; that he had

displayed a most singular and unaccountable want of precaution by allowing himself to be knocked down by a mere boy, and then bound, together with his assistants, by the aforesaid boy, who was quickly joined by about a dozen members of the tribe. Particular stress was laid upon the prowess manifested by one of the gipsy gang whom Harry persisted in calling "Strikemstiff," for this fellow's arm was absolutely irresistible. All his opponents were knocked over like nine-pins, and rather than have anything to do with such a character again, Tom declared that his subordinate would go half-way to be hanged. Eventually, he continued, the camp became comparatively deserted, and Harry and his fellow-prisoners were left in different tents, bound, gagged, and utterly helpless. The one who had tied Harry happening to have performed his work rather clumsily, the prisoner, by dint of busy, patient toil, managed to slip his bonds and reach home to tell the tale of his captivity.

At the close of the constable's narrative, it was suggested by the magistrate, and at once acquiesced in by Tom, that the assistance of a body of the stoutest yeomen in Rockington

should be procured, and a wholesale arrest of these daring offenders against the law effected with the least possible delay. Very much against his worship's will the command of the party devolved upon Flashford, and it was agreed that Grubbum should act as pioneer and scout to the expedition. Simeon did not receive the proposal with any great relish; indeed, he positively refused at first to have anything to do with the business other than in the capacity of informer, and witness when the case came to be heard. The eloquence of the magistrate, backed up very strenuously by that of the constable, at length, however, prevailed. The prospect of being speedily revenged upon his enemies, and of receiving a liberal reward from Old-fogie, made him forget the terrors from which he had escaped, and burn once more with a fierce, eager desire for vengeance.

The necessary complement of men having been procured—and the task proved a not altogether uneasy one, for every farmer in the place having become a sufferer by the foraging expeditions of the gipsies, armed his man or men, as the case happened, so that a clean sweep might at once be made of

the rascals—and the necessary instructions having been given them, the expedition started upon its journey.

The night was rather unfavourable to their purpose; “there was too much light,” as Grubbum said. The tardy moon walked slowly down the heavens and shone with unusual brilliancy; but in the height of her splendour, in the fulness of her glory, this brilliancy became obscured, for a cloud passed before her face, thick, heavy, and impenetrable, and muffled thus she remained for a considerable time. Simeon’s heart gave a bound at the welcome sight, and he stepped forth to play the spy with an eagerness which more than counterbalanced his former reluctance.

Flashford, with a feeling of the liveliest satisfaction, watched his departure, and muttered to himself, as he peered after him out into the darkness: “Two of a trade never agree. A bit of a reckoning must take place between us concerning that squeeze of the throat you gave me; and you’ll find, my man, that I’ll pay it off to the last farthing, or perhaps leave you in my debt even.” He then commanded a halt until they should receive a report from their scout.

Grubbum, with a noiseless step, gained the pool, which we have before described as being upon the outskirts of the gipsy encampment; and here the exercise of the utmost caution became necessary. He stopped to listen, but all was still. Surely he had detected footsteps behind him. With head bent forward to catch the least sound, he waited for a resumption of the movement. Silence, calm and undisturbed, reigned supreme, and he resumed his onward progress, but this time upon hands and knees. When he had gained the very brink of the pool, he again strained his hearing faculty to its utmost. The night-winds playing with the fallen leaves, and the mingling hum of voices wafted across the water from the camp, were all that he could make out. Having satisfied himself that he might return to Flashford with a report that the coast was clear, and that they might proceed in safety, he made a short retrograde movement, preparatory to regaining his feet, whilst performing which he felt himself seized by the heels from behind, and the next moment he was thrown head foremost into the lake. He rose to the surface like a cork, but, instead of striking out for the bank, he lay upon the

water as still as death. It was well that he did so, for a huge stone came whistling through the air—aimed evidently at his head—but, luckily for his safety, it fell beyond him, causing him no greater inconvenience than filling his eyes with spray. Countless other missiles were thrown at him in succession, but Simeon, who could imitate nature in various ways, floated under the bank as quietly as a corpse. The merciless pelting at length ceased, and he emerged from his cold bed looking like a drowned rat. Wringing from his clothes as much of the crystal element as was possible, and shaking himself as a dog would have done, he hastened back to his allies, muttering as he went that the gipsies must have kept a sharp look-out.

CHAPTER X.

“’Tis a gallant enemy !

How like a comet he goes streaming on !

But we must plague him in the flank—hey, friends ?

We are well breathed—follow.”—KEATS.

WITH the water dripping from his soddened dress, without a hat, and with only one shoe, chapfallen and miserable in the extreme, did

Grubbum present himself to Flashford and his party. Tom, attempting to be jocular, inquired the cause of his being in such a sorry plight.

“Upon my word, now, Sim,” quoth he, “I almost took yer to be a mermaid, and thinks I to myself, that gentleman is come to give us an invitation to his dominions during the bathing season.”

“You and I fell out once before,” returned Grubbum fiercely, “and you know who got the worst of it that time; so stop your chaff, if you are wise. Give us something to drink now, if you have any about you, for I feel as if the marrow in my bones was ice, and nothing else. So neatly done too,” he muttered, after taking a pull at the constable’s flask. “I was soused before I could say scissors, and without a chance of knowing who did it. But I may get upsides with the chap for that job yet, and if I do, he may say his prayers as quick, and cut them as short, as he likes. But, gentlemen,” he presently said aloud to Flashford’s followers, “although I was treated rather badly, and although I thought at first it was one of the gipsies gaveme the ducking, I’ve altered my opinion within the last five minutes. You may go straight on and do your errand,

for there are but very few in the camp able to resist you ; that I very well made out, when some blackguard dog or other ” (here he strode towards Flashford, and placing his face close up to that of the latter, glared at him with the eyes of a fiend) “ made an attempt to murder me.”

The constable, despite every effort at self-composure, was quite taken off his guard by Simeon’s demeanour. His jaws chattered like a dice-box, and the effort which he made to laugh sounded as though he were violently struggling for breath, but the noise which followed was perfectly dreadful. One of the squad declared it was more than’ he could bear ; while another, who watched Flashford’s jaws as they gave birth to the sound, averred, upon his conscience, that he thought the lower and upper parts of the head were about to part company.

“ I call you to witness, gentlemen,” said Tom, in a hoarse whisper, “ that this fellow has slandered me ; and if there is law in the land to be had for that, I means to have it.”

“ I said nothing, did I,” sneered Simeon, “ which would hurt your feelings ? But listen to me now,” he went on ; “ if you stand here

like a white-washed post, and do nothing but grin and chatter like an ape, it follows to reason that you'll never execute that warrant of yours."

"Our friend is right," said Tom. "Fall in, lads, four deep; keep quiet tongues, and march."

His orders were instantly obeyed.

The stillness of the night was strangely broken by the persistent, unsteady tramp of the attacking party. Flashford, whose brute courage was notorious, inspired his followers with an amount of confidence, wanting which the expedition must have proved abortive, for already there had been signs of wavering, if not of actual dismay, amongst its members. The profound quiet, which the roll of the distant surf appeared only to deepen, gave an impression of awe to more than one mind. Tales of the supernatural powers of those whom they were going to capture were bandied about, notwithstanding Tom's stern injunction that they should preserve the strictest silence. The constable himself marched at the head of his men, like the daring general that he was, but Simeon slunk to the rear, and could not be induced, either by threat or entreaty, to lead the forlorn hope.

“You’ll have the post of honour, my friend,” he muttered, nodding towards Flashford, “and of danger too, for that matter. If Whistling ’Zekiel drops across you, there’ll be some rough play, I fancy. I shan’t interfere, that’s certain, unless it’ll be to pocket the shiners. I’ve run my neck into plenty of nooses already, and another might stretch it for me. By Gad, it will be the monkey and the nuts this time. You’ll get roasted, my friend, while I eat, ha! ha! and we’ll then be able to cry quits about the bath you gave me. You hulking brute! You thought you had done for me, did you? You have already called me a cat: you little thought of the difficulty you’d have in killing me. A cat has nine lives, and it isn’t a bear like you that can kill her.”

Once more was the scene lighted up by the serene presence of the night queen, and once more did Simeon greet her appearance with a curse! One benefit, at least, did the party receive. With the increased light came increased steadiness in their pace, and also a dispersion of a good many of those fears and terrors to which the darkness had given birth. To the minds of Flashford and Simeon,

however, these benefits were more than counterbalanced by the increased chances of their falling into an ambush, and the impossibility of swooping down upon the camp unobserved. But there was no help for it, they couldn't have veiled the moon had they tried, and to push forward with as much haste as they could was their only chance of escaping from the threatened danger. Their road now lay through a narrow gorge, the passage of which half-a-dozen resolute men might have successfully disputed with a regiment; and here it was that their progress first received a check. The constable's ear had unmistakably detected footsteps upon the rock above. He was a little in advance of the rest, and therefore was the first to catch the sound. He walked on, however, for some minutes without appearing to heed it, and then suddenly stopped to listen. The footsteps ceased almost, but not quite, simultaneously with his own. Satisfied with the result of his ruse, he proceeded at a more rapid pace, and stopped again more suddenly than before. This time he had greater reason for congratulation than ever, for the spy (if spy

he was) made at least half-a-dozen steps before he could bring himself to.

Standing stock-still until the rest got up to him, Flashford addressed them in a subdued tone of voice, urging upon them the necessity of making a rush over the remainder of their course, and carrying all before them at one stroke. It was quite clear, he said, that their approach had been perceived and the alarm given to the camp, but all they had to do was to make a dash and a run, and the position would be gained.

“Follow me, lads, fear nothing, and may the dickens take the hindmost,” he exclaimed, saying which, he leaped forward, waved his gun round his head, emerged from the narrow road into the plain above, and made a blow at an individual who had suddenly sprung up to oppose him, with the stock of his weapon, which would have felled an ox had it taken effect. The person attacked, however, sprang nimbly aside, and the constable, missing the expected resistance, fell headlong forward with the impetus, and lay stretched at full length upon the ground.

His companions viewed the fall of their leader with dismay, and would have beaten an

instant retreat, but for the encouragement they received from Simeon, who was in the rear. "On you go; no turning back, now you've got so far," were his words. "You coward hounds, don't you see that Flashford's upon his legs again, and if you don't go to his assistance he'll get killed for certain? Where on earth has your fighting Welsh blood gone to? We heard a deal about it when we set out. Has it turned to water? Hooray now! Saint Dafydd for ever," he added, seeing that his words had had the desired effect, for rushing through the gap, notwithstanding the resistance offered them, went the Welshmen like a torrent.

Flashford, having regained his feet and his wits (which had been considerably muddled by the violence of his fall), laid about him in earnest. He was backed up right gallantly by his followers, who had begun to warm with their work, and the gipsies were obliged to give way and make for their tents with all possible speed. Here a stand was made, and the fighting resumed, for the besieged had suddenly received reinforcements. "Whistling 'Zekiel" himself and three other fellows had appeared upon the scene, and the fight was

renewed with the greatest vigour. The gipsies had the rising ground in their favour, and taking heart at a tremendous blow dealt by Manhaggo to the constable, they sprang upon their assailants, and bore them down the hill. Fortune once more, however, favoured the attacking party, and again were the gipsies beaten back to their tents, for their champion—the tanner and dresser of hides—had himself received a blow at the back of his head, which laid him as low as ever he had laid the constable. The battle now became of a more general character, for having reached the tents, some of the besiegers were received with pots of boiling water by the women, and a cripple, perched in a cart, played sad havoc with such as came within reach of his most dexterously-wielded crutch. The tide of affairs was setting in unmistakably in favour of the gipsies, when Grubbum, by a master-stroke of strategy, caused it to run in the other direction. Unperceived by any of the combatants he managed to gain the rear of the encampment, and snatching up a large burning fagot, he set fire to several of the tents in a twinkling. Waving the brand above his head, he jumped upon the

cart, thrust it in the cripple's face, threw him over, and gave utterance to a frantic howl of delight, which struck terror into the hearts of the defenders, nearly all of whom believed him dead. Horrified at the appearance of a being whom they took to be no other than Baalzebub himself, and at the sight of their burning homes, they broke and fled in all directions, and the victors took possession of the encampment. "Cast-iron Jack," the man of many aliases, bleeding and helpless, was bound under Simeon's special supervision while Showman Loftewalde submitted to a similar operation after making two or three unavailing, though daring, attempts to fight his way through a host of assailants.

"No go, old fellow," said Simeon. "Give over kicking now; the game is played out, and you've lost; so do the decent, and let's have no more trouble. You know we have the law on our side, and that we must win in the long-run, if you fought ever so long."

"Law on your side, bah!" replied the Showman contemptuously. "You to pray in aid the law which you have so often outraged. You, who consider yourself beyond the pale of the law, only because it has not

yet been able to encircle you in its grasp ; beware, for the day will surely come when you will be called upon to reckon your evil deeds, and to expiate them. You, whom the weighty arm of that authority which you have so often set at defiance will one day overtake and crush ; you to talk of triumph with a gallows' mark already imprinted upon every lineament. You, whom were my hands at liberty I myself would throttle, though by doing so I would deprive the hangman of his just due ; you, of all other men, should remember that you are playing with a two-edged tool."

"Chatter away, old magpie. I wonder you have not set yourself up in the fortune-telling business. You might come out strong as 'The Prophet of the Hills,' or in some such line as that. I'm merciful, or I'd bung up your jaws. I've something more important in hand than to stop to talk to you, you old jackdaw. So good-night for the present," saying which Simeon made off in the direction of a tent which was pitched in the very centre of the camp, and which had the appearance of belonging to some superior member of the tribe. The covering he drew

hastily aside, and entered ; but he was speedily brought to a standstill by the voice of a female, who in shrill though cracked tones bade him leave her dwelling that instant.

“ Child of sin,” she exclaimed, “ misfortune has ever followed thy appearance in our camp. Thou who hast broken bread and eaten with us, who hast received shelter with us from toms of thine own cre ating, is it thus thou repayest us for our kindness ? Get hence, and dare not again brave the vengeance of those who have sworn to have thy life.”

“ To the devil with you for an old witch. Your noise won't frighten me,” returned Simeon. “ I was born too near a wood to be scared by an owl ; so out of my way, and spare your breath, because you don't seem to have too much of it in stock. I want something from this tent, and that something I must have ; so out of the way I tell you, or it'll be the worse for you.”

“ Stand back, man,” commanded the figure, “ or old as I am I will try the effect of my staff upon thy shoulders,” and she raised as she spoke a stick of unusual length, and was in the act of striking, when Simeon dashed forward, seized her by the arm, and shoved

her with such violence that she fell to the ground stunned and motionless.

“Quieted you, at any rate,” observed the ruffian. “Now for the swag.”

After the lapse of a few minutes, he emerged from the tent, carrying a small box under his arm, and stood face to face with the constable.

“Bravo, Simeon,” said the latter, “you escaped all the knocks, but you did the best work of us all. That’s the jewel-box, is it? Hand it over, my chicken, for I was charged to produce it.”

“Were you now?” responded Grubbum coolly; “I thought you were dead. I could have sworn that the Keyhole Whistler had knocked the half of your head off, and that old Mother Carey’s niece, taking you for a porker, had scalded the other half, so I took upon myself the job of finding the jewels, and not a very easy job it was either, for I had to do violence to the feelings of no less a woman than Mother Carey herself. My way is the only way of stopping the female tongue. But as to the jewels, I think you may as well leave them to me. I can produce them as well as any one else, and you can bring up the men,

and make ready to march with the prisoners. Perhaps we may have some more fighting to do."

The peremptory tone of the speaker left the constable no other choice than to comply, and after moodily remarking that he (Simeon) had better look out if them jewels didn't get safe into Oldfogie's hands, he set about the duties at which Grubbum had hinted. The prisoners having been secured, and the amateur constables of the morning having been released from durance vile, the homeward march was commenced.

The journey was considerably enlivened by Gruffydd ap Shenkin's relation of his experiences of the thieves among whom he had fallen. Gruffydd, it may be mentioned, was one of the half-dozen assistants provided for Davies when the latter set out to execute his warrant in the morning, and a jolly dog was Gruffydd; alike in fair weather and foul, sunshiny and merry of heart was he.

"It is not possib' for me to help laughin' indeed to goodness *anwl*¹ now, when I think of what did happen to us. Here did they tie us, and twist us, and turn us like a lot of

¹ *Anglicé* (used idiomatically), "dear."

horses, head and tail, and I was thought we were going to be sold at *Ffair vawr* Langam-march.¹ Oh dear! it was splendid to see how the boys did bear under the trial! How unhappy Harry William Dafydd did look, to be sure. His face had the *gwnegion*² right enough, *dyn ai helpo!*³ Oh, and when they did say to him that they would tie him neck and toes together, and let him soak in the river for a full week, oh dear *anwl*, I was thought me would have the fitses there and then by looking at him. *Nawr*⁴ you see they did go down with him to 'r *afon*,⁵ and, *dear'n catto ni*,⁶ you should hear him saying his prayers. He had a big wife and a little family at home, and no one to *ennill*⁷ for them but him, and, O Lord, now, would they let him go, and drown the other rascallions as fast as they was like? There's a man for you now! He did say too as how we did deserve to be drown, 'cause we came to disturb quiet people, but as for him, he was 'bliged to come and do the job, or else he be transport for life by the jestis."

¹ *Anglicé*, Llangammarch Great Fair.

² Rheumatism.

³ "Goodness help him."

⁴ Now.

⁵ The river.

⁶ (Colloquial) "Goodness preserve us."

⁷ Earn.

“It was all owing to your jaw, Griff,” returned Harry, who seemed divided in his opinion as to whether he should laugh or feel angry. “Didn’t they tell you now that a soaking might stop a bit of it, and that after you had remained in the water a week they would take your parole?”

“Oh, don’t try for to put the *bai*¹ on me, whatever. I was be bad enough already. If it wasn’t for you now, we shouldn’t have had nothing to do with such a lot of dashed rascals,” said Ap Shenkin.

“And yet I’d take my oath, Griff, I heard you making love to Pinketta Carey, the old witch’s niece, tied up though you were.”

“Hark at the rascal dog, now,” said Gruffydd. “I only tell the girl that she was purty, and had two eyes as black as *calon yr afal*.² The rogue of a *lodes*³ was believe me too, me think, for she was smack my face more nor once’t, and she did give me such a splendid basin of broth—oh, *anwl*, it made me think as how I had the hare that made it by the tail. It was so nice, and what was better nor all, the girl had to feed me like a babby. They was tie my hands behind my back, you

¹ *Anglicé*, Fault.

² The heart of the apple.

³ Lass.

see, and she had to hold the basin to my mouth ; but indeed, now, it was all the sweeter for that. I was just biting her little finger once't—it came so close to my lip, and I was think, upon my soul, if it was come a bit further, I should have swallowed it like as if it was meat in the stew."

"Just as Dick William Shôn swallowed a mouse," put in one of the others, "thinkin' it was hops in the beer."

"Ach! you beast. How the deuce must you want to poke in your nose in my business? Mind your own matters, will you, and speak when you are spoke to," returned Gruffydd. "I was got the girl to say about the jewels a bit. She was tell me *distaw fach*¹ as how some ship went down on the coast, and man and boy was saved, but the man was afterwards die. This man, she said, was king in where he was come from, and he was have diamonds and gold in plenty somewhere about him, and how he made a will that the Captain of the *Sarah Spankin*——"

"*Spanking Sally*, sir. Hope you'll pardon me for correcting you, because I was aboard the vessel for a time," interposed Simeon Grubbum.

¹ *Anglicé*, "Very quietly—in mine ear."

“ Well, we’ll say it was the *Spankin’ Sally*, if you like,” continued Ap Shenkin ; “ but, for all that, the man as was going to die gave the pearls and the diamonds to the captain and somebody else that the *lodes* called a fish——”

“ The Shark, I’ll be sworn,” said Simeon.

“ Aye, that’s the name. The man gived it to them two in charge, and they did put the lot into a box of oak, which was in one of the tents, but she would not on no account tell me where, but that was ’cause she didn’t know p’r’aps, which I be sorry for.”

“ Never mind that, friend. I guessed where pretty well. No need of telling me that,” observed Simeon, in a meditative tone. “ Never mind where. I have it.”

The foot of the hill was reached in safety, and the victors had already begun to breathe more freely, when they were startled by the loud, shrill tones of a boatswain’s whistle, immediately following which came a cheer, and a cry of “ Lockbolt to the rescue ! ” Another moment, and Flashford bit the dust at the feet of the Showman, whom a strong, though friendly hand, dragged hastily aside, while a voice whose tones were familiar to

him bade him keep still until the fight had ended. This time the officers of the law found themselves sadly overmatched. Fight desperately as they liked the odds were too heavy. The best weapon which they were in possession of was but a cudgel, while their enemies were armed with cutlasses. Flashford's gun had, long ere the termination of the previous struggle, been wrested from him by Manhaggo, and hurled goodness only knew whither, but far enough out of reach, that was certain. The suddenness of the attack also proved of infinite advantage to the assailants, and, as a matter of consequence, of equal discomfiture to the assailed. Had it not been for the closeness with which the fight was maintained, many would have been the mourning homes that night at Rockington; long would the day have been rued on which the valiant and the brave gave ear to the promptings of beings actuated by griping avarice and low cunning. The assailants, moreover, confident of their superiority, used their weapons sparingly, and the skirmish ended by the surrender of the prisoners by the constable and his party, who had already had enough of fighting.

“Give up, boys, give up,” commanded Flashford. “We’re too heavily handicapped. Throw up the sponge, and let the jewels and Justice Oldfogie go to blazes. We’ve done enough for one day’s work, and if anybody finds fault with us, why let him try and do better, that’s all.”

“Very sensible advice, my friend,” observed one of the tallest of the attacking party, the leader of the opposition he might have been termed. “Very good advice, and if you’ll accept another bit from me, you would return at once with us to the camp and have a feed. Now, upon my word,” he continued, observing signs of disapprobation on the part of Flashford, “I assure ye, lads, that there’ll be right good welcome for you. Brandy, my fine chaps, such as never yet found its way to these parts we’ve a keg of——”

“An’ whisky galore: an’ lemons fine shtore. Jabers, what punch won’t we make!” put in an Irish voice, whose owner has already figured in these pages.

“Well, we’ll find a bag of lemons, I dare say,” observed Lockbolt, for it was he who had made the daring proposition.

“Off we was go, and say no more about

it. It is more nor we was get with old Sir Tatws a good bit, even if we did bring back the jewels, and as we was not bring them back we are very like to get good scolding, and perhaps be lock up, or as Harry William Davydd did say, be transport for life," observed Gruffydd.

Flashford's resolution, which had already begun to waver, was fairly knocked over by this last blow, so, after extracting an assurance from the leaders of the party, and giving his own word in return, that an honourable truce would be maintained between them and their, and him and his followers, he turned his back upon home, and marched up the hill arm in arm with Gruffydd Ap Shenkin, while Jack Hartington, at the rear, struck up the familiar and soul-inspiring strains of—

“For we are jolly good fellows,
We are jolly good fellows,
We are jolly good fellows,
Hip, hip, hip, hurrah !”

CHAPTER XI.

“ They were also, good people, much given to kings,
Fond of monarchs and crocodiles, monkeys and
mystery,
Bats, hierophants, blue-bottle flies, and such things,
As will partly appear in this very short history.”

MOORE.

THE spirits of the combined parties were so elate that not before their arrival at the camp was it found that no less a particular than the safety of the jewels had been entirely overlooked. With the noise of giving orders, the demonstrations of young Hartington at the escape of his friend the Showman, the joy of the latter at learning from his daughter that she had managed to leave the camp at the moment the others were made prisoners, with her young charge upon her back in her father's drum, the shouting, and hurrying, and hustling of each other by the women who were entrusted with, and were full of anxiety respecting, the preparations for the approaching festivities, the sobbing and crying, the laughing and hugging of friends just restored to each other's arms, the joyous welcomes of animals whom brainless people

have called dumb, diversified with shouts of "Belay there!" from our old friend Lumpkin, whom we take this opportunity of greeting after a somewhat protracted absence. "Sail close to the wind, damme, or ye'll run foul of a water-butt" (this to a young girl who was hastening to dress and lay out with becoming decency a newly-departed turkey). These, and the thousand-and-one other noises which went to swell up an indescribably pleasant hubbub, banished for a time every other thought from everybody's head. Gradually, and true to the rule which governs the world at large, the little society calmed down, and everybody and everything therein found his or its proper place and level.

While yet sniffing the savoury promises of a substantial repast, the Shark, addressing Flashford, asked him to be good enough to produce the box containing the treasure of which the camp had that night been so unjustly despoiled.

The constable, whose wits were never at any time of the brightest, rubbed his head with his palm, and muttered, in a half-dazed manner, "The jewels, the jewels; why, my good friend, I thought you had them."

"Come now," said the Shark, "let there be no beating about the bush in this matter. Order the man in whose custody they are to hand them over to the rightful owners, Captain Lockbolt and myself."

"Owners in trust, that is to say, for the shipwrecked youth of whom we have the charge," put in Loftewalde, with a touch of acerbity in his tones.

"Just so, just so. Our friend is not so particular, you see," said Lockbolt. "But come, Mr. Flashford; the jewels, if you please. Your worthy master can't say those were his, either by flotsam or jetsam, or any other sam. I know as much law as that, anyway."

"I'll swear to you now," observed Flashford, with a perplexed look, "that I thought you had them from the fellow who had charge of them. I never saw them afterwards."

"Afterwards! after what, man? What the deuce do you mean? Are your wits gone a wool-gathering?" queried the smuggler, angrily. "Come now, recollect yourself, and let's have as little dallying as you can—the matter's a long way too serious."

"If you'll exqueese me, sirs, I will make a little explanashion to you shentlemans all,"

said the Welsh tongue of our acquaintance Gruffydd. "You see, we was have wan good fight before we could have them purty things from you, and after we was done all the fighting, and was get all the knocks, a chap as was get no fighting and no knocks, as far as I could see, goes into one of your tabernacles over there, and was come out like a shot with the jewels in his arm under a box—I mean in a box under his arm, but there's no difference for that."

"Where is that gentleman, I should like to know?" said the Shark.

"That's a question which I was be axing myself ever since you did begin to talk angry, and, by St. Davydd, me was not able to give it an answer. I have been look here, and look there, but it was just like look for the needle in a hay of rick; the fellow with his box was be fly away the same as he run at the devil's tail. I am sure we could not be lose him sooner."

"But he was one of your crew, wasn't he?" demanded Lockbolt.

"Oh, *diawol damaid*,¹ indeed, sir; that's where you be mistake. If Llanfihangelcraig-

¹ "Devil a bit."

y-gonglen" (Rockington) "was own such a feller as that, I was leave the place at once, for too much shame. Some of our chaps was have good mind not to go with him, but they was persuade, and a Welshman's heart be not hard when he was have good spree of a chance—ah, yes, I was know what you be going to say," he added, nodding towards Lockbolt, who was about to offer a smiling explanation—"oh yes, I was mean, you know, good chance of a spree, but is my English was never very good after I was once begin to grow. Now I was think this: if we was on both sides not quite so fond of a battle, that chap wouldn't have got off with the jewels; and it is my *opiniwn*, without jokes now, that it was when we was pound away each at another that he was put out his toes on another road."

"Here, Manhaggo, Pat Brothovaboy, and you Obadiah Hopwell, myself and the Chief here have a word or two to say to you," shouted Lockbolt, upon whom a light had dawned as to the identity of the possessor of the jewels. Drawing the personages whom he had named out of the hearing of the others, he addressed them at length, giving them a

general description of the individual whom he desired them to seek for, and to bring back into camp when found. The listeners selected a friend each, and set out at once in quest of the marauder, and in their footsteps we intend to follow, leaving the others in the camp to enjoy themselves in their own fashion. The night was now pitchy dark, and it was consequently a not uneasy task for a person of Simeon's keenness and watchfulness to elude the utmost vigilance of the half-dozen people who were upon his trail. More than once (unconsciously of course) did Manhaggo the terrible come within an ace of clutching his prey. After floundering about without a shadow of a hope of success, fagged and disgusted, they determined that the chase should be given up. Their peregrination brought them, although by a very circuitous route, near to the Manor House at Rockington, and here the Whistler, observing a light to issue from one of the magistrate's windows, made a pause.

"Something up, or else the old rascal wouldn't be wasting candles at this time of night," remarked Obadiah.

"Something up, of course," returned Eze-

kiel, moodily. "Don't you know that he's expecting his men back with a prize? He little knows how both he and we have been done out of it."

"It shtrikes me, if ye'll but join in, boys, that we might pleh the ould imp a trick now," observed Racing Pat.

"Pat, you are made up of nothing but tricks, I believe," said Obadiah. "But none of your tricks to-night; we've had plenty of another sort."

"Annything for a shpree, ses I," answered Pat, "and I propose, av ye plase, that we'll ax his worship for a noight's lodging."

"You'll get kicked out and put in the stocks for yer pains," quoth Obadiah; "or perhaps get shot through the head, for I'm told the old chap always keeps a loaded blunderbuss by him."

"I'll try, at anny rate," said Pat, who, without another word, stepped towards the verandah window and tapped at it very gently at first, and then, finding no reply, a good deal louder. Still no answer, whereupon the intruder walked on tiptoe in the direction of the main entrance, where he repeated his knocks for admission, but with

no other result than the eliciting of a succession of very loud barks and growls from the ever watchful Snarley, who was located for the night in that quarter of the building.

“To the divil wid ye for an unchristian baste,” shouted Brothovaboy. “Send yer master here, you caterwauling rhinoceros, and tell him a gintleman wants to shpake to him. Av he axes yer me name, tell him to make his man open the door, and I’ll send in my card, and the bit shtick that I carry down your blessed throat at the same time. Lucky ye are, ould boy, that yer house is closer shut than that brute’s jaws, or, by the soul of my grandmother’s aunt, the boys yonder would get inside it, and you’d be a mourner in the morning.”

Finding it impossible to effect an entrance, Pat returned to his friends, and acquainted them, in a sad tone of voice, that “the fun had been shpoilt, for divil a mother’s son could be found to let him in to tell his business to his riv’rence. So back to the camp, ses I,” he added, “or we’ll lose all the frolic; and I belave, upon me soul, that it’ll be as good as the best wake I iver was at.”

Trudging homewards—we suppose we may use the word—the men cursed their ill luck with great gusto, and every now and then went further, for “Obie” declared it to be his solemn conviction that had the treasure lain at the bottom of the sea, or gone to Tophet before “the camp” had undertaken to be its guardians, it would have been the better for everybody. To be sent out on such a wild-goose chase, too, no one knowing whom they were to look after, for the captain had only described to them the person in whose possession “he believed” the prog was, was simply execrable, they thought.

At a distance of about half-a-mile from Oldfogie’s house they came across a party of the tribe who were returning in the same direction as themselves from a drinking bout at the village, which they had just left. These were in boisterous spirits, and Brothovaboy at once found himself in his element.

“Hooro, me bould blades,” he cried. “The sight of yer does good to the heart of me mother’s ouldest son. But who the devil have ye been wakin’, faith? Tare and ouns now, I went out on a kind of expedeshun wid lave to catch a thief if I could, but ne’er

a man nor baste who'd own to that occipashun have I come across, so we're returnin' home in mournin'. But wisht now: holy mither, here's the very gintleman we were looking for! Shtand, sir, in the king's name," he commanded, holding the knob of his stick close to the teeth of an individual across whom at a turn of the road they had stumbled. "Shtand, sir, and give an account to the gintlemen here for being found at such a lonely spot at this ungodly hour of the night. Ye've nothing to say, haven't yer; then give him a haist, lads, for by the rattling of his teeth I could tell ye on the vertchy of me oath he's the party we're afther looking for."

The poor wretch was seized without further parley, bound hand and foot, and, despite all his struggles, hoisted to the shoulders of four stalwart fellows, who trotted along with him as if he had been a child. The prisoner ultimately found voice to remonstrate with his captors.

"Put me down, ye thieves," he roared. "I am Titus Oldfogie, the magistrate. This jolting will break every bone in my body."

"It'll cure yez of the gout for certain,

thin," replied Pat coolly, and the remark was greeted with a shout of laughter.

"Where are you going to take me to? Put me down, I tell you, or you'll know to your cost to-morrow whom you have been playing with," bellowed the Knight.

"Not if we kill and salt ye to-night, ye ould pig," returned Pat. "Run him along, boys, and shake the breath out of him; he'll be all the more tender when he comes to be eaten. D'ye know, Mистер Justice, that ye are going into a camp of cannibals, and that they only went poaching on yer 'state because they wanted game for a change; they had got tired of babbies, ye see. Oh, but won't there be rejoicings over the fat calf we'll bring them to-night. Be jabbers, I shall make me fortin' by selling veal."

The Irishman's words inspired the magistrate with a secret terror. All the tales he had heard of the kidnapping propensities of the race into whose hands he had fallen rushed upon his mind with alarming celerity. He began to tremble in every limb, to sweat at every pore, and to proffer to his captors the most abject appeals for mercy.

"My good friends," he remonstrated, "set

me down and let me return home, and I'll send you game enough in the morning to make you a feast all round. Come now, I don't mind if I throw a hogshead of the best home-brewed into the bargain."

"Listen to the hypocrite," said Manhaggo. "Let him loose and he'd bring a squad of red-coats and hunt us down as soon as morning dawned."

"Let him loose! Divil a bit of it, faith," said Pat. "We came out to find a man, shure, and we've got one."

"But I am sure, my dear sir," said Oldfogie, "that I am not the man whom you came to search for."

"Don't be too sure of annything, now," said Pat. "It's all fish that comes to our net, and, begorra, we've landed a porpus this time. So on with him, my brave comrades. Oh, had I but the Showman's drum, by the mother of Moses, it's meself that would play the 'Dead March' in this funeral. But strike up, boys, to a sang av me own :

"We've caught the beak, oh, who shall speak
The glories of the day, boys,
When backs shall break and bones shall creak
Beneath a load of clay, boys.'

“ Now chorus :

“ ‘ Carry him to the burying ground,
Carry him along.

“ ‘ This grampus man, this bag of bran
Has ground our noses well, boys,
But fate will ban the grinding man,
His life ne’er closes well, boys.’

“ And chorus :

“ ‘ Then carry him, etc.

“ ‘ The biter’s bit, the striker’s hit,
Although ’twas not intended,
By him who’s caught that schemes well thought
Should thus have sadly ended.’

“ Now chorus :

“ ‘ So carry him, etc.

“ ‘ We’ll mash him up, and on him sup,
We’ll grind his bones to powder,
His haunch will make such fine beef-steak,
Then sing we, lads, the louder.’

“ Chorus agin :

“ ‘ Carry him to the burying-ground,
Carry him along.’ ”

Angry clouds flitted across the heavens,
while the hollow gusts of wind which shook

the tents of the gipsies also bore to their and to their companions' ears the wild exultant tones of "the chorus," which Pat and his friends roared forth from lungs stentorian. In the midst of proposing the health of "the gallant *cwprwl*"—the smuggler Captain and the gipsy Chief—in a humorous speech, Ap Shenkin was stopped, and asked to postpone what he had to say until the cause of the approaching demonstration should be ascertained. The wind now sang in a higher, fiercer key, which ended in a shriek as it flew away across the dark waste exterior to the camp. The fires of the encampment spluttered, crackled, and blazed the louder and the brighter as old Boreas whistled through them, carrying with him as he went an occasional spark, which, after circling and eddying in mid-air for an instant, descended, and was lost to view in the darkness beyond. The ruddy glow of the fiery element flashed and danced its reflection upon the mountain side, and on the waters of the little lake below, which now heaved and sighed, joining their tones in melancholy chorus with the night winds. The party bearing the magistrate approached, but before permitting them to put their burden

down, Pat insisted they should give one more "stand-sorr," after this fashion :

" Oh, loudly, lads, we'll sing and laugh,
We've reached our homes all right,
Our friends will help to kill our calf,
And eat his half to-night."

Chorus (in which the groans of the captive were mingling audibly) :

" Bear him to the shambles then,
There kill and dress him clean :
Tan his knotted hide, my men,
We'll eat him with potheen."

" Hooroo, hooroo, hooroo ! be the sowl of me grandmither's forty-second cousin, and they say she was a distant relashun of the Duchess of Kendal," exclaimed Pat.

" Cousin *German*, perhaps," suggested Jack Hartington.

" Lang life to ye, Master Jack, for the merriest young cock that ever put on shoe leather. I wish the command of the expee-deeshun of this blessed night had been entrusted to ye, and it's yerself, be me faith, would have kept me company in the crowin'. Niver a mother's son of our boys here would have sang a note if I hadn't kept shtirring

'em up. But I shamed 'em out of it at last, and they sang the choriss to the verses (which I made me blessed self as we were coming along) in style, me boy. Tip down yer load, boys, and lit the gintlemin see what ye have there; its meself shure that fargat ye were standing under it the while."

No sooner was the word given than the bearers shunted down the magistrate like a sack of wheat. He fell with a thud, and groaned in agony of soul at the shaking which his bones had received.

"Peh yer rishpicks to his majesty, or be the powers I'll take upon meself to teach ye a lesson of loyalty that ye'll little loike," said Pat to the fallen worthy, as the latter was making attempts to regain his perpendicular. "His majesty, avick," reiterated Pat, "who sits before ye in person; the King of the Ratcatchers, and no less a man ye're lying before."

A very prominent figure, indeed, was the individual referred to. Seated in front of what in camp phraseology was termed "the council chamber"—a sort of canvas quadrant in which were compartments, the entrances to which were respectively fixed north, east,

south, and west, the whole being covered over by a huge tarpauling—was the Rat-catching Monarch. A broad band hung over his shoulders and depended to his side until it came in contact with his top-boots, whereon was painted an endless procession of the rodent in hunting which he was believed to be an expert. A large old-fashioned threadbare coat, once blue in colour, with half-crown pieces for buttons, descending to his heels; a pair of faded kerseymere breeches, a red plush vest, an enormous hat which almost covered the little ferret eyes and threw a dark shadow over the yellow weazen face beneath; such briefly is a picture of that majesty before whom Brothovaboy commanded the magistrate to bend the knee and do reverence.

And if he obeyed, what of that? Many a man a thousand times more noble has done the same to a creature twice as contemptible. Little King Ratcatcher was as merry as a cricket, and had a heart that could feel—a somewhat unkingly quality, by the way—for the troubles and sufferings of a human creature, even though that creature were an enemy.

“Enough, enough,” commanded the little man, with a mock air of authority, “we are satisfied. Arise and partake of our bounty, slave though thou art. What ho, there, my cupbearer! fill this horn for the refreshment of our captive, who to-night must be our guest. Drink!” he added more imperiously than ever as, thrusting his left hand in his side, cocking his hat fiercely over his right eye, and giving his chest a prodigious expansion, he held the now filled drinking-horn towards the magistrate.

The latter, believing that he was asked to swallow a deadly potion, some juice of “cursed hebenon,” destined for a certainty to send him to his last account, waved the goblet from him.

“Drink, base, perfidious wretch!” thundered the little man, “or pay the penalty of thy contumacy with thy life.”

Still Oldfogie halted between the two opinions, whether he should drink or persist in refusing.

“It might, at the worst,” he thought, “be but some powerful narcotic, under the influence of which they intended to despatch him; or it might——” but the voice of the mon-

arch cut short any further speculation. "Drink, fool, the nectar provided for base mortality," commanded his majesty; but finding that his worship remained obstinate, the little man's temper got so much the better of his reason and the dignity which should at all times characterise the actions of personages of his exalted rank, that he dashed the contents of the horn in the face of the yet-kneeling magistrate, and actually so far forgot himself as to say, "Take it that way, then, and be hanged for a pig-headed idiot, although by so doing I waste as good a drop of cognac as ever was distilled."

Never in the whole history of royalty, we are sure, did such an ebullition of feeling occur publicly, or meet with such loud and unbounded acclaim.

The culprit Titus began to blubber and sob like any baby, and to appeal to "the gentleman" to have pity upon a poor helpless man, who was declining in life and a martyr to his country.

"Poor man! Poor old feller! Did they, did they, then?" said Obadiah soothingly, and wiping the suppliant's face with a handkerchief at one and the same time. "Did they

make him a magistrate, and oblige him to run all these risks, then? Naughty people! Let me dry his eyes, then, and they shan't tease him any more, poor child."

The gravity with which the words were spoken, and the appearance which the magistrate's face presented after Obie's manipulation, were too much. Jack Hartington fell over in a fit, while Brothovaboy himself declared he had been beaten. Obie's handkerchief had been smeared with charcoal dust.

This last act of indignity, however, saved the magistrate any further, if any had been intended, for it brought Flashford, Ap Shenkin, and half-a-dozen others upon the scene, who had previously been too busily engaged in discussing the merits of gipsy cookery and smuggled liquor to pay attention to anything else.

"Holloa," exclaimed the head-constable, "are you all gone mad?"

"They was got sterricks, whatever," observed Griffith.

"What's all the laughing about?" asked Flashford. "Oho! who have we here? Why, my master, as I live. Come, gentlemen, this is too bad," he added, turning with

an offended air to the magistrate's tormentors, but grinning like an ape, notwithstanding, when his face met theirs. "How on earth, sir," he said, facing his master again, "comes it that you are found here, and in such a pickle?"

"Oh, Tom, Tom," blubbered his superior, "save me from the hands of these wretches—I mean," he added hastily, "get these good people to promise that they'll let me go home again without further injury or molestation, and I'll tell you all."

"You'll promise this, of course, gentlemen?" said Tom, with a wink at those whom he was addressing.

"Oh, of course," replied Obadiah, who winked in return.

"Thank you, good friends, thank you," said Oldfogie, who, after prefacing his story with the observation that his anxiety for the return of the expedition had occasioned him to wander farther from the Manor House than was consistent with safety, proceeded to narrate the misfortunes that had befallen him, a portion of this history with which the reader has now become fully acquainted.

CHAPTER XII.

“A race of rugged mariners are these—
Unpolish’d men, and boisterous as their seas.”

The Odyssey.

THE recital of the worthy man’s woes being ended (they were afterwards declared by Ap Shenkin to have been enough to “melt the heart of a wheelbarrow”), it was unanimously voted that the captive had been sufficiently punished, and that to compensate him in some measure he should have an honoured place at their feast.

“Take a swig, my dear sir,” quoth Tom (in whom a liberal indulgence had bred familiarity), holding a drinking-horn towards Oldfogie. “Rare stuff, sir; ’twill give you an appetite for the trout which the ladies of the camp are cooking for you. Such splendid dark eyes,” he went on to say, almost in a whisper. “Make yourself agreeable, sir, and, damme, never a man amongst us will get on better with them than you. Such cooks, too! Hang me, if the smell of their hashes wouldn’t cause the teeth of a saw to water. That’s right, my cherub,” he added presently, as he

noticed the magistrate putting the horn to his mouth, and taking a deliberate pull. "Do in Rome as the Romans do, and ten to one but you're on the safe side of the hedge if a *bull* goes by. Come along, sir, and I'll introduce yer to the master of the ceremonies, a gentleman named Lockbolt, a particular friend of my own."

His worship was at once led near to a blazing fire, and Tom, ordering him to be seated, informed the company that his master, in consideration of the fact that a mistake had been made, freely forgave every one concerned in the affair, and would remain with them a short time to partake of their hospitality if they were agreeable. To this Sir Titus was about to offer an indignant remonstrance, but Tom, seizing him fiercely by the arm, said with the coolest air imaginable, "His honour, as you see, gentlemen, is rather the worse from the jolting of his carriage, and on that account I must be his spokesman for a little time to come. His vurtchip is very excitable, and doesn't know what he is saying at times; but he soon gets better, and then there isn't a more pleasant man agoin'."

The magistrate, after a moment's reflec-

tion, was convinced of the wisdom of his follower's act and words. He accordingly determined to remain quiescent, unless the strongest necessity should arise for an opposite course of proceeding.

"Is master, you see, was repent of all his sins just now, and I was advise him," said Gruffydd, "to suicide hisself on the pot as is stew in the hare—I was mean, you see, as how the hare was be stew in the *crochon*,¹ but I was always put the horse before the cart, as you know. And now, you see, if you was not mind I will ask you all——"

"But, my good friends," interposed Lockbolt, "we will, if you please, postpone all the yarn-spinning until the rations have been served out, and every man has had his allowance of grog, and is in a pleasant frame of mind. We've a little business to talk about also; so fall to, if you please, because I for one am as hungry as a polar bear after a long winter. Fall to, boys, and no more palaver. Find seats as best you can, make yourselves comfortable for the remainder of the night, for with daybreak we part company, goodness only knows when to meet again."

¹ *Anglicè*, crock or pot.

Catering for such a number of hungry stomachs was by no means an easy task, but it was done by the women of the tribe without any unnecessary fuss, and to perfection, so the owners of the aforesaid hungry stomachs declared. The feast was laid out and eaten in a style somewhat primeval; but what of that? Was empty stomach ever known to let such a trifling matter as the absence of a fork stand between it and repletion? Did ever watering mouth refuse the proffered savoury basin of stew because a spoon might be wanting? We should like to hear that mighty man of old—that bluff, fearless, generous, matter-of-fact, careless, never-to-be-sufficiently-moralised-upon, rough and ready individual, Esau, give an answer to these questions, and to a few others upon the same subject, which we might like to put. We would simply expect him to anathematise any and every invention which had a tendency to retard the progress of anything eatable—a mess of pottage for example—from the platter to the human gizzard. Geese baked in clay, boiled wild-fowl and fish, hares stewed with as many ingredients as go to make up a Cornish pie, all doled out plentifully to each

and every person assembled, and partaken of with appetites and digestions unimpaired by any of the nonsensical notions of a modern cookery book—what more could degenerate humanity ask for? What more could bountiful nature give?

To celebrate the successful landing of his cargo—which had been effected while the magistrate and his myrmidons were, to use Lockbolt's words, "making full sail upon another tack, and one upon which they had been shipwrecked;" thereby alluding, we presume, to the unsuccessful attempt of that functionary to secure the jewels, all of which has taken such a long time to say that we must begin again—to celebrate, we repeat, the successful landing of his cargo, the smuggler Captain produced two small kegs, which he christened respectively "Malaga" and "Cognac." Out came drinking-horns, out came pots of pewter and of tin, out came cups of earthenware, and in one or two instances of something better—heirlooms of dead and gone greatness—and from the first-named keg a bumper was served all round, and with a laugh and a shout, success was drunk to the ship and to her next expedition. Scarce had

the night subsided ere the shrill piping tones of the Ratcatching Monarch were heard declaring that loyalty was fast getting to be one of the things of the past.

“What business had you,” he demanded majestically, “to toast an inanimate compound of wood, canvas, and tar, before giving ‘the King.’”

“His majesty for ever, hooray, and three times three!” shouted Lumpkin, on hearing the little man’s words. “Where is there a king like him? Hip, hip, hooray, lads!” and the shout was echoed with maddening glee by every throat present.

“I am satisfied,” quoth the little man, jumping on the shafts of a cart, “at the tribute of respect paid to my dignity; and I thank you, my good friends and subjects all, for the honour you have done both to yourself and me upon this occasion—ahem! But that this is not quite the time for speechifying, I might have a word or two to say. Proceed to the next toast, if you please.”

“Divil a bit. Divil a bit,” commanded the voice of Brothovaboy. “Silence, lads, to a spache from the trone. The mind of his majesty is sure to burst his waistcoat unless

ye give him a awjence at once. We beg of yer hoighness to condescend us a word on the state av yer kingdom."

"Our ever faithful vassal has spoken well. Our mind is worn down with the affairs of state, and our soul is full even unto overflowing," began the Ratcatcher. "While our brother George, who is the nominal ruler of this realm, is engaged in the serene occupation of growing turnips, we are racked by the cares and troubles of a disordered state. Across the water, as you my loyal subjects are aware, Corporal Bony has been playing such tricks of late as have caused no small commotion amongst a number of old women seated upon rickety old stools which they call thrones. Thinking on Bony has made 'em contract a disease which the doctors call a 'shivery shake.' Brother George, good old man, never worries himself about this or any other thing in particular, but a lot of little rats who call themselves his ministers are in a mighty sweat about it. George thinks of nothing but taxation. That is a very fine idea you will admit. His people have been spending pretty freely of late, both in blood and money—George takes his meals as usual,

and sleeps well of nights notwithstanding. The state of our country is about as bad as it can be, but our brother draws his pay as regularly as ever, and this has a soothing effect upon his feelings. As for ourselves, we have viewed with overflowing eyes the struggles of the weak for life, and the very scantiest of its necessities. Could we have persuaded our brother to think a little more of them we would have attempted the task ; but no—turnips ! His mind is borne down by turnips as by a nightmare, while cabbages have entered his soul ! Rats he of course detests, and that is the reason why we live so wide apart. For the people with whom we have found a shelter from the storms of adversity, the waves of misfortune, he entertains a hatred unquenchable.” (Groans from the audience—“ To old Harry wid him ” from Brothovaboy). “ They swell not his exchequer, they rob him of what he deems a just tithe. This is a tune, lads, upon which we could fiddle a whole night long ; but drink, boys, ‘ Confusion to the tinsel monarch ; success to the one with the chink of the true metal in him ;’ though monarchs as a rule,

“ From Saul to Psalmanazar,
From Beersheba to Dan ;
From Georgie to Belshazzar,
Are humbugs to a man.”

“ Bravo, well spoken, by Jove !” shouted Jack Hartington. “ If you had been a quack doctor, my friend, and had made such a speech as that at a fair, you would have sold your pills by the ton, while if you sent it to a newspaper and got it printed, you and the editor would very soon become acquainted with the interior of a stone jug ; or you would be pilloried, or put in the stocks, perhaps. Lord, what *babes in the wood* you would have made, to be sure !”

“ And I say, lads, no more disparaging remarks about royalty in the presence of so many of its sworn servants, if you please,” quoth Flashford. “ It’s personal, you know, so let it drop.”

“ Right, right again,” put in Lockbolt. “ Avoid being personal : shun anything of that sort as you would old Jimmy Squarefoot ; but come, Hartington, my young buck, I don’t think a toast from you would be taken very much amiss. Out with it, lad ; don’t blush when it comes to your turn. Say something ;

whether it be wise or foolish we're sure to enjoy it."

"Well, well," began Jack, bashfully, hat in left hand, glass in right; "I give you 'The Ladies,' from her who ate the first apple to her who made the last dumpling."

"Hoorro," roared Pat. "The ladies, boys, drink to the health of every muthur's son of thim."

A perfect gale of laughter followed the Hibernian's words. After it had subsided the cup went round right merrily. More toasts were given, more nonsense spoken, and more laughter evoked, until, tired of the din, music was called for. In ready response a fiddler stepped forward, took his station in front of the central tent, and struck up a lively air. Partners were readily selected, and how they did foot it, to be sure! None of your solemn, stiff-starched funereal movements here, you may depend upon it. No bowing and scraping, standing still and blowing your nose, giving two paces and scratching your head, turning once round and handling your snuff-box—dear me no! Every one went to work with right good-will. Every girl who had a pretty ankle to show—(and which of them

hadn't?)—showed it without fear of spoiling kid boots at 7s. 6d. a pair. The men, too—Gruffydd Ap Shenkin notably—what calves did they not exhibit! That rare old Welsh nether garment, a *British penlun* (Anglicè, knickerbocker), possessed advantages eminently fitted for such a display, and the dancing of Gruffydd and his partner Pinketta Carey was declared to be perfection itself. While the merriment was at its height, Lockbolt and the Shark were in close converse at a little distance from the dancers.

“You must know, friend, that I have not been quite so forgetful of our interests as some whom I could name, although it *is* a jovial night,” said the Shark under his breath.

“Ah, I see,” replied Lockbolt. “That’s a shot in my direction, but you know sailors were ever light-headed.”

“Well, not so bad as that either,” returned the Chief. “I was going to say that with the exception of yourself and me, no one but old Mother Carey knew where the jewels were secreted. I left her in charge of the tent, believing that her Bedlam airs and her reputation as a witch would effectually scare away every intruder, but some demon or

other found a way to them through all. I sometimes think the old hag must have blown, and that after surrendering her trust she disappeared for fear of my vengeance, for not a trace of her have I been able to find since our return to camp. Of every one of whom I inquired I received the same answer; no one can tell what became of her after the attack made upon the tribe by our pleasant friend Flashford and his gang."

"If she has chosen the man whom I have in my mind's eye for a consort," returned Lockbolt, "old Bogus may surely be said to have had his own. The cat-face scoundrel that he is! Ill luck sails in his wake as sure as a storm follows a rolling porpoise. Egad, the fellow never wipes his whiskers but there must be a shower. I have wished him at the deuce a hundred times before this, but I found as much difficulty in getting rid of him as another old rover called Sinbad had in shaking off a certain chap called the Old Man of the Sea. Some of your people, however, have regularly frightened him and no mistake, so I don't expect he'll trouble me with his attentions again."

"Mean you Simeon?" queried the Chief

with an angry execration. "I thought him dead. Let him but once again come within the reach of these hands and I'd throttle him though a whole regiment had their bayonets at my breast—the miserable dastard! But, Captain, you and I have yet to talk over a plan for the recovery of these precious stones. Precious in a double sense—as the relics of a dead friend and commander of our race, precious as the only source of wealth to a child who has been cast destitute upon the world by the cruelty of the fates. But, softly; here comes young Hartington. We'll talk of this matter again."

"Some of our people yonder," said Jack, touching his hat to Lockbolt as he spoke, "have sent me hither, sir, to request you to be good enough to come and favour them with a song, or, at least, to give them the lead in some chorus or other, or something of that sort. Some of our entertainers also," he added, looking towards the Chief, "are strongly of opinion that they could do something in the same line provided you were to take the management. What say you, gentlemen?"

The two thus addressed laughed outright.

Lockbolt declared he knew less about singing than a whale, while the Chief averred that he had no more voice than a gander. Jack, with all the audacity which he could summon to his aid—and he was pretty liberally endowed with this quality, we must admit—persisted in his request, and backed it up so well with arguments of a nature most likely to convince the persons to whom they were addressed, that the consent of both men was at length given—“if it was only to get rid of your teasing, Master Jack,” declared Lockbolt.

A shout was raised by the merry-makers when they perceived young Hartington returning “with the Captain and the Shark in tow,” so Lumpkin expressed it. “No shirking, Captain,” continued that personage. “No excuses, sir. I know you’ve a capital voice, and can give us a song of your own make, too, sir, if you’ve a mind.”

“But really, my friends,” began Lockbolt, deprecatingly.

“Oh, now thin, Captin, by the piper of Brian Boru, ye musht give us a sang. It’s mesilf that ’ave heard ye sing before this, by the powers. So I make bold to say upon

the prisent occashun no excuses, av yer plase," said Brothovaboy with a bow.

"Sing, we command thee, or thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy delay," chimed in the voice of the Ratcatcher.

"Well, on condition that the Chief begins then," said Mark laughingly.

"Oh, come, you'll not get out of it that way," observed the Shark, with a good-humoured expression of countenance. "Here goes when silence is given; but you must promise to be every other verse with me, Captain."

"That I will," said Lockbolt, "so heave away."

Silence was at once observed, and the gipsy Chief began in a by no means unpleasing voice a tune of which the following were the words:

"The life of a gipsy is happy and free,
He chirps like the cricket or buzzes like bee;
No lawyers or doctors, no taxes or rent,
No bailiffs to track him, nor duns to torment."

"Hooray! Wind yourself up, my hearty. Give us another instalment of your song, and by the time you have done mine will be ready," cried Lockbolt excitedly.

The Chief, appearing pleased with his comrade's praise, shook his head at him as much as to say : " Your turn next, and I'll keep you to your word mind," after which manœuvre he thus went on :

" The Court with its satins and laces and gold
Can't boast warmer hearts, boys, nor spirits more bold :
Do brighter eyes glance, has the laugh truer ring,
Where palace-glare gilds them, where smiles on the king,

" Than under the night sky, with gems studded o'er
(Their like in a diadem monarch ne'er wore),
Than dwell in the greenwood, than bound on the lea,
Than camp under canvas, or rove over sea ?

" Has soaring ambition, on wicked schemes bent,
Most scope in a castle or down in a tent ?
Does gout or the bile, boys, a greater sway own
With Ishmael's descendant than king on his throne ?

" For powder or patches, for wadding or wigs,
For scents or cosmetics, who here cares two figs ?
We speak without mincing, and love without fear ;
What member of Swelldom knows freedoms so dear ?

" Then drink to the bonnie, the dauntless, the gay,
The staunch in the quarrel, the jovial in play,
We're bricks every one, boys, and each mother's son
Is a trump when required for fighting or fun."

After the applause with which the song was greeted had ended, Lockbolt, whose turn

had now arrived, put on a very doleful look, and declared that he felt queer. He was afraid, he said, that singing with a full stomach would do him a great deal of harm.

“Here’s a help to digeshun, then—my dear sir—my good—hic—friend—my old—hic, hic, chick,” said Flashford, whose legs were beginning to show signs of unsteadiness. “Swall—hic—this,” he went on, holding out a full cup to the Captain, who, for fear the liquor would be spilled, took it from him. “Gad, it would make a corpse music-ic-al—if you—hic—could only get one to shwallow’t. Fore George now’ll sing’self—hic—if you don’t, Cap’n, s’there now—”

“Sit down, Tom; you’re drunk,” commanded his master. “You to sing, pish! There’s no more music in you than in a rusty file. Go on, sir, if you please,” continued the worthy Knight, whom the drink was beginning to warm into congeniality.

“Well there’s no getting out of it, I see,” said Lockbolt, laughingly. “Now for a yarn, as sailors say. Jerry, lad, pipe all hands to silence, while I give a howl.

“We’re rovers brave and bold
Our bark lies in the offing ;

Now that her cargo's sold
Her luck let's all be quaffing.

“Will that do, boys? Hang me if it wasn't tremendous work, though—the fitting in of that last line. Hand us a cup, Jack, and perhaps the next verse will come easier,” said the Captain, who having taken a pull thus proceeded :

“O'er briny deeps we dance
From climates bright with beauty,
Our Spanish wines and France
's silks paid king no duty.

“His minions rave and swear
They'll sink her as she flies, man ;
Or storm our rocky lair—
Brave words, good John Exciseman.

“Your oaths are wasted breath ;
Your boasts made at a distance,
May save you wounds or death,
From fifty men's resistance.

“Who've arms both stout and strong,
Who know the way to use them,
Who ne'er will suffer wrong,
E'en though the king pursues them.”

Chorus of gipsies and smugglers :

“In tent, on deck, no storms we reck,
No matter what the bluster ;

Our cares, like chaff, will fly the laugh
That blows where'er friends cluster.
Then fill a bumper high, hurrah !
And drain the goblet dry, fa la,
Fal la, la la, la, la" (*ad lib.*).

Additional verse by the Ratcatcher :

" Let the king cast his net,
We have teeth left us yet,
We'll nibble through the mesh and away, sirs,
" He'd never stop the holes
Of the rats and the moles
Though he swore until black was his face, sirs."

General chorus :

" We've hearts light and gay
As the dancing spray
Or breezes that sport on the heather
For velvet or nap
We don't care a rap,
Our fingers we snap at the weather.
Then fill a bumper, etc.

" Let the cups clink, clink,
And every man drink
Success to the bold blade and brave, sirs,
Let his life be spent
In a gipsy's tent
Or rocked on the foam-crested wave, sirs.
Then fill a bumper," etc.

The singing, we suppose (although we

wouldn't like to take an oath that it wasn't something much more potent), had a soporific effect upon Flashford, who at its close might have been seen rolled up like a bundle of old rags near the fire, insensible to everything around him. Before the conclusion of the smuggler's vocal effort, notwithstanding the anxiety which he had expressed to hear the whole of it, Oldfogie also (suffering probably from the same complaint as his man) disposed himself to sleep. Their united snoring blended admirably with the bass in the choruses, as far as pitch may be considered; with respect to time, of course, they were out most lamentably, and more than once, and by more than one singer, had it been proposed to "stir them up for a couple of sleepy hogs that they were." Thanks, however, to the intercession of the considerate smuggler, they were allowed to snore on undisturbed.

The camp was fast subsiding into repose. Those who yet remained awake might have been counted upon the fingers of one hand, and by some of these a number of not overdried boughs were placed upon the almost dying fire to save it from total extinction. The men sat near it awhile, watching the

volume of light-blue smoke curling slowly and gracefully upwards, and occasionally fanning the embers into a glow with their hats. Presently a bright flame shot up into the smoke, and played and danced in its midst right merrily. The ascending glare revealed a face hideous, mocking, and horrible, leering and grinning upon the startled watchers. The men gave utterance to a cry of mingled surprise and terror as the creature, with hair erect and glaring eyes, seemed, salamander-like, to advance upon them from the very heart of the blaze. Suddenly the night air rang with a scream, wondrously and fearfully distinct. The tall, gaunt figure of Mother Carey was seen—her dishevelled elf-locks straggling in the breeze, her countenance deadly pale and bloody, her bony arm outstretched, her skinny finger pointing to the intruder, at whose feet, almost, she fell prone and insensible. Her cry aroused the sleeping gipsies; and Flashford—who had been dreaming that he was being buried alive—was startled into wakefulness by the commotion.

“Heavens and earth!” he thundered, after glancing towards the fire, and becoming aware of the cause of the alarm. “Grubbum, by all

that's good ! Seize him, fools, gaping idiots, and dullards that ye are ! The man who robbed your dead, who has taken from the living his inheritance, who has—" But without waiting to finish the sentence, he made a spring in the direction of the cause of all the fright ; but the object eluded his grasp, and darted away into the gloom. Manhaggo promptly joined the constable in the chase—but it was too late. The figure of their visitant was seen amongst the dancing shadows of the tent fires, ascending the mountain side, and with almost phantom suddenness penetrating the outer darkness, by which, as by a curtain, he was effectually screened from their view.

CHAPTER XIII.

" I do remember an Apothecary."

SHAKESPEARE.

EVERY character in this veracious history has, since author and reader parted company at the end of the previous chapter, grown ten years older. Although the period is a long one, the seventh of the allotted span of

human existence ; although for more than one of the personages who have figured in our pages it may have been a most eventful one, the author, even at the risk of being considered arbitrary, regarding it chooses to maintain the strictest silence. It is near the then very unimportant in point of size, though surely, if slowly, growing (very slowly growing, for at the time of this writing it has not blossomed into an incorporated entity) town of St. Tydfil le Martyr, in one of the southern counties of Wales, that we next find materials for the development of our narrative, as the faces of three persons whom, in the turmoil and hurry of the scenes which we have attempted to describe, we have (perhaps unfairly) kept a good deal in the background, appear in view. When we say that the oldest of the trio was no other than our friend Showman Loftewalde, our readers will have little difficulty in identifying the others. Indeed, we have no wish that he should have any, or that he should be mystified in the slightest degree concerning the younger members of the group ; and to show him that we are in earnest respecting that which we have just written, we beg to

inform him at once that they were the Showman's daughter, Emmeline, and his son by adoption, Alberto. In person the elder Loftewalde (whom we don't remember having previously described) was of about the middle height, and somewhat slightly made. He was accoutred in a long overcoat which reached nearly to his heels, opened at the breast, and displaying a red plush vest with bright yellow buttons. Beneath the stock, which held his Pandean pipes, peeped the frill—worn and frayed at the edges, it is true—of a white linen shirt, a remnant from the wreck of better fortunes. Nether garments of faded nankeen with leather gaiters, and heavily-soled shoes, completed his equipment, if we except a hat, crestfallen and weather-beaten as the owner. It had a band of crape round it, which by long exposure had become whitey-brown; but what a tale, reader, lay concealed in its folds! As memory's lightning-flash ran along the far-off, dimly-lighted headlands of the past, it revealed to him who had assumed that mourning zone the face of a being who had flown away from him in the heyday of her youth, aye, and of her beauty too; for though voyaging on a

sea of trials had robbed her cheek of its damask, her step of its lightness, her figure of a great deal of its graceful motion, it had also endowed her with a loveliness beatific as that of a vision. Time and sorrow, task-masters inexorable, had burdened the shoulders of Showman Loftewalde with a load under which they were now considerably more bent than when first we introduced him to our audience. The icy fetters of wintry age had weighted heavily his limbs, unfitting him almost wholly for battling as of yore with the ills of a fortune of which he had more than once declared himself the plaything. Days, fleeing like shadows, had dusted with snow his beard and hair, while the canker-worm care had eaten its way to his heart, sapping the foundations of his existence, and leaving him but the wreck of his former self. His brow, lofty and noble, had been sadly furrowed by the ploughshare of the general Destroyer. The shades of death's endless night seemed thick and fast crowding round him; the buffetings which he had received during his long tempest-tossed career had exhausted him, and, hope-deserted, he seemed fast sinking into that flood which had carried

millions before him to the unknown. Travel-stained and weary, the Showman was reclining upon a smooth patch of turf by the side of the road, about a mile and a half from the town which he intended to enter. Beside him sat his daughter, her white forehead shaded by her light brown hair, whose waves, gilded by the setting sun, imparted to her features a radiance celestial. Gentle, loving girl! beautiful as a morning flower, and as spotless and sweet. At her feet reclined Alberto, now a lad of some fifteen summers, who wore his cloak in such a fashion as to effectually conceal his tights and spangled dress. His hair, which was of a jetty hue, was worn long, and tied behind with a band of ribbon. Smiling mischievously as he did so, he strummed a guitar in the ear of a dog that had coiled itself up in a corner of the aforesaid cloak. The sound instantly roused the animal, who extended its jaws, gave a gape, stretched its form to its full length, shook a cloud of dust from its coat, and through its shaggy eyebrows watched with its sharp grey eyes the movements of its friends.

“Oh, but I say, Father Loftewalde, is

yonder the place we are going to stay at to-night?" queried the lad. "I don't think Emmy could trudge it any farther. How far have we come from where the fair was yesterday? I forget the name of the little village now; indeed, I could never tell it; it was Welsh, and too much for me."

"Not far, lad, not far; that is, to you and Emmy it might seem a good distance; but never mind the distance. Half an hour's walking will bring us to the place where some of our friends are, and have been for some time past, and where we will remain for a short time to recruit ourselves," said the Showman, in an absent, dreamy manner.

"You may well say that, father," exclaimed the girl. "You do indeed require rest—a long rest that would bring you back some of your old spirits again. I am told that the people we are going among are kindly; perhaps we may find the means of procuring you that rest from toil which I am sure your nature must crave for, although I have never heard you complain."

"Hush, girl. Rest I shall find, and that ere long, but not of the kind which you desire for me," replied the other, sadly.

“Father, father,” cried the girl, bursting into tears, “do not, do not, I entreat you, thus give way to despondency. It is so unlike your old self, so unlike what you have always until lately been saying, that to hear you talk so is enough to break one’s heart. Alberto and I must redouble our energies, and surely, father, between us we will be able to keep you from want.”

“Good girl! Kind, loving child,” said Loftewalde, with a fond look at his daughter. “Ten thousand blessings upon your head; but as to redoubling your energies on my behalf it is impossible, quite impossible. You have done all you can, more it would not be possible for you to do.”

“Oh, ah! but father,” put in the boy, “I have hitherto done nothing but scamper about, and cause you all sorts of trouble. Come now, I’ll set to work in earnest. I’m a man now, pretty nigh, and you wait, that’s all. See if I don’t put you all right. I am sure I shall one day do something to pay you for all your kindness to me.”

“No more, children, no more,” returned the Showman, “Let us set forward to the place where we are to rest for the night.

To-morrow there is a large fair to be held, and let us hope that there may be some work to do that may turn us in pence enough to keep away the wolf for some time to come. But, stand aside, boy, here is a carriage coming."

The noise of rapidly-revolving wheels caught the Showman's ear so suddenly that he made a hasty step to the side, well-nigh dragging his daughter and the boy along with him, so fearful was he that the approaching conveyance might drive over them at the bend of the road. An instant later, and a carriage, drawn by a pair of splendid blood horses, whirled by them like a meteor.

"That was a narrow escape," observed Loftewalde. "We were either so busily talking, or musing, or both, that neither of us took notice of what was coming. But, Albert, lad, turn to the light here, my eyes are not so good as they used to be;" and, suiting the action to the words, he whirled the boy round to the setting sun, and scanned his countenance long and thoughtfully, as if intent upon reading its minutest lines.

"It must have been a dream," he muttered to himself, "or perhaps the foolish speculation

of a disordered fancy. Things appear to me of late blurred and indistinct. Yet the impression remains with me that there was a resemblance. Poor boy, poor boy! What will become of him when I am gone, and of Emmeline too? But for them, my life would not be worth the holding. Heaven knows how hard we have struggled with fate through the years that have gone by, but in the future how will the fight be maintained should the bond of union between us be broken—should even one of us succumb to the common enemy? For their sake would I be spared yet awhile, but if it is otherwise ordained we must uncomplainingly submit.”

As these melancholy thoughts coursed through the Showman's mind he resolutely kept his face turned in another direction, lest the agony which he knew must be depicted upon it should be noticed by his youthful fellow-wanderers, and cause them pain. The boy, apparently absorbed in thought, was gazing at the clouds, while Emmeline, who held his hand, walked silently by his side, as though bent upon allowing him an undisturbed reverie. Not so Toby, however. Lightest in heart of the three, he gambolled

and frisked before them merrily as ever ; now chasing a fly, now engaged in an interminable race after his tail, and then careering madly onwards, as though under the impression that that portion of his anatomy was a long way ahead, after which he would sit upon his haunches until his friends came up, when he would turn a somersault and scurry away again as before.

Our travellers shortly found themselves in the main street of the little town, and, attracted by the loud laughter of a crowd which had assembled in an open space just a few yards to their right, they turned in that direction to ascertain the cause of the jubilation. The astonishment of the Showman may be imagined when he heard himself addressed by name by an individual who appeared higher by a good deal than any of the rest, for the simple reason that he was standing upon a chair.

“ I tell you, my good friends,” said the speaker, “ that although to-night I am addressing you for the first time, I am not an utter stranger to the place. You may, therefore, take my word—the word of an honest man—for what I have been telling you, and in

proof of the wonderful results of my medicine just look at the gentleman who is but now approaching you. Although I don't mean to say, and don't want you to believe, that that there man was well up in years when Adam played marbles, and Eve made doll's clothes, yet what I tells yer is this—that person yonder, whom I knew looking just as old as he does now when my grandfather was born, has dined for the last fifty years on nothing else but the celebrated Extract of Mari-carbonicam. If you don't believe my words, look at the labels on the boxes and bottles in which I retails the stuff in its liquid and solid state, or, to bring myself down to the level of the very simplest child among you, in elixir and pills. As I was saying," continued the orator, "do you think, gentlemen, that the person who now stands listening to me would be able to carry such a box upon his shoulders if it wasn't for Maricarbonicam. This is the secret for which mankind in all ages of the world have craved in vain—ahem. Had I lived in the days of Old Parr, and got him to take my medicine at one shilling the box, or two shillings the bottle—mark well, friends, the bottles contain

as much three times over as the boxes, so there is a great saving by taking the larger quantity—had he taken this here medicine in time he would have lived on till now, or if he hadn't, he would have been twice as old when he died, which would have been the same thing."

"Oh, gammon," here broke forth from the crowd, "we won't believe that neither."

"What do I hear?" resumed the Doctor. "Is there any gentleman among you as disputes my word? Let him come forward like an honest man, and say what he means, Nobody comes! Very good then. It is a sign as all of you takes me to mean what I say—nothing more nor less. Is there a doctor among you. Let him come forward if he dares, and question me in the Latin language, gentlemen—that will show you my qualifications; and let me ask of you as a favour, if I couldn't answer the fool according to his tomfoolery, to take me in my chair and lay me under the waters of the Tave yonder—for that I understand is the name of your river—and let your young men and maidens sing over my unworthy carcase those words from

the 'Witch's Glee' in 'Othello,' commencing—

“ Full fathoms five thy father lies ;’

or that other fearful melody from Johnson's Dictionary, the first line of which says—

“ I'll not beguile thee from thy home.’

That, gentlemen, will give you a proof of my knowledge, and whether what I says is true or not true, right or wrong, according as your notions goes, or as mine are, or *worse and worser*,¹ as the Greek philosopher saith.”

The Showman could not help indulging in a laugh at all this farrago. Turning to his daughter he whispered a few words in her ear, the meaning of which she no sooner caught than she stared at the Doctor in surprise, after which her features brightened, and she gave a nod confirmatory of her parent's words. The Doctor, having caught her glance, bowed profoundly to her, a proceeding which had the effect of sending all eyes in that direction, to the intense discomposure of poor Emmeline. The Doctor, perceiving this, at once resumed his oration.

¹ Does the hignorant hass mean *wice wersa* ?—*Printer's Devil*.

“Friends,” quoth he, “you have this very minute had a most wonderful instance of the power of my words. The gentleman yonder” (here the eyes again sought the spot where our travellers were supposed to be standing, but they had gone), “I meant to say the gentleman who stood there just before you looked round, has not, to my certain knowledge, enjoyed the luxury of a laugh for the last ten years, and you all heard him laugh then. That is testimonial number one to the wonderful tonic and healing properties of the world-famed Maricarbonicam. Now listen, gentlemen, to testimonial number two. I should say in this place that these testimonials is perfectly ginuine, and can be inspected at my house at Brimigem, where the pills is made, in the handwritin’ of the testimonialists themselves, so that there can be no mistake about that, anyway. They are also printed—and what is in print must be true, as every one knows what is any scholar at all—upon the wrapper of each of the boxes, as a hextra precaution, so that the medicine may not be the only thing as will have to go down ; besides which, you have all the light reading gratis and for nothink. For

the benefit of those as is not thorough masters of the English langwidge, I will just read you one or two of them :

“ ‘ To Professor Thomasino Bolusem.

“ ‘ DEAR SIR,

“ ‘ I was afflicted many years with a stomach on my chest, and could neither sleep night nor day. I paid scores of pounds to doctors, tried at least twenty hospitals and infirmaries, but all without no use, until a friend put your invaluable remedy in my way, ever since which I took the first dose I was a hex-changed being. I shall recommend your Elixir wherever I goes to as the greatest blessing never bestowed on mankind.

“ ‘ Yours with affectionate gratitude until death do us part,

“ ‘ TABITHA WIMPERWELL.’

“ There’s a beautifully written letter for you, gentlemen. It is so full of pathos that my heart bleeds to think of the sufferings as that woman must have gone through before meeting with my inestimable medicine. Now here’s another from a sailor as was ship-wrecked at the source of the Nile, who saved

himself by clinging to a threepenny loaf, and who lived three days and three nights upon the top crust, when he was picked up by the *Mary Ann*, of Sheffield, and treated by the skipper to a box of my pills, which he always had by him, and which at once restored the appetite of the nearly drowned man, which it would otherwise have perished for ever, owing to his having lived for such a length of time on dry rations. This is how the honest tar writes :

“ ‘ Shiver my topsail forelights, if you are not the best rumgudgeon of a larboard bowsprit what ever made pills into mortar. [Ah, well, that was a mistake; he meant, gentlemen, “ pills in a mortar.”] May I be keel-hauled for a twelvemonth and a day in the Dead Sea, which flows through Noman’s Land at the rate of 150 knots an hour Nor’ West by Nor’, under bare poles in a dead calm, if you are not a regular old hunks. [Hunks, in seafaring langwidge, gentlemen, means “ benefactor of his kind.” It is a hexplanation I got from a book entitled “ Stray Thoughts, or Random Jottings, by a patient of Bethlehem Hospital.”] If I had followed

the prescription on your pills to Davy Jones's locker I should have been cured much better nor I was; and believe me to be yours sincerely as ever before,

“ ‘ HARRY TARPAULIN.’ ”

“ Now what could be more manly, straightforward, and touching,” queried the Doctor, pathetically. “ I appeal to you—which most of you, I dare say, that has never seen a ship can tell—does not those sentences of the brave mariner go straight to the pit of your stomachs through the organs of indigestion? Answer me with a clear conscience; am I right, or would you try and make a fool of a clown and be hanged?”

“ Testimonial No. 9,996,257, and the last which I shall trouble you with, runs thus:

“ ‘ MISTER PROFESSOR,

“ ‘ Your stoof have done wonders in my family whatever. It cured me in three days of a complaint which I could not for the life of me find out what it was. I was advised to stand on my head for 39 minutes twice a day, but all in vain. Then my wife, as her name is Nancy, was had a complaint

about the weather; it did cure her, too, besides mendin' a pair av bellus and puttin' a new leg under the table. I have likewise found Nancy washin' the flooar with it with good effectks, while the pills is hexcellent for cleanin' brass kandlestiks. Our pigs gets as fat as butter on 'em, while if rats take 'em it's pison.

“ ‘Yours effekshoolly,

“ ‘DAVID WILLIAMS.’

“ ‘Please address No. 19, the same place as before, and make use of this tistymonyall as whatever you may think please to be fit.

“ ‘P.S.—Sind me as much more of it as you like, and I will settle with you as before.’

“ Gentlemen, friends of truth, lovers of the marvellous in nature and art, although I perceive some of your countenances wearing a smile, yet allow me, as a man upon whose bare word you can rely, to assure you in all sincereness that the medicine is what it is represented to be, which it can't be doubted for a moment that it is. You who have never studied geology, physiology, anatomy, natural history, or any other history, chemistry, the influence of the stars, termed

astronomy ; you who know less about your own diseases and the remedies proper for their cure than the very dogs at your gates, which, when sick, will find out herbs, and plants, and roots, and flowers wherewith to physic themselves ; you who have never, as I have, made love to nature, courted science, wooed philosophy, ahem—and—and—and—yes, and wedded the muses, which of you can lay his hand to his heart and say, in the glowing language of the Poet-doctor who now addresses you :

“ From streamlet and mountain,
From brooklet and lea,
From river and fountain,
I’ve brewed best herb tea.

“ From hill and from valley,
From hedges and ditch,
From lakelet and alley,
Where mosses grow rich.

“ I’ve culled the best balsams,
I’ve dried them and hung,
Through storms and through sunshine,
Their virtues I’ve sung.

“ But ne’er could he pick ’em
Who knows not the clue
To the Maricarbonicam
I sells unto you.

Which of you, I ask, which? Echo answers which?

“Yes, I repeat it, gentlemen, whether I ever said it before or not, that never in the whole course of human experience was there such a medicine found, and all at one shilling the box, or two shillings the bottle. Now, I see a gentleman yonder who wishes to purchase some of this invaluable compound. In one moment, sir; but you must first allow me to make a few remarks, the proper understanding of which will be of infinite use and benefit to you when you comes to take the medicine. I was just about to observe that the discovery of this most extraordinary remedy was not achieved without difficulty or danger. No, friends! but the far-off Egyptian country which gave me birth has reared many such noble sons. In the pursuit of the essence of this never-to-be-sufficiently-praised vitalising and easily-to-be-swallowed Maricarbonicam, I’ve been a wanderer over deserts vast and dreary, whose inhabitants clamoured for my blood. I’ve crossed the Savannas, slept with the Redskin in his wigwam, swum the Amazon with a thousand alligators after me in full cry—all-

gators, gentlemen, is creatures indigenous to or not known in this country; they are some'ut larger than white mice, and rather more ferocious, although if you have the courage to stare them well in the face, they runs away from yer like a flight of sparrows. I've traversed prairies boundless as the ocean, and been obliged to sacrifice my horse to the capacity of three separate troops of wolves and buffaloes who were chasing me, yet I held on, and had the danger been ten times as great, your beaming countenances, and the thought that I have been the means of saving millions of my fellow-creatures from suffering has repaid me for it all. Now, these pills, as I have once before said, are thoroughly adapted for all the evils which the human anatomy can give rise to. And what is anatomy? some of my hearers may ask. It is, in plain langwidge, the study of skin and bones. Bones, I may remark in general, is dry and hard, and there is a good many of them in the human system, as distinguished from that of the insect world. Brain, nerve, muscle, ligament, membrane, tendon, cartilage, and blood is not bones, but ribs, vertebræ, teeth, and nails, is. Everythink else is skin, if I

may except hair, which is a thin, dry, easily-bent filament, growing from and rooted in the skin. It is of various colours, indigo and green excepted ; of different lengths, from the nigger's wool to the Chinaman's pigtail, and worn in various styles, as many of my hearers must be aware. About the most important part of the human frame, anatomically considered, is the stomach—the seat of digeshun, the larder of the carnivorous biped. Take away the stomach, and what is there left of mortal man worth living for? Stomachs may be of two kinds, the empty and the full. These may be again sub-divided into an infinity of classes, such as the half-empty or semi-satisfied and the partially full or nearly satiated. Then, again, there are the delicate stomach and the horse's stomach — one of which turns up its nose at everythink, while the other can digest anything from a sheep's head to horse-nails and fish-hooks. A good deal more might be said on this subject, but from what you have already heard, you cannot help seeing the amount of importance to be attached to a study of this wonderful organ. Keep in mind the old proverb what says, 'Once let the larder go wrong and it's

a case of pickles which nothing can by any possibility set right unless it be a regular course of Maricarbonicam in both forms—fluid and solid—elixir and pills.’ The elixir, I should state, may be either taken externally or rubbed internally over the part infected; if both methods was adopted it would be doubly efficacious, and cure in half the time. Now, I’ll trouble that gentleman to renew his order, and you, good friends, all to follow his example. If you are not unwell at the present moment, you should invest notwithstanding. Recollect, sickness cometh like a thief in the night, and you should all have your boxes ready or your bottles unstoppered.”

Led away by the Doctor’s eloquence, his listeners made their purchases with a recklessness truly astonishing. His stock was cleared off to the last box and bottle, and he congratulated himself—as well he might—upon the successful issue of his labours. Having rewarded a youth who for two mortal hours had held a pole to which was attached a flaring oil-lamp surmounting which, on about a square yard of canvas were painted the words :—

THOMASINO BOLUSEM,
Professor of Botany
and
Egyptian Anatomist.



Man, know thyself ; or for particulars apply
to the above.

After, we say, having rewarded this youth with a sum of sixpence, and bestowing a similar donation upon another young ragamuffin, who for a similar period had kept suspended by a leathern strap from his neck a huge tray on which was, or, strictly speaking, had been, arranged a large quantity of boxes and bottles, the Professor announced his intention of holding forth the following night upon "Anatomy" and kindred subjects, put out the light and bent his steps towards a house in the outskirts of the town, whither we, the chronicler of a few of the most precious and learned of his sayings, intend following him.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Fortune is painted plind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is plind ; and she is painted, also, with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation.”—*Fluellen*.

THE great resort for travellers of every grade at the period of which we write, in the town of St. Tydfil le Martyr, was the Mumpers' Inn, which was situated in that part thereof exterior to which the scenery was (or was supposed to be) of a sylvan character, on which account that particular quarter had received from the inhabitants the designation of the “ Distant Field.” The exterior of the building was frowning, uninviting, forbidding, repulsive even. It seemed to lord it over the few timorous, shrinking little cottages which had been erected in its neighbourhood, like a cur in a company of cats, or a playground bully among his fags. Its windows reminded you of the cheeks of an old Court beauty, or the eyes of a prize-fighter—there was absolutely no end of patches upon them. In the centre of one of these apertures was stuck an

old square piece of cardboard, whose dingy opacity rendered daylight a luxury which the occupants of that particular apartment must go elsewhere to enjoy, on which had been scored (doubtless with a burnt stick, or with one which had done duty in the blacking-bottle), in a nearly diagonal direction, the following orthographical puzzle :

L O D
G E I N S F O
R T R A
V I L L A R S A N
D E T I N O U S .

At the only debating club which, as far as our knowledge goes, the little town ever boasted, this singular inscription was long and fiercely discussed. The chairman and a strong following firmly believed it to be Sanskrit, while the Vice, who, independently of being a wag, was always, as in duty bound, opposed to his brother magnate, headed an almost equally strong opposition, who were confident that it was Irish. After many eloquent and exciting debates, in which neither side would give way an inch ; after ballots had been taken, in which the numbers

were always equal, the question was on one memorable night finally settled by the unanimous adoption of the suggestion of a stranger, that the inscription should thenceforth and for ever be deemed to be—Greek, every word of it. A record of this famous resolution may be inspected, along with other curious things of the past, at the vestry offices of the good little town even at this day. The architecture of the noble hostelry was of no fixed type, the door-scraper being early Norman, the centre window on the second story florid Gothic, and the tallest of its two chimneys Antediluvian. If the exterior presented appearances which might clash somewhat harshly with one's notions of the æsthetical, the interior was one elaborate study of chiaro-oscuro, old boots, broken bottles, and bad odours. Upon its white-washed walls the charcoal crayon of the village Hogarth had been busily at work. Quaint sayings, rhymes (?) illustrative of the times and manners, grotesque figures of men and animals—among the latter the monkey being the favourite species—curious devices of flags and anchors, ships in full sail and in no sail at all, an outline or two of celebrated

members of the fancy, as they appeared in certain historical and tremendous encounters, "Tom Strutwell" as Rolla in "Pizarro," "Moll Davies" at sixteen, "Napoleon Buonaparte at the Battle of Austerlitz," "Dick Turpin and Tom King," "The Storming of Badajoz," "The finish in the three-mile spin between the Birdcatcher and Jack Stagley," a full-length portrait of Bampfylde Moore Carew, and a number of other less important sketches, blended (as though they had been shaken up in a bag) into a harmonious whole, and formed a truly wonderful series of panelling and fresco, whereat the visitor was supposed to stand entranced. You caught all these sights from the doorway; but if you had the courage to enter, and stare straight at the fireplace, to your left, the sight which then met you would well repay your temerity. There, majestic in deportment, with one hand gracefully resting upon the spoke of a mangle, and coloured to the life with red chalk, stood the figure of the proprietress of the establishment, a frilled cap environing her venerable crown, about which, forming a circumambient halo of sanguinolent flame, ran the words "Dame Fortune and her

Wheel." The furniture consisted of two tables extending the whole length of the room on either side, and a large complement of the very roughest and ricketiest chairs and stools. The establishment boasted of a real candlestick, minus its slide it is true, but a candlestick notwithstanding. The loss in this particular branch of the household economy was made up by the enlistment into its service of a number of bottles which were often obliged to do duty as receptacles for drink and for tallow in one and the same day; nay, sometimes in one and the same half hour. Indeed, of the two kinds of candle-holder, the dame had been repeatedly heard to express her preference for the one made by the potter, and she had been known to observe, when an over-fastidious visitor dared to raise a voice of remonstrance against the uses to which some of the aforesaid bottles were put, "You shut up, now. You knows nothink about keepin' a lodgin' 'us. Bottles comes for nothink, but candlesticks we has to buy;" and the mouth of the grumbler would be closed for ever by the rebuke. Should, however, any one more reckless than his fellows venture even to breathe his dissatis-

faction with the good lady's answer, she would immediately supplement it with the terrible words, "If you can find better anywheres else, you be welcome to go," and this would inevitably prove a clincher; the audacious rebel against the time-honoured institutions of the place would take the first opportunity of retreating into a corner, there to hide his diminished head until the storm of the great woman's wrath was over.

The company assembled at the house on this night was truly of a motley character. An artist of cosmopolitan tendencies would have been delighted at the scene presented to him. Seated upon a high stool near the fire was an individual towards whom the attention of every one present seemed to be turned. He had a wooden leg, which, poised high in air, was describing circles with a bewildering rapidity; a cap, with which some good-natured person had graced the timber limb, giving a very fantastic appearance to its gyrations. These revolutions, it might be noted, were timed to the huzzas of the audience at some tale which the possessor of the wooden leg aforesaid was then in the course of relating. The rejoicings were cut

short by the opening of the door and the appearance of a person in the doorway, who, box on back and cap in hand, commenced reciting a doggerel rhyme in a loud "razors-to-mend" tone.

"Beneath this roof a man may find
The scum and dregs of human kind,
Some lame, some blind, in rags and jags,
With frowsy, ragged, old scran-bags.

"See tinkers who, with leather metal,
Will mend a saucepan or a kettle,
Italians with white mice and monkeys,
Ragmen with dirty dogs and donkeys.

"Hindoo scent-makers, mean and base,
The worst of all the human race ;
Beggars from St. Patrick's land,
Who always will hold out a hand.

"Wandering about like sons of witches,
With sovereigns sewn up in their breeches,
All should in quod be breaking stones,
The lazy, idle vagabones."

"Oh ho! thank you for nothing," roared several voices in response.

"Thank hevin I was out of it that time," said an old chap who was unwinding from his head the string that held thereon a full-rigged representation of the *Sarah Bell*, "wot foundered in the month of May, ven it vos a

stormy day, in vich the wessell lost her way, and ran among the rocks, sirs."

"Well, I'm blest," he continued, "if that doctor chap can't turn his tongue to anythink. "But, I say, old Poisenem, Hocussem, Bolusem, whatever yer blessed name may be, don't you think you was rather hard on yer shipmates that time? You sails in the same boat, as yer knows, and, dash it, you should never run down those of yer own cloth. Couldn't you have added a line about

" 'Cussed 'lixir and pill boxes,
Wot rubs yer back and fills yer chopses,
In solid form, likewise in dropses?—het-settler-her.'"¹

"What, my old balsam of ipecacuanha," exclaimed the Doctor, running to the mariner and shaking him lustily by the hand; "what, my old essence of harquee vitee, is it you, or does me eyes deceive me? Yes, no—yes, it must be Jerry Lumpkin, or my name is not Oba—ah, well, or my name is not Thomasino Bolusem, Egyptian anatomist, and the sole discoverer of the Maricarbonicam, to imitate which is forgery at Common Law."

¹ *Et cetera* we suppose the speaker meant to say.—
Author.

“Whew, whew, whew,” whistled Lumpkin, for it was indeed he. “Take off those goggles, my hearty, and perhaps I may know ye by yer blinkers. Hang me, that don’t make matters brighter yet,” he added, with a puzzled and perplexed look.

“But now?” whispered the Doctor in his ear, as, after pulling him aside, he twisted a huge beard and moustache from his face. “Now can you tell yer friend?”

“Why, good gracious, Obee—” But the remainder of the word was cut short, for the Doctor inserted his fist, stopper-wise, but with all gentleness. into Jerry’s mouth.

“Here, my old particular, before asking you to tell us your adventures since we last parted company, let’s have some’ut to eat together, and while the rest of the fellows are spinning their yarns we’ll digest.”

“But, I say, Doctor,” broke in the wooden-legged individual from his stool in the corner, “I maintains that what you said when you entered an appearance in this here room was personal, and you must apologise fair and square now. What do you say, gentlemen?”

“Oh, sartainly! In coorse he must,” chorused at least half-a-dozen voices.

“ And,” pursued Jack, “ as I have had the honour of being elected speaker for the night, I have a great mind to make you do penance by swallowing one on yer own boxes of pills.”

“ Bravo, bravo,” responded several of the company.

“ Mercy, mercy, noble sir,” cried the Doctor, extending both hands appealingly.

“ Well, my werdict is, that you pays double yer allowance in the ‘ fetching ’ what is now goin’ to be had in.” (Loud cheers.) “ After you does that, I respeckfully begs leave to tell yer that you should never take such a liberty for the futur’. Never run down a trade, not even a thief’s.” (Immense applause.) “ Why, that trade can boast of names as glorious as you could pick from that of any other trade or profession whatsumever. I once began to copy from the Scroll of Fame, which is a most interesting dokeyment, the names of as many of the gentlemen of that calling as was writ there, but I ran out of paper, and I was obliged to give it up. It was a pretty long list, notwithstanding’. No,” continued the speaker, after a short interval, which he had employed in searching his pockets, “ no, I find I

haven't got that bit of 'ritin' about me now, but I remembers very well that it began with Alexander the Great, and I thought to end it with Corporal Bony. I might have taken a wider field than that, only what I fixed upon was very select, you must know. So don't let me hear you say anything agenst a respectable trade of that kind for the futur'." (Loud and continued cheering.)

"Ye noisy divils," broke in the voice of the proprietress of the establishment, "hould yer tongues now, and be hanged to ye. Ye'll moither me branes wid yer scrame-ing."

"I ask pardon, gentlemen all," said the Doctor. "I'll stand the Sam willingly. The fondness which the people of this here blessed town showed for pills quite unnerved me, and that was how I came to say those things as gave you offence."

"I beg to ashk de shentleman who ish de shpekare to prosheed mit hish shtory, for me likesh him verra vell," said a voice from the corner at this juncture.

"Go on, sir, I pray you," said the Doctor, "and I again repeat what I never said before, that I am sorry for the interruption

which the overflowings of my poetic soul occasioned to this goodly company."

"Well, hang me," said Jack, "if I can remember where I broke off."

"If de shentlemans vill hexkoosh me, I vill just say vun leedle vord," said the previous speaker, who got up from the tub on which he was sitting, and pointed with the stem of his pipe to the palm of his hand, in order to give emphasis to his words. "You had come, sar, to what you vos say vos von lady vosh give you do vorm your shtomag mit."

"Oh, ah, yes, to be sure," said Jack. "Moses, you are a nipper for a story. The point I had got to in the story of my life when that confounded pill merchant interfered was—

"THE STORY OF THE DISAPPOINTING POTATO.

"You have already heard, gentlemen," said Jack, immediately upon the restoration of silence, "that, every other means of earning a honist livin' having failed" (here several people were heard to cough), "I took to cadgin' as a last resource. Durin' my travels this wery day I came across a old woman

as licked everythink I ever knowed afore. I had heard hereabouts as she was a tile short, or a screw loose somewhere in the head, or some'ut like that; you know what I mean."

"Oh, splendid," said a voice with a decidedly Welsh accent. "She was go in with the bread and come out with the cakes, like."

"Exactly," said Jack, who mentally wished the interrupter at the deuce. "But, as I was saying, this lady kept a farmhouse on the side of the hill here which the Welsh call—call—call—oh, I can't remember it for the life of me."

"Cwm Skadgû?" suggested the Welsh voice aforesaid.

"Ah, that is it, Kamschatkee. I know them quarters well," put in Jerry. "I was frozen up in 'em oncet, begging your pardon, though, for breakin' in upon your yarn."

"Well," continued Jack, whose patience was fast ebbing under these interruptions, "I knocked at her door, and sure enough out comes her ladyship in person. 'Would you help a poor man what haven't neither father nor mother, but is left a horphan, and has tramped a hundred miles lookin' for work,

and without having nothink to eat for two days?' says I."

"Which was true, every word of it, of course," put in the Doctor.

"Order," "Order," "Chair," "Turn him out," was shouted on all sides at the observation of the Professor.

"I give you my word of honour," said Jack, who was now quite angry, "that if the company desires me to go on with the story, I'll spit with this peg of mine the very next feller that interrupts me." ("Hooray! go on, go on!" from the audience.) "Well, then," said Jack, "I was sayin' that—"

"Yes, that you vosh travel in three daysh for three hunderd miles," said the Hebrew voice already referred to.

"Hold yer tongue, Mr. Moses," thundered Jack, "or, by the beard of your great-grandfather Aaron, I'll operate upon yer this very minute for a cussed Sheemee that ye are. What the dickins have the thing got to do with you one way or another?"

After a minute's silence Jack resumed :

"Havin' told the lady all this, she says to me, 'Why don't you go to your parish, my good man? They are bound to pervide for

you there.' 'I assure you, ma'am,' says I, 'that such a thing never belonged to me. I was always too bad off to get one.' 'But your parish is the place you was born in,' says she. 'Indeed, my lady,' says I, 'I am not the owner of even a field nor the smallest handful of ground, much less a parish.' The old lady got rather savage at this, and says she to me, 'I didn't mean that the parish belonged to you, but that you belonged to the parish, stupid.' 'I give you my word of honour, mum,' says I, 'that I belongs to no parish, for I was born in a wagin, which kept goin' along till it got lost.' Oh, lor, you should have seen how she grinned at me, jist like Punch at Jack Ketch for all the world. 'Jane,' says she aloud, to her servant, 'bring this poor man at the door here something to warm his stomach with.' And what do you think the wench brought me, gentlemen? A mouldy tater, as true as I'm telling yer. I took it in my left hand, put my right thumb on my nose, spread my fingers fan-like right in the old hag's face, and shied the tater over the edge. She drew herself up with as much airs as if she vos the Queen of Sheba, and commanded her maid to bring back the treasure I had

thrown away. I laughed like mad at them words of hers, but Jane did the bidding of her mistress, notwithstanding. 'Look here, idiot,' said the old witch, and after she had broken up the tater with her own hand, my wondering eyes saw inside of it three goolden guineas. She held them triumphantly above her head between finger and thumb, threw the mashed-up spud in my teeth, and after remindin' me with a sneer that 'beggars should not be choosers,' turned on her heel and slammed the door in my face. I mizzled from the spot with a broken heart."

"And serve you right for a confounded ass," said the Doctor, immediately the narrative was over.

"Oh ho! and what would you have done better, had a mouldy tater bin offered you, old Pillbox? Let's hear your Solomon's wisdom on that, and if the answer is worth rememberin' I'll recommend you to several hundertakers of my acquaintance for a testimonial," said Jack.

"In the first place, then," said the Doctor, "potatoes of the kind in question have a near relation to the peculiar idiosyncrasies of the class of person upon whom you called.

They—” but here the speaker was interrupted by a peal of derisive laughter from his audience, who one and all thought he was about to enter upon a professional discourse on “Anatomy,” to a specimen of which we have already treated the reader.

“What is there to laugh about?” asked the son of Galen, when the outburst had subsided. “You know no more about the matter than a unicorn, either of you. And yet the subject is a himportant one, so himportant that had Jack there, who is now grinning like any hoorang-hootang, known it, he would have swopped his wooden leg for it any day.”

“Come now, Mister Professor, without any joking whatever, I was like to hear that little secrat from you, indeed, now,” said the Welsh voice, which we have already noticed.

“I perceive, sir,” observed the Professor, “that this company has in it at least one man of sense, and to him I will communicate my thoughts publicly, while the rest may listen or not as they choose.”

“Well, sir, they, that is, the potato to which we, learned in the Latin tongue, have given the name of *Solanum Tuberosum*, or ‘the Solace and Flower of the Sun’ (!) and the con-

tents of the cavity of the cranium in insane persons possess properties peculiarly analogous. Both are watery, tasteless, dull" (interruption)—"I mean to say, of course, without salt for the one, or for the other that invaluable compound, the most extraordinary of modern discoveries, the most efficacious remedy for every ill that human flesh is heir to, Maricarbonicam, fluid and solid, elixir and pills, at two shillings the bottle, or one shilling the box. N.B.—The bottles contain three times the quantity of the boxes, and is only twice the price, and each has directions on 'em printed with the Government stamp, to imitate which is forgery, and renders the offender liable to transportation beyond the seas for the term of his or her natural life."

The mode in which the Doctor galloped through the whole of this sentence gave his hearers no time to interrupt him. Having paused a moment to regain breath, he continued:

"If our good friend Peggy there—I don't mean you, mum, oh no" (this to the hostess, who was shaking her fist at him) "but the individual who is bedecked with that helegant piece of furniture termed a peg, if, I say, he

had given his days to human nature, and his nights to the influence of the stars, as I have, he would have escaped the bitter disappointment which he has this day experienced. He would have learnt that vegetables of the Solanum tribe have a singular connection with soft heads, and for why? For the simple reason that Sol means the moon (!!) and people who have a fondness for queer tricks are termed *Moonstruck*. Now substitute 'potatoes' for 'tricks' and the analogy is complete; or, if you wish to pursue it yet further, it may be put in this way in what is called a *post too late*¹—crack-brained people like queer potatoes; pigs like potatoes, herego² the first named are pig-headed, and Peggy yonder, had he been acquainted with these facts, would have been three guineas the richer."

"The Doctor can beat the devil at a argument any day, that he can," said Jerry Lumpkin. "In fact there's no areging with him on anythink, for he's got argeyments on his finger ends. He must have been through the Three Colleges" (two of which the speaker here declared to be Bedlam and Newgate

¹ Query: postulate?—*Printer*. ² Query: ergo?—*Ib*.

respectively, the name of the third would not sound well in print) “to have picked all that ’ere lingo up, for darn me if he don’t talk like a counsellor or a parson. I really think he’d beat a sailor at a yarn, that I do, especially when he spins them with them jaw-cracking thingumbobs of words that nobody but hisself is able to make out.”

“Talking about yarns, Cap’n,” said Jack, “what would you say to spinnin’ one of your own now? An old salt like yerself must have plenty on ’em in stock.”

“Well,” responded Jerry, “I’m not much in the humour for to spin a yarn to-night, but I wouldn’t mind telling you what happened to me once, when I was boatswain of the good ship *Cristovalla*, trading between the Orkneys and Cape Horn, owner Don Giovanni de Fiddle-dedee les Folol le Hankipanki—every Don, you know, has a name as long as your arm, and some on ’em has more names nor shirts. Well, it was on the 12th of May, 18—,—I forgets the exact year—when the brig had taken on board at the port of Stornoway the last cask of palm-oil, and the last bale of elephant’s tusks and gold dust. This latter they sells largely to tinkers, who finds it invaluable

for sawderin' purposes, bein' often better nor leather."

"Draw it mild, Jerry," suggested the Professor.

"True, every word of it," said Jerry, emphatically. "As I was said, the last bale of wares having been got aboard, we weighed anchor and sailed. We had left port about no more nor two months at the furdest, and were well-nigh in sight of Point de Galle (that's on the sou'-west of Ceylon, you see), nor a storm arose. My eye! didn't it blow big guns! You could have read the smallest print, although the night was pitchy dark, by the light of the lightenin'. The fiery element rushed along the ropes and shrouds, and it was as much as the wind could do was to blow it out. Oh, it was awful! The sun never showed his face for a whole month, and the horrible noise which the winds made in quarrelling with the waves was enough to make us believe that the bottom of the sea was labouring to vomit itself dry."

"Remember the warning I gave you, Jerry, or you'll soon be in a worse fog nor you were aboard that there vessel," put in the Doctor.

“Stop yer jaw, if ye please; seafarin’ matters you knows nothin’ on. Poisonin’s your business; stick to it, and shut up,” responded Jerry, snappishly.

“Doctor,” said the peg-legged master of the ceremonies, “you will get yourself into serious trouble, if you don’t mind, by that tongue of yours. Let the gentleman proceed, will you?”

“Well,” resumed Jerry, “notwithstanding that we had taken in every inch of canvas, we scudded away no one knew whither, until, all of a sudden, we found ourselves in——”

“Brobidingnag?” queried the Professor, in an undertone.

“Robinson Crusoe’s Island?” suggested Jack.

“Neither,” replied Jerry, laconically. “We found since that the part we was drove to was called Melville Sound.”

“What!” said the Doctor, in astonishment; “were you so near as that to the North Pole?”

“So near? aye; and, let me tell you, I’ve bin much nearer nor that, too,” returned Jerry. “We were so near to the North Pole once’t that some of our chaps broke a

piece off the end on it, and brought it home with us. It may be seen at this werry minit in the British Museum, side by side with a live mummy."

"Well, I never was hear of such a ting ash dat," observed the Hebrew gentleman before alluded to, with gaping mouth and distended eyes.

"Oh, that's nothink new," remarked Jack. "So many voyages has been undertook to them parts, and so many bits has been broke off the Pole, that there won't be one left by-and-by for the world to turn round on. But go on, Capt'in."

"Well," said Jerry, "we had been obliged to throw everythink overboard, even to our d——d black rascal of a cook, to lighten the ship, so that when we came to Melville Sound we had to reload with barber's blocks and penny-whistles, which grows there in plenty. In due time we set out on our home'ard voyage, with every chance of fair weather; but, when nearing the island of Cumboozleycheesang, in latitude this and longitude that—I forgets how much of each, although the capt'in told me at the time—we was nearin' the island in a thick fog, and

going at the rate of something less nor two hundred knots an hour, when we was run into by the *Wheelbarrow* man-of-war, of Pentrebach, and our ship sunk in twenty fathom of furze bushes."

"Oh! oh, oh, now!" groaned the audience. "Don't cram us in that way, either."

"Fact, gentlemen, fact," said Lumpkin, coolly. "Furze bushes is a nautical phrase for green sea-water. But I continues. When the accident happened, there was an awful time. I passes it over: it *bows* my legs and *arrers* my feelings; but I don't want it to have the same effect on the gentlemen here present. I and sixteen of my shipmates lashed ourselves to a crowbar——"

"Capt'in, capt'in, you're growin' wuss," remonstrated Jack.

"I tells yer," said Jerry, doggedly, "that these is only nautical names for things you don't know the use on, never having bin to sea. Things nautical and things in general are not the same, you see; and as I puts it down to your ignorance, I takes no notice of you, and goes on with and finishes my yarn. We were picked up in a hexausted condition, after bein' in the water about three months,

by the schooner *Road Wagin*, of Brecon, and I only arrived at this very port the day afore yesterday."

"Capital, capital!" shouted the Doctor. "Hooray! Bravo, my old lump of salt junk! Told with a hexactness as to time, place, and the correctness of things in general, as does credit to your heart as well as to your head. Hooray, hooray! my old concentrated essence of Muscovy tallow, you deserves a monument. But tell me, Jerry, whereabouts does Island What-'ye-call-it lie? In what quarter of the globe, I mean? I have been in every quarter almost, and I never even heard of the name."

"No," said Jerry, with a swaggering air, "it is in the tother quarter; and it would take a better navigator nor you ever was to find it out."

"Well," said an individual, whose avocation was that of a vendor of matches, "you have only got to go on a voyage to the moon agen to beat that yarn of yours, brother. P'raps you've been to them parts, though?"

"No, not quite," said Jerry; "but I started in that direction oncet. Howsumever, we cast anchor in a belfry, and the spire entering

our shrouds, we came down with a run; so after that I didn't care much about voyaging in them high waters."

"And after that long lie, I think ye can take yourself to yer own quarters, and lit the gintlemin take to theirs for the night now," broke in the voice of their hostess. "I'm not goin' to shtap up heere burnin' candles an' cool for anny more of yer palavers, so be off wid ye."

"In one minit, ma'am," said Jack. "Let's finish my pipe, and we'll mizzle."

The words were no sooner uttered, than there came a soft and somewhat timid rat-tat at the door. The company became silent as the dame advanced, candle in hand, to answer it. Shading the light as well as she could from the strong piercing draught from without, she craned her neck, and peered into the darkness, for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of intrusion.

"We want a night's lodging, ma'am, if you please. There are three of us," said a soft voice, whose owner the dame had not yet been able to see.

"No room—all hokipied. Try another place," said the dame, sharply.

“But where else can we go to?” asked the same gentle voice, in pleading tones. “My father, who is with me, is too weak and ill to travel any further, and we *must* find shelter here. Read this, ma’am, and you will see that we are making no unjust claim upon you.”

The dame took from the speaker’s hand a piece of paper, retreated a step or two, held it up to the now steadied light, and read its contents.

“Ah, well!” she muttered, “needs must whin the divil drives. Come in, miss. Bring in yer father and the lad, miss. Make way, gintlemin, make way.”

CHAPTER XV.

“The greatest blessing is a pleasant friend.”

HORACE.

THERE were bustle and commotion in the House of Fortune when the persons for whom the dame had requested a clearance stood in the middle of the room. A blind man, who had taken up a position singularly well calcu-

lated to obstruct the passage of a direct thoroughfare from the fire-place to the doorway, was well-nigh upset by the tugging of his dog, who, having the fear of the dame very strongly before his eyes, endeavoured to get his master out of the way with all possible speed. Honest Jerry—who had just completed some repairs to the rigging of his ship, which on the morrow was to be lashed to his head, in which situation he intended that the inhabitants of the good old town should, for the modest charge of a halfpenny each, have the privilege of seeing it going through all the evolutions of a real vessel in calm and storm, with every inch of canvas spread, and again with every sail close-reefed, all this and a good deal of ballad-singing (save the mark!) into the bargain—picked up his gear, and made room for the new-comers with all the alertness of which he was capable. So also did Moses, the Jewish hawker, and Peg-legged Jack, the gentleman of no profession in particular; so also did the vendor of matches, and a person from the “sunny south,” whose professional name was Tali-fori, the proprietor of a learned monkey; so also did Professor Thomasino Bolusem,

Egyptian Anatomist, and discoverer of the justly celebrated, world-famed, and never-failing specific for every disease, of no matter how long standing, Maricarbonicam; so also did the Hindoo retailer of scent, referred to in such complimentary terms by the Professor in the execrable "impromptu" which he had perpetrated upon his entrance into the room; so also did "Mad Zephaniah," whose suit of armour, made of a bright military tunic, covered with every known livery button in the kingdom, deserves at the very least a passing notice. The singular taste of this individual for glittering ornaments had recently undergone a striking change. His coat was wont to be decorated with a quantity of old silver coins, bestowed upon him by some patron or patrons willing and able to gratify this rather odd and expensive whim; but the rats and mice (by which terms he designated some of the light-fingered gentry into whose company he occasionally fell) had nibbled away so persistently at the "decorations," that not a single one of them was now left. Some of the aforesaid rodentia had been heard to declare that "Zephy's coat was as good as a

bank to them." Small wonder was it therefore that the poor fellow was compelled to adopt a change of fashion. Zephaniah's head, we might mention, was adorned with a rusty black velvet cap, with a gold band and long feathers. His particular walk in life was that of a dancer, and in his profession he was said to excel. But to proceed: so also did—but why weary the reader with going categorically through the motley assemblage, when we might with far less trouble have said: so also did—all who were in the way? "There is a reason for everything," saith a very homely old proverb, and ours for this bit of circumlocution may become apparent by-and-by.

Poor Loftewalde! Fate had indeed played the tyrant with him. For some hours after his very summary departure from the scene of the Professor's labours for the benefit of mankind in general and himself in particular, he had endeavoured to draw together an audience for Punchinello. In this, owing either to the coldness of the night or the counter attraction of the Doctor's lecture on "Anatomy," or to both causes combined perhaps, he was unsuccessful to the last de-

gree. He waited and watched painfully and long for the conclusion of the rhodomontade which his rival was pouring forth ; but when the end came, half dead with cold, hunger, sickness, and fatigue—as baleful a quartette of influences as ever mortal man was or can be subjected to—he was obliged to give up in despair, near though the prize he had so bravely struggled for appeared to be to his grasp. A voice like his was on that night, hoarse, husky, and thick, could not have adapted itself to the cadences necessary for Punch, Mrs. Punch, the Beadle, the Baby, the Clown, Jack Ketch, and the many other marvellous actors in that show of shows. And the crowd ; they wouldn't, of course, give “ where the play wasn't gone right through with,” not they. What crowd ever did ? Nay, has not the truth been brought home to hundreds and hundreds of minds that crowds as a rule don't care about paying even *after* the play has been “ gone through with ?” This disposition of a crowd has been noted by some of the most popular of public entertainers, and the crowd has, in consequence, been made to pay, and pay handsomely too, before the show is proceeded with. This is

matter of history, is it not? Of course it is, and we fancy ourselves taken with more or less severity to task by some of our readers for committing to paper such a very easily answered query.

But to resume: our Showman, whispering in his daughter's ear that it was impossible for him to proceed, desired her to make all haste to inquire for a place wherein they could find shelter for the night. Alberto, perceiving how matters stood, sturdily shouldered their baggage, and marched along by the side of his fair protectress, who was supporting with her arm the exhausted frame of her parent.

A person in the crowd, possessed of more humane feelings, of acuter perceptions, than the rest, volunteered to accompany them to the residence of the "Justice," before whom he directed them to lay their case, adding an assurance that they were certain of an order for a night's lodging at the very least.

His worship was so much struck with their story that they had little difficulty in persuading him to give them a ticket of admission into Dame Fortune's establishment. The note, moreover, was couched in terms rather

peremptory—for the dame had a knack of giving the cold shoulder to guests whose finances could not bear pretty strict investigation—and ended with a request that Mrs. F. would supply “the bearer and two” with certain little “extras,” which, to persons circumstanced as our travellers were, might of a certainty be deemed luxurious. Emmeline, timid, shrinking girl though she was, could not help the tone of warmth in which she expressed her thanks for so much kindness.

“Hang me,” muttered the good-natured old gentleman, “that’s a sort of girl one doesn’t meet with every day. So well spoken too, besides being good-looking. I must see Griff about her. But I say, young woman—I mean Miss What’s-your-name—you may find it of use just to hint to Mrs. Fortune, at whose house you are going to stay for the night, that I shall be coming pretty early tomorrow to inspect her place; so she had better have it in order, or by—well, she may look out if she doesn’t, that’s all.”

“I thank you, sir; from my very heart I thank you,” said the girl, with brimming eyes.

“Really—ahem—miss, I only wish that I had a better place to send you to, but you

won't get on so badly, if you try to conciliate your landlady, who is a good old soul when taken in hand in the right way. But look here, miss; your father yonder will require something more than I have the power to order him, so here's—well, there, you needn't look at it until you get to the place. Good-night, miss, good-night. Mind and tell the dame I'll be round to-morrow. Good-night, miss. No remonstrance, no thanks. My supper is waiting me : good night, miss, good night," and the worthy magistrate disappeared into an inner room, with an alacrity surprising for a gentleman of his years and portliness.

Their reception at Dame Fortune's door we have already noticed. We now see them seated by the blazing fire, for every one in the company, rough as it was, made room for them, and seemed anxious to make them comfortable. It is astonishing the amount of sympathy which people of this class evince towards those of their own grade who have been more unfortunate than themselves. Immediately the state of our travellers was ascertained, every soul in the house had some little offer of service to make, some little act of kindness to perform, some little suggestion

to give as to the best mode of treating their fellow castaways. Well, well; theirs was, happily, not the only instance of kind hearts under ragged coats. Foremost amongst those who waited upon Loftewalde were the Professor and Jerry. The Doctor, taking from his inner pocket a bottle containing a suspicious-looking red fluid, was about to hold it to the Showman's mouth, when Lumpkin grasped him by the collar, and dragged him forcibly aside.

"No, no," observed the sailor, in a quiet, determined tone, "none of your cussid medicine stuff here. Swallow your beastly essence of all that is horrible yerself. Don't ram it down other people's throats, if you please—leastways, don't give it] nobody that I has any respects for, and be hanged to you."

"Why, you superannuated old conger eel," returned the Professor, tartly; "you blessed old compound of cayenne pepper and sassafras, d'ye think I'm a fool? You old stick of turkey rhubarb, get out of my way now, or you and I will fall out, that's certin."

"Quite ready for ye, Pill-box," returned Jerry, in a similar tone, "and you shall walk

over my corpus before that poor fellow shall touch your ditch-water swipes."

"Now, Jerry, don't be a lunie," observed the Doctor, in a modified strain. "Look here—put your nose to it, you old grampus, and you'll see at once what a fuss over nothink you've been making. Now do you know what it is?" he asked, after Lumpkin had given the bottle a very cautious sniff. "It's agenst my principles," he added, "to administer any other medicine myself. I always lets them that buys it do that, so that they can satisfy themselves that when anythink goes wrong they can't lay the blame on me. Are you convinced now, my lump of Tartary cream?"

"You're a rather good hand at callin' names, Doctor. That there habit is professional perhaps, but go on; the medicine is quite good—better nor any as ever comed from a doctor's shop is what I have found it. So let the poor man have a dose at once."

"He has it then," said the Professor, suiting the action to the word; "and please to be so good, miss, as to give him a little of this," he added, turning to the table and pouring some of the mixture into a hot cup of tea, which

the dame had very expeditiously got ready for the elder of the travellers.

“Nothing like it, miss, in a case like this ; no medicine can touch it.”

Emmeline took the proffered cup with a grateful heart, and offered it to her parent, who put it to his lips and drank a good draught.

“There’s hope for him yet,” remarked the Doctor, triumphantly. “Another pull, old friend, another pull ; long, strong, and deep. Well done ; Madam Fortune, hand this way that bit of toast you have just made. Hooray, Mr. Loftewalde ! just a small bite now. Gently, gently, my dear sir, or you’ll choke. Ah, that’s better. Now another sip. That’s jolly. Another cup, ma’am, if you please. Bravo, bravo ! Just a toothful this time. Don’t you smell it ? Why the haroma (as we doctors call it) of this here tea is delightful. I likes to flavour my own tea always. I carries a bottle of flavouring mixture always about me. It keeps the cold out, revives dead hopes, and allays the spasms—a few drops of this tincture does. It’s the best of medicines, and beats even Maricarbonicam. That’s it, my friend. Only one bite more,

just one good, strong, and long pull agen, and you must go to bed, or I, as your medical attendant, will not be answerable for the consequences. Now, ma'am, if you please, show us the good man's room, and you, Jerry, and you, young What's your name—"

"Alberto, sir," said the youth thus addressed.

"Ah, yes, I remember—that is to say I've heerd the name somewhere; give us a hand here now, Jerry, so—that's it. Lead the way, ma'am, if you please, and if this gentleman is not better in the morning, I shall, to use the language of a somewhat greater man than myself, ask you to 'write me down an ass.'"

The Doctor, whose promptness and command of resources had astonished everybody, assisted by Jerry, and the young man Alberto, carried Loftewalde bodily to his apartment, where he was laid to rest upon one of those straw pallets with which the house abounded, where they left him to his repose.

"Your father, miss," observed the Professor, on regaining the kitchen, "is not the man I knew him ten years ago. Bless my heart—this young friend of yours, too, he's grown almost a man."

“Almost!” muttered Alberto to himself, while the hot blood rushed to his forehead. “What does he mean? I’m as big a man as he is, and as good a man too.”

“Ten years,” replied Emmeline, in her low, sweet voice, “have worked sad changes in us. Ten years more of such worry, and famine, and toil, and our place in the world may be vacant. I thank Heaven, however, that it has sent us some friends, who have aided us when Fate has frowned upon us its severest. To you, sir, who have this night behaved towards my poor father with such kindness, I would tender a thousand thanks, and to these I would add the hope that one day I may be able to repay you in full.”

“But, miss, now, on my word, you think more of what I have done than it deserves, ten times over. I saw by his looks as I stood on the chair giving my lecture to-night, that he knew me, although ’twas ten years since he and I met last. You also remembered my face, miss, I could see. I always had a great liking for your father, although he wasn’t quite so free as the rest of our friends in that little spot on the North coast where we first made acquaintance. You remember where,

miss, very well; and this is one of our old friends—Jerry here, miss, boatswain of the—hum, well, no names just at present. Should you feel in any way curious on that head we will spin our yarns, as Jerry would say, when opportunities is more convenient.”

“Just so,” quoth Jerry. “Lord love yer handsome face, miss, it’s no use talking afore strangers, but this I says, let the storm be what it may, never say die, nor give up the helm. If you sticks to the wheel there’s one chance that you may save the craft you’re sailin’ in, but if you don’t, there’s a hundred that she’ll go to the bottom.”

“Very true, Jerry, very true,” responded the Professor. “But if your head’s thicker than mine, old ’un, I’ll give it up. Here we are clacking away like a couple of old hens, and not giving one thought to our old friend’s children. We looked after the old man, and made such a fuss over it, that we thought that was enough. Now I’m blest if we are not the greatest pair of idiots that ever stepped in shoe leather.”

“You are right, Obie. We never thought as how the young people—bless their hearts!—might be as hungry as a ship’s crew arter

being on short rations for a month," said Boatswain Lumpkin.

"Some more of that tea, mum, if you please," said the Doctor to the proprietress of the establishment, who was mending a stocking at the other end of the room. "And if you can cut a couple of tidy slices from that loaf of mine, and get me a little more butter, for which here's a shilling to pay, I should feel obliged," he added.

The dame pricked up her ears, sniffed thrice, gave a wink and a nod, as much as to say: "Lies the wind in that direction? Anythink to be had here for money. Your orders is attended to at oncet, since you're game to sich a hextent as that;" and throwing her stockings with the darning apparatus into a corner, she took up the kettle from the hob, and let it down with a bang upon the fire.

"Tay, Dockthur, did ye say? Aye, and the best Boheh tew, be my sowl, and it's meself has been the unfeeling old baste for not having minded the young woman suner. Oh, murther, Dockthur, whoy didn't ye tip me the wurrud before now? Tay! faith, it's meself that'll make it shtrang enough to blow off the lid of the blessid pat. Bread and buthur,

wirra ! as thin as a weefer, sure. Did ye say cheese, Dockthur ? I have some rale Caerphilly* in the panthry yonder ; but I locks it up, ye know, for the pleece swarrums wid varmin av all sorts, sizes, and descreepshuns, and a poor sowl like meself must be ceereful av her perveeshuns," said the dame.

"Some Caerphilly, ma'am, by all means. The youngster here 'll like a bit, I know," remarked the Doctor, thereby putting a period to the old dame's garrulity. "Use the young people well, mum, and I'll pay the damage, if it's anything like reasonable. Now then, that that's all settled, Jerry and I goes aloft at once. Don't think it at all as a charity, miss," he presently added, turning to Emmeline ; "money never rusts in my pocket. Upon my word now, the greatest favour you can in any ways do me is to let me spend a peg—I mean a shilling—or two on your behalf. It keeps me from investing in something which would positively hurt my system—which would do me, miss, as much harm as the doctors' trash, which I takes so much pains to caution my hearers against taking. So

¹ Westphalia, for its hams, is not so well known (in Wales) as Caerphilly for its cheese.—*Author*.

you see it is you as does the charity to me. There now, miss, don't say a word. Tea is ready—enjoy it. Jerry and I are off. Good-night. *Honnyvong*, as they say in France. Adoo."

Emmeline would, had she been able, have made some reply for so many and such unexpected kindnesses, but sobs choked her utterance. Her under-lip quivered, and tears bedewed (but did not bedim) the splendid blue of her eyes. She sat silent, with the viands of the Doctor's preparing untasted before her. The grateful heart manifests itself not by loud and clamorous utterances; it is not the fullest vessel that, when sounded, makes the most noise; it is not the greatest talker who is the greatest thinker; neither is the greatest boaster the best worker. The organ of speech is not always the best communicant of the workings of the feelings: they are often too fine, sensitive, and ethereal to be interpreted by the babblings of the tongue. A good deal of what we have just written may consist of but a collection of truisms, but we can't help thinking that they are truisms which a great portion of the civilised world has either for-

gotten or doesn't choose to remember. But it is not our purpose to be continually lecturing, what every writer chooses complacently to call, the world, forgetting that he himself is a part of it. No; we admit at once our unfitness for the task, confessing ourselves to be too much of the world, worldly, and too prone at times to believe with the poet that "whatever is is right." Our readers must not, however, take it for granted that we intend going right through with our history without rapping somebody's knuckles, kicking somebody's shins, or treading on somebody's corns; all we wish to assure them is that we have no desire to play the part of an unapproachable, all-perfect, intensely conceited, inconceivably prosaic, dull, and stupid Mentor.

To our heroine again. Her long reverie did not quite please her more hungry, less thoughtful companion. After several longing glances at the meal set before them, he looked entreatingly at his sister, but finding in her dreamy face no expression of response, he exclaimed:

"Now, Emmy, don't let your tea get cold. It isn't every day we get the like. Do take some, like a good girl, and don't cry like that.

I am waiting for you to begin. You needn't think because I haven't touched a bit or drop that I have no appetite."

"That's a sensible man for you now," observed the dame. "Spoken like a parson. Come, miss, you forget the nice buther and the Caerphilly cheese. Mother av Moshes now, if Peg-legged Jack had been here he would have swallid the teeble by this time. Eat a bit, honey—eat a bit, now."

The joint efforts of her young charge and the good woman of the house ultimately proved successful. Alberto, once the signal to attack had been given, fell to ravenously, and under his influence the "Caerphilly" cheese got smaller by degrees, and beautifully less. He, however, gave in at last, and with a well-filled stomach, and a feeling of profound peace with himself and the world at large, he placed his feet upon the fender, and dozed away the remainder of the night.

When he awoke he found himself the sole occupant of the apartment. The fire had burnt out, and the chilly dawn of another day was penetrating, in long thin pencillings of light, the chinks in the window shutters and the keyhole, and there were noises

overhead as of preparations for the resumption of the bustle and activity characteristic of the establishment upon every working day of the year.

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