



# Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries  
and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



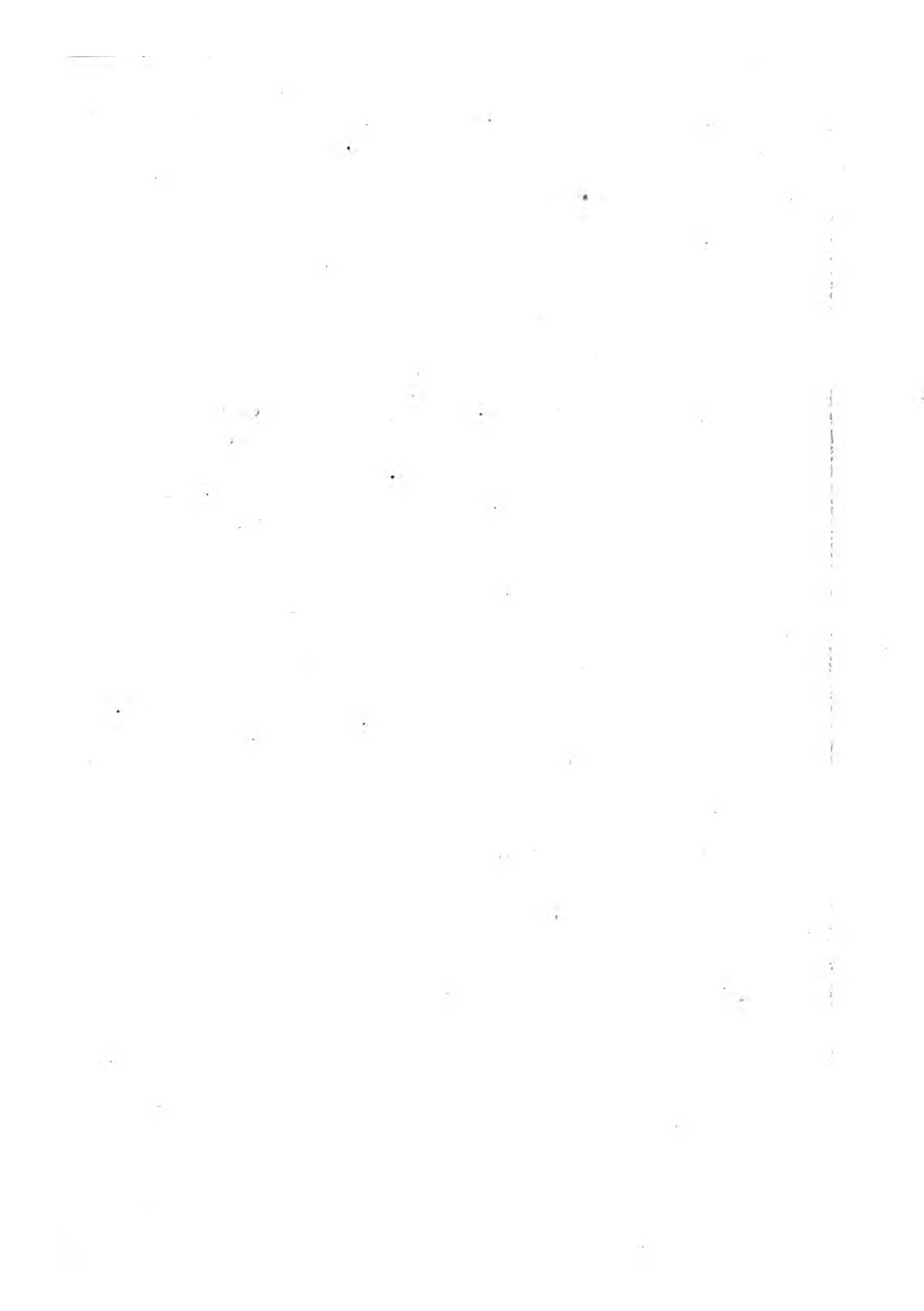
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-  
ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



2533 e. 895









DEAD! FOR A DUCAT.

BEN. GEORGE'S  
JUVENILE LIBRARY  
( LARGE SERIES. )

---

RALPH'S TROUBLE,  
AND  
OTHER STORIES,

REPRINTED FROM  
PETER PARLEY'S ANNUALS.

---

RIGHT OF TRANSLATION RESERVED.

---

London:  
BEN. GEORGE, 47, HATTON GARDEN.

LONDON :  
BEN. GEORGE, 47, HATTON GARDEN.



## PREFACE.

---

HE Proprietor of PETER PARLEY'S ANNUAL being desirous of promoting the circulation of superior reading for the young, now begs to present, in a cheap form, the following pleasing stories for the perusal and instruction of his many juvenile friends.

These tales are mostly selected from former editions of the ANNUALS.





## RALPH'S TROUBLE.

---

**H**ORACE Elphinstone had been spending his Midsummer holidays at his uncle's farm, which was situated in a lovely valley at Sandringham, that fine estate now owned by the Prince of Wales. Here, in the society of his cousin, Ralph Elphinstone (who went to the same school as Horace), he passed the holiday time in a happy, healthy manner.

Both Horace and Ralph were fond of the activity and freedom that surrounds all agricultural pursuits. They were up in the morning early, and saddled their horses for an appetising scamper over the fields and meadows belonging to Mr. Elphinstone's extensive farm; or they would heartily engage themselves with the servants in loading the waggons with vegetables in season for the neighbouring town market; or with pitchforks assist the haymakers. But the young gentlemen were in that merry holiday humour that they more retarded than helped the peasants, by whom they were loved for the jokes and jests and frolics that they infused into their labours.

### RALPH'S TROUBLE.

The two youths were fine specimens of young English gentlemen; well grown, muscular, their wits about them, good natured, good tempered, and the bonnie hue of health bespreading their open countenances. Within a month or two they were of the same age—verging on fifteen. Though they sometimes quarrelled with each other, they never entertained any of that little miserable pent-up animosity which some youths indulge in. Their natures were too honest and open for that, and if they were in dispute one minute they were friends the next.

Horace was a very beautiful reader, and dear old uncle Elphinstone—a man with soul and deep religious feeling—used to appoint him in the evening, when the day's work was done, audibly to read some of the beautiful passages in the Church service, or the Bible, or some worthy entertaining book, to himself and his assembled labourers. Ralph facetiously nicknamed his cousin the farm chaplain. Horace was as much beloved by his uncle as was Ralph, his only son, and he was always glad that his nephew should spend his school holidays at the farm.

Uncle Elphinstone was not a very wealthy man, but a well-to-do farmer, with more than an ordinary cultivated mind found among those who trade in the produce of the soil; but he was far richer than his brother, Horace's father, who held some mercantile position in a London house. Indeed uncle Elphinstone contributed somewhat to his brother's support, and paid for Horace's education; and for the latter help his nephew and brother were deeply grateful, for both Horace and his father held it a great privilege to climb the tree of knowledge, which the former could not have done but for the support of dear old uncle Elphinstone.

## RALPH'S TROUBLE.

Connected with the farm was a ten acre cherry-garden, or orchard, and it wanted but a few days to the close of their holidays, when Ralph and Horace, one morning at sunrise, took their guns and went sparrow shooting in the orchard, the trees of which were now bent down with the weight of the delicious fruit that the Creator had made them bring forth for the pleasure of mankind.

Why the poor birds should be denied a little of the fruits of the earth, I cannot tell; but in my opinion, although so good a man as uncle Elphinstone permitted it, it is a very cruel and unjustifiable practice to sport with the lives of these poor little creatures under the pretence that they are the farmer's enemies. What if they are proverbial for impudence, cunning, and voracity? Depend upon it these characteristics are for the benefit of mankind, or these little creatures would not be so plentifully created. But, unfortunately, we limit the good and evil of things too much by what we see, than have faith in those we do not see or comprehend. The chattering sparrow has his laws and instincts, over which he has no power or control. Why should we interfere with them? Spare them! You would find worse enemies in grubs, snails, and caterpillars, which they keep under.

Horace and Ralph, well-furnished with small shot and two bright fowling-pieces, as I said before, one lovely morning wended their way over many a meadow to the orchard, which was well fenced round with hurdles and wild bushes, and entered by a five-barred creaking gate. Encouraged by the opening sun, numerous birds were on the wing to the orchard, while many were making an early breakfast from the sweet red juice of the luscious cherry.

"Well, old fellow," said Ralph to Horace, "this will be

## RALPH'S TROUBLE.

our last shooting before the holidays are over, and I challenge you that I will bring down more sparrows than you?"

"You have the better gun, Ralph. Mine wobbles."

"A good get out of the challenge," laughed Ralph. "The truth is, I am a better shot than you!"

"Change pieces, and I will not shrink from your challenge. Ha! you won't. That shows you know I have but an indifferent piece. I tell you again that it wobbles."

"You do not hold it firm in hand, Horace. 'Dead! for a ducat, dead!'" exclaimed Ralph, as he aimed at a sparrow on the wing. "That's the shot I like. Any muff can shoot birds while they are perched on a tree."

They walked up to where the sparrow fell, and there they found the little creature with a fine black cherry between its beak, no doubt on its hapless way to feed its expectant younglings with, and who were now left to perish through the uncultivated condition of Ralph Elphinstone's moral nature.

Sparrows are peculiarly attached to their young, and they will fight in unequal odds for their defence. Aye, and they are benefactors to man, too, properly understood, and make ample restitution for their plunderings. Spare the sparrows! They are agents appointed by nature for keeping from undue increase another race of creatures, and by their numbers they accomplish it. In spring, and the early part of the summer, we may see them every minute of the day in continual progress flying from the nest for a supply, and returning on rapid wing with a grub, a caterpillar, or some other destructive insect; and the numbers captured by them in the course of these travels are incredibly numerous, keeping under the increase of these races.

RALPH'S TROUBLE.

"And so you are afraid of accepting my challenge? Ha! ha!" cried Ralph, in triumph.

While he spoke his cousin Horace aimed, and also brought down a bird.

"As good a shot as yours, with a worse gun."

"How can that be, when your performances are as good as mine?" asked Ralph, his eye searching the sky for another bird.

"Because my skill makes amends for the wobbly gun," replied Horace.

"Now I've got you, Horace, I mean to hold you tight to the argument. Your better skill makes amends for your wobbly gun, and yet you won't accept my challenge."

"I don't like rivalries," said the more thoughtful Horace.

"Stuff! I glory in them. They stimulate me to do the best I can."

"They often lead to serious mischief, and estrange good friends. Why should you be anxious to prove yourself a better shot than I?"

"Why what a moralising old fellow you are getting, Horace!" cried the excitable Ralph. "Sport to me without rivalry is like powder and shot without a gun. When we wrestle, we wrestle in rivalry for who shall be the better man."

"And last time we wrestled I threw you, and we quarrelled about it."

"What of that? A little row now and then makes fellows better friends after."

"Don't see it, Ralph," said Horace. "Every quarrel creates bitterness. You may laugh, but I feel it in myself, and therefore I think it exists in others. Candidly, I don't like

## RALPH'S TROUBLE.

to be beaten at anything. It excites in me bad temper, and nothing is remunerative that does that. Why, then, for the sake of rivalry, risk friendship?"

"Why, Horace, how droll you are talking!" exclaimed his cousin, standing back from him in surprise. "You must be studying to obtain the usher's vacant place at our school. Are you getting sad and grumpy because the holidays are nearly over?"

"Not I, Ralph, I like my holidays and I like my school, and I like you, old boy, and that's why I object to risk any rivalry with you, for it cannot ever lead to good."

"Ha! ha! A very convenient way to get out of a challenge."

"Have it so, Ralph—have it so. Let it be that you are a better shot than I am. It is no pleasure to me to beat you; if it were so, I should only be finding pleasure in your pain and defeat. Say no more, there's a good fellow. We are out for sport. There goes another sparrow, and down he comes," cried Horace, levelling his piece, and another bird fell.

"Nobody could do better than that," said Ralph, leading on Horace from the skirts of the orchard more into its depths. "We must pause awhile, or we shall frighten all the birds away with the report of our guns."

They had not long to pause, for the little brown birds came back in troops to their luscious repast upon the trees, when the reverberation of the guns had passed away.

"Look, Horace!" cried the impassioned Ralph, "there's a hundred on yonder tree!"

"Don't fire at them while they are perched. Shoot them on the wing."

The impetuous Ralph heard not his cousin's remonstrance, but levelling his gun fired.

## RALPH'S TROUBLE.

Unperceived by the two boys, old Simon Broadbent, an ancient labourer on Mr. Elphinstone's farm, was perched on a ladder by the tree gathering cherries for the market. The last shot that was fired struck down the man instead of the birds, and the young gentlemen started back when they saw the old man, ladder and all, come toppling to the ground. Their first impulse was to run away, but a heavy groan went through the orchard, and partially recovering their courage, they went trembling, breathless and pale, towards the tree. And here the truth was soon clear to them, for they knew old Simon well, and now he lay there upon the grass weltering in his blood. The shot had penetrated his brain, and taken fatal effect!

Ralph's courage at once fled, but Horace, who had a higher moral nature than his cousin, grew strong in the lamentable event that had interrupted their diversion.

"Whatever shall we do, Horace?" cried Ralph, averting his head from the sight of old Simon, whom he had just deprived of life. "What shall I, can I do, Horace? I feel sick and ill."

"Rest by that tree, Ralph, while I go and tell uncle what has occurred."

"You must take me with you, Horace, for I dare not remain so near the poor old man."

"Be brave, Ralph. It was an accident."

"Take my gun, Horace; my hand trembles so, that I cannot hold it."

"Come on with me then; but I could reach the house sooner by myself."

"I have a mind to fly!" cried the terrified Ralph.

"For what? you have done no wrong," said the noble

### RALPH'S TROUBLE.

Horace. "You have reason to be sad and sorry, but not to fear. Cowards only fly from their deeds. Come on with me, and let uncle advise what shall be done."

"Oh! Horace, I dare not see my father! Such news will break his heart."

"Not when he knows how it happened. And I will tell him. When he sees how much you suffer, I am sure he will rather pity than blame you."

"My heart gives way, Horace," pathetically rejoined Ralph. "I am not brave in trouble. Help me."

"Of course I will," kindly replied his cousin. "But we must not lose time. Come on, there's a good fellow. Something may yet be done for poor old Simon. A doctor must be summoned."

Ralph, encouraged by his cousin's sympathy and counsel, for a little while took heart, but as the farm-house came in view, his old fear seized him, and he tightly clasped the arm of Horace, and for a minute stopped his further progress. Then with tears in his eyes he looked in his cousin's face most appealingly.

"Horace, will you be my friend?"

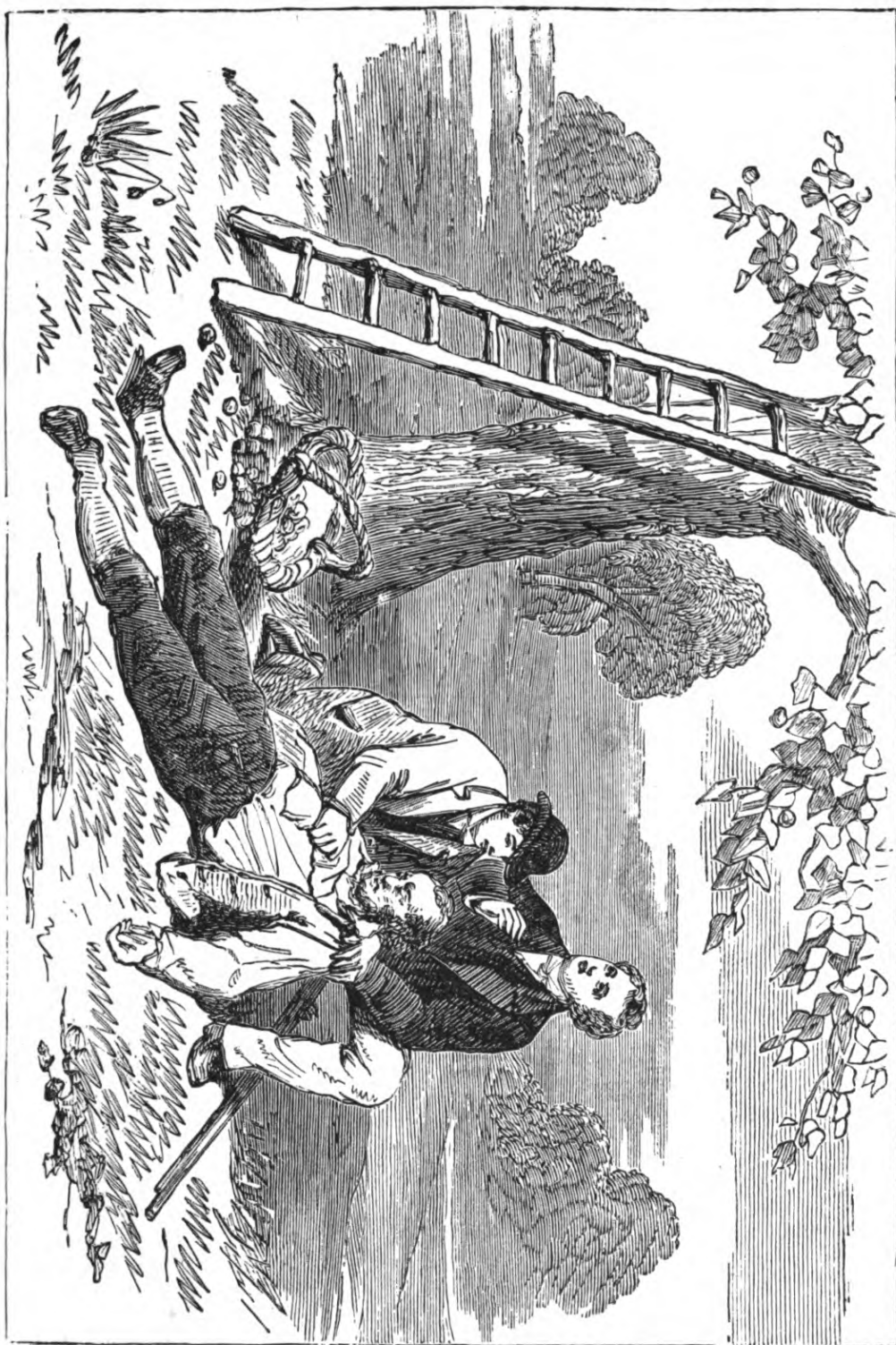
"I have already said so," returned Horace.

"Will you—will you—Horace I do not like to ask you. I am indeed a coward."

"What would you have me do, Ralph?"

"You are braver than I am—say that you killed Simon. Will you? Say you will change places with me?"

"What! tell a falsehood; you know I love you, Ralph, and you should not tempt me thus. You have done no intended wrong, I tell you; and if you had it should be atoned for by confession, and not covered by an untruth."





### RALPH'S TROUBLE.

"Are you sure it was not your gun that killed him?" suggested Ralph.

"Peace, Ralph," said Horace, his better nature rising higher under the baneful influence of his cousin's temptation. "Use your mind to surmount your fears, and not to tempt me or yourself to palter with truth. Your father would indeed be angry with you, if he knew that you could give way to so mean a thing as lying. I will suffer any punishment for you, but I will not lie for you nor for myself."

"You would be braver than I to battle with the consequences of this accident," pleaded the miserable Ralph.

"But I am not brave enough to battle with the consequences of an untruth. One falsehood requires twenty more to make it good. I might have shot poor Simon just as you have."

"Oh! I wish you had," exclaimed the fear-stricken youth. "But if you had, Horace, what would you have done?"

"I should have gone straight to Uncle Elphinstone, and told him all the circumstances."

"Would you have had no fear?"

"What could I have to fear?" Reason the matter with yourself, Ralph. I was a witness of the whole proceeding. Neither of us saw old Simon amongst the branches of the tree. Had you been alone you might have had some difficulty in making the truth clear; but as it is you have nothing to fear, but much to be sorry for, for old Simon was a favourite with all of us. Poor Annette, his granddaughter, how she will feel his loss? But I am sure your father will provide for her."

"They will take me prisoner, won't they, Horace?" asked Ralph, with bated breath.

## RALPH'S TROUBLE.

"I cannot tell you anything about it. Let us hasten to your father, and break the sad news to him."

"You won't tell father what I asked you to do for me, will you, Horace?"

"Not I," returned the generous youth. "I love you and uncle too much for that. Step out, Ralph. Time may yet save the old man, who may only be in a swoon or faint for all that we know."

"No, no; poor Simon is dead," said Ralph, in dismal tones.

"Be my rival now, cousin," said Horace, cheerfully, "and see which of the two shall be the braver in difficulties. Will you accept my challenge, Ralph?"

"*You* have no difficulty."

"A good deal, I think, to get you along," replied Horace, endeavouring by his cheerful temper and good spirit to rouse Ralph to be more of a man, and not flinch like a coward from the consequences of an action over which he had no control.

Not long after both youths stood before Mr. Elphinstone in his quaintly-furnished oak-wainscotted little parlour, which he used as his business-room; and he was now busy with accounts to take to market with him, it being the old gentleman's custom to accompany his waggons of farm produce on a favourite grey horse, who well knew his master's humdrum pace.

The old farmer smilingly glanced over his spectacles when the two boys entered, but when he saw Ralph in tears, and Horace with both fowling-pieces in his hand, his smiles gave place to alarm.

"Haloo, haloo! what's the meaning of this? Is Ralph wounded?"

### RALPH'S TROUBLE.

"Only in his feelings, uncle," very happily replied Horace, for Ralph was speechless. Horace, in a calm and dignified manner briefly related to his uncle what had occurred, who, when he heard it, touchingly exclaimed—

"Poor old Simon! Why he was the best servant ever man had, Ralph. You may well weep, my boy, for what you have done."

"I do indeed regret it," cried Ralph, whose fears, after his father's unblaming reception of the news, became more stilled, and an unaffected sorrow took their place.

"Have you left the good old man where he fell?"

"Yes, uncle. But I fear he is dead."

"You are not sure, then? Come, come, there is hope. One of you run for Dr. Hepburn, while I go to the orchard."

Horace flew off like a shot, while the downcast Ralph still stood in tears.

"I am sorry for your feelings, my son," said Mr. Elphinstone, "but this is not a time to give way to them, when action is wanted."

The old man for a moment covered his eyes with his hands in silent prayer, then led the way, attended by Ralph and two labourers, to the orchard, which the energetic Horace and the doctor had reached some five minutes before them.

"Quite dead," said the doctor.

"Very sorry indeed, sir, to hear it. So thy day's work is done, old Simon," touchingly said the farmer, looking on the lifeless form of the labourer, who still had a peaceful smile on his aged face. "You may well smile for your good old soul is in heaven. Now, my lads, bear his body to my house, while I go and impart the bad news to poor little Annette, at the cottage."

### RALPH'S TROUBLE.

"There will have to be an inquest," said the doctor.

"So I suppose, doctor."

"Therefore I would suggest, as your son is unhappily concerned in the matter, that there would be more propriety in taking the body to the nearest inn."

"No doubt, no doubt," said Mr. Elphinstone.

"Your son, you see, sir, will have to be examined by the coroner—"

"To be sure, to be sure," interrupted Mr. Elphinstone, while Ralph, who stood by the side of Horace, could have shrunk into the earth at the doctor's observation.

A broad plank was procured, on which the body of old Simon was laid, and four stout fellow-labourers bore him to the adjacent inn, where it was followed by all present; and after it was deposited in the large club-room, Mr. Elphinstone, and his son and nephew, went on to the cottage, from which they soon emerged again, with the farmer leading the weeping Annette to his own home. She was a pretty cottage girl of ten years old—just in the rosebud of her life, and the death of her dear grandfather was the first grief she had ever felt.

From this time Mr. Elphinstone looked upon her with the same tenderness as if she had been his own daughter; and when his son and nephew were called away to school again, little Annette was quite an interesting companion to the old gentleman.

No other verdict than that of "Accidental death" could have been given by the coroner, after he had heard the statements made by Horace and Ralph. During the examination of the latter his composure was often found wanting, which was rightly imputed to his over-wrought feelings.

### RALPH'S TROUBLE.

Five years after this Mr. Elphinstone ended his earthly career. In his will he had not forgotten Annette: he left her a little independence, and Horace also. The remainder of his property, of course, went to Ralph.

Great good to Ralph Elphinstone had arisen out of this one terror of his life. Never again did he take gun in hand to shoot helpless little birds. But, better still, he had been shamed by Horace of the wickedness of lying, and became as much enamoured with the dignity of truth as his noble cousin. He loved Horace as his brother, and after his father's death, they both lived and worked together for a while on the old farm. But Horace had higher views. He left his cousin, and founded a large school near London. Before they parted Ralph took Horace to the orchard, and on the spot where he had fired the gun which resulted in Simon's death, he took his hand, and with tears in his eyes, said,—

“Dear cousin, but for you, I should now have loathed myself and you too. You nobly stilled my fears and prevented me from resorting to falsehood to cover an accident.

Horace contented himself by replying to his cousin,—

“The real nobility of birth  
To age, maturity, or youth,  
The very crown of creature worth  
Is easy, guileless, open truth.”





## THE MINER'S SONG.

---



FIFTY fathoms down below,  
We delve and dig from day to day;  
The changing seasons come and go,  
But not for us the fields are gay,  
Or frozen deep in glist'ning snow.

With axe and pick our work we ply,  
And heed not what your lives contain;  
We never hail the glowing sky,  
The woods new-scented by the rain,  
The groves brim-full with melody.

But day by day we labour still,  
And year by year our tasks endure;  
We can but labour with a will,  
And trust in Heav'n to bring the cure  
Of all that earth has framed so ill.



## UTILE DULCI.

---



OLLOA! my young friend, what are you doing among the pots and pans? These culinary vessels, chief in every good housewife's household, are not to be knocked about like nine-pins. Have a care, have a care, Master Harry. Have you ever thought how much of the comfort and pleasure of life, one way or another, depends on these obscure domestic utensils? I verily believe I could write an ode in praise of the stew-pan."

"No, I have never given a thought to the matter, and I have never looked at them in the light of ministrants to our pleasures, before. But I was trying to find out for myself, by ocular proof, what you hinted at yesterday respecting cast-iron pots and pans."

"Well, listen: the matter is in a nut-shell. At the present day, every variety of household articles, besides pots and pans, is rapidly and easily manufactured of cast-iron, as you are aware. Each article is of one piece without any seam or soldering—and the word "cast" conveys exactly and literally the method of operation, as the term "blow" indicates the pro-

## UTILE DULCI.

cess observed in the manufacture of glass. This mode of manipulating or operating on iron was discovered one hundred and seventy years ago; and it is to a boy we are indebted for the discovery of the process, the solution of a problem, that had hitherto defied the skill and practical knowledge of the cleverest workmen in metal."

"Oh! tell me quickly all the particulars. I feel much interested since you say that the discovery of the process was made by a boy. I wish I could find some witty invention."

"Your curiosity is laudable, and shall be gratified; but the story is a short one. I shall, however, premise its introduction with one remark. It is this, that we have many instances on record that, assisted only by the power of thoughtful observation, nourished by an intuitive quickness and shrewdness of intelligence, many boys have applied, without being able to give a satisfactory reason, right principles, either in the working of some process, or supplying a link in the perfecting of an object, or simplifying by some cunning device the method of production,—in a word, by their ingenious forethought, have contributed to scientific discoveries, and domestic and economic utilities.

"Now, my dear boy, this is proved to demonstration in the instance under review. It is related on good authority, that about the year 1700, there lived in Bristol one Abraham Darby, the proprietor of a brass foundry. A man of enterprise and energy, he tried to substitute cast-iron for brass, but his experiments fell to the ground.

He, however, became the lucky possessor of this philosopher's stone, which had heretofore eluded the mental grasp of many searchers beside him, through the following incident. A Welsh shepherd boy, named John Thomas, tormented with





## UTILE DULCI.

the fear of being impressed as a soldier, solicited his master to recommend him as an apprentice to a relative, who was one of the partners of Abraham Darby, and he was accordingly taken into the brass works.

“One day as he was looking on, while the workmen were trying to cast iron, he said to Darby, that he thought he saw how they had missed it, and begged to try a method of his own.

“This was assented to, and he and Darby remained alone shut up in the shop that night, and before morning, the difficulty was solved—they had cast an iron pot. Simple as it now seems, it was hailed as a great and useful discovery that had till then resisted the research of many to expound. It has since revolutionised the domestic economy of the household.

“He was at once retained in their service, and kept the secret inviolate, faithfully to the day of his death; although his cupidity was sorely tried by offers of double wages by parties interested in the trade.

“For more than a century after that eventful night, the process of producing iron castings in a mould of fine sand with two wooden frames and air holes, was practised at that factory alone; but, to evade the lynx-eyed jealousy of the trade, the process was conducted in secrecy, with plugged key holes and barred doors.

“Such is the simple story; but there is one drawback to cast-iron, it is comparatively brittle. However, the process saves labour, as a thousand cast iron articles can be produced in less time than it took to manufacture a hundred by the old method, and, consequently, cheapens the article to the purchaser.”

## UTILE DULCI.

"Thanks, thanks, my dear sir. I am always so glad to hear stories of boys who have been useful ; and to whom the bitter censure of being foolish and idle is inapplicable."

"Yes, Harry, the success of this boy should be an inducement to all young people to observe closely, to think maturely, and to act wisely ; so that in whatever sphere of life it may please God to place them, the golden opportunities of self-help, in this great mechanical and scientific country, may not pass unimproved. From it, they may learn that the smallest improvement which leads to useful results, may bear them onward to the topmost wave of fortune, and its thousand attendant comforts and rational enjoyments."





## YOUTH AND AGE.

---



“WOULD I were a man to-day !”  
Said one whose soft and flowing hair  
Proclaimed him gayest of the gay.  
A boy, and void of care.

“I would I were a man, to do  
As pleased me most, uncheck'd and free;  
I'd roam the whole world through and through,  
In perfect liberty !”

“I would I were a heedless lad !”  
Said one whose scant and hoary hair  
Proclaimed him saddest of the sad,  
A man bow'd down with care.

“I would I were a thoughtless boy,  
And all these years that roll between  
Were as a shadow on the joy  
That was, and might have been !”

YOUTH AND AGE.

Oh, Youth and Age, oh boy and man,  
That envy still each other's state,  
Misreading both the Master's plan,  
Ye find the truth too late !

Mark well the lesson that is taught,  
One to the other, and be wise :  
Each day with novel use is fraught—  
Employ it 'ere it flies !





## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

---

**A**T the commencement of the present century France was in much the same uncertain state with regard to its Government as it has been lately ; how uncertain, an anecdote of a very clever Minister, whom you may have read of, Talleyrand, well illustrates. There was very severe fighting going on in the streets of Paris, just as there was last Spring, and Talleyrand was shut up in his house with all his people waiting for the affair to be decided one way or another, perfectly calm amidst the surrounding agitation. At last the firing ceased ; shouts of victory were heard ; and presently the bells began to peal in honour of the conquerors.

“Hark !” said Talleyrand, going to the window, “We conquer !”

“Which side ?” eagerly inquired an excited friend.

“Ah,” said Talleyrand, “I will tell you that to-morrow.”

He had played his part with such acuteness as to be on good terms with all the hostile factions, and able to claim protection from the most powerful, whichever it might prove to be.

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

There were very few, however, who possessed Talleyrand's clear head, cold heart, and laxity of principles; the majority of Frenchmen were eager partisans; Royalists, Republicans, or Imperialists; the rest were puzzled. It was very hard for a man who merely wanted to obey the laws and mind his own affairs, without caring about politics, to know what to be at. What was loyalty one day was treason the next.

The king and queen had been beheaded, and the next heirs to the throne were in exile, but there was one party who stuck to their cause all through, refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Republic, the Directorate, or the Emperor Napoleon the First. These fought when they could get anything of an army together; when they could not, they plotted and conspired. Bands of these Royalists were formed in different parts of France, under the name of Chouans, who kept up a desultory civil war when there were no armies in the field, and by their daring, and the difficulty of detecting the men who composed them, proved a source of constant annoyance and considerable danger to the Government for the time being.

These few preliminary words were necessary before introducing you to a room in a fortress outside Orleans, where a party of five Royalists were detained prisoners. Had they been taken at Paris, or certain other towns where the authorities were violent politicians, they would have been treated with the utmost harshness during the short period that their heads were allowed to remain on their shoulders; for they were uncompromising aristocrats, titled men every one of them. But the Commandant to whose care they were committed had no partisan sympathies. He considered it his duty to obey the orders of the existing Government, which





THE CELL IN THE PRISON OF ORLEANS.

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

employed and paid him, and he did so unflinchingly and at all hazards. The prisoners were given into his charge to be kept in safe custody until they were fetched away for trial—or execution, it was all the same thing, and keep them securely he would: all the wealth in the Indies would not have tempted him to betray his trust, but he had no personal feeling against the men themselves; on the contrary, he respected their courage and misfortunes, and even had a most un-republican feeling of deference for the position they had once held in society. So their sojourn was made as comfortable for them as possible, under the circumstances; they were allowed their own bed and bedding; their servants were permitted to come to them every morning and evening, to bring them better food and wine than the prison regulations afforded; to enable them to change their linen, &c. Interviews with their friends were even winked at under certain restrictions, such as a responsible man being present to see that no weapons were passed, but friends did not much care to compromise themselves by taking advantage of the indulgence, and appeared but rarely. A still greater boon was the permission to live together, without being spied upon; for though they were so thoroughly guarded that escape was impossible, the guards only entered their room at stated times, and then never without giving them warning.

Two of the prisoners were reclining on their beds; two were walking up and down; the fifth sat on a chair by the window, reading a journal. Presently the latter broke into a low laugh; all turned towards him.

“What is it, Bethune?” asked one of the promenaders.

“Listen! ‘We have to record another of those daring outrages which must be put down with a firm hand; the night

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

before last the diligence was again stopped by a party of armed ruffians, who overpowered the escort, and carried off a large sum of public money, the proceeds of the taxes which have lately been levied in the Department, which was being conveyed to the capital. Several merchants, taking advantage of the government escort, were likewise carrying a considerable amount of property with them, but this the brigands did not touch, saying that they were not robbers, who preyed on private individuals, or seized the public money for their own personal advantage, but loyal subjects engaged in seeing that the taxes were made use of in support of the only authority which had a right to levy them. From this it is evident that the outrage was committed by a gang of Chouans.’”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Well done!”

“Capital!”

“My friends, this is the very best method of supplying the budget that a Minister of Finance ever dreamed of. There is none of the unpopularity and grumbling excited by imposing taxes; none of the expense and trouble of collecting them: no, all that is left to the adversary, to the opposition; and then, the money being collected, you walk in, you make your bow, you take it; beautiful!”

“Ah! I am sorry for this.”

“What is the matter, Bethune?”

“Lower down here, in another paragraph. ‘The mask of the leader fell off while he was reassuring a lady who had fainted from fright; he was recognised in the streets of Orleans yesterday, and arrested.’”

“Another victim!” sighed the oldest and gravest of the party.

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

"And a stupid proverb affirms that nothing is ever lost by politeness!" said another, with a shrug of his shoulders. "If he had let the fair dame come to at her leisure, he would have been free now, whereas politeness will lose him his head, as sure as mine will part company from my shoulders before the month's out."

At this moment steps were heard in the passage outside; then the word "Halt!" and the thud of ordered muskets; then the door opened, and a fresh prisoner was introduced.

The others received him as a stranger, with bows of distant politeness; but directly the door had closed again, and they were alone, they pressed around him with outstretched hands.

"What, Guyon! They have taken you too, at last! We hoped that you bore a charmed life."

"How was it; tell us."

"My faith! They choose to make me the hero of some attack upon a diligence."

"Ah, we were just reading about it, little dreaming it was you whom the faithless damsel had betrayed."

"An extraordinary mistake of hers;" said Guyon, in a loud voice, turning towards the door. "A most curious case of confusion of identity. Happily, I can prove an alibi." Then he added in a low tone to one of the others, "That is my line; don't any of you seem to know me before the guards. I fancy I have a friend somewhere, for when I was being carried to the mairie after my arrest, someone in the crowd murmured in my ear, 'Take the name of Gobard; deny everything; act the indignant; ask for your black servant to be allowed to wait upon you.' Now I never had a black servant in my life, but I claimed him when I came in

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

here, and they said that he should be allowed to pass. One cannot afford to throw away a chance."

Late in the afternoon a black man presented himself at the prison with a basket of provisions, and a change of linen for his master Lieut. Gobard. He was admitted and searched, and nothing suspicious being found upon him, he was brought to the prisoners' room.

"Oh my master, my dear master!" he cried, "that you should be locked up in prison and accused of a crime which was committed when you were fifty miles off at the time, in the company of Captain Leverrier and your faithful Pompey!"

And the poor fellow fairly blubbered.

Now perhaps you think that Pompey ought to have used broken English, said *de* for *the*, &c.; but I beg you to remember that I am translating his words, because he spoke in French. Now go on reading, and don't be so ready to find fault.

"Who are you? What does it all mean?" Guyon asked, when the door was closed.

"Are you sure of all here?" said the black, in a whisper.

"Perfectly; you may speak without fear."

"Well, then, Guyon, don't you remember Gobard? The black? Oh, that will soon come off. I am your old school-fellow, your friend, until we found ourselves by unlucky accident on different sides. Gentlemen," he added, turning to the others, "I warn you not to talk secrets before me, I am an enemy. Only you see I must save my friend here; he once did the same thing for me, so I owe him a life."

"But how did you come to Orleans, Gobard?" said Guyon, shaking him by the hand.

"Oh, it is all correct, I have got proper leave from my

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

Colonel—urgent private affairs. I happened to pass the café just as you were arrested; I saw that no one knew you, and an idea came into my head which promises to succeed better than I anticipated. You have taken my name, as I told you?”

“Yes.”

“Then now take my servant’s black face. Poor old Pompey; He followed me home from Martinique, and is as clever as he is faithful. He has got up his story perfectly, and is ready to bear witness that he has been to visit me here. Where is the water? oh, here. And the soap; and a towel; that is it. I shall be white soon; do you take that bottle of blacking I have brought to polish my master’s boots with, and change your complexion too. It is a peculiar mixture, and will dry presently. But look sharp; there is no time to be lost. If one of the guards came in we should both be done for.”

“I see!” cried Guyon, waking from his bewilderment. “You mean that I should escape as your black servant?”

“Of course. You black yourself; we exchange clothes; when the time comes for you to turn out, you go away, promising to return to morrow morning. Once outside the fortress, you go where you like. I should recommend England, but that is at your choice. My servant, the real Pompey, will come to-morrow morning—it has all been arranged—and talk as if he had been here this evening.”

“But they will observe that you are not the same man who was first arrested and imprisoned here.”

“Trust me to brazen that out. I shall have the evidence of these gentlemen here—”

“Yes, yes, of course!” they all echoed.

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

“And that of my black servant.”

“Generous friend!” cried Guyon, “I will not accept this sacrifice: the risk is too great!”

“The risk is nothing at all,” replied Gobard. “I have written to my Colonel already, complaining of my arrest; my strict adherence to my military duties, and utter indifference to all political matters are well known; I can prove that I was fifty miles off when the diligence was attacked. The only risk I run is from your delay, which might cause my little plot to be discovered.”

“If it is as you say—”

“It is, on my honour as a soldier! Why, my Colonel would no more see a hair of my head harmed by civilians than—than he would take their word against mine. If they stand it out that I am not the man originally arrested, he will only think that they say so to excuse themselves for making a ridiculous mistake. Come, strip; do not keep me shivering!”

For Gobard had kicked all his clothes off while he was protesting and explaining. There was nothing for it but the other must follow his example; dye his face and hands with the composition which had been brought in the blacking bottle, and then dress himself in the garments Gobard had come in. As for this latter he turned into bed, that the exchange of prisoners might not be discovered that night at all events, and so Guyon might have plenty of time to get clear off.

These arrangements were not completed one minute too soon; for a guard came into the room presently to say that the hour had arrived when all strangers had to leave the fortress, and the black servant must go.

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

"Cannot I remain with my master?" pleaded the disguised Guyon.

"Of course not; come, clear out at once, or you will not be allowed to come again."

And so, with feigned reluctance, he left; declaring that he would return the first thing in the morning, and that it could not be long before the Colonel came to clear up the mistake, and let his master out.

Once outside those gloomy walls, which he had never expected to leave save on his way to the scaffold, Guyon drew a long breath of relief. Rashly brave as he was, and now accustomed to hairbreadth escapes, this sudden transition from the shadow of death to life and liberty staggered him for a moment. But he speedily recovered himself, and started off for the place, some five miles distant, where Gobard had told him he would find the real Pompey. It was dusk when he left the prison, and by the time he had reached the rendezvous night had fallen completely. The black servant was waiting at the appointed place, with a horse and a purse of money which Gobard, who never did things by halves, had provided for the fugitive. Guyon explained the success of the scheme, told Pompey that he was to call at the prison on the following morning as agreed upon, and rode away. In twenty-four hours he was in a place of safety.

There was a rare stir in Orleans next day. The Colonel of Gobard's regiment rode over, and wanted to know why his officer had been arrested. The Mayor, a gendarme, and the Governor of the fortress declared he was not the same man who had been seized the day before; Pompey and his fellow prisoners declared that he was. The Colonel demanded how he could possibly have been exchanged? The Governor

## AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

owned the force of this argument, and said that he was probably mistaken, but he never knew a night's rest effect such a change in a man's appearance before.

Gobard, however, was at once set at liberty, and rejoined his regiment, which marched a few days later against the Austrians; but the whole affair was a mystification to the Mayor till the day of his death.





## THE THIEF DETECTED ;

OR, TOM PEARTREE'S PORTRAIT.



HIS portrait was taken under very peculiar circumstances, as the sequel will show.

It records an interesting incident in the boyhood of Gainsborough, an English painter of eminence, who has left many lovely memorials of his graceful genius to attest the beauty of his conception and the excellence of his execution.

The house in which he was born and lived in his youth, near Sudbury, was enclosed in a spacious orchard of choice trees. It was the admiration of the neighbourhood, and especially noted for the melting lusciousness of its pears. Abutting on the public road, the orchard was the cynosure of eyes. The mouths of the passers-by often watered at the sight of the succulent, rich-savoured fruits, as they hung temptingly on the heavily-laden branches. The eye of cupidity often longed, and the hand of temptation often itched for their possession. Therefore, in spite of every

### TOM PEARTREE'S PORTRAIT.

precaution to guard this garden of the Hesperides from pilferers, it was often rifled of its wealth of fruit.

Who abstracted them? How stop the nocturnal foray and incursion of the depredator? Whose was the profane hand laid on the forbidden fruit? What was to be done? These questions agitated the breast of the household, who were at their wit's end. No clue for a long time could be obtained likely to lead to the detection or apprehension of the culprits.

However, to this lovely spot, redolent of the delicate and savoury perfume of the ripe mellow fruit, Gainsborough, led by caprice, early one morning repaired; and, in the soft stillness of the glowing autumn, concealed from view by an old rustic arbour, he was busily exercising his facile pencil in sketching a fine picturesque, gnarled old tree in the orchard. While thus engaged, his attention was suddenly roused, when he perceived a man's face—in which one could read in legible characters in the facial lines a long career of vagrancy and roguery, together with shrewdness and cunning, mingled with fear and hope—peering whistfully over the fence of the enclosure. He eyed him attentively several times, and then seemed to relapse, absorbed in his work; but this unconsciousness of the presence of the trespasser was only apparent.

After eagerly scanning the ground to see that the course was clear, that no danger lurked near, and evidently satisfied with the result of his furtive scrutiny, the pilfering fellow bounded with the spring of a stag over the slight paling, and climbed up one of the trees with the agility of a squirrel. He was suffered to proceed unmolested, till the object and intent of his visit was no longer doubtful; and then, before he had





### TOM PEARTREE'S PORTRAIT.

time to lay his felonious hand on the fruit, the youthful painter issued from his hiding place, and making a noise, scared the marauder.

At breakfast Gainsborough related the circumstance, and laid upon the table the likeness of the good-for-nothing fellow, whom, with great presence of mind and a happy facility, he had photographed.

It was at once recognised by the family as that of a man who lived in Sudbury. He was sent for and taxed with his thievish misconduct, which he denied stoutly, and asseverated his innocence with many protestations. At last, provoked by his obstinate denial, the boy produced and confronted the original with his own counterfeit presentment, as he looked when about to break the eighth commandment; at the sight of which he was crest-fallen, and the rogue stood confessed.

Thus, by the playful exercise of his youthful talent, he led to the discovery of the ne'er-do-weel; and, in after years, Gainsborough made a finished painting of this juvenile effort, and called it "Tom Peartree's Portrait."

In conclusion, I will only add a bit of advice. Bear in mind always that no story, good or indifferent, is without a point or moral. As in the realm of nature there is no atom without a purpose, so in the domain of literature there is no anecdote without a meaning, latent or apparent. If we inwardly digest what we read or hear, it can never escape us. But how oft, my friend, we lose through carelessness in reading or listening the precious lesson of a tale. And may I enjoin you ever to avoid an idle story as you would the bite of an adder, for the like reason that Sir Peter Lely made it a rule never to look at a bad picture, having found by experi-

### TOM PEARTREE'S PORTRAIT.

ence, that whenever he did so, his pencil took a tint from it. However, it will always delight me to tell you a pleasant story, when its application to every day life is so obvious that he who runs may read, and may draw inferences for future use.



## A DARING LION HUNT.

---



HUNTING the lion must necessarily be a daring undertaking, and men must have hearts of iron and be fearless of death to engage in it. But the hunt that Messrs. Galton and Andersson undertook may be recorded as one of the most daring. These travellers were the guests at a missionary station in Richterfeldt in tropical South Africa. While at the station they were joined by one Hans Larsen, a Dane by birth, and well-distinguished for a remarkable degree of courage, energy, and endurance.

While one day at dinner, the travellers were interrupted by the arrival of several natives, who, in breathless haste, related that an *ongeara*, or lion, had just killed one of their goats, close to the mission station, and begged of them to lend them a hand in destroying the beast. These natives had so often cried "Wolf!" that their statement was not heeded, until after they had persisted in their story, when the travellers determined to ascertain the truth for themselves. They at once equipped themselves, each by strapping to his waist a shooting belt containing the several requirements of a hunter,

## A DARING LION HUNT.

such as bullets, caps, knife, and shouldering a double-barrelled gun (after loading it with steel-pointed balls), followed the men who had raised the alarm.

In a short time the party reached the spot where the lion was supposed to have taken refuge. This was in a dense tamarisk brake of very considerable extent, partly situated on and below the sloping banks of the Swakop river. On the rising ground, above the brake in question, were drawn up in battle array a number of Damaras and Namaquas, armed with their native weapons, and a few with guns. Others of the party were in the brake itself, endeavouring to oust the lion.

But as it seemed to Mr. Andersson that the "beaters" were timid, and, moreover, slow in their movements, he called them back, and accompanied by the Dane and Mr. Galton, and a few worthless dogs, he entered the brake. It was rather a daring proceeding, for, in places, the cover was so thick and tangled as to oblige the party to creep on their hands and knees; and the lion, in consequence, might easily have pounced upon them without a moment's warning. But the travellers were devoid of fear, or they would never have chosen lion-hunting for their pastime.

Thus they proceeded for some time, when suddenly, within a few paces of where they knelt, they heard a low, angry growl, which caused the dogs, with hair erect in the manner of hogs' bristles, and with their tails between their legs, to slink behind. Immediately afterwards, a tremendous shout of "Ongeama! Ongeama!" was raised by the natives on the bank above, followed by a discharge of firearms. Presently, however, all was still again, for the lion, as they subsequently learnt, after showing himself in the outskirts of the brake, had retreated into it. Further attempts were made by those

## A DARING LION HUNT.

in the brake to dislodge the beast; but, finding the enemy awaiting him in the more open country, he was very loth to leave his stronghold. Again, however, they succeeded in driving the lion to the edge of the brake, where, as in the first instance, he was received by a volley; but a broomstick would have been equally efficacious as a gun in the hands of these natives, for out of a great number of shots that were fired, not one seemed to have taken effect.

The party in the brake were at length worn out, and disgusted beyond measure, at the way in which the natives bungled the affair. They left the tamarisk brake, and rejoined those on the bank above, and offered to change places with them; but their proposal, as was expected, was forthwith declined.

As the day, however, was now fast drawing to a close, Mr. Andersson determined to make one other effort to destroy the lion, and should that prove unsuccessful, to give up the chase. Accordingly, accompanied by only a single native (he himself relates), he again entered the brake in question, which he examined for some time without seeing anything; but on arriving at that part of the cover they had first searched, and when in a spot comparatively free from bushes, up suddenly sprang the beast within a few paces of them. It was a black-maned lion, and one of the largest Mr. Andersson ever remembers to have encountered in Africa. But the movements of the beast were so rapid, so silent and smooth, that it was not until he had partially entered the thick cover (at which time he might have been thirty paces distant) that the traveller could fire. On receiving the ball he wheeled short about, and, with a terrific roar, bounded towards his assailant. When within a few paces he couched as if about to spring, having

## A DARING LION HUNT.

his head embedded between his fore paws. Drawing a large hunting-knife, and slipping it over the wrist of his right hand, Mr. Andersson dropped on one knee, and, thus prepared, awaited his onset. It was an awful moment of suspense, and the hunter's situation was critical in the extreme; but his presence of mind never forsook him—indeed, he says, he felt that nothing but the most perfect coolness and absolute self-command would be of any avail.

He would now have become the assailant; but as—owing to the intervening bushes, and clouds of dust raised by the lion lashing his tail against the ground—he was unable to see his head, and to have aimed at any other part would have been madness, he refrained from firing. Whilst intently watching his every motion, he suddenly bounded towards the traveller; but—whether it was owing to his not perceiving him, partially concealed as he was in the long grass—or to his instinctively throwing his body on one side—or to his miscalculating the distance—in making his last spring he went clear over him, and alighted on the ground three or four paces beyond. Instantly, without raising himself from the ground, Mr. Andersson wheeled round on his knee, and discharged his second barrel; and, as his broadside was then towards him, he lodged a ball in his shoulder, which it completely smashed. The lion, on receiving his second fire, made another and more determined rush at his assailant, but owing to his disabled state, he happily avoided him. It was, however, a narrow escape, for he passed the hunter within arm's length. The lion afterwards scrambled into the thick cover beyond, where, as night was then approaching, Mr. Andersson did not think it prudent to pursue him.

At an early hour on the next morning, however, all the





## A DARING LION HUNT.

travellers, with several natives, tracked the wounded lion, and soon came to the spot where he had passed the night. The sand here was one patch of blood; and the bushes immediately about were broken and beaten down by his weight, as he had struggled in his frantic effort to get on his legs again. Strange to say, however, they here lost all clue of the beast. A large troop of lions that had been feasting on a giraffe in the early morning had obliterated his tracks; and it was not until some days afterwards, and when the carcase was in a state of decomposition, that his death was ascertained. He breathed his last very near to where the hunting-party were "at fault;" but, in prosecuting the search, they had, unfortunately, taken the opposite direction.

Not long after this Mr. Andersson had another escape from a lion. This occurred at a station called Elephant Fountain. He had posted himself, he relates, in a dense mimosa brake, commanding the approach to the Zwart Nosof river, at a point much frequented by wild animals, and flanked by an immense pitfall. The darkness was deepened by surrounding thick foliage and high river banks. "Indeed, so black was the night, that I could not discern the muzzle of my gun. The gloominess of my solitude was increased by the occasional "Quaqua!" of the night-heron, which made the succeeding hush more dreary; during which were the falling of leaves, and rustling of insects among dry grass, which was hailed as a relief to the impressive silence."

To a man in a savage wilderness, and without a companion, silence, and especially when combined with utter privation of light, is inexpressibly solemn. It strikes the mind not merely as a negation, but as a threatening presence. It seems ominous.

## A DARING LION HUNT.

Amidst this loneliness and sense of desolation, Mr. Andersson fancied that he heard the purr and breathing of an animal close behind him; but as no other indications of any living thing ensued, he attributed the sounds to a heated imagination. All at once, however, the stillness was disturbed by the quick steps of a group of pallahs descending the stony slope leading direct to his ambush. "Stooping as low as possible, in order to catch their outline, I waited their arrival with my gun on full cock. Nearer and nearer they came, till at last I fancied the leader was on the verge of the pitfall; but, just at that moment, there was a low, stifled growl, a rush, and then a faint cry as of some dying animal. All was again silent. Though the impenetrable darkness prevented me from seeing anything, I could no longer doubt that I was in the vicinity of a lion."

The redoubtable traveller here confessed that he felt himself awed, well knowing that if the lion attacked him, he should be entirely at his mercy. His situation was critical in the extreme. Straining his eyes and ears to discover the beast's whereabouts, he held his breath in fearful suspense, while every nerve was strung to the highest pitch. Presently, to his astonishment, he heard the report of a gun within fifty paces of his hiding-place; then a second and a third shot. This made matters worse, for he now became apprehensive that the men, not aware of his presence, might direct their fire towards him. He therefore sprang to his feet, and vociferated,—

"Who's there?"

"Sir, the lion—the lion!" replied a follower, who the next instant stood trembling before Mr. Andersson.

He had, it appeared, been sent to call the latter back, but

## A DARING LION HUNT.

had encountered the beast in his path, and fired in order to frighten him away.

Though Mr. Andersson did not exactly comply with the wishes of his follower, he deemed it advisable, after what had passed, to remove to a more open space. where he was less likely to be taken by surprise.

Early next morning a number of Hottentots came to examine the ground, when, as he had expected, they found the footprints of a lion scarcely distant the length of a gun-barrel from his own person, where he had been crouching previously to leaping on the pallah (whose cry he had heard in the night), but which, though wounded, had effected his escape. How far the beast had intended to do Mr. Andersson mischief it would be hard to say, but certainly his position had not been an enviable one.





HOB'S CHOICE;  
OR, LOOK TO THE END!

A FABLE.

---



OME time ago, in those old days  
Which folk romantic call "sublime,"  
The age of goblins, and of fays,—  
The well-known "*once upon a time!*"

Two serving-men,  
(One Dick, one Hob,)  
Who worked for some old merchantman  
Residing near the Barbican,  
Were sent upon a simple job,  
To carry certain stores, one day,  
Into the suburbs far away.

### HOB'S CHOICE.

Now, though the task was easy sailing,  
And such as any man might do—  
When he has got a dreadful failing  
The case has quite another view ;

For Dick, who was a sturdy chap  
As any master might require,  
Lov'd twiddling fingers in his lap,  
Or snoozing o'er the warehouse fire.

Active he was—in sport or fun—  
But not when *work* was to be done ;  
So Hob was left to growl, and do  
Much business set apart for *two*.

This Hob was Yorkshire born, and quick,  
Tho' patient under all this trouble,  
And scorn'd his fellow-servant's trick  
Of making him do labour double.

*This* time, however, as it chanced,  
The stores to Hob and Dick assigned  
Were vastly different, as you glanced,  
And bore their nature well in mind ;

For the two bags, (which Dick had tried  
By making with his staff some lunges,)  
Had contrary contents inside,  
One holding salt, the other, sponges.

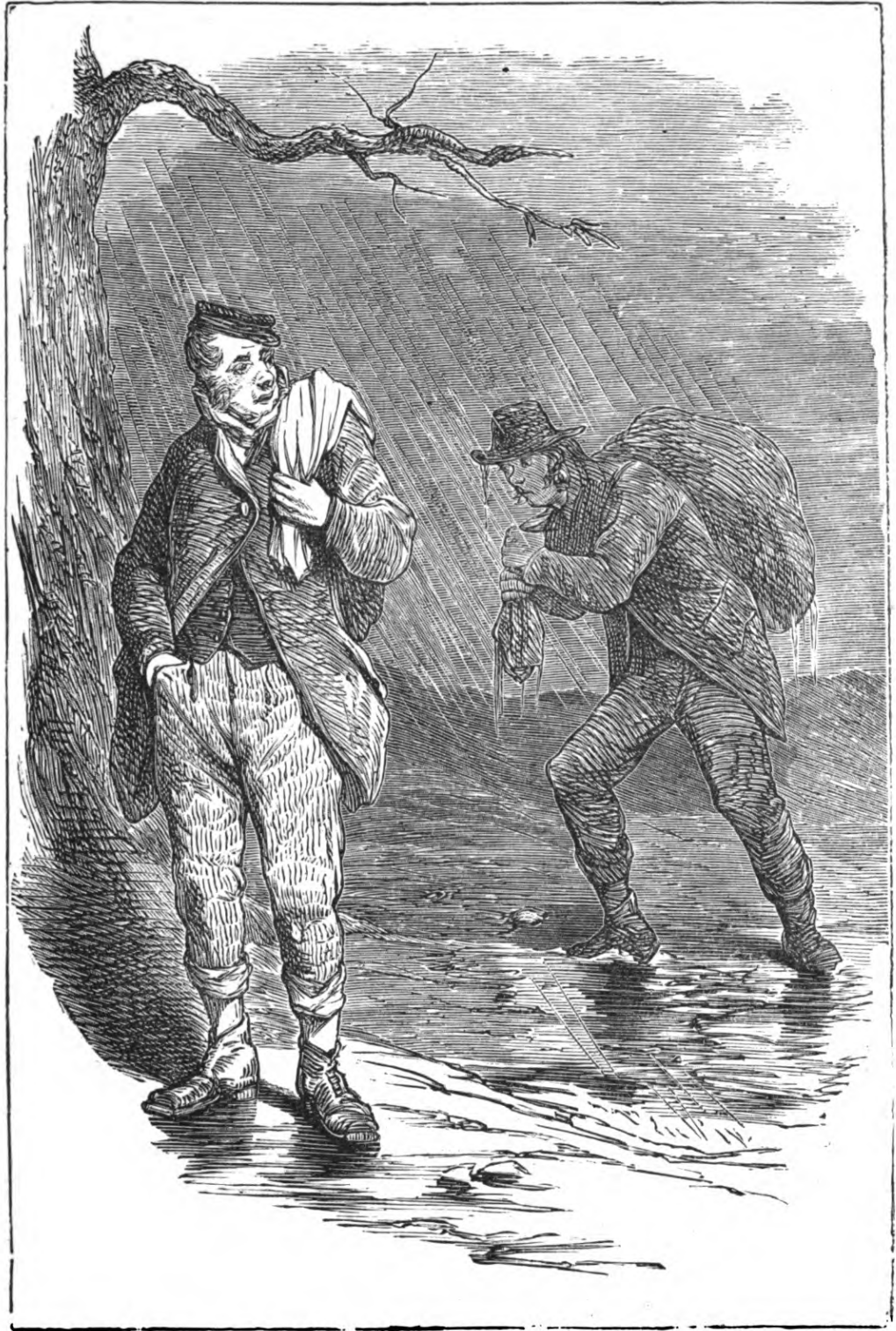
## HOB'S CHOICE.

Hob watched his fellow—sure enough  
He fixed upon the lighter stuff ;  
And smiling, with contented air,  
Bade Hob to follow with his share.

At first, Hob looked enraged ;  
This trick was quite too much ;  
But looking up, by chance, on high,  
To the dull, threat'ning winter sky,  
He answer'd, as if pre-engaged,—  
“ *I'm* willing, if *your* choice be such !  
I'd rather take the heavier load,  
As we've to trudge a lengthy road !  
So fling your sponges on your shoulder,  
And start ere we're a minute older !”

Dick chuckled to himself, in glee  
At his arrangement being successful,  
While Hob, the patient fellow, *he*  
Toiled on in fashion most distressful ;  
But ev'ry now and then his eye  
Look'd queerly upward to the sky.  
The sponges were the merest feather,  
Not half as heavy as the weather !

“ Come on !” laugh'd Dick ; Hob answer'd, “ Hark !  
It strikes me that's a growl of thunder !  
And we're not halfway thro' the park ;  
I fear this journey was a blunder !”





### HOB'S CHOICE.

Dick, looking at the salt, says "Yes!"  
And giggles neath the sponge's shelter;  
When suddenly, to their distress,  
Down pour'd a tempest, helter-skelter!

No tree, no house within two miles!  
The water-spout got stronger, stronger,  
And, odd to say, Hob's all in smiles,  
While Dick's poor phiz is growing longer!

"Cheer up!" cries Hob, with smother'd joy,  
"I'm getting on first-rate, you see!"  
"Cheer up?" groans Dick, in pain. "My boy,  
It's vastly different with *me*!"

"Don't mind the rain!" laughs Hob, again.  
See how *I* walk, *you* shouldn't lag!"  
Dick sighs. "My sponge is filled with rain!  
Whilst *you* have got an empty bag!

"The storm that makes my woe so great  
Has washed your heavy salt away,  
And now I sink beneath the weight  
Of what I thought so light to-day!"

"You've got a lesson, then, at last!"  
Says Hob, with half a serious voice,  
"Don't to be selfish prove too fast—  
And *think* before you make a choice!

HOB'S CHOICE.

"I'll help you, *now*, the journey through,  
You drench'd and over-burden'd elf!  
But when we *next* have work to do,  
Look out, and do your share *yourself*!"

MORAL.

If you've got work,  
Don't shirk!  
If you've to make a choice, choose *well*,  
That is, choose *wisely*,  
And think of what these verses tell,  
Precisely!





## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

---



WHEN boys are really heroic, their heroism often takes a form as noble as that which is displayed by such men as win the Victoria Cross or the medals of the Humane Society. The nearer we are to our infancy, the nearer we are to a state of innocence; and few things deserve our admiration more than an innocent boy. So it seems to me in my old age; and this is why the story I am going to relate to you has always seemed to me a grander example of true heroism the longer I live. When a boy myself, I thought little of it, comparatively; but now that my hair is gray, I feel proud to remember that the young hero of my tale was once my friend and associate.

When I was at school, at about the age of fourteen, there was a big bully amongst us, who used to make our lives very uncomfortable. He presumed on his own strength and our faint-heartedness to lord it over everyone. He would thrash two or three of us every day, simply for his own amusement; and if he had not got a fair pretext, he would make one for the occasion. The younger ones had to fetch and carry for

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

him, clean his boots, smuggle in forbidden articles, with the chance of a flogging from the Doctor if they were found out and took the blame on themselves, and the certainty of a flogging from Barnes if they confessed the things were for him. Though there were several amongst us whom he did not like to offend, yet even we did not possess pluck enough to interfere with him. He tyrannised over all, and was generally held to be the "cock" of the school. Therefore you may be certain that Barnes was as much disliked as he was feared. The under-masters themselves were afraid of him; for in those days, more commonly than now, the ushers in a private school were often a very mean-spirited sort of men, who had no qualification for their post, unless it was ignorance and poverty. Barnes used to treat them to brandy and cigars—for his purse was always well supplied with money—and if they ever ventured to complain of him, he would answer them back boldly before the whole school. Once I remember seeing him take the French master by the arm and bundle him out of the room; and then, because he was afraid "Mossoo" would tell the Doctor, he followed him out and gave him some cigars, and they returned again laughing together, as though it had been a capital joke. So that, what with bribery and intimidation, he had them also under his thumb.

There was another fellow called Murby, two or three inches less than Barnes, and a good year younger. He was a very quiet boy, who was always studying, and seldom said much on his own account, so that nobody thought much of him, though he was exceedingly well liked on the whole. But he was tolerably plucky and determined, and no one ever meddled with him, Barnes hated him, and, I believe, feared him; the

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

former because Murby beat him in class, and at cricket, and at a multitude of other things: the second, because Murby had now and then got the best of him in a dispute. It had never come to blows between them; but there were a few of us who thought that if Murby would only take the trouble, he might give Barnes a good lesson, and be "cock" in his place.

A little before the time I am going to speak of, a young boy called Mannering had entered the school. His father had brought him, and came into the play ground to watch us at a game of cricket. He was conversing with the Doctor, and I was standing near them; and it happened just then that Murby had caught Barnes out, at which there was a general shouting and clapping of hands. The Doctor laughed, and said,—

"Well caught, Murby; a splendid catch."

"Murby, did you say?" observed Mr. Mannering. "What Murby is that? Does he come from Ireland?"

"Yes," said the Doctor; "his father resides in Cavan, and is a magistrate there."

"Dear me," said Mr. Mannering, "I know the family well. His father is an old and intimate friend of mine, but I had no idea he had a son with you."

The innings was just over, and so the Doctor sent for Murby, and Mr. Mannering began talking to him about his family and his home. Murby was very much pleased, I could see, and became quite red at being spoken to by a stranger in such a familiar way. Then Mr. Mannering said,—

"I have brought my boy, Tom, to be one of your school-fellows, and am delighted to think that he will have some one to look after him at first. For, considering how long

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

your father and I have known each other, it is only natural that our sons should be friends too. Do you think you could manage to let him down easy into the ways of the school, without taking up your own time too much, or causing you any trouble? He is rather a quiet lad, but not a coward, I am sure."

Of course Murby promised to take care of him, though it was not a nice or easy task, as he soon found out. Barnes was desperately jealous of any one else being taken notice of when he was present, so he was envious of Murby, and annoyed at his catching him out when the Doctor and Mr. Mannering were looking on. As soon as they had left the field he began laughing at and chaffing the new boy—"Miss Milksop," as he called him.

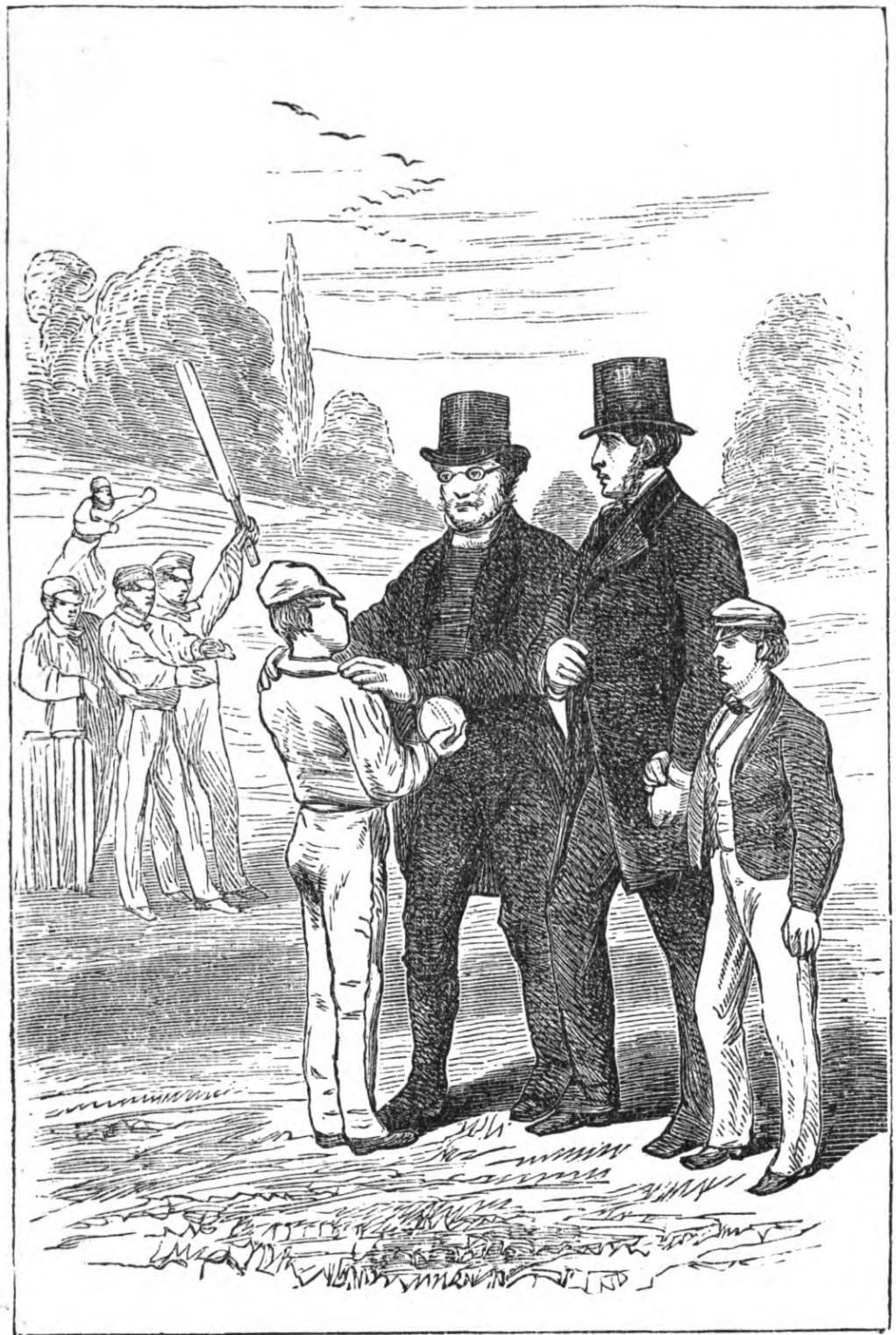
"Did they bring the poor little missy away from home, and put him into a nasty horrid school, and give him a nurse to look after him? Poor little dear!" said Barnes, stroking him on the back.

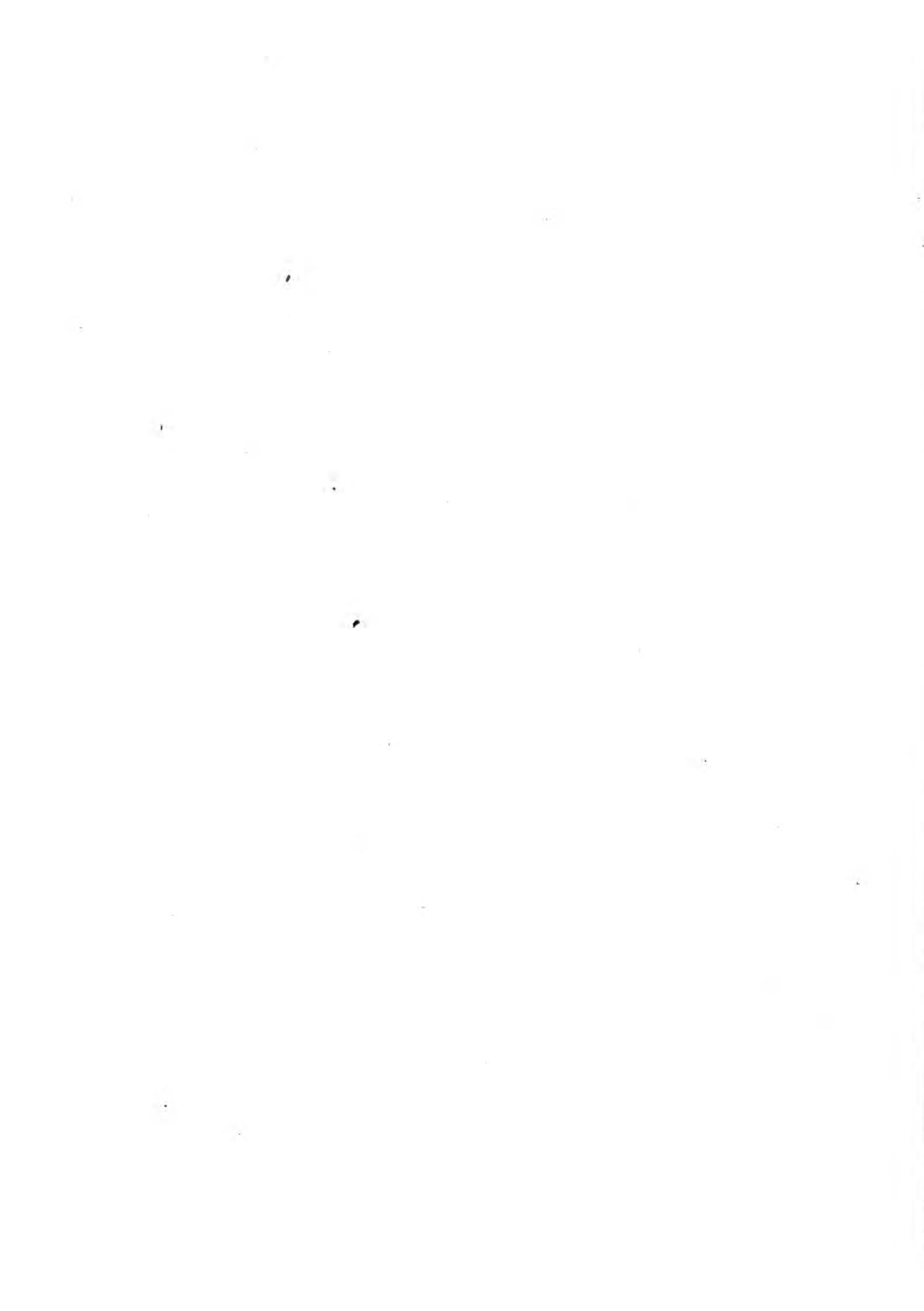
Murby looked at him rather savagely, and said,—

"I suppose you mean me by the nurse, Barnes. I don't much care for your calling me so, if you like, but I advise you not to go too far, for if I am a nurse, I know how to do my duty."

"O, goodness!" said Barnes, "we must look to our p's and q's now, and no mistake. I say, you fellows, just take your eyes off little missy, or else nurse Murby will give you a jolly good dressing!"

It was time for the next innings then, so the quarrel did not go any further; and some of the fellows thought that Murby had taken it too quietly. But we soon saw that it was not from fear: he hadn't got his blood up yet. Besides, it is





### A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

a mistake to make too much about a new boy all at once; it is much better to let him rough it a little, and try to find his level by himself. Tom Mannering soon found his. He was the pluckiest fellow for his age that I ever knew, and could stand up for himself as well as any of us. We all voted him a regular good fellow, and he became a general favourite. But Barnes seemed to have a determined spite against him, and did everything he could to make him miserable. Murby had told us all that he had taken Tom for his fag; but when Barnes got him by himself, he used to bully him as much as he could, and even make him fetch and carry for him like any of the rest. Murby soon discovered this—in fact, I told him, for I saw clearly that Tom would not do anything to get his friend into trouble. So Murby gave him orders, the next time Barnes wanted to make him fag, just to refuse him out and out; and he asked me, if I observed anything of the kind going on, to come and tell him directly.

Several days after, when Murby was studying for his examination, Barnes and Mannering and I, with a few other fellows, were out in the play-field together; and Barnes was bullying Tom, as usual. Suddenly, he said,—

“By the bye, it's frightfully hot, and I must have something to drink. Here, you Mannering, just cut over that wall to Mother Nixon's, and get me some of her 'cordial.' She'll know what you mean. Now then, be off sharp, or else I'll give you something to quicken you.”

Tom looked at me, and then said to Barnes,—

“Get some one else to go, can't you? I'm not your fag.”

“Ain't you?” said Barnes. “We'll soon see about that.”

He took up a wicket, and held it over Tom's back.

“Now then, are you going?”

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

"No," said Tom.

Down came the wicket. Tom did not cry out, but looked as defiant as ever. I scampered off to the school-room at once, and called out,—

"Here, Murby, now's your time! Barnes is licking the young one."

Murby jumped up and ran ont immediately. Barnes was holding Tom by the collar, and was thrashing him unmercifully. But his time was come; and just as he had raised the wicket for another blow, Murby rushed up and seized his arm.

"Drop that wicket, you horrid brute, and listen to me," he said quietly. "You've played the bully long enough, and I am jnst going to try if I can't take you down a peg or two."

By this time all the school had got wind of the affair. We made a ring round them; and, not to spin a long yarn out of what you have heard described a hundred times before, I will merely say that Murby gave the bully a thorough and well-deserved thrashing. Barnes had a couple of black eyes for weeks after; Murby was made "cock" of the school; and bullying was completely abolished. Barnes could not stand being beaten and degraded; and, much to the delight of everyone, he got his father to take him away.

But this, though it was heroic enough on Murby's part, was not what I alluded to at the beginning. I must go on to the second part of my story.

Tom Mannering was very much devoted to his friend from that day forward. He always kept near him whenever he could, and would do anything in the world that he thought Murby would like. The latter never made him fag for him, but Tom seldom waited for his orders. I was amused to see

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

him watch the other as a dog watches his master, just to try and find out something he could do for him. For instance, Murby had written a Greek poem for a medal which the Doctor used to give every Midsummer, and he had deferred finishing it until the last day. It was six o'clock, and the poems had to be sent in by eight. Soon after Murby had finished it, and was going to fasten the sheets together, he unfortunately upset the inkstand over his desk, and the whole poem was spoilt. It so happened that an aunt of Murby's, who resided in the neighbourhood, had fallen dangerously ill, and at that very moment the Doctor's servant came in with a message that he had been sent for, and must go immediately. I was the only other fellow in the room, and I was writing my own poem at the time.

"Well," said Murby, "I suppose it comes to about the same thing. I believe you would have beaten me, Parley, and now you will have one less against you at all events."

So saying, he swept the leaves on to the floor, and went off. Directly afterwards, Tom Mannering came in. He saw the sheets, and asked me what it meant. I told him; and he immediately sat down; and by sticking close at it, made a clean copy just in time to hand it in by eight. The result was that Murby got the medal.

Tom and I had been invited to go over to Ireland to his father's, to spend the holidays with him that summer. We had a very pleasant time of it, what with cricketing, and going out with the keepers, and boating on the river. One day we had been out since the early morning, sailing and rowing on the quiet beautiful stream, between banks whose romantic loveliness I have never seen surpassed, though I have seen a great number of rivers since, large and small, in

### A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

Ireland and out of it. First we floated between high walls of granite, crested and dotted over with dense groves of trees. then we came suddenly upon an undulating tract of emerald meadows, in which the small sturdy Irish cattle were luxuriously feeding. Then we passed through dark woods, as it were in a lane of golden sunlight, which looked all the brighter for the cold gloom on either side of us, into which the sun could not penetrate. Ever and anon we rested on our oars to listen to the blithe music of the song-birds, and the plaintive notes of the cuckoo and the stock-dove; or we watched the restless fishes thrusting out their noses or their silvery sides into the warmer air. I remember that day as perhaps the very happiest of my whole life; and I think my companions entirely shared my feelings, though we were too young then to be very sentimental about it.

We did not think of returning home until the sun was low in the sky, and as we had more than six miles to row, we settled down to a good long pull. The stream, however, was in our favour, and we spun merrily along. By the time we had done about five miles it was nearly dark, and we unfortunately had to pass a somewhat dangerous spot, where the stream fed a mill-wheel, being dammed up across the half of its breadth. About a hundred yards above the dam a number of stakes had been driven in, to show where the current of the side-stream was strongest, and within these it was dangerous for any boat to venture. We hoped, however, by cautiously hugging the opposite bank, to get past without difficulty; but two things were against us. First the darkness, which rendered it impossible to discern one object from another; and next the fact of the river being very high, and the current swift. As ill chance would have it, the mill was

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

working, which greatly increased our danger. How it was I cannot say, but we got too far from the bank, and suddenly, before we knew we were near the posts, we struck forcibly against one of them, and were upset. We could not see each other, nor yet make ourselves heard; though I for one shouted till I was hoarse. I was carried violently against the stone work of the dam; and though I lost my head for a time, I was fortunately able to hold on instinctively by an iron girder. Tom Mannering secured himself by one of the posts; and after a few minutes we were both rescued. But Murby, unhappily, was carried into the boiling water beneath the mill-wheel; and it was a providence that he was not killed outright. He doubtless would have been, had not a couple of men been standing on the little bridge above; and at great danger to themselves, they succeeded in saving him from what seemed certain death. But not before the great wheel had struck him one terrible blow, which broke his leg above the knee. When they got him out, he had fainted; so you may judge how imminent his peril had been.

We had a much duller time of it for the next few days. Mr. and Mrs. Murby were of course very anxious about Arthur, but they were very kind to us, and would not let us go home, as we thought it right to suggest. Arthur, too, pressed us to remain; and we used to sit by his bedside, reading and talking to him, whenever we were allowed. But the adventures of that memorable visit were not yet over; and, about a week after the accident on the river, another occurred, much more serious than the first. And it was now that Tom Mannering performed the act of heroism to which I have alluded.

## A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

One night, he and I had been invited to a large party at some miles distance, by some friends of the Murbys. Arthur, of course, was to have gone with us, but his broken leg prevented him. We did not care to go without him, but he insisted upon it so strongly that we gave way and went. One of Mr. Murby's men took us in a light car, and brought us back about two o'clock in the morning. There was no moon, and it was somewhat dark, but both groom and horse knew the roads well, and we went merrily along. We were both in high spirits, having spent a very happy evening. All on a sudden Tom sprang up on his seat and cried,—

"See, there! That red light through the trees. Whatever is it?"

The groom looked, and then vigorously lashed his horse.

"It's a fire," he said. "That's what it is; and, worse luck, it's just where the master's place lies."

We were much alarmed, and impatient to get to the end of the journey. The road there made a sharp bend, and a small grove of trees stood between us and the house. But in about ten minutes we had rounded the wood, and then, sure enough, a terrible sight greeted us. The house was on fire! The flames were pouring out of two windows in one of the wings, and a dense volume of black smoke was hanging over the roof. There was no sign of activity about the place; the inmates had evidently not discovered their danger. Mr. Murby was unfortunately away; he had gone up to Dublin that very morning, and was not expected back until the next day. Only Mrs. Murby and Arthur, and about a dozen servants, were in the house. We drove up as rapidly as the man could make the horse go, shouting all the time at the top of our



MURBY'S DANGER.



### A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

voices. How we pulled all the bells we could come at, and thundered away at the door. Our only thought was to make as much noise as possible; We did not think how we should frighten Mrs. Murby by waking her suddenly out of her sleep. But we had not long to wait, for the servant who had been charged to sit up until our return, and who had been snugly asleep in a large armchair in the hall, opened to us in a great hurry. She was amazed when we told her the house was on fire, and rushed out into the garden, shrieking louder than we had been able. By this time some of the other servants had been roused, and came running out of the house, too frightened for themselves to be of much use. However, I seemed to be inspired with a little energy for the occasion, and, no little to my own surprise, began to give orders right and left, and what was more, to be obeyed. There was no fire-engine nearer than two miles; but I instantly sent off the page-boy to fetch it. I then made one of the servants go with me to Mrs. Murby's room, and sent her in to arouse her. She found her mistress hastily throwing on her clothes, and, hearing my voice outside, she cried,—

"Is that you, Peter? What is it? I hear them calling fire. Where is it?"

"There's just a little ma'am," I said, "coming out of the left wing. I don't think it will turn out much, but you would be safer outside."

She rushed to the door, throwing a large cloak over her head, and her face beneath it was as white as a sheet.

*"And don't you know that my boy is there with a broken leg, unable to stir?"*

She said this through her teeth, so low and quiet, that it

### A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

impressed me more than if she had shrieked out. I fell back against the wall of the corridor, without saying a word. I had for the moment quite forgotten Arthur; though I have no doubt I should have thought of him as soon as I had seen that Mrs. Murby was safe. She partly pushed me aside, rushed to the end of the corridor, and opened the folding doors which led into the wing. I followed close behind her, and could not help echoing the cry that escaped her as she began to mount the stairs. The smoke was so thick that we could scarcely breathe, and although there was another closed door at the top of the flight, it poured out through the chinks in dense clouds.

To come from Mrs. Murby's room to the top of these stairs was the work of less than a minute. Without the least hesitation the mother dashed open the door. A hot gust of air blew in our faces, and put out the candle which Mrs. Murby was carrying; but there was no more need for a light. *Something* came staggering through the lurid smoke, and fell down at our feet. We could not see their faces, but we knew them. It was Arthur Murby and Tom Mannering.

We quickly carried them, one apiece, through the door, down the stairs, and into the other wing, where they would be safe at least for a while.

It had fortunately happened that the fire had been seen at the distance of about half a mile, by a man who knew exactly where it must be—for he knew every mile of the county. He had run at once to give warning at the fire-engine house; and thus, in less than ten minutes after our return home, the engine was on the spot. The river ran close by the house, so that there was no lack of water; and, to be brief with my tale, the fire was soon extinguished. The greater part of the

#### A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

left wing was destroyed; but the main building was untouched; and when Mr. Murby came home, he did not find so great a calamity as he might have done.

Poor Arthur and Tom were a good deal injured by the fire; and the double shock which the former had received sent him into a fever. Thus, although Tom was soon able to talk to us, it was not until some weeks afterwards that we heard the true account of his heroism.

It seems he had heard me tell the servant to take me to Mrs. Murby's room, and had then immediately thought of Arthur, and his helpless condition. He rushed at once to the room where he knew that he slept; and though, as I have said, the whole wing was full of smoke, he groped his way up in the dark. He was only just in time. Poor Arthur had discovered the fire, and had managed to get out of bed; but then, either the pain of his leg, or the thick smoke, overcame him, and he had sunk upon the floor. Tom immediately took him upon his back as carefully as he could; and though the fire burned off all his hair, even his eyebrows, he struggled back again on to the landing. Just then, as he afterwards told us, when he thought he must give in, and was on the very point of falling, he saw Mrs. Murby at the door, with the light in her hand. All he could do was *to fall towards the light*; and after that he remembered no more.

You may imagine that Tom was a great hero with the Murbys after that. He and Arthur were scarcely ever separated. They both went into the army, and joined the same regiment; Murby first, and Mannering a few years afterwards. My own course in life was different; but so long as they were in England I was continually with them. How often we used to talk of that eventful summer, which began so happily, and

### A SCHOOLBOY'S HEROISM.

ended so gloomily! And how often Murby and I would glance at that great red scar on Mannering's cheek, which he never entirely got rid of, and think of the night when he proved that a boy can be a real hero.





## AËRIAL MESSENGERS.

### I. BALLOONS.    II. CARRIER PIGEONS.



HE ambition of man, which is beyond limit in conception, is occasionally checked in its practical fulfilment by his own physical organization; so, that though he has made himself, in a way, master of the resources of Nature, he is defeated continually by his own incapacity to fully use them. Our primitive man no sooner saw a fish than he ambitiously attempted to make the water as much his home as the earth.

My young friends need not to be reminded that, notwithstanding some thousands of years of industrious practice in the art of swimming, man is just as far from being rival to a salmon as he was when he first crept cautiously into the yielding water and spread forth his hands to float. His organization will not allow him to live under water, and so his ambition is thoroughly checked. His acquirements in the art of swimming have been of great service to him; and he

might have been satisfied with this achievement. But though he can outrace the dolphin by employing a steam-vessel, and can sink a shaft deeper than ever suggested itself to the most adventurous mole, he is not satisfied with his triumphs, but desires to travel through the air like the birds. Here again his high-mettled ambition has received a decided curbing, and hitherto the birds have got the best of it.

A few sanguine men, rivalling the sage in "Rasselas,"—of whom I hope my young friends have read, or will read—have constructed apparatus in clumsy imitation of the anatomy of the bird's wings, with which they have committed themselves to the air from an eminence; invariably with unsuccessful, most frequently with fatal, results.

The nearest approach to a conquest over the air has been gained by the invention of balloons; and though little has been done as yet, in spite of serious scientific research, in establishing a system of air-navigation, some positive advantages have been gained by these wonderfully simple contrivances. Of these I propose to tell you presently; at first I think I may amuse and instruct some of you by describing the construction and management of the balloon, from its first design.

The first suggestion of the balloon, which is a corruption of the French word "*ballon*," or "little ball," was obviously the air-bubble or soap-bubble. No idea, however, of experimenting upon this notion was made public till so late as the year 1670, when a learned Jesuit, named Francis Lana, published a treatise, in which he mentions an apparatus closely resembling the first construction of our balloon.

Nothing further was gained till 1782, when an Italian, Cavallo by name, inflated a soap-bubble with hydrogen gas,

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

which being the lightest body in nature, rises rapidly in ordinary atmosphere; he never succeeded, however, in raising anything heavier than the bubble.

Strange to say, the first experiment in aërostation which was at all successful, was made with a very different agent from hydrogen gas.

About the same year that Cavallo experimented with his soap-bubbles, two brothers, Stephen and Joseph de Montgolfier, paper makers at Annonay, near Lyons, conceived the notion of inflating a paper ball with hydrogen gas; but the material was too porous, and the gas escaped. They then determined to try rarefied air for their purpose. This they accomplished by placing fire under the neck of the paper globe. This experiment was successful, and a balloon of 23,000 cubic feet was raised with considerable force. Immediate notice of this discovery was taken by the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and further experiments were advised and made.

It may interest my readers to be informed that the first notion of applying the discovery was in connection with war. How cleverly and successfully the French employed balloons in the disastrous contest with Prussia is known to all; and it seems as if the Montgolfiers were anticipating a day when their invention, improved and nearly perfected, was to be of almost vital assistance to their distressed and besieged countrymen. As far back as the battle of Fleurus the French employed balloons for reconnoitring, and are said to have escaped a surprise this way.

To return to the Montgolfiers. In 1783 their first public experiment was made at Annonay, on the 5th of June. At the appointed time, and in the presence of a magisterial body,

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

the brothers commenced operations upon what appeared to be nothing but immense folds of paper lying in the public place of the town. The mass was one hundred and ten feet in circumference, fixed to a frame, and weighing altogether about five hundred pounds. On the application of fire underneath, supplied by straw, the unwieldly body unfolded, and assumed the form of a huge globe, which on being set at liberty rose rapidly and gracefully into the air, where after attaining a considerable elevation, the rarefied vapour was dispersed, and the balloon sank.

As soon as the news of this phenomenon reached Paris, an extraordinary excitement was aroused. The idea of using hydrogen gas was now revived, and by using a material of lutestring dipped in a solution of india-rubber, which made the fibre air-tight, a balloon was inflated, on the 26th of August, 1783, in the Champ de Mars. It rose successfully to one hundred feet, where it was detained by ropes. After repeatedly lowering it and letting it rise, it was abandoned, in the presence of a great concourse of people. It fell five leagues from Paris.

The Montgolfiers afterwards experimented with their invention, but the interest fell off considerably, as no advance seemed to be made in the science of aëronautics, till the attempt was made to entrust human life to the balloon. As the danger was considered to be very great, the balloon, (a Montgolfier, or fire-balloon, not one inflated with hydrogen gas,) was held by ropes; and thus protected, M. Pilâtre de Rozier ascended, on the 15th October, 1783, to the height of one hundred feet; and on the 19th, to the height of three hundred and twenty-four feet.

The first persons who offered to leave the earth *entirely*,

#### AERIAL MESSENGERS.

were the Marquis D'Arlandes and M. Rozier. They performed this feat at the Château de La Muette, near Passy, on the 21st November, 1783. The voyagers rose to an altitude of three thousand feet, crossed the Seine, and drifted to Paris, where they descended safely in a field, having only used a third of their fuel, and having occupied twenty-five minutes in their trip. This balloon was seventy feet high, forty-six feet in diameter, and carried a weight of nearly one thousand seven hundred pounds. Amongst the names of those who signed the *procès verbal* relating to this most interesting experiment figures that of the eminent Benjamin Franklin.

The next ascent was noticeable as being made in the first hydrogen balloon by MM. Charles and Robert, from Paris.

In 1784, seven persons ascended in a monster Montgolfier (one hundred and two feet diameter, one hundred and twenty-six feet high). Soon after this so much confidence was placed in the balloon that several ladies took part in the ascents.

The first balloon launched in England was one in which gas was used. It rose, November 25th, 1783, from the Artillery Ground, London, and was found forty-eight miles from that city, near Petworth. The first voyage made in England was by Lunardi, from the same ground. He landed near Ware. Various ascents were subsequently made with varying success; the first parachute descent being made by M. Garnerin, on September 21st, 1802.

The parachute, which is only an amplification of an umbrella, has had more than one victim, notably the unfortunate Mr. Cocking; and its efficacy has been much doubted. In very calm weather it may answer the purpose of descending from a height, but as it can be easily capsized by a slight current of air, its use is exceedingly dangerous. It has been

#### AERIAL MESSENGERS.

entirely discarded in later times, when ballooning seems to have occupied much research and enquiry.

The old attempts of Rozier and others seem very insignificant by the side of the achievements of Messrs. Green, Grahame, Nadir, Coxwell, and Glaisher, of our times, and though every attempt to arrange a system of steering balloons has failed hitherto, there exists a society of scientific men which devotes itself to the patient study of aërostation, and which believes in an ultimate and imposing success.

There was, as early as 1836, a bold attempt made by the late Mr. Charles Green, whose name I have just mentioned, to make a voyage in his great Vauxhall balloon across the continent. Mr. Holland and Mr. Monck Mason accompanied the aeronaut, and these travellers started from Vauxhall Gardens, on the 7th November, at half-past one, p.m. They sped over the Channel, continued their voyage through the entire night, and at half-past seven in the morning descended in the Valley of Elbern, in the Duchy of Nassau. This famous balloon was afterwards known as the "Great Nassau Balloon."

During the late war between France and Prussia, the balloon played an important part. When Paris was besieged, and all means of personal communication were cut off, the value of these aërial messengers was amply proved. Not only were messages conveyed to distant lines and distant lands, but important actors in the strife, whose advice and presence were alike necessary to the army beyond Paris, were wafted by means of balloons to their destination.

The enemy were constantly on the look out for these "escapes," and many of the fugitives had narrow risks of being riddled by the rifle bullets of the sleepless Prussians, as

#### AERIAL MESSENGERS.

they glided in air over the camp. The Prussians also employed balloons for the purpose of inspecting the condition of Paris and its adjacent lines, and an amusing and exciting account is given of the "duel" between two antagonistic balloons which encountered each other in mid-air. Fortunately, neither aëronaut suffered from more than alarm. In the use of letter carriers the balloons were highly successful.

PETER PARLEY remembers, many years ago, when the search for the brave Sir John Franklin was being most actively carried on, a very ingenious suggestion being made to employ a series of small balloons, each bearing a number of packets of messages printed on strong cloth of various bright colours, (each message of each packet being alike). These packets were attached, at intervals of a few inches, to a slow match hanging to the balloon. The machine was to be let loose in the neighbourhood of the search, and allowed to drift in the supposed direction of the lost party. At a certain height the fire of the fusee reached the packthread which held the first bundle of messages, and immediately detached them. The letters then flutter down in all directions over the snow, where their bright colours would render them peculiarly attracting to the eye. The balloon still drifting on, then discharges a second packet of messages further on its road, till all were distributed.

This ingenious plan I believe was never adopted, though it answered well for the conveyance of letters from France to England and elsewhere, lately.

It is not to be supposed that the use to which balloons were formerly put ended with a scientific purpose. On the contrary, many attempts were made by fool-hardy men and

## ÆTIAL MESSENGERS.

women to add to the already existing dangers of aerial travelling, by imperilling their lives unnecessarily.

Some twenty years ago, a Frenchman named Poitevin ascended in Paris on a bull which hung suspended to his balloon. As this cruel experiment was received with much favour by the thoughtless Parisians, M. Poitevin came to England, and gave another performance of a similar kind. On this occasion, however, a horse was substituted for the bull. The poor animal was strapped firmly, by bands passing under its body, to the bottom of the car, its four legs hanging downwards to the earth. The Frenchman, after reaching a tolerable altitude, descended from the car by a rope, and sat on the horse, who thus had an additional strain to endure in its uncomfortable position. Its sufferings were intense, both from actual physical pain, and from its excessive timidity.

The magistrates, I am glad to be able to relate, on hearing of this put a stop to the performance, and I have never heard that it was repeated in France.

A still more hardy and daring feat was accomplished a year or two later by two acrobats, who suspended to the car of a balloon certain ropes and bars, on which they executed a variety of gymnastic exercises while the balloon was at a great height. One of these feats was peculiarly daring. The stronger of the acrobats hung by his legs to the bar which swung below the balloon, while the other crept over him, and allowed himself to be held by the heels in mid-air. Both of the performers were thus swinging head downwards, the upper of the two having to support himself and his comrade. This performance was also checked by the authorities.

Of the perils which have from time to time beset the voyagers in balloons I have not space to write. The ponde-





## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

rous machine is so thoroughly at the mercy of accident, that even the best aeronauts admit their danger.

Thunderstorms not unfrequently burst close to the balloon, and the only chance of escaping explosion and certain destruction is to let the balloon rise above the clouds which contain the electric fluid. The sight of such a storm has been described as sublime. Perhaps the possibility of danger may add something to the feeling of awe.

But besides the natural risks which surround the aeronaut, there are stories of hair-breadth escapes of men who have been exposed to the recklessness of a passenger, or to his positive attack, under the peculiar excitement arising from the pressure of the atmosphere on the brain.

There is an account published of a gentleman having accompanied his friend in a balloon, and then, at a great height from the earth, discovering that the aeronaut's brain was affected. In a balloon with a *madman*! The story tells how the maniac commenced to cut the ropes of the car, and how fearful was the struggle between the two men, till the unfortunate aeronaut fell from the car, now nearly severed from the balloon, and how the solitary passenger, relieved from one desperate danger, encountered all the perils belonging to the machine itself, though ultimately he reached the earth in safety.

Some years ago, in a similar struggle, though on this occasion there was no insanity in the case, a gentleman named Harris was flung from the balloon in which he and another were travelling. It was shown that self-defence alone had necessitated the survivor's act, and the result was acquittal.

Accidents have also occurred from foolishly igniting fire-

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

works too near to the gas contained in the silk, but as a mere amusement aerostation is almost extinct.

With the construction of the balloon my young readers are, I have no doubt, well acquainted; but as a few may desire information, I will briefly explain something of its manufacture and management.

The Montgolfier balloon is no longer in use, except as a toy; the pretty paper models now sold being still types of the original invention; though small hydrogen balloons constructed of gold-beaters' skin are perhaps the more popular. The use of inflammable gas in their inflation, however, does not recommend them as a safe toy.

The body of a practicable balloon is, of course, the large receptacle for the gas. Silk, which has been rendered airtight by being soaked in a solution of india-rubber, is carefully sewn in large "gores," resembling quarters of an orange, so as to form that well-known piriform (or pear-shaped globe which is so graceful in a balloon. The seams are well covered with the solution before mentioned, and the tapering neck of the machine protected by a stout leather casing. Over the whole of the silk is stretched a net-work of cord (sometimes of silk), which is left of sufficient dimensions to admit of the extraordinary swelling of the balloon. From the widest part of the machine, and forming a portion of the net-work, depend strong ropes which are designed to support the car. These ropes are brought within the dimensions of the car by meeting first in a stout hoop about six feet above the floor of that receptacle, to the sides of which they are strongly fastened. So far the balloon is constructed in the rough. To make it available for work, a valve, or moveable round shutter, is fixed at the crown of the balloon, opening

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

inwards, so that a string fastened to it and depending into the car, can be pulled by the aeronaut, and the gas liberated upwards. This, of course, decreases the buoyancy of the balloon, and suffers it to descend. Ballast, consisting of pebbles, or sand in bags, is carried in the car as extra weight, and by emptying these bags the machine, losing strain, is assisted to rise. The balloon is now ready for a journey, as soon as we have added some ropes with hooks attached, (called grapnels, and answering as the balloon's anchors in its descent), provisions and scientific instruments for ascertaining heights, force, and tendency of air-currents, etc.

The inflation of the mass has been going on all this time, and thousands of cubic feet of coal-gas have been pouring in through the narrow neck of the monster, and making the balloon sway, and swing like some great strange bird anxious to be free. The aeronaut inspects its fullness, and watches the moment when enough gas has been admitted.

Pure hydrogen gas, which can be readily made by covering granulated zinc, or iron filings, with a strong solution of sulphuric acid, is the best gas that can be used, but for very large balloons common coal-gas, such as we burn in our streets and houses, answers the purpose as well as the more expensive vapour.

The neck of the balloon is, of course, left open, when the signal is given to cut the ropes which hold the machine down to the earth; since the gas is trying to *ascend* within the balloon, and cannot escape below the aperture.

There is a moral even in the action of hydrogen gas; a moral of "Excelsior," which need not be overlooked. But the aeronaut and friends are ready; the crowd is impatient. the flag waves, the band plays "Off she goes," and the great

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

silken, rustling monster bounds into the air, and in a few minutes this big city looks like a model to the excited travellers in the air-balloon. So easy is the motion of the machine, that the sensation of travelling is that the earth is leaving *you*, not that you are soaring above it.

Without following the journey, let us now see how descent is accomplished. When the aeronaut desires to descend, he pulls the valve in the crown of the balloon; the ambitious gas rushes instantly up, and, as the balloon loses its sustaining power it begins gradually to sink. Now he looks out for a good spot, such as a field, for the balloon to rest. This selected, and the machine being now near the earth, the grapnels are got ready. But, see,—he is passing rather too near that clump of trees which skirts the field; out go the contents of five or six ballast-bags, and up goes the balloon again, clear of the trees.

Now for the grapnels, and fish for a hedge. The gentleman who manages the grapnel has missed the hedge, and the hooks are trailing along the field. Now they've caught in a gate, and the balloon is stopped. Pull the valve again, and down they come quickly, but lightly, for more ballast is discharged as the gas escapes. With a rough shake, which the travellers escape by hanging on to the hoops above, the car reaches Mother Earth; the gas roars at its lucky escape,—the beautiful, full shape is wrinkled, crumpled, and flabby. The last of the gas is gone, and all that is left is to pack the silk bag into the car, and book it for town by the next luggage train.

As I am not writing scientifically, I have omitted much that is instructive of the investigations made by celebrated aeronauts during recent aerial voyages, and have preferred to

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

tell more of the *practical* part of ballooning, as it bears upon the use to which the art of aerostation has been put in these latter days, as a conveyer of tidings of the deepest interest and import both to nations and to individuals.

As regards the second portion of this paper, which refers to another form of transmitting messages, by means of what are familiarly termed "carrier pigeons," I shall not inflict any learned treatise on you, nor seek to fill the place of your Natural History by what must be necessarily a very brief sketch of the habits of those remarkable aerial messengers. I shall merely tell you how long ago the peculiar gift of these pigeons was known and turned to account.

Even the ancient Greeks and Romans had noticed and employed the "carrier pigeon" as a messenger, for Anacreon, the famous Greek song writer, relates that Taurosthenes sent to his expectant father, who resided at Ægina, the glad tidings of his success in the Olympic Games, by the trusty wings of a pigeon, which made its journey and delivered its message in the same day. As has been done so very recently by the besieged French, so, Pliny assures us in his Natural History, was done by the Romans at the Siege of Mutina. A constant communication by means of pigeons was kept up between Hirtius, and Decimus Brutus. The old historian says in his quaint way,—“Of what good to Antony (the besieger) were his trenches and his watching, or his nets stretched across the river, while the messenger was cleaving the air over his head?” In the Crusades the carriers were employed frequently, and Tasso, the great Italian poet, relates in his famous epic, “Jerusalem delivered,” how a pigeon, which was flying to the Christian camp, was attacked by a falcon, but protected by the noble Godfrey De Bouillon, who

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

got the message safely. To that remarkable knight, warrior, and pilgrim, Sir John Maundeville, we are indebted for a singular account of the use of the carrier pigeon even in so out-of-the-way a country as China. "In that country," says he (and Peter Parley spares his young friends the quaint spelling), "they have a custom, when they are at war, and when men hold a siege about any castle or city, and cannot send out a messenger with a letter, from general to general to ask for succour, they make their letters and bind them to the neck of a *Colver* and let the *Colver* fly, and they are so taught that they fly with the letters to the very place that men would send them to." He accounts for this justly enough, by explaining that the pigeon's instinct is to return to the place "where he is nourished;" whence we have adopted the more expressive name of the "homing pigeon" for this bird; his carrying messages being no part of his *nature*. Man has adapted the "homing" characteristic of this pigeon to his own purpose of transmitting messages, but as a mere "carrier" the bird is certainly mis-named.

In England the use of the "homing pigeon" was soon degraded into bearing the intelligence of the felon's death at Tyburn. The famous print by Hogarth will give an example of this practice. The pigeon was also used as messenger from the race-course and other public sporting occasions; even as bearer of important information to the Stock Exchange of the rise or fall of foreign stock.

The Germans, but especially the Belgians, have of late years paid great attention to the breeding and education of pigeons. So thoroughly have the natural propensities of the bird been developed, that a flight from the South of France, or from England to their native country is now-a-days quite

## AERIAL MESSENGERS.

a common occurrence. This very year a most interesting match took place at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, where some six hundred "homing pigeons," of Belgian breed, were loosed at the same moment, and all but one returned to Belgium in about three hours.

The flight of the homing pigeon is peculiar. On being released from the trap it rises wildly into the air to a considerable elevation, wheels round and round, as if settling in its mind which is the proper direction to take, and finally darts off, led by its marvellous instinct, to the place of its abiding.

As PETER PARLEY saw a moral from the gas in a balloon, he may as well instil another into the minds of his young readers in respect of this pigeon, whose *love of home* is so charming a characteristic. Some of you may keep pigeons, "fancy pigeons" as they are called, and perhaps you may own amongst them a "homing pigeon;" in this case I would suggest that the happy owner should read some reliable book on the habits of this pretty bird, and encourage them as far as in him lies.

To a great many people the lower animals are only so many conveniences or encumbrances as the case may be, and no attempt is made to develop in them those wonderful instincts which show that the GREAT PROVIDENCE cares for all creation alike.

The balloon and the "homing pigeon" are, we know, mere instruments in the hands of intellectual Man, but there is no reason, even granting this, for us to make too much of our possessions in the great field of Nature. After all, we employ gas and birds to do what we cannot do ourselves, and in the midst of our triumphs we may learn a salutary lesson of humility even from Our Aerial Messengers.



## NEW YEAR'S DAY.

---



HE year is number'd with the dead !  
His work is past ; and o'er his head  
The young year comes with eager tread.

Old Year, we barely mourn thy fate,  
Thou wast so full of bitter hate,  
Thy wrath was so insatiate !

With fire and blood thy soul was nurs'd ;  
With strife and discord thou hast curs'd  
Fair cities, quenching cruel thirst.

New Year, we hail thee in thy birth !  
Smile kindly on the stricken earth,  
And fill our mourning hearts with mirth.



## MOZART.

---

**P**ROBABLY the subject of this memoir furnishes one of the most beautiful and perfect specimens of youthful precocity on record. And in this case, it may with truth be said, that the promise of transcendent genius which ushered in the morning of life did not disappoint the expectation of manhood. We may also further premise that the most interesting aspect of a man's life is his boyhood: the season when the seeds of future excellence and utility are sown. And on this aspect of this great man's life we will chiefly speak.

On the 27th of January, 1756, was born at Salzburg John Chrysostom Wolfgang Theophilus Amadeus Mozart. His parents were of the middle class. His father, Leopold Mozart, acquired considerable reputation as a professor of music, and by his avocation amassed a competency. His mother was a woman of some literary taste. They were both noted for personal beauty.

Young Mozart inherited nothing of the parental good looks. He was a plain, puny child, but of great vivacity and cheer-

## MOZART.

fulness of temper. As a baby in arms he showed signs of his susceptibility to music, gay or grave, according as the air was lively or plaintive. His musical education began in his babyhood. In his third year, he astonished his father when he discovered him intuitively seeking for thirds on the piano, as he delighted him by the drollery of his manners. Perched by his side, the infant threw his arms and legs about, and altered his gestures as he listened to his lessons. These antic actions showed the effects of music on his highly sensitive nervous organisation. So exquisitely delicate was his ear, rough sounds or discords caused him tremor. His horror of the trumpet was inconceivable. And when his father, to convince the child there was nothing to fear from it, blew that instrument strongly, the experiment resulted in fits of convulsion. He was fully ten years old, before he could bear the bray of the trumpet.

Struck by the infantile proofs of musical aptitude and quickness in learning which the child displayed, the father began seriously and earnestly to develop his talents; and at the tender age of four he received daily lessons in music.

Such was the rapid proficiency he made, that at five years old, young Mozart was talked of as a prodigy. But those outside the circle of his friends treated the rumour of his great skill, if not with contemptuous indifference, at least as extravagant fictions. The child, however, played before the Elector of Bavaria, and common fame was confirmed. He so far exceeded expectation by his extraordinary performance, that it led to an official inquiry of the precise period of his birth.

In every other respect as well as in music, the infancy of "the little sorcerer," was full of the promise of genius. His

## MOZART.

feelings were intense. Wonderful boy ! with all his cleverness, he was mild, docile, and obedient to his parents.

Obedience to parental authority is one of the chief excellences in a boy's character ; and in after life, it is one of our dearest consolations to feel that, how great soever our shortcomings, we have never wantonly grieved our parents' hearts by disobedience and frowardness. And in this respect, Mozart stands a conspicuous example, worthy of imitation. And of a truth, I have never heard or read of a good and great man who was wanting in affectionate obedience to his parents.

But to proceed. He was affectionate in the extreme, and clung round the heart like the tendril of the vine ; and with an acuteness of sensibility, he would strive to endear himself to those about him, often asking earnestly,—“ Do you love me ? Are you sure you love me *well* ? ”

The amiability and goodness of his disposition never suffered any abatement in the acme of fame. His application, though not continuous, was yet great. He pursued the study of music with the utmost ardour. The ordinary sports of childhood were laid aside or made subservient to this *belle passion*.

Presently, music was entirely abandoned, and *reading*, *writing*, and *arithmetic* were studied with great eagerness ; and his father found it impossible to prevent his scribbling and writing with chalk his sums upon the furniture, walls, and on everything that came in his way. His progress in this latter branch of study was so great, as to have led some to infer that he would have shone as an arithmetician, if he had not betaken himself to music. However that may be, these studies were shortly afterwards, laid aside, and music again resumed its sway over his fervid mind.

## MOZART.

One day his father returning home from church with a friend, was astonished to find little Mozart in the music room, intensely absorbed in efforts to write with pen and ink; and the following dialogue which passed between father and child on the occasion is worthy of repetition here, as showing the mental activity of the infant Orpheus:—

“What are you doing, my little dear?” asked the father.

“Oh! papa, I am composing a concerto for the harpsichord. Don’t interrupt me, for I have just got to the end of the first part.”

“Let me see it, child. What a fine scrawl.”

“No! don’t look at it yet, papa, for I have not finished this movement.”

The father, however, took the paper, and both he and his friend burst out laughing. The child, ignorant of writing, had always dipped the pen to the very bottom of the ink-stand, and the consequent repeated blots he had wiped with his hand and cuffs, whilst the musical notes were written upon the smeared as well as the clean parts of the paper. After examining it further, the parent’s eyes glistened with tears of joy, and showing it to his friend, he said,—

“See how regular and accurate he is. It is composed strictly according to the rules; but it could be of little use from the extreme difficulty of playing it.”

“Dear papa,” cried the ardent child, “it’s a concerto, and must be studied to be played properly. You shall hear the style in which it ought to be executed.”

Suiting the action to the word, he sat down to the instrument, and so far succeeded as to give his father and his friend a perception of the subject and musical idea he wished to convey.

## MOZART.

Sometime afterwards young Mozart again surprised his father and a circle of friends by a fresh display of his acquisition. He had only been taught the harpsichord. But one evening a few musical friends met at his father's house, when a second violin being required, the child volunteered his services. The ease and style in which he acquitted himself, in an intricate part, on so difficult an instrument, excited the incredulity of those present; who could hardly be persuaded, even when assured that the child was self-taught on the violin, but that he had received ample instructions. This fresh exhibition of skill was a source of great joy to the parents.

He was now six years old; and the unrivalled powers of the boy Mozart were beyond dispute. Many curious anecdotes are extant respecting his brilliant performances and sublime indifference to vanity. Though so young, he was not blinded by his success. It has been remarked as one of the most amiable traits of his character that even at this tender age he appeared totally indifferent to everything that flattered vanity or worldly pride—the rocks on which many a goodly youthful bark has made sad shipwreck of its future. He was gratified only by the commendation and appreciation of those who were really judges of the art.

In confirmation of this opinion, on one occasion, the Emperor Francis the First, who was remarkably fond of the child, was eulogising him, when he turned round and asked with great *naïveté*,—"Yes, yes; but is Mr. Wagenseil here? Send for him, for he will understand me." The Emperor good humouredly complied with his desire and gave up his place at the piano to the eminent composer. Mozart, then, with great vivacity said,—“Mr. Wagenseil, I am going to play

## MOZART.

one of your concertos. You must turn over the leaves for me." Which he did, with unfeigned admiration. It was on this occasion the Emperor nicknamed the child, "the little sorcerer."

When he was exactly seven years and a half old, his father set out from Salzburg to publicly exhibit the juvenile Orpheus in the principal cities of Europe. In every court he won admiration and praise; in every city to which he travelled he met with an ovation. His abilities were tested and fastidiously scrutinised. He was often tried by the most complex themes; but explored them with rapidity and expounded them instrumentally with ease. The more severe the test applied, the more decided was his triumph. In fact, he intuitively apprehended the difficulty, and as instinctively apprehended its solution.

In this journey, after visiting Paris, where his reception was very flattering and profitable, his father, eager to reap all the laurels as well as all the profits he could by the exhibition of his son's cleverness, brought him over to London, in 1764. He was then just eight years and three months old.

As the particulars of his stay in this country, which he never again visited, may excite your curiosity, I will give you what scanty but interesting details I have been able to glean.

To guard against deception and imposition, the boy Mozart was early submitted to a rigorous scrutiny by a committee of distinguished persons. He was variously tried, by all the means that the most astute ingenuity suggested. Several of the most complex pieces by Bach and Handel were played by him at sight; and also a manuscript composition in which he executed a part, unpremeditated, with precision and taste.

## MOZART.

He both sang and played in an extemporary scena, in which he illustrated several of the passions, effectively.

He went through the ordeal with his usual *éclat* and to the satisfaction of every one present, who, with one accord, acknowledged his wonderful proficiency, readiness and skill.

He gave concerts with original symphonies by himself to every piece played.

King George the Third was partial to the child, and on one occasion, wishing to try his readiness in composition, had a full bass placed before him, and he, without the least difficulty, yea, almost instantaneously, set a charming melody to it.

The King and Queen gave him several marks of encouragement, and often expressed themselves delighted with his manners and his talents. Her majesty, on one of these occasions, made her music master, C. Bach, take the child on his knees; and thus, to gratify her as well as to give her a further proof of his precocious skill, the youthful musician and Bach played alternate bars through a whole sonata—the child's execution calling forth admiration for masterly precision, feeling, and depth it displayed.

He composed several pieces which were dedicated to the Queen; but, on the whole, it seems that our countrymen were better pleased with his performance on the organ than on the violin or harpsichord.

Mozart stayed altogether fifteen months among us, enjoying our hospitality, as well as the liberal patronage of the court and the world of taste and fashion. His success was unbounded, and all that his father could desire.

He was eleven years old when he returned from his travels, loaded with honours and with the friendships of the most

## MOZART.

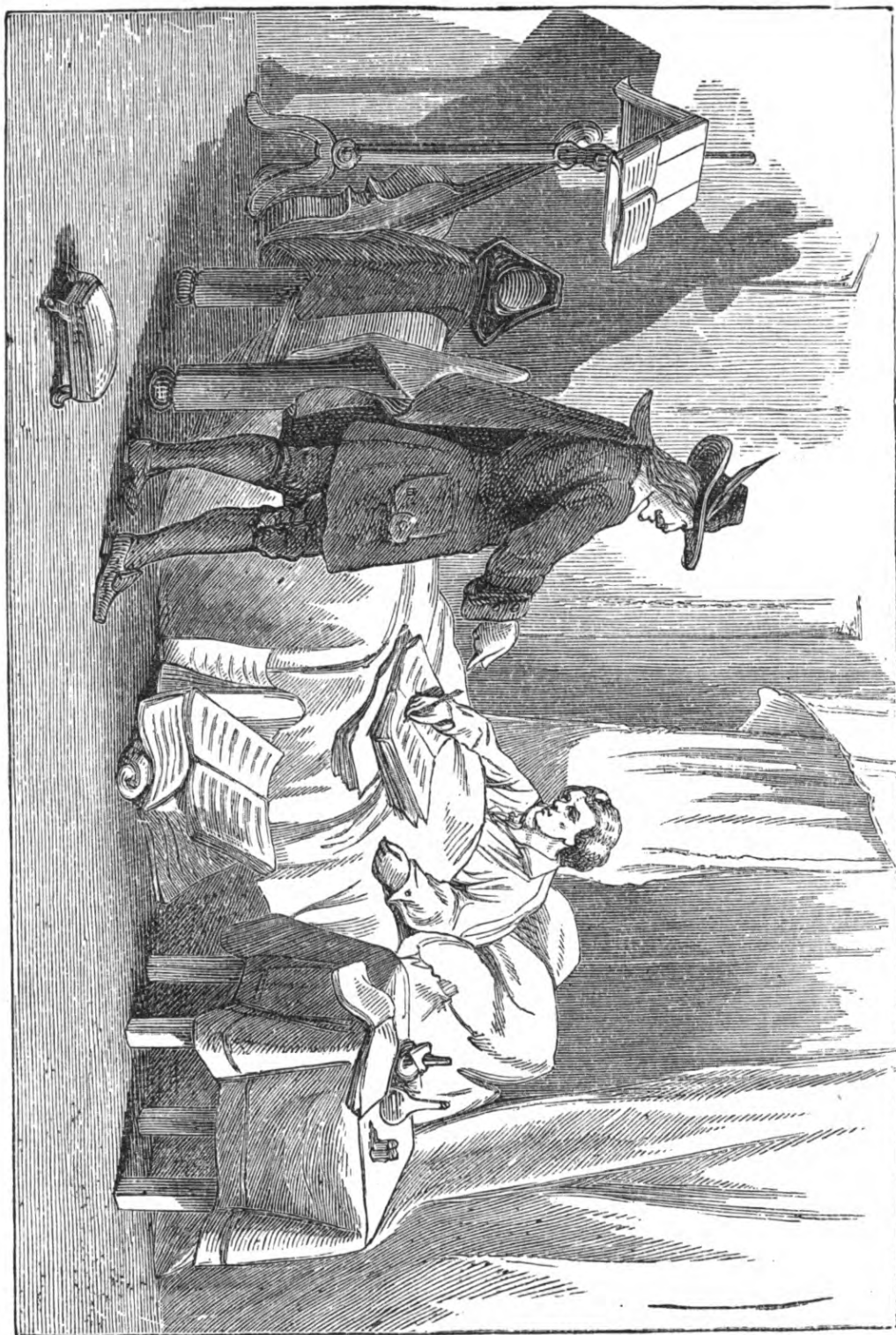
distinguished. Everywhere he left happy recollections, and original compositions that flowed from his prolific pen to identify him with the chief cities he visited.

Having rested for a season in his native land, he proceeded to Italy—the land of song; and in his fifteenth year his first opera was performed in Milan, with deserved success. His journey in Italy was one continued triumph. He overcame, by the sheer force of genius, the prejudices and jealousies of the Italians. The voice of detraction was drowned by that of praise.

While in Rome, he accomplished a most extraordinary feat of memory. In the Sistine Chapel, every Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the “Miserere” is sung by the choir without accompaniment. It has the most wonderful effect on the imagination. The people of Rome used to make the greatest mystery of this vocal mass, and insisted that the mode of singing it could not be conveyed by notes. Mozart, however, repaired to the chapel on Ash Wednesday, heard the service, and carried it away in his memory. “It would be impossible,” says a judicious critic, “to convey any idea of this little less than miraculous exertion of memory and of every mental faculty connected with music, except to those who are acquainted with the ‘Miserere.’”

Henceforth, his career ran for several years in the golden groove of success. But before we come to the closing scene of his brief meteoric life, I would, to give you a just idea of his transcendent powers, recall one or two characteristics.

In his latter years he was a prey to the most irrational fears. His imagination was sometimes haunted with sickly apprehensions of approaching evils, that made him work, until he fainted with exhaustion; while, at other times, nothing





## MOZART.

could rouse him from his lethargy or melancholy abstractions. Yet, he has left innumerable compositions in every vein and style, attesting his great industry and the inexhaustible fertility of his mind. Facile, luxuriant, original, and felicitous was the flow of his thoughts. He excelled in all the rich variety, mood, and grace of harmony—the mirthful, the pathetic, and sublime. Some of his masses are among the grandest, most solemn and sublime efforts of intellect. In them is revealed in all the glorious breadth of fancy, and in all the depth of pathos, the master of all the resources of his art, to soothe, to elevate, to terrify and enthral the soul.

In happy apposition to the fertility of his conception stands his rapidity in composition, which is almost incredible. This facility appears particularly in the composition of the overture to “Don Giovanni”—a work of great merit. He had written nothing towards it until the very morning of the day on which it was promised. At five in the morning he awoke and began writing with enthusiastic rapidity; by seven, when the copiers of the orchestra called on him, according to his appointment, the work was done. On the same night the opera was brought out, and the overture was played without a rehearsal.

One other feature to complete the picture, which reveals the intrinsic goodness, generosity, and disinterestedness of this illustrious character. Throughout life, he was zealous in the cause of others—devoting his time and interest in their behoof. It was his highest delight to bring men of talent together, and to recommend obscure and distressed persons of genius to the consideration of the liberal and affluent. Extolled and caressed, yet from the wealthy and titled, Mozart sought no advantage on his own account.

## MOZART.

The last act of the drama was mournful and sad. The sacred fire of genius burned fitfully yet brightly to the last; but its flashes made the darkness of his distempered brain darker. It is a woeful spectacle to think of that imperial intellect overthrown by sorrow, and embittered by the pang of ill-requited deserts.

In this season of utter moral prostration, Mozart wrote his "Requiem," which breathes the most overwhelming pathos; and in evoking ecstatic sensations, gives a glimpse of heaven. But in connection with it, an incident occurred which I will detail for its singularity.

Overborne by a most melancholy fit of despondency which no efforts of love or friendship could allay, a carriage stopped at his door and he is waited upon by a serious and well-appointed gentleman, of sedate manners.

"I have been commissioned, sir, by a man of considerable importance, to call upon you."

"Who is he?" asked Mozart, much depressed.

"He does not wish to be known."

"Well, sir, and what does he want?"

"He has just lost a person whom he tenderly loved, and whose memory will be eternally dear to him. He is anxious to solemnize this loss annually, and he will give you any reward for a *Requiem*. Employ all your genius and feeling, for he is a judge of music, and his affliction is severe."

Mozart was sensibly moved by the stranger's sorrowful tone, and consented to write a funeral mass.

"What time do you ask?"

"A month."

"Very well; this day month I shall return. What price do you require?"

## MOZART.

"A hundred ducats."

Silently, the stranger laid them on the table and retired.

On his departure, Mozart relapsed into a fit of abstraction. But presently, rousing himself, like a giant after rest, he impetuously asked for writing materials, and proceeded to evolve his ideas with the utmost ardour. The intensity and earnestness of the interest he took in the work increased day by day; till, at last, he wrote unceasingly. Nor could any enticement withdraw him from his task. Exhausted, he fainted several times; and, on recovering from one of these attacks, he took the hand of one he dearly loved, and earnestly said—"This is for my funeral service: this Requiem is for myself."

In vain, his family, who dearly loved him, tried to shake this notion out of his head. No argument could combat nor dispel his fits of melancholy or presentiments of approaching death. And when the stranger was expected, the agitation of poor Mozart was truly painful.

At length on the day appointed, the stranger came, in deep mourning, pale and sorrowful, as on their first interview.

"I have found it impossible," said Mozart, "to keep my word. The work interests me more than I had imagined. I must have another month."

"In that case, it is but just to increase the reward. Here are fifty ducats more."

"Sir," said Mozart, with astonishment, "who are you then?"

"That is nothing to your purpose," replied the stranger. "In a month I shall return."

By a sad perversion of his disordered intellect, this unhappy man believed the stranger a supernatural being, sent to warn him for death. It was to no purpose those attached to him

## MOZART.

by the ties of love and friendship demonstrated the absurdity and groundlessness of such a supposition. Fit succeeded fit, and vision followed vision. In the short lucid intervals Mozart worked on the Requiem—the ruling passion strong in death; and finished the glorious work.

The stranger returned duly on the day fixed; but Mozart was no more. He died on the 5th of September, 1791, aged 35 years and a half.

The Requiem was his funeral service. Like the swan, he breathed his sweetest notes with his last breath.









