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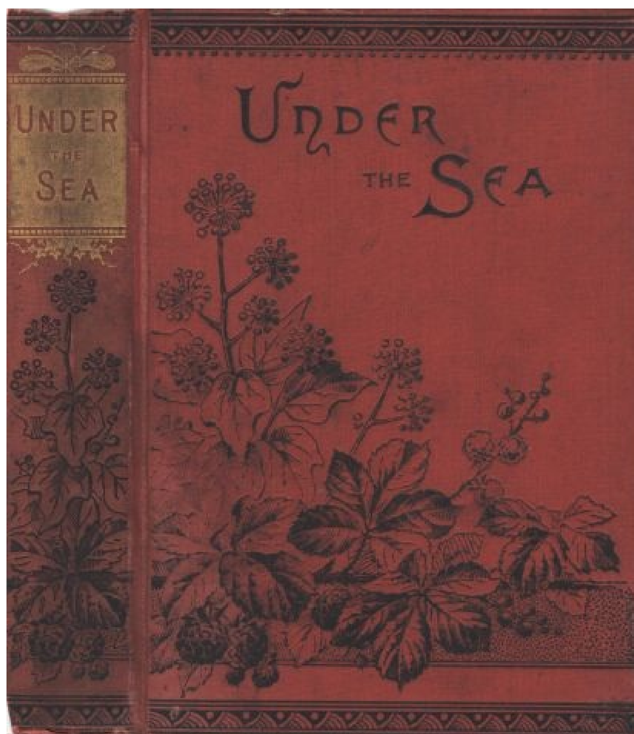

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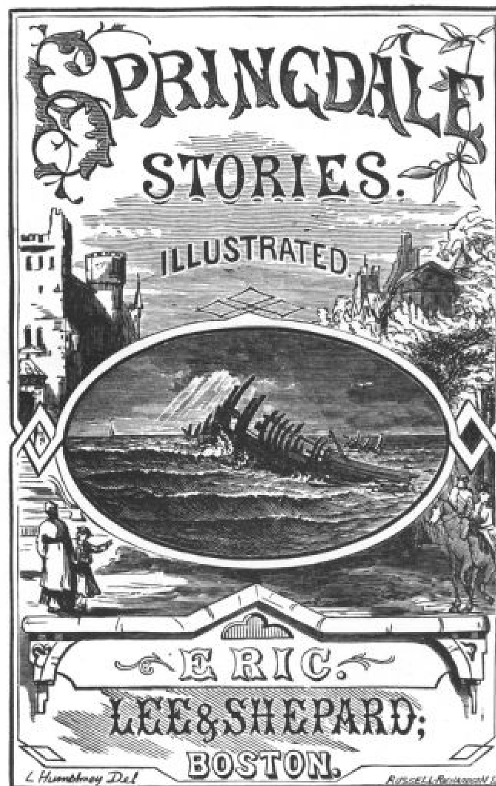

THE SPRINGDALE STORIES.

ERIC;

OR,

UNDER THE SEA.

BY

MRS. S. B. C. SAMUELS,

AUTHOR OF “ADELE,” “HERBERT,” “NETTIE’S TRIAL,”
“JOHNSTONE’S FARM,” “ENNISFELLEN.”

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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO
FRANK EDWARD SAMUELS.

THE SPRINGDALE STORIES.

COMPLETE IN SIX VOLUMES,

1. ADELE.
2. ERIC.
3. HERBERT.
4. NETTIE’S TRIAL.
5. JOHNSTONE’S FARM.
6. ENNISFELLEN.

PREFACE.

The story of the travels of Eric and his friends on the continent of Europe will, I trust, be interesting to my young readers. Many of the incidents described are actual facts, and the descent of Eric, in diving armor, to the bottom of the sea, will be found to possess some items which will be worth remembering.

The sights, sounds, and sensations which I have described, are such as any submarine diver of experience has seen, heard, and felt, and therefore will be instructive in a certain way.

The finding a box of gold by the divers is not of often occurrence, although valuables are reclaimed from the ocean in this manner occasionally.

The lesson taught by Eric’s honesty in trying to find the owner of the money, and its influence on his accusers, when he is unjustly accused of theft, will be worthy of attention to all my young friends who have a name to make.

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ERIC.

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CHAPTER I.

LEAVING THE CASTLE.

Olendorf is not far from Hamburg. The broad and sparkling Elbe washes it on the western side, and with the rugged mountains and the weird grand, old forests upon the north and east, seem to shut the little town quite in from the outer world; yet Olendorf had been an important place and on account of its grand old fortress, Castle Wernier, was a bone of contention throughout the French and German wars; and between the French, who were resolute to hold the fortress, and the barons of Wernier, who were equally resolute to regain it, the castle suffered severely; 10 and when, long years after, peace was declared, the last baron of Wernier died, and the castle came into the possession of Adele Stanley, his great granddaughter, it was merely a grand old ruin.

Adele’s father rebuilt the tower and a couple of wings, and furnished all the habitable rooms, intending to have his little Adele and Herbert spend their childhood there. But while Adele was yet almost a baby, her kind father died. Then she lost her mother, and was for a long time a wanderer among strangers in a foreign land; and the old castle had been uninhabited, except by Gretchen, the gardener’s wife, and the owls in its dark turrets. Now, however, the long windows were thrown open to the fresh breezes and sunshine; merry laughter rang up from the garden; children’s voices echoed among the ruins, and children’s feet danced through the long corridors, keeping time to the music of the happy voices. 11

Adele and Herbert Stanley were at the castle with their young guests from New York—Eric and Nettie Hyde. They had spent the summer months there; “the happiest months in their lives,” they all declared. Now, alas! the merry season was drawing to a close. Adele was to go to her grandfather’s home in England, Herbert to school at Eton, Nettie with her mother to New York, and Eric was to travel in Holland and the German states with his uncle, Dr. Ward, and his cousin, Johnny Van Rasseulger.

Such a busy day as it was to be! But just now all care was forgotten, even to the regret at parting, in watching the absurd freaks of little Froll, the monkey. Her real name was Frolic; but who ever heard children call a pet by its real name?

Mrs. Hyde called to Nettie, requesting her to do an errand. At the sound of her voice Nettie ran towards her, exclaiming,— 12

“O, mamma! Adele has given us such a splendid present, to take home with us!”

“What is it, my dear?”

“I love it so dearly! It’s—it’s—”—here Nettie’s voice trembled a little, and her heart knew its own misgivings—“it’s—Froll, mamma, the little darling!”

“And who *is* Froll, the little darling!”

“That dear little monkey,” answered Nettie, pointing to Froll, now close at hand.

“O,” exclaimed Mrs. Hyde, retreating hastily, “I dislike monkeys, and I cannot have one travelling with me.”

“But, mamma—” said Nettie, piteously.

“You need not think of it, my dear; it is quite impossible,” was the decided reply, to Nettie’s disappointment.

“But may not Eric take her?”

“Uncle Charlie must decide that question: if he has no objections to travelling with an animal that is never out of mischief, I suppose Eric may take charge of her.” 13

“But then, mamma, Eric will be gone a whole long year—”

“And as you have lived nine whole long years,” interrupted her mother, smiling, “without a monkey, or a desire for one, don’t you think you could survive the separation?”

Nettie didn’t then think she could; but a while after, when Froll chased her with a paint-brush dripping wet with red paint, and then completely spoiled a pretty landscape view that Herbert

was painting for her, she changed her mind, and decided that a voyage from Hamburg to New York with such an uncontrollable creature would be, to say the least, inconvenient.

To be sure, papa was to meet them at the Hague, and he might be willing to look to her safe transportation across the Atlantic; but she had not much faith in this argument, and, making a virtue of necessity, resigned herself with becoming grace to her mother’s wishes. [14]

Looking back upon the pleasant summer months at Castle Wernier, the children thought time had never gone so quickly. They were soon to be parted from each other, and their pleasant German home and every object took a new interest to them.

“The value of a thing is never known till we have lost it,” Herbert said, sorrowfully, thinking how lonely Adele and he would become when parted from their companions.

“Nor how dear a place an old castle is, until we are forced to leave it,” said Eric.

“I remember thinking once,” said Nettie, “that this place was horrible. It was when we were all so frightened about the ghost.”

“And all the time I was the ghost,” Adele added; “and I used to think it very hard that I couldn’t speak to you, not knowing that I was frightening you all out of your wits.”

“I suppose more than half the ghosts we read about are only people walking in their sleep, as Adele did,” said Herbert. [15]

“Of course,” said Nettie; “but if we stay here all day, talking about ghosts, what will become of our pets and toys?”

As Herbert and Adele were to start for their home in England when Mrs. Hyde and her children left the castle, all their pets were to be disposed of among the gardener’s children, that is, all but Froll, for Eric was sure that uncle Charlie would not object to having the little creature for a travelling companion; and as Mrs. Hyde would not allow Nettie to take her with her, Froll was to make the tour of Germany with Dr. Ward and the boys.

There were the pony, and the rabbits, and the canary bird, of all which Gretchen’s children were to take the utmost care, until the dear *Fraulien* and the young *Herr* should come again. And many and loud were the expressions of affectionate regret at the children’s departure, oddly intermingled with exclamations of delight at the appearance of numerous toys, which Mrs. Nichols and Mrs. Hyde had decided must be left over from the packing. [16]

Then the garden must be visited in every nook and corner. Particular directions must be left with Hans concerning their choice flowers and favorite plants.

And then there was the grand event of the day—the packing up of their own individual treasures, in the shape of books and toys. They worked hard all day, and were very proud of their work when all was accomplished; but, in the dead of night, when they were fast in the “Land o’ Nod,” old mauma, who was prowling around the trunks and hampers to see if all were secure, seemed rather suspicious of one, and knelt down on the floor to examine it, giving it a little shake, by way of test.

“Dear heart alive!” she exclaimed; “just you look here, missis, please. All those little flimpsy toys and things to bottom, an’ the heavy book stuck in any ways to top, an’ all of ’em jolting roun’ like anything!” [17]

Poor tired Mrs. Hyde could not help smiling, as she leaned wearily over the two hampers the children had filled, and gave directions to mauma and Gretchen about repacking them.

The two women soon accomplished what it had taken the children all day to perform; and to their faithful exertions was owing the safe arrival at Fifth Avenue and Ennisfellen of the toys.

Early in the morning the children were aroused to prepare for their journey. They were all in high spirits, and thought dressing and breakfasting by candle-light the “greatest fun in the world;” though it is doubtful if they would have held to their opinion had the practice been continued permanently.

“Nobody wants breakfast so early,” Nettie said, as she laughed and talked in excitement.

“I’m sure nobody wants to lunch on the train,” shouted Eric, across the hall.

“The train, indeed! Why, we shall be aboard the steamer at noon. I like to travel on these European steamers,” Nettie called back. [18]

“I am so glad we are all to travel together to the Hague,” said Adele’s sweet voice. “How quickly you dress, Nettie! But where *can* my other boot be?”

“I’m sure I don’t know; let’s look for it. Here ’tis.”

“No; that’s your own.”

“Sure enough; and I’ve been all this time doing up yours. Shouldn’t wonder if we did miss the train. And it’s in a knot, and I can’t untie it. Mauma, mauma, bring another light here, quick! and you’d better hurry, Adele.”

“Nettie, did you mean the train was in a knot?” called Herbert.

“No, it’s *not*,” said Nettie, quickly; and then they all laughed merrily. For, though Nettie’s remark was not particularly brilliant, there was enough in it to amuse the happy, excited hearts around her. [19]

The breakfast received a very slight share of attention. The boys were constantly running below

to “see after the horses,” and Nettie was dancing about, in everybody’s way, assuring them all that they would certainly lose the train, and begging Adele, for her own safety, to keep close to her, and not to be nervous on any account.

“I know somebody will forget something!” she exclaimed for the fiftieth time. “Be sure, all of you, to remember.”

“Not to forget,” interrupted Eric, mischievously.

“The carriage has come to the door, Herr Von Nichols!” Gretchen announced, through her tears.

All the Werniers, the ancient holders of the castle, had been Herr Vons; and as Mrs. Nichols was a Wernier, Gretchen had adopted the villagers’ fashion of bestowing the title upon the husband.

The servants were in the hall, sorrowfully awaiting the departure of their kind patrons.

“Good by! Good by!” the children shouted; while the mournful group bade them “God speed.”

“Who’s forgotten anything?” said Nettie, crowding into a corner of the carriage.

“I think you have, my dear,” answered her mother. “Where is your sacque?”

Nettie looked quite dismayed.

“O, I packed it, mamma. I forgot I was to wear this dress.”

There was a general consternation at this confession, until mauma drew the missing article from under her shawl.

“Here ’tis, Miss Nettie. I ’spects you’d want it.”

“I’m ever so much obliged to you, mauma,” said Nettie, eagerly seizing the sacque, and putting herself into it, while Mrs. Hyde rewarded the faithful old colored woman with a grateful smile.

“I was so busy remembering for the others, mamma,” Nettie said, apologetically.

“Perhaps it would be as well for you to attend more particularly to yourself, my dear,” was her mother’s mild rebuke.

Mr. Nichols and the boys were busy stowing boxes and parcels in various hidden compartments of the carriage. Just as Mr. Nichols announced that they were ready to start, Eric thrust his head in at the door, exclaiming, funnily,—

“Mamma, Nettie is so anxious, suppose you all just feel inside your bonnets, to make sure that your heads are here?”

“Don’t detain us, Eric,” his mother said, smiling at the frank, joyous face.

“All right, mamma. This is my load: let me see,—Mrs. Hyde, Adele, Nettie, and mauma. Go ahead, Carl.”

The coachman drew up his reins, and the spirited horses, after curvetting and prancing for an instant, dashed down the avenue, Adele’s and Nettie’s white handkerchiefs floating on the breeze, in a last adieu to Wernier.

They were followed immediately by another carriage, containing Mr. and Mrs. Nichols and the boys; and, except for the group of sorrowing servants, watching the fast-disappearing carriages, Castle Wernier was left alone.

CHAPTER II.

“THE HAGUE.”

“The sun rode high, the breeze was free,
High dashed the diamond spray,
And proudly o’er the dark blue sea
The steamer ploughed her way.”

Aboard of the Hague, the children, watching the distant spires and domes of Hamburg “melt into air” as the vessel bore, with almost imperceptible motion rapidly towards the North Sea, began to realize that they would see no more of Wernier. And though their sorrow but faintly came home to them, they were sad and thoughtful.

Adele whispered mournfully to Herbert, “O, let us go below! It is so like going out in the Europa, with dear mamma, before she died in the wreck. O, Herbie, I cannot bear the cruel, cruel sea. Take me below.”

So Herbert and Adele went to the cabin, and Eric suggested to Nettie that they should follow.

“No,” said Nettie, “I like to stay here. Eric, see that boy look at you; I think he wants to speak.”

Eric looked around, and saw a boy of his own age steadfastly regarding him. When he caught Eric’s eye, he bowed and hastened forward, holding out his hand.

“Eric Hyde?” he said.

“Yes,” said Eric. “Do you know me?”

“I never *saw* you before; but I know you, for all that,” said the boy.

“How?” said Eric, astonished, and interested, too.

“I knew you by your voice. I used to live next door to you in New York. I was blind then, and auntie sent me out to Hamburg, to the famous oculist Dr. Francis. He has given me my sight, and I am going home alone. Auntie doesn’t know about it yet; she only knows that the operation was performed two months ago, and that Dr. Francis had no doubt of its success. Won’t she be surprised to see me walk into the parlor, and to hear the whole story from me?”

“Hurrah!” cried Eric, excitedly, tossing his cap high in the air.

“I remember you well,” said Nettie; “I am Nettie Hyde. Don’t you, Eric?”

“Yes,” said Eric. “I used to pity you so! Isn’t it just jolly!”

“Do you know,” said the boy, whose name was Allan Ramsdell, “I never saw a steamer before to-day! I have been blind so long, ever since I was four years old. I’ve got the key of my state-room here, but I don’t know where to go to look for the room.”

“I’ll show you,” volunteered Eric. “And, Nettie, if you will go down for Adele and Herbie, we’ll go all over the steamer.”

Nettie ran quickly into the cabin, eager to impart the news of their new acquaintance. Mrs. Hyde was glad of anything that would interest Adele, and urged her to go upon deck with Herbert. Mr. Nichols was resting from the fatigue of the ride. Mrs. Nichols, always feeble, did not feel equal to the exertion of climbing the companion way, the stairs from the upper deck to the cabin, and Mrs. Hyde wished to remain with her; so the children began their exploring expedition alone.

The great steamship was now out in the blue sea. The wide decks were gradually being cleared of passengers as they sought their narrow state-rooms, and as the children were quiet and orderly, no one interfered with them.

“This is the dining-hall,” announced Eric, as the five heads peered in at the door of a long saloon, where tables were ranged for the accommodation of the passengers.

Behind this saloon was the kitchen, a hot, steaming place, where men, mostly cooks, in dirty white jackets, rushed helter-skelter into each other and around the room.

“Too many cooks spoil the broth,” said Herbert, in an undertone, which remark so tickled the others that they all ran off laughing, till they met a stout, dignified “yellow man,” holding the store-room keys, and wearing a cleaner jacket than the others. He was the steward, and, being cross, scolded the children roundly for getting in his way. In the lower cabin were the steerage passengers. These had no saloon with tables arranged for their accommodation. They ate plain bean soup from tin mugs, and hard ship biscuit from their hands, and their table was a long board, let down from above by ropes. They stood around the board while eating, and when the meal was finished, the temporary table was drawn up out of the way.

By the time these observations had been made Mrs. Hyde joined them; and after speaking kind congratulations to Allan, and inviting him to attach himself to their party, she warned the children of the approach of dinner, and requested them to prepare for it.

Allan was very grateful to Mrs. Hyde for her kindness, and thanked her politely. He travelled with her to his aunt’s door, and was such a gentlemanly, companionable boy that they all became very much attached to him. It would be pleasant to take the trip from Hamburg to the western coast with our party; but that is impossible, as Eric has considerable journeying to do in another direction, and we are to accompany him. But the voyage was a pleasant one, and the children saw and learned many new and wonderful things before they reached their destination. We must not forget that little Froll left Hamburg snugly packed in a cage, and intrusted to mauma’s care for the voyage. She was quite a favorite aboard the vessel, and made much merriment by her absurd pranks, and at Hague was safely landed, and transported to the hotel.

At Hague, too, the Hydes and Allan Ramsdell left the vessel, after a sorrowful parting with Mr. and Mrs. Nichols and Herbert and Adele.

CHAPTER III.

THE CITY.

It would seem strange to us to hear our native city called “the Boston,” and stranger still to hear the staid old capital called by more names than one.

Eric, and Allan, and Nettie were quite confused in the capital of Holland by the variety of names

given it.

“Hague,” “The Hague,” and “La Haye” they had heard, but upon their arrival they found its inhabitants calling it “*Gravenhaag*,” which, Mrs. Hyde explained, meant “The Count’s Meadow.”

“What a comical place!” Nettie exclaimed, as they glided along through “canal streets” to the hotel. “Mamma, if our streets were like these, wouldn’t you fret for our precious necks every time we looked out of a window? And I don’t suppose you would ever let us go out to play, for fear we’d drown.”

31

“Still, it is very pleasant gliding under these shady trees; and if you look about, my dear, you will see there are also carriage roads, with sidewalks.”

“Yes,” said Eric; “we’ve passed several.”

“I like these boat roads best,” said Allan, “they are so novel.”

“Where are we going, mamma?” asked Nettie, “and how far?”

“To the *Vyverberg House*, my dear. I do not know the distance.”

“Is it a mile?” asked Eric, of the boatman.

He shook his head, saying, “*Nein*.”

But you are not to think that he meant nine miles, for “*nein*” is German for “no.”

The Vyverberg House was at the north end of Gravenhaag; so our friends had a fine view of the town, and learned much of its history from the sober old boatman, who, very fortunately for them, spoke English well.

32

He pointed out the moat, which surrounded the city and formed its principal defense, and the drawbridges which crossed the moat.

“How different from Hamburg!” said Eric. “There, a strong wall fortified the town, and most of its streets are now built upon its old walls of fortification.”

“The canals were similar to these,” said his mother. “You did not notice those particularly, because you always rode in Mr. Nichols’s carriage.”

“But this is a much better looking town than Hamburg, mamma.”

“Yes, indeed; the buildings are much handsomer here,” she assented.

“O, how lovely!” “How splendid!” cried Nettie and Allan in a breath, as they came upon a fine open space, ornamented with a lake, and wooded island in its centre.

33

“This is the Vyverberg,” the boatman said.

“Mamma, how good of you to bring us here!” cried the children; “it is perfectly splendid!”

Well might they say so. The square containing the lovely lake and island was surrounded by the handsomest and chief public edifices of the city, the finest one of them all being the former palace of Prince Maurice, now the National Museum, celebrated for its gallery of pictures.

The Royal Museum and other famous buildings were there; but that to which our party’s attention was most closely drawn was the hotel.

It stood facing the lake, a broad, comfortable-looking brick building, with heavy balconies, and frowning eaves and ornamental stucco work surrounded its doorways and windows. Between it and the avenue lay a beautiful garden, and just beyond the building was a small shady grove.

34

“Mamma,” exclaimed Nettie, “I *do* think the Germans and Dutch have the most exquisite gardens in the world.”

“They are certainly very beautiful,” said Mrs. Hyde. “Here in Holland great attention is paid to the culture of flowers. Indeed, some of the finest varieties are raised here, and Holland bulbs are among our choicest varieties.”

“Mrs. Hyde, I suppose I am very stupid,” said Allan, blushing, “but I do not know what ‘bulbs’ are.”

“No, indeed, Allan; you show great good sense in asking about whatever you do not understand. That is the way to learn. Bulbous plants are those which have a round root, and produce very few leaves; they are such as the tulip, hyacinth, crocus, and others. They are nearly all ornamental and beautiful from the very large size and brilliant color of their flowers. Holland tulips were once so much in demand as to bring almost fabulous prices. A gentleman in Syracuse gave a valuable span of horses, and another exchanged his farm, for a bed of the tulip bulbs.”

35

“Thank you, ma’am,” said Allan. “It is very interesting. When I am a man I think I will be a florist. I am very fond of flowers; they were a great comfort to me when I was blind.”

As Allan ceased speaking, the boat stopped, and they were landed upon a short flight of stone steps. Eric gave directions for the baggage, and then all proceeded to the hotel.

A carriage was approaching them quite rapidly, and Nettie suddenly, with a cry of joy, sprang forward, directly in the way of the horses. If Allan had not, at the risk of serious injury to himself, immediately sprung after her and drawn her back, she would have been run over.

“Let go of me, Allan; O, let me go! It is papa!” cried Nettie.

36

A gentleman in the carriage stopped the horses, and leaned anxiously forward.

“Is the little girl hurt?” he asked of Allan, in German.

Poor Allan did not understand him, and could not answer. But there was no need, for in another instant, exclaiming, “Why, ’tis my own little girl!” the gentleman leaped from the carriage, and Nettie was in her father’s arms.

Meanwhile Mrs. Hyde and Eric, who had been separated by carriages from them, and had only seen Nettie spring before the horses, and Allan go after her, were very much frightened. They now appeared upon the scene, and finding the child sobbing in a gentleman’s arms, concluded, of course, that she was hurt.

“My darling!” cried poor Mrs. Hyde, in agony, “O, is she hurt, sir?”

“No, ma’am,” said Allan, “she is not hurt, at all!”

“Alice!” said Mr. Hyde to his wife.

He had but just landed from the American steamer, and was on his way to the hotel, not knowing of the arrival of “The Hague,” when he first saw Nettie and Allan. He was overjoyed to find his family thus unexpectedly.

“O, Eric, Eric! I am so glad!” she exclaimed, in relief; “but Nettie!”

“My little rash, excitable Nettie is safe and sound in papa’s arms,” he said. But the tremor in his voice showed how nearly Nettie had escaped severe injury. “Eric, my boy,” he added, “have you no word for papa?”

Eric, white and faint, could not speak a word, but clasped his father’s hand convulsively.

“And where is my daughter’s brave protector and deliverer?” Mr. Hyde asked, looking around for Allan.

The boy, who had bashfully retreated behind Mrs. Hyde, was brought forward and introduced as “our neighbor the blind boy, whose sight is now restored.”

“He is travelling home with us,” Mrs. Hyde added, when her husband had warmly thanked him.

Quite a crowd had collected around our travellers, and so eagerly and sympathetically inquired what had happened, that Mr. Hyde was obliged to tell them, briefly, the incident, as he led the way to the Vyverberg House.

It was but a few steps, and they were soon in the hotel, where the words of congratulation floated after them from the crowd; and presently a hearty cheer followed, when the good Hollanders understood that the little American *Fraulien* had found her father.

CHAPTER IV.

ALLAN’S STORY.

Poor Nettie was mortified enough by the result of her impulsive act. She was quite frightened by the crowd, and their joyous cheering filled her with terror, for she did not understand that these honest, kindly people were filled with joy because a little girl’s heart was made happy.

Her parents talked to her kindly and seriously of the necessity of learning to govern her impulsiveness, and Nettie promised; but, alas! the promise was broken again and again, until she learned by hard and terrible experience to be a careful, thoughtful child. She now found that she had spoiled every one’s pleasure for the day.

Her mother suffered from a nervous headache, brought on by the fright and excitement. Her father was obliged to leave, when they were comfortably established in the hotel, in order to transact some important business, and had taken Eric with him, starting immediately after their dinner.

When he went off with Eric, Mrs. Hyde went to her room to lie down, forbidding Nettie to leave the parlor, that she might feel assured of the child’s safety.

Allan had a letter to write to Dr. Francis and his friends in Hamburg; so Nettie was obliged to amuse herself.

She obtained permission from her mamma to take Froll out upon the balcony, and played with her for a little while quite happily. But by and by Froll spoiled all the fun; for she *would* climb up the blinds and mouldings to the utmost limit of her chain, which was just long enough to admit of her reaching the window-sill and thrusting her head into the room where Mrs. Hyde lay. Now, Mrs. Hyde was really afraid of Froll, and these performances were not calculated to cure her headache. She spoke to Nettie once or twice from the room; but finding the monkey’s visits repeated, she sent Allan down to tell Nettie that, if Froll came up to her window again, she must return to her cage, and Nettie to the parlor.

“I won’t let her go up again,” said Nettie. “Now, Froll, be good; *do* climb down the other way,

after this cake. See, Frolic, see!" and she threw a little fruit cake over the railing.

Quick as a flash, Froll went after it; so very quickly, as to pull the end of the chain from Nettie's hand.

Before the child had time to think, the mischievous monkey had seized the cake, and was travelling quickly up the blinds and moulding, over the sill, and, as Nettie drew a frightened breath, in at the window. 42

"O, dear!" said Nettie; "now I'll have to be punished. It's silly of mamma to be so easily frightened."

Her mamma, meanwhile, had just fallen into a doze. The rattling of the chain startled her; she opened her eyes, and saw the ugly little black monkey perched close beside her. She was quite startled, and very angry with Nettie, of course: after securing the monkey safely in her cage, she called Nettie to her, and speaking quite severely, told her to return to the parlor, to sit down on the lounge, and neither to rise from it, nor touch anything, until her father and Eric came home. Poor Nettie! It was very dull indeed for her, and before long she was sobbing quite bitterly.

Meanwhile Allan finished his letter, and took up his cap, meaning to take a walk around the square. Looking into the parlor, and seeing Nettie's distress, he resolved to give up his walk and to comfort Nettie.

"I wouldn't cry, Nettie," he said, so softly and kindly that she stopped crying, and looked up at him. "I will stay with you now. I've written my letter." 43

Nettie's face lighted up instantly, but fell again as she exclaimed,—

"But it is not fair, Allan: you told Eric you should take a walk; mamma is very unkind and unjust, too! I could not help Froll's going up that time."

"O, Nettie," said Allan, "don't ever speak so of your mother, so kind and good. My mamma is dead, Nettie; and if yours should ever be laid away in the cold, cold ground, you would feel so dreadfully to think you had wronged her!"

Nettie was crying again.

"I *do* love mamma, and it was very bad of me to speak so; but, O, dear! I never *do* do anything right. I don't see why I can't be good, like Adele."

"I know what makes Adele so good and gentle," said Allan. "She loves the Lord, and tries to please him." 44

"But *I can't*!" said Nettie, piteously.

"O, yes, you can, Nettie. Every one can."

"Grown-up people can, I know."

"And children too," said Allan, earnestly. "Let me tell you a story auntie used to tell me, when I was blind."

Nettie assented, and Allan repeated the story of "Little Cristelle," unconscious, the while, that he was fulfilling the teaching of song in ministering to Nettie.

"Slowly forth from the village church,
  The voice of the choristers hushed overhead,
Came little Cristelle. She paused in the porch,
  Pondering what the preacher had said.

"'*Even the youngest, humblest child*
  Something may do to please the Lord.'
'Now what,' thought she, and half sadly smiled,
  'Can I, so little and poor, afford?'

"'*Never, never a day should pass,*
  Without some kindness kindly shown,'
The preacher said. Then down to the grass
  A skylark dropped, like a brown-winged stone.

"'Well, a day is before me now; 45
  Yet what,' thought she, 'can I do, if I try?
If an angel of God would show me how!
  But silly am I, and the hours they fly.'

"Then the lark sprang, singing, up from the sod,
  And the maiden thought, as he rose to the blue,
'He says he will carry my prayer to God;
  But who would have thought the little lark knew?'

"Now she entered the village street
  With book in hand and face demure;
And soon she came, with sober feet,
  To a crying babe at a cottage door.

“It wept at a windmill that would not move,
  It puffed with its round red cheeks in vain;
One sail stuck fast in a puzzling groove,
  And baby’s breath could not stir it again.

“So baby beat the sail, and cried,
  While no one came from the cottage door;
But little Cristelle knelt down by its side,
  And set the windmill going once more.

“Then baby was pleased, and the little girl
  Was glad, when she heard it laugh and crow,
Thinking, ‘Happy windmill that has but to whirl
  To please the pretty young creature so!’

“No thought of herself was in her head,
  As she passed out at the end of the street,
And came to a rose tree, tall and red,
  Drooping and faint with summer heat.

“She ran to a brook that was flowing by,
  She made of her two hands a nice round cup,
And washed the roots of the rose tree high,
  Till it lifted its languid blossoms up.

“‘O, happy brook!’ thought little Cristelle;
  ‘You have done some good this summer’s day:
You have made the flowers look fresh and well.’
  Then she rose, and went on her way.

“But she saw, as she walked by the side of the brook,
  Some great rough stones, that troubled its course,
And the gurgling water seemed to say, ‘Look!
  I struggle, and tumble, and murmur hoarse.

“‘How these stones obstruct my road!
  How I wish they were off and gone!
Then I would flow, as once I flowed,
  Singing in silvery undertone.’

“Then little Cristelle, as bright as a bird,
  Put off the shoes from her young, white feet;
She moves two stones, she comes to the third;
  The brook already sings, ‘Thanks! Sweet! Sweet!’

“O, then she hears the lark in the skies,
  And thinks, ‘What is it to God he says?’
And she tumbles and falls, and cannot rise,
  For the water stifles her downward face.

“The little brook flows on as before,
  The little lark sings with as sweet a sound,
The little babe crows at the cottage door,
  And the red rose blooms; but Cristelle lies drowned!

“Come in softly; this is the room.
  Is not that an innocent face?
Yes, those flowers give a faint perfume:
  Think, child, of heaven, and our Lord his grace.

“Three at the right, and three at the left,
  Two at the feet, and two at the head,
The tapers burn; the friends bereft
  Have cried till their eyes are swollen and red.

“Who would have thought it, when little Cristelle
  Pondered on what the preacher had told?
But the wise God does all things well,
  And the fair young creature lies dead and cold!

“Then the little stream crept into the place,
  And rippled up to the coffin’s side,
And touched the corpse on its pale round face,
  And kissed the eyes till they trembled wide,—

“Saying, ‘I am a river of joy from Heaven;
  You helped the brook, and I help you;
I sprinkle your brows with life-drops seven;
  I bathe your eyes with healing dew.’

“Then a rose branch in through the window came,
  And colored her lips and cheeks with red;
‘I remember, and Heaven does the same,’
  Was all that the faithful rose branch said.

“Then a bright, small form to her cold neck clung;
  It breathed on her till her breast did fill,
Saying, ‘I am a cherub fond and young,
  And I saw who breathed on the baby’s mill.’

“Then little Cristelle sat up and smiled,
  And said, ‘Who put these flowers in my hand?’
And rubbed her eyes—poor innocent child—
  Not being able to understand.

“But soon she heard the big bell of the church
  Give the hour; which made her say,
‘Ah! I have slept and dreamt in this porch.
  It is a very drowsy day!’”

“O,” said Nettie, drawing a long, deep breath, “I think, Allan, that it’s the most beautiful story I ever heard. Do you know who wrote it?”

“No,” said Allan. “I used to think it was auntie’s own; but I asked her once, and she said, ‘O, no, indeed!’ and that she did not know who wrote it, but thought it was a translation from the German.”

“Adele would have liked that so much!” said Nettie thoughtfully, “and she would have been just like little Cristelle, too.”

“Yes,” said Allan, “I think she would; and that would have been because both of them were trying to please the Lord. Don’t you see, Nettie?”

“But after all, Allan, it is not a true story.”

“It’s an allegory,” said Allan. “It means that if we do every little simple kindness for the sake of helping others and pleasing the Lord, that we shall be children of the Lord, and live in heaven with him.”

“Then, Allan, you are one of the ‘children of the Lord;’ for you do kind, generous things all the time, and—”

“No, no, Nettie,” said Allan, hastily interrupting her. “I am very selfish, and I have to try very hard, and pray to the Lord Jesus to help me to be good.”

“But you *do* give up for the sake of others, you know; now this afternoon—”

“I am having a delightful time, and enjoying myself hugely,” said Allan, interrupting her again, and laughing merrily. “I’ll go and get my checker-board, and we’ll have a game.”

Thus, thanks to the kind-hearted Allan, the afternoon wore pleasantly away, and when Mrs. Hyde and Eric returned, Allan and Nettie were both very happy, and in the midst of an exciting game. Mrs. Hyde had slept off her headache, and was giving orders for tea on the balcony, to the children’s intense satisfaction.

CHAPTER V.

“SEEING THE ELEPHANT.”

“‘You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,’” sang Nettie, as she leaned over the balcony railing, gazing out upon the lovely lake and island before them; for Mr. Hyde had explained that, as his time was exceedingly limited, he could allow them only three days to explore Havenhaag, and at the end of that time they must leave for New York.

“So we will begin with the Royal Museum to-morrow morning,” he added; “and all who are up in good season can take a trip with me, in one of those shallops, around the lake.”

After the children had retired, Mr. and Mrs. Hyde held a consultation about Eric. They expected the arrival of Dr. Ward and their nephew daily, and were in hopes of seeing them before the

steamer should sail. But there was just a chance that the doctor might be delayed at Paris; and if it should so happen, what would Eric do?

His parents were unwilling to disappoint him by taking him to New York without making the desired tour of Germany; and they disliked the idea of leaving him, a young boy of thirteen, alone in a strange place.

But his father at length decided to let him remain at the Vyverberg House, in case the doctor should be detained until after they had sailed.

Eric was a thoughtful, reliable boy, and old enough, his father said, to learn to depend upon himself.

Mrs. Hyde felt some misgivings as to this course at first; but her confidence in Eric was so great, that she soon consented to it, and having once decided in favor of the plan, she would let no thought of it trouble her.

You may be sure that the three children did not need an “early call” in the morning, for they were up and dressed with the daylight, having a romp on their balcony with Froll, who frightened several of the occupants of adjacent rooms by trying to get in at their windows.

Nettie told Eric how Froll had got her into disgrace, the day before, by the same trick.

“I think,” said Eric, “that she must once have belonged to an organ-grinder, and have been taught to climb up for money.”

“Very likely,” said Allan. “But you had better break her of the trick. People, as a general thing, are not fond of the sudden appearance of a black monkey at their chamber windows.”

“Here’s papa!” cried Nettie. “Now for our sail!”

“Isn’t Mrs. Hyde coming?” Allan asked.

“Here she is! Good morning, mamma, and—O, Eric, mind Froll!” cried Nettie; but too late, for Froll had darted from him, and gone in at an open window above.

There was a breathless silence.

Mr. and Mrs. Hyde were very much annoyed, and the children were alarmed for the safety of their pet.

While they were momentarily expecting a scream of terror from the occupant of the room, Froll reappeared at the window, and, with a grin and chatter of defiance, tumbled out, and clambered down towards the children, with a pair of gold-rimmed eye-glasses in her hand. A night-capped head, thrust out after her, was withdrawn again hastily, as its owner’s eyes encountered those of Mrs. Hyde.

Saucy Froll perched herself upon the top of the parlor blind, stuck the glasses upon her nose, and peered down at the children, who greeted this manœuvre with an irresistible burst of laughter, in which their father and mother joined.

The owner of the glasses again thrust his head out at the window, minus the nightcap this time, and seeing the monkey, laughed as heartily as the others.

Leaning forward, he could reach the chain, which he caught; and then Froll was made to surrender her plunder; after which she was committed to her cage in disgrace.

The sail on the lake was delightful. The water was as smooth as glass, the air fresh and cool, and the little island in the lake’s centre was crowded with song birds, whose sweet, merry notes rang musically over the water, and were echoed back from the shore.

After breakfast they prepared to visit the places of interest in “Gravenhaag.”

Mr. Hyde led the way to the National Museum, occupying the Prince Maurice palace—an elegant building of the seventeenth century. Numerous guides offered their services, and when one had been engaged, our party followed him up a broad, solid stairway to the famous picture gallery. Most of the paintings were old pieces of the German masters, and did not interest the children so much as their parents, for they were too young to appreciate them. But in one of the rooms almost entirely covering one end, was a grand picture, so vivid and natural that Nettie was quite startled by it at first. It was a picture of a young bull spotted white and brown, a cow lazily resting on the grass before it, a few sheep in different attitudes, and an aged cowherd leaning upon a fence. The background of the picture was a distant landscape, and all the objects were life-size.

“That picture is Paul Potter’s Bull—a highly prized work of art,” said Mr. Hyde. “When the French invaded Holland, Napoleon ordered it to Paris, to be hung in the Louvre.”

“I suppose it didn’t go, as it’s here now,” remarked Allan.

“Yes, it was carried there, and excited much admiration. But when Holland was free of the French, and Germany victorious, the painting was reclaimed.”

The children could have staid, gazing with delight upon it, for a much longer time than was allowed them. The guide soon led the way to the Royal Museum of Curiosities, and they reluctantly followed. The collection of curiosities was in the lower part of the building, and here they saw all kinds of Chinese and Japanese articles, which, the guide informed them, was the largest and best collection of the kind in the world.

There was enough here to interest our young folks, and old folks, too.

All kinds of merchandise and manufactures, and most interesting and complicated toys, model cities, barges gayly-colored and filled with tiny men at work on tinier oars, pagodas, shops, temples, huts, houses, vehicles, and men, women, and children in every variety of costume, engaged in every conceivable employment.

So fascinating was this Museum that the entire morning was most agreeably spent in it; and there was but just time, before leaving it, to look into the historical department, where were many objects of interest, and among other things the armor and weapons of De Ruyter, the famous admiral. At any other time these would have possessed great interest for the boys; but now they rather slighted them for the unique toys of China and Japan.

After their dinner and a half hour’s rest, the children paid a visit to the king’s palace; for Gravenhaag, you must know, is the favorite residence of the king and court.

Nettie and the boys walked very carefully, and held themselves very properly, such a thing as a visit to the king’s palace not being a daily event with them. Although she would not have missed going for anything, Nettie was a little alarmed at their situation, as they drew near to the palace, a large Grecian building, with two wings, forming three sides of a square. She had an idea that whenever kings were displeased with people, they ordered their heads to be cut off; and she wondered if he *would* be pleased to have their party looking at his possessions. Her fears were groundless, however.

As they reached the square, they saw, near the entrance to the palace, a fine-looking man, well dressed and gentlemanly, who smiled kindly at the children, and, seeing their eager scrutiny of the palace, politely invited them to enter it.

The boys were delighted, but Nettie declared that she was afraid of the king.

“O, the king will not trouble you, my little maid,” said the stranger, in excellent English: “walk in, walk in!”

He held out his hand to Nettie, and was such a kind, pleasant-looking man, that Nettie’s fears vanished. She gave him her hand, and the two boys followed her into the palace. Yes, actually *into* it, when, a few minutes before, she had hardly dared venture a terrified glance at the outside, and was momentarily expecting the stern command,—

“Off with their heads!”

Their new friend led them to a lovely garden, gave them flowers and fruit, and chatted gayly with them all the time. Then he took them to several apartments of the palace, and finally into the drawing-room.

The children noticed that every one made a respectful bow to their kind escort, and concluded that he must be some great nobleman; but judge of their surprise, when they found themselves being presented by him to a beautiful, pale lady, quietly dressed in black.

“Alicia, my dear,” said their nobleman, still speaking in English, “I have brought these young American travellers to see you. My little friends,” to the children, “yonder lady is the *Queen of Holland*.”

Wasn’t *that* enough to confuse the best bred child in the world?

Poor Eric had a faint idea that he must kiss the queen’s toe, as a mark of courtesy, and stepped forward, with a dizzy singing in his ears, to do so. But he was saved from such a ridiculous situation by the gentle queen, who smiled and extended her hand; then Eric thankfully remembered that it was the queen’s hand and the pope’s toe. So he bent gracefully forward and kissed Queen Alicia’s white fingers.

Allan, of course, did the same. And Nettie had no time to consider what she must do, for the queen had kissed her quite warmly at first, and their strange guide had drawn her to his knee.

“Why did you fear the king, little maid?” he asked, so kindly that Nettie confessed her idea of majestic temperaments. How he laughed! and how the queen laughed, too!

“Now, I suppose you will want to go to mamma,” he said, soon afterwards; and giving them each a gold coin, added, “Keep these to remember me by, and you can tell your friends that the *King of Holland* gave them to you.”

The children were perfectly amazed, and could not speak their thanks properly; but of this the king took no notice. He led them to the entrance on the street, and then kindly said, “Good by.”

Mr. and Mrs. Hyde, who had become quite anxious over their long delay, were much relieved to see the children come safely home just before tea-time. They were quite as much astonished, by the account of the visit, as our young folks had supposed they would be.

Tea, on the balcony, and some quiet music in the evening, finished up the day; and when the tired children sought their pillows, they quickly fell asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

It would take too long to mention all the sights seen and famous places visited by the travellers in Gravenhaag.

They were admitted to the palace of the Prince of Orange, and saw his famous collection of paintings and chalk drawings. They went over the *Binnenhof*, which is a collection of ancient stone buildings, containing a handsome Gothic hall, and the prison in which Grotius and Barneveldt were confined, the churches, synagogues, and the royal library, and walked on the *Voorhout*, a beautiful promenade, with a fine, wide road lined with shade trees and furnished with benches, to the *Bosch*, a finely wooded park belonging to the King of Holland. In its centre, reached by winding walks among the trees and beautiful lakes, stands the *Huys in den Bosch*—house in the wood—the king's summer palace.

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After visiting all these places, and the printing establishments and iron foundery, Mr. Hyde, finding he had another day before the steamer sailed, took them all to Rotterdam. They went by railway to the city, and drove around it in an open carriage, like a barouche, which was waiting at the depot. Mr. Hyde, who had been there before, was quite familiar with the place. He ordered the coachman to drive through the High Street; and soon the children found themselves on a street considerably higher than the others, lined with shops, and looking very pleasant and busy. Mr. Hyde told them it was built upon the dam which prevented the Maas River from overflowing.

"And this is the only street in Rotterdam," said he, "which has not a canal in its centre."

The Queen of Holland.—Page 61.

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When they had gone the length of High Street, they came to street after street, each having a canal in the middle, lined with trees on both sides, and exhibiting a medley of high gable fronts of houses, trees, and masts of shipping.

"Dear me!" cried Nettie; "I wouldn't live in such a place for the world. It's pretty to look at; but think of having those ships going by right under the drawing-room windows. They make me giddy."

"How many canals!" cried Allan. "They go lengthwise and crosswise through every street but the High."

"And these clumsy bridges," said Nettie again, pointing to the drawbridges of white painted wood which they saw at every little distance; they were made of large, heavy beams overhead, and lifted by chains for the vessels to pass through.

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Under the trees, beside the canals, were yellow brick "sidewalks," as Nettie called them; but they were really quays, for the landing of goods.

Between the trees and the houses, on a coarse, rough pavement, among carts, drays, and carriages, walked the foot passengers quite frequently. For though there were sidewalks close to the houses, little outbuildings and flights of steps to doorways were continually in the way, and it was "impossible for one to walk straight along, or at all fast, on any of them," as the children said.

“Mamma,” said Nettie, “I should think they would break their necks every minute. Just look at those canals, right in the street, and nothing to keep people from falling into them. What do they do in dark nights?”

“How do they light the streets, papa?” asked Eric.

“By oil lamps, hung on ropes from the houses to the trees,” said Mr. Hyde. “They have gas on the High Street.”

Allan’s attention had been attracted by some curious little structures outside the lower windows of several of the houses.

66

“What are they?” he asked.

“Looking-glasses,” said Mr. Hyde.

“Looking-glasses, papa! *Outside* their windows?” exclaimed Nettie.

“Yes, dear; they are hung so as to reflect the passing objects to the people inside.”

“Then they can see whatever is going on in the streets below, without coming to the windows,” said Eric.

“What a funny custom!” exclaimed Nettie, again.

The only building they visited was the Church of St. Lawrence, where they saw the famous great organ, a splendid structure, larger than the great organs of Haarlem and Boston. It is one hundred and fifty feet high, mounted upon a colonnade fifty feet high, and has five thousand five hundred pipes.

In the market-place they saw a statue of the great scholar Erasmus, and “the house where he was born,” which is now, alas! a gin-shop. From the *Boomptjes*, a fine quay, planted with rows of beautiful trees, and surrounded by elegant, dark brick mansions, our party chartered a little sail boat, and went out upon the Maas.

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The beautiful, quiet Maas, with Rotterdam’s green, woody banks in view; the blue, blue sky, seen clearly in the limpid waters; the steamers coming and going, and birds flying around, adding their sweet notes to nature’s harmony—this beautiful picture was one remembered by the children all their lives. To-morrow’s parting hung its shadow over them, and softened their hearts to the true beauty everywhere expressed.

The sun had set when they reached the Vyverberg for the last time.

“Mamma,” said Eric, regretfully, “I almost wish I was going home with you all.”

“Uncle Charlie may come to-night,” said his mother, cheerfully. “At any rate, he will soon come. You would then wish you had staid.”

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“Yes, I know,” said Eric. “But it is very hard to let you all go home without me, for all that.”

Very careful directions were given to Eric, and he was placed under the care of the landlord until he should hear from his uncle.

The evening was very short to Eric, who lingered by his mother, and could not bear to leave her side, knowing he should see her no more for a long, long year.

Long after Nettie and Allan had left them, he staid with his parents, listening to their last kind advice, and sending little loving messages to his cousins and schoolmates.

In the morning he saw them off with a heavy heart. His father’s last kind words, Allan’s affectionate greeting, Nettie’s tears, and his promise to his mother that he would remember his prayers and daily chapter in the Bible, and would try to make his travels a useful, profitable study, and to keep himself truthful, honest, and kind, were mixed up with a hearty, homesick longing to go after them. His eyes filled with tears as the stretch of water between him and his dear ones rapidly widened; he turned from the wharf with a sorrowful face, slowly and sadly retracing his steps to the hotel.

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“How dismal it will be! how lonely and dismal without them!” He thought and murmured sorrowfully,—

“Alone, alone, all, all alone!”

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CHAPTER VII.

UNDER THE SEA.

Eric had been but a few minutes in the parlor at the hotel, and was trying to amuse himself with little Froll, when there came a tap upon the door, and the servant entered with a card.

Eric read the name,

EMIL LACELLE,

and written underneath,

No. 365 Vyverberg House.

“Who in the world,” thought Eric, “is Emil Lacelle? and what did he send this to me for?”

The waiter explained that the gentleman was waiting, in his room, up stairs; and Eric, with Froll on his shoulder, started for No. 365.

The door stood open, disclosing a pleasant room, with various kinds of odd-looking armor lying around: seated by a table was a gentleman dressed in black, whom Eric recognized at once as the one whose glasses Froll had stolen.

This gentleman was looking for Eric, and said at once, when he entered the room,—

“I am pleased to see you, monsieur,” and politely requested him to be seated.

“Do you speak French?” he asked.

“Not very well, sir,” answered Eric.

“German?” inquired the stranger.

“Yes, sir,” said Eric.

“And English?”

“Yes, sir; I am an American.”

“I am a Frenchman,” said Mr. Lacelle. “I want you, if you please, to do me a little service.”

“I will do anything that I can for you,” said Eric. “I am very much obliged to you already for being so good-natured about your glasses.”

“Do not mention it!” Mr. Lacelle exclaimed, with the natural politeness of a Frenchman. “I have taken quite a fancy to your playful little beast.” And he coaxed the monkey to him, and gently stroked her soft hair.

“What is it that I can do for you, sir?” asked Eric. He was beginning to like Mr. Lacelle very much.

“I have a letter to write to America, and am not enough of an English scholar to undertake it. Now, therefore, if I tell to you that which I want written, would you be so very kind, if you please, as to write for me, it?”

“Yes, indeed; with much pleasure,” said Eric; thinking the while, “No wonder he does not like to undertake a letter in English, when he speaks the language so clumsily.”

Mr. Lacelle, still holding Froll, brought forward a traveller’s writing-desk, filled with perfumed French paper, and then placing it before Eric, and saying politely, “At your convenience, *monsieur*,” he reseated himself.

Eric arranged the paper, took up a pen, and after writing the date, sat waiting for his instructions.

“For example, what do you say to two gentlemen?” asked Mr. Lacelle.

Eric was completely puzzled, and could only say, “Sir?”

“Pardon me!” exclaimed the Frenchman, “to *one* you would say ‘sir;’ but to two, would you say ‘sirs’?”

“Yes,” answered Eric, but, recollecting some letters he had copied for his father, added, “O, no: it’s *Messrs.*”

“Exactly!” said Mr. Lacelle. “I thank you. That is fine.”

He appeared quite relieved, and began dictating.

“The Vyverberg, at the Hague,
Holland, October 21, 186-.

“Messrs. Brown and Lang:

“I have given to myself the pleasure of examining the sunken yacht in the Zuyder Zee; and my opinion it is, that that vessel is injured not in the least, and that I can right her for the sum of two hundred dollars.

“Most respectfully to you, Messrs.,
Emil Lacelle,
Submarine Diver.

“To Messrs. Brown and Lang,
New York City.”

“Is it quite correct English?” he asked, anxiously.

Eric rewrote it, transposing some of the words. Mr. Lacelle was very grateful for the boy’s assistance. He was by no means ignorant, but his knowledge of English was rather limited, and he was too sensitive to be willing to send off a peculiar letter.

Mr. Lacelle’s history would be very interesting, had we time to give it minutely; but there is only space to say that he was the younger son of a noble French family, whose circumstances during

his youth were so unfortunate that he was thrown upon his own resources at a tender age, and had, by great energy and perseverance, become a wealthy and famous man.

Eric knew that “sub” meant under, and “marine” the sea, but he did not understand exactly what it all meant; so he asked Mr. Lacelle, whose explanation and subsequent conversation, we will render in readable English.

“A submarine diver is one who goes beneath the water of the sea: professionally he examines and clears harbors, removing obstructions, such as rocks, &c.; draws up sunken vessels, examines wrecks, and brings up from the depths of the ocean money, jewels, and articles of value.”

“But tell me,” cried Eric, eagerly, “how does he breathe? what protects him in the water? how —”

“I will tell you all about it,” said Mr. Lacelle. “There are several divers here in the house. We are going to the Zuyder Zee, near Amsterdam, to-morrow, and you shall go too, if you wish.”

“O, thank you, sir,” said Eric. “I would like to.”

“Meanwhile I will tell you,” proceeded the diver. “We wear an armor such as this,” he explained, pointing out the several pieces to Eric, as he noticed them. “In the first place an India-rubber suit like this. You will observe that it is made entirely water-proof, by being cemented down in the seams, wherever it is sewed.”

Eric looked with interest upon the clumsy-looking dress, which was made entirely whole, except the opening at the sleeves and neck, and was cut away above the shoulders, like a girl’s low-necked dress, to admit the body of the wearer; the legs were footed off like stockings, and the wrists of the sleeves were terminated by tight, elastic rubber bands; a similar band surrounded the neck, which was also finished with a flap of white rubber facing.

“You see,” continued Mr. Lacelle, “we put ourselves into this suit, drawing it on from the top. It is perfectly water-tight. Upon our feet we wear shoes such as these,” pointing to a pair of heavy leather shoes, with broad, high straps and buckles, and lead soles half an inch thick. “They weigh twenty-five pounds.”

“Why!” exclaimed Eric; “I should call that something of a load.”

“The weight is imperceptible in the water,” the diver explained, and, showing Eric a couple of box-shaped canvas bags, added, “We wear these also, filled with weights, just above the waist, one before and one behind.”

“But you haven’t told me yet how you breathe in the water,” said Eric.

“I am coming to that shortly. Upon our heads we wear a helmet, made of copper, completely covering head, face, and neck, and firmly inserted between the rubber facing and the tight band about the neck of the dress, just above the shoulders. To the back of the helmet is fastened a rubber hose, attached, above the water, to the pump, which keeps the diver supplied with air; and there is a glass window in the front. A half-inch rope, called the life-line, is securely adjusted to the diver, and by it he is lowered into or drawn from the water; and by it, also, he signals to those above for more air, for withdrawal, or anything he may require.”

“This helmet is heavy enough,” said Eric, lifting and examining the curious structure. “There is a valve inside: what is that for?”

“To let the air, which the diver breathes from his lungs, into the water,” Mr. Lacelle replied. “This machine in the case,” pointing to a high black-walnut case, “is a three-cylinder air-pump; two men in the vessel, or on the shore, keep the pumps constantly in motion by means of the crank attached to the wheel.”

“Why do they have more than one pump?” Eric inquired.

“One pump,” answered Mr. Lacelle, “would not supply enough air; it would work like a water-pump, sending down the air by jerks, and the receiver would be exhausted between the supplies of air. Two pumps would send down the air puff-puff, like the pumps of a steam engine; but three pumps, constantly in motion, send down, through the hose, a steady and continuous stream of air, enabling the diver to breathe freely and fully.”

“And can you go down into any depth of water?” Eric asked, with intense interest.

“Not lower than one hundred feet, usually, the pressure of the water is so great. I have been down one hundred and fifty-six feet below the surface; but that was something very remarkable.”

“And did you never have any hair-breadth escapes, or thrilling adventures?” inquired Eric.

“No,” answered the diver, with a slight laugh and shrug of the shoulders, “I never did, and never knew any one who did, although I have read of many such incidents, altogether too marvellous for belief. You see,” he continued, “we know that the least carelessness would probably cost us our lives, and we are minutely accurate about all our equipments. And,” lowering his voice and speaking reverentially, “I always commit myself to the guidance and tender care of the good Shepherd.

“‘They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters,

“‘These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

“‘They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distress.’”

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Eric listened, and his respect and esteem for the diver grew tenfold more.

Mr. Lacelle continued:—

“It is a strange business. The danger fascinates some, but the peril is never lost sight of. I put on the helmet, for the first time, more than ten years ago; and yet I never resume it without a feeling that it may be the last time I shall ever go down. Of course one has more confidence after a while; but there is something in being shut up in an armor weighed down with a hundred pounds, and knowing that a little leak in your life-pipe is your death, that no diver can get rid of. And I do not know that I should care to banish the feeling, for the sight of the clear blue sky, the genial sun, and the face of a fellow-man after long hours among the fishes, makes you feel like one who has suddenly been drawn away from the grasp of death.”

“Were you ever in great danger?” asked Eric.

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“I think the most dangerous place I ever got into was going down to examine the propeller Comet, sunk off Toledo. In working about her bottom, I got my air-pipe coiled over a large sliver from the stoven hole, and could not reach it with my hands. Every time I sprang up to remove the hose, my tender would give me the ‘slack’ of the line, thus letting me fall back again. He did not understand his duties, and did not know what my signals on the life-line meant. It was two hours and a half before I was relieved, and there was not a moment that I was not looking to see the hose cut by the ragged wood. It’s a strange feeling you have down there. You go walking over a vessel, clambering up her sides, peering here and there, and the feeling that you are alone makes you nervous and uneasy.

“Sometimes a vessel sinks down so fairly, that she stands up on the bottom as trim and neat as if she rode upon the surface. Then you can go down into the cabin, up the shrouds, walk all over her, just as easy as a sailor could if she were still dashing away before the breeze. Only it seems quiet, so tomb-like; there are no waves down there—only a swaying back and forth of the waters, and a see-sawing of the ship. You hear nothing from above. The great fishes will come swimming about, rubbing their noses against your glass, and staring with a wonderful look into your eyes. The very stillness sometimes gives life a chill. You hear just a moaning, wailing sound, like the last notes of an organ, and you cannot help thinking of dead men floating over and around you.

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“A diver does not like to go down more than a hundred and twenty feet; at that depth the pressure is painful, and there is danger of internal injury. I can stay down, for five or six hours at a time, at a hundred and fifteen or twenty feet, and do a good deal of hard work. In the waters of Lake Huron the diver can see thirty or forty feet away, but the other lakes will screen a vessel not ten feet from you.

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“Up here you seldom think of accident or death, but a hundred feet of water washing over your head would set you to thinking. A little stoppage of the air-pump, a leak in your hose, a careless action on the part of your tender, and a weight of a mountain would press the life out of you before you could make a move. And you may ‘foul’ your pipe or line yourself, and in your haste bring on what you dread. I often get my hose around a stair or rail, and generally release it without much trouble; the bare idea of what a slender thing holds back the clutch of death off my throat makes a cold sweat start from every pore.”

“I suppose you find many beautiful things,” said Eric.

“I wish I could describe half the wonderful and beautiful things I find,” cried Mr. Lacelle.

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“There are flowers, the most exquisite that can be imagined; groves of coral, beautiful caverns, with floors of silver sand, spiral caves winding down, down, down, covered with beautiful, delicate plants, and leading to beds of smooth, hard sand, which shine like gold. Feathery ferns turn silver and crimson beneath your hand, and beautiful fish glide around you, or rest in the water, with no motion save the gentle pulsation of their gills as they breathe.

“I have stood upon the bottom of the ocean, and gazed up, awe-stricken and bewildered, at the wonderful masses of coral above my head, resembling forests of monstrous trees, with gnarled and twisted branches intertwined; and when I have considered that it was all the work of insects so tiny that millions of them were working at my feet, and I could not see them, I have compared my own littleness in the universe with the wonderful work of the least of them, and have felt my own insignificance.

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“And curious things have happened, too. I was once examining an old wreck off South America. It was an old Spanish frigate, supposed to have valuable jewels and a large amount of money aboard.

“I was walking over the wreck one day, and, being disappointed in not finding any treasure, was about returning, when I observed a curious heap of shells, close to one of the stanchions. I picked off a handful from the top of the heap, which was about two feet high, and regularly piled in a conical form, and seeing the shells were of a most beautiful pink color, and very delicate, I filled my pockets with them, and then, touching the life-lines, was pulled up.

“The divers in my employ were delighted with them, and as they were just the right size for buttons, one of the boys went down, with a large bag, to bring off the rest.

“I told him just where to find them; but when he came up, he declared there were none to be seen anywhere.

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“I was sure he had not followed my directions; so I went down again; and judge my surprise when I found he had spoken truly. *There was not one to be seen.* The little wretches, disgusted

with the disturbance I created, had all crawled away.”

“How curious!” exclaimed Eric. “Could you not find any of them?”

“Not a vestige of them.”

“It was singular—wasn’t it?”

“Yes. I have learned many singular things since I have gone under the sea. For instance, water is a very powerful conductor of sound, much more so than air. We often blast rocks under the water—”

“How can you?” interrupted Eric. “What keeps the powder dry?”

“We have water-proof charges prepared.”

“But how can you fire them under the water?” persisted Eric.

“By electricity,” responded Mr. Lacelle. “A report of blasting rock a little distance off, will scarcely disturb us upon the land; but under the water it is very different. We were once blasting rocks near the coast, and another party were at work three quarters of a mile from us.

“Our charge was set, and ready to go off; I sent word to our distant neighbors that we were about to blast, and they had better come up until it was over. My courtesy was repaid by a very profane answer, accompanied with a request to ‘blast away.’

“So the charge was set off; and the unfortunate divers in the distance were hauled out of the water more dead than alive. I afterwards learned from them that the shock was tremendous.”

“When you blow up the rocks, do you place the charges under them?” inquired Eric.

“O, no; that would have no effect: holes are drilled in the rock, and the charges placed within them.”

“And when the rocks are blown, what do you do with the pieces that come off?” asked Eric.

“We grapple them with hooks and chains, and draw them to the surface.”

“It is very interesting, and I am very much obliged to you for telling me so much,” said Eric. “I wish I could learn *all* about it.”

“Well, my boy, you shall go with me to-morrow; and, if you’re not afraid to venture, I’ll take you down beneath the sea with me. It is quite safe near Amsterdam.”

“O, thank you, sir,” said Eric, eagerly, grasping the kind Frenchman’s hand.

“I must go now to the palace,” said Mr. Lacelle. “I have an engagement there. Will you do me the honor to amuse yourself here until I return?”

“Thank you,” said Eric again, with a joyous smile; for Mr. Lacelle’s room was stored with ‘curios’ from the bottom of the sea, and Eric knew he could spend a long time very comfortably there.

He was careful to secure Froll in her cage, that she might do no mischief; and then he had a thoroughly good time, examining the sea things; and as they were all labelled with name and date, and the place from which they were taken, he gained much useful information.

Before night a letter came from his uncle, saying that Johnny was quite ill, and had been unable to travel to the Hague; but he was now so much better, that they would probably join Eric in a day or two.

“I shan’t mind waiting,” said Eric to himself; “and there’s nothing now to prevent my going to Amsterdam to-morrow; but I wish uncle Charlie could be with me too.”

Then he remembered that he had been left under the landlord’s care, and must obtain his permission. So he sought him out, and made known his request.

The landlord of the Vyverberg was a kind-hearted German. He was quite fond of his little American guest, and readily consented to his plan for the morrow, telling Eric that Monsieur Lacelle was a remarkable man, and he could not be in better hands.

“I think this is just the jolliest country, and full of the jolliest people in the world,” was Eric’s mental comment before he fell asleep that night. Indeed, there are few people more kind-hearted, thoughtful, or hospitable than the Dutch and Germans.

Eric’s parents were anxiously wondering how their boy fared alone in Gravenhaag.

Could they have seen him as he read his promised chapter, and knelt to commit himself to God, or afterwards, falling asleep, his last thought of the kindness of the people around him, their own sleep would have been far lighter, and their prayers would have blessed the good foreigners.

CHAPTER VIII.

Early in the morning they went to Amsterdam, or Amsteldamme, as the Germans call it, because it controls the tides of the Amstel River.

The city of Amsteldamme is situated on a marsh, and all its houses and buildings are erected on piles, which are driven from forty to fifty feet into the earth.

“How many canals!” was Eric’s first remark, when he obtained a good view of the city.

“Yes,” said Mr. Lacelle. “When I was a boy, I counted the bridges across the canals, and there were two hundred and fifty. The city is divided by the canals into ninety islands. Those high walls were once ramparts, but have since been converted into public walks. They are planted with trees, and make excellent promenades.” 93

“But suppose there should be another war,” said Eric; “what would their defence be?”

“They could easily flood the surrounding country.”

“What splendid streets these are!” said Eric, as they passed through one and another with rows of beautiful shade trees, handsome little stone bridges, broad, clean pavements, and long lines of elegant mansions.

They were indeed very beautiful streets, not easily to be surpassed in all Europe.

“I should think,” said Eric, thoughtfully, “that there would be danger to the people here in having so much water in their town. Do the dikes ever give way?”

“Very seldom. The people watch them very faithfully, and whenever a break is discovered it is instantly repaired. There is a very interesting story connected with the dikes of Holland, which I will tell you, to show you what great service a little boy did his country. 94

“The little hero, Peter Daik, was on his way home, one night, from a village to which he had been sent by his father on an errand, when he noticed the water trickling through a narrow opening in the dike, built up to keep out the sea.

“He stopped, and thought of what would happen if the hole were not closed.

“He knew—for he had often heard his father tell of the sad disasters which had come from small beginnings—how, in a few hours, the opening would become bigger, and let in the mighty mass of water pressing on the dike, until, the whole defence being washed away, the rolling, dashing, angry sea would sweep on to the next village, destroying life and property, and everything in its way. Should he run home and alarm the villagers? It would be dark before they could arrive; and the hole, even then, might be so large as to defy all attempts to close it. What could he do to prevent such terrible ruin—he, only a little boy? 95

“I will tell what he did. He sat down on the bank of the canal, stopped the opening with his hand, and patiently awaited the passing of a villager. But no one came.

“Hour after hour rolled slowly by; yet there sat the heroic boy in the cold and darkness, shivering, wet, and tired, but stoutly pressing his hand against the water that tried to pass the dangerous breach.

“All night he staid at his post. At last morning broke, when a clergyman, walking up the canal, heard a groan, and looking around to see where it came from, seeing the boy, and surprised at his strange position, exclaimed with astonishment,—

“‘Why are you there, my child?’

“‘I am keeping back the water, sir, and saving the village from being drowned,’ answered little Peter, with lips so benumbed with cold that he could hardly speak. 96

“The astonished minister at once relieved him of his hard duty, and the poor little fellow had but just strength enough left to alarm the villagers, who flocked to the dike, and repaired the breach.

“Heroic boy! What a noble spirit of self-devotion he had shown! resolving to brave all the fatigue, the danger, the cold and darkness, rather than permit the ruin which would come if he deserted his post.

“There is a beautiful poem on the subject by Miss Carey. I will repeat a few of the last verses.”

Then Mr. Lacelle repeated in a clear, mellow voice, whose slight foreign accent lent it an additional charm to Eric’s ear,—

“So faintly calling and crying
  Till the sun is under the sea,—
Crying and moaning till the stars
  Come out for company.
He thinks of his brother and sister, 97
  Asleep in their safe, warm bed;
He thinks of his father and mother;
  Of himself as dying—and dead;
And of how, when the night is over,
  They must come and find him at last;
But he never thinks he can leave the place

Where duty holds him fast.

“The good dame in the cottage
Is up and astir with the light,
For the thought of her little Peter
Has been with her all the night.
And now she watches the pathway,
As yestereve she had done;
But what does she see so strange and black
Against the rising sun?
Her neighbors are bearing between them
Something straight to her door;
Her child is coming home, but not
As ever he came before.

“‘He is dead!’ she cries; ‘my darling!’
And the startled father hears,
And comes and looks the way she looks,
And fears the thing she fears;
Till a glad shout from the bearers
Thrills the stricken man and wife—
‘Give thanks, for your son has saved our land,
And God has saved his life!’
So there in the morning sunshine
They knelt about the boy,
And every head was bared and bent
In tearful, reverent joy.

“‘Tis many a day since then; but still,
When the sea roars like a flood,
Their boys are taught what a boy can do
Who is brave, and true, and good;
For every man in that country
Takes his son by the hand,
And tells him of little Peter,
Whose courage saved the land.
They have many a valiant hero
Remembered through the years,
But never one whose name so oft
Is named with loving tears.
And his deed shall be sung by the cradle,
And told to the child on the knee,
So long as the dikes of Holland
Divide the land from the sea.”

They had now come to the Y, an inlet of the Zuyder Zee, where several of the men under Mr. Lacelle were at work.

“Here we are,” said Eric, gladly. “Here we are! Now for my ‘thrilling experience,’ as the newspapers say.”

There was a tent close by, into which they stepped to change their dress for the diver’s costume.

“Nobody would know me now, I am sure,” said Eric to himself, when, with much difficulty, and considerable help from the attendants, he emerged from the tent arrayed in the suit. “I can hardly drag my feet along, they are so heavy; and I’m decidedly glad that my every-day hat is not like this helmet.”

Mr. Lacelle had given him particular directions about diving, and now the life-line and air-hose were adjusted, and the brave boy stood beside the professional diver, waiting for the descent.

The signal was given, and soon Eric was going down underneath the blue, cold waves. He could not see Mr. Lacelle; it seemed as if he were never to stop going down: the water sang around his ears; and seeing nothing but water made him giddy and faint. He thought he must certainly smother, and, for an instant, was thoroughly afraid.

Then he remembered that, at a single touch of the life-line, the men above would instantly draw him up, and, feeling quite at his ease again, began to look about him. To his great joy he saw the bottom, and was presently upon it, and walking towards Mr. Lacelle.

Suddenly a sound like heavy peals of thunder reverberated through the water. At a motion from Mr. Lacelle, Eric looked quickly upward, and saw a school of tiny fish, darting with great velocity towards them, and several large fishes in pursuit of the little ones.

On they came, straight towards Eric and Mr. Lacelle; but just before reaching them, they turned sharply off in the opposite direction; as they turned, the noise increased to a heavy peal, and ceased as they passed from sight.

“How wonderful!” exclaimed Eric, involuntarily; and his voice sounded like roaring and screaming, though he had spoken quite softly.

Mr. Lacelle then held at arm’s length a small cartridge, which he signalled, by the lines, for the men above to ignite. Almost instantly it exploded. Eric was perfectly astounded by the effects of the report.

It seemed as if huge rocks had fallen upon his helmet; and such a crashing, rending sound as accompanied the shock! It was quite as much as he was able to bear in the way of noise. Mr. Lacelle told him afterwards, that the noise of the report in the air would be no louder than that of a common fire-cracker.

Eric hoped that Mr. Lacelle would make no more experiments in sound, and the diver did not seem at all anxious to do so.

It was rather awe-inspiring, Eric thought, to be walking easily about at the bottom of the sea, knowing that around and above him lay the mighty element of death. And there, under the water, the eighth psalm came into his mind, and he realized its beauty as he had never been able to before.

He walked around, picking up shells and curious plants, and being careful to keep near Mr. Lacelle, who was making some calculations about the building of a huge bridge, contemplated by the king. Several large fish swam lazily up to Eric, eyed him curiously, and let themselves be patted upon the back.

“How amused Nettie would be!” he thought, and wished the huge fish were less inquisitive, as he did not particularly fancy them. He was quite interested in the flowers, which were as brilliant and beautiful as any upon the land, when suddenly he discovered a heap of shells quite similar to those which Mr. Lacelle had described the day before. He put several handfuls of them into his diver’s basket, and then, moving off a few steps, he watched to see what they would do.

When all was quiet, they moved slowly at first, then more rapidly, and all crawled away in the same direction.

“That is very curious,” thought Eric to himself. “I wish I knew what they are.”

When he moved again, something struck his foot. Looking quickly down through the window in his helmet, he saw a small, square box, made of tin, and fastened with a padlock. A key was in the lock, and Eric turned it and opened the box, wondering what it could contain. The lid flew back, and disclosed an inner cover, on which was painted a coat of arms, with the name “Arthur Montgomery” engraved beneath. A spring was visible, and, pressing it, Eric disclosed to his astonished vision a number of English sovereigns—gold coins worth about five dollars apiece.

His first impulse was to show the prize to Mr. Lacelle, but he could not readily attract his attention. So, putting the box in his basket after safely locking it, he busied himself with gathering the beautiful flowers within his reach, and storing them in his basket to press for his mother.

Suddenly he felt himself being drawn up slowly towards the surface, and, turning his head, saw that Mr. Lacelle was also ascending.

He knew that they were being drawn up because Mr. Lacelle wished him to catch the return train to Gravenhaag, and had cautioned the men at the pumps not to let them remain under water more than half an hour; but he was extremely surprised to find that the time had passed.

On reaching “terra firma,” so much hurrying had to be done in changing his armor for more convenient land apparel, that he entirely forgot the box of money until seated beside Mr. Lacelle in the carriage. Then he showed it to him.

“That *was* a find, for so young a submarinist,” said Mr. Lacelle. “It is yours, my boy; divers consider themselves entitled to all such unexpectedly discovered valuables.”

“But,” said Eric, eagerly, “the owner’s name is upon the box; and see! here is a letter addressed to ‘Arthur Montgomery, Bart., Clone, Lancaster County, England.’ I think I ought to return it.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Lacelle, pleased with Eric’s honesty, “conscientiously you ought; but you are not obliged to by law.”

“I would much rather,” said Eric, earnestly. “Will you please to inquire about it, and see that it reaches the owner?” Mr. Lacelle promised, and, seeing Eric safely aboard the cars, bade him good by, and left for Amsteldamme.

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE JOHN.

When Eric returned to Gravenhaag, whom should he see but his uncle, Mr. Van Rasseulger? And he being the last person in the world that Eric would have thought of meeting there, of course he was decidedly surprised.

"Uncle John!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "Who would have thought of seeing you here?"

"You wouldn't, I'll wager, young man, or you'd not have gone wild goosing it over the water at Amsterdam."

"I've had a glorious time!" exclaimed Eric. "I've been walking upon the bottom of the Zuyder Zee."

"It's high time somebody arrived to look after you."

"But, uncle John, it was perfectly safe. Mr. Lacelle is an experienced diver; and the landlord under whose care papa left me gave me permission. Besides, nothing happened—"

"How stout and healthy you have grown!" exclaimed Mr. Van Rasseulger, interrupting Eric. "If Johnny has improved as much as you have, I shall send him abroad frequently."

"How is Johnny? He was ill when uncle Charlie wrote to me."

"Ill!" exclaimed Johnny's fond papa, instantly growing anxious. "What did the doctor say, Eric?"

"Only that I must wait here a day or two, until Johnny was well enough to come on."

"And where were they when he wrote?"

"At Paris," said Eric.

"I meant to stay with you to-night," said his uncle; "but I believe I shall take the boat to Antwerp to-night, and catch the Express to Paris. I must look after my boy."

"O, please take me with you," pleaded Eric. "Mr. Lacelle is going to stay at Amsterdam, and I shall be terribly lonesome here, all alone again."

"Well, get your things together. Can you be ready in two hours?"

"In ten minutes," cried Eric, gayly: "mamma did all my packing before she left. I've only to tumble a few things into my travelling-bag, and to feed myself and Froll."

"The little monkey? I've made her acquaintance. We're quite good friends."

"Uncle John, if you haven't seen the doctor or Johnny, how *did* you find me?" said Eric, who had been puzzling himself with this question for some time.

"Entirely by accident," replied his uncle. "I arrived here about two hours since, and, finding all your names on the register, supposed I had stepped right into a family party; but then I learned that your father and mother, and that bundle of mischief called Nettie, had gone home, and that *Mynheer* Eric had gone to Amsteldamme to explore the mysteries of the bottom of the sea. I was so frightened that if there had been a chance of hitting you, I should have gone directly after you."

"I wish you had," said Eric, "in time to have gone down into the water."

Mr. Van Rasseulger, for all his talk about Eric's expedition, was heartily pleased with his brave little nephew, and was thinking to himself such an honest, energetic, courageous boy would make his way well in the world.

Eric had no idea that he was a particularly interesting boy. He was large and strong for his age, easy in his manners, and had a frank, joyous countenance, surmounted by thick, brown, curly hair. His eyes were very honest eyes indeed, often opening wide in a surprised way, when they saw anything not quite right, and blazing and flashing upon the aggressor when they witnessed wrong, cruelty, or injustice. He had been brought up upon the creed, "First of all, *do right*; and *be a gentleman*." And being thoughtful, careful, and obedient, he was trusted and respected as few boys of his age rarely deserve to be.

Of course he had his faults. No young lad is without them. But the difference between Eric and other boys was, that when he became conscious of a fault in his character, he immediately set about overcoming it, and therefore soon got rid of it. But he was obliged to keep a very careful watch over himself, for little faults creep into one's character faster than the little weeds spring up in the flower garden, and, like the weeds, too, if at once removed are almost harmless, but if allowed to spread and flourish they soon spoil the entire character, as the weeds spoil the garden.

While we have been moralizing, Eric has eaten his supper, neatly packed up the few things left about, and, with Froll and his travelling-bag, starts from the Vyverberg for Paris.

A very common-looking steamboat took them to Antwerp. There is not much to relate of their journey, for Eric's adventures had so tired him that he slept all the way, only awakening to take the cars at Antwerp, and rousing once again to know they were passing through Brussels, and to hear his uncle say that the finest altar in the world was in the cathedral there. They arrived at Paris about noon of the next day, and, after considerable trouble, found that Dr. Ward had taken rooms in a hotel in the *Place Vendôme*, whither they at once repaired.

Eric wanted to give his uncle and cousin a surprise. So Mr. Van Rasseulger did not send up their names, but they stole softly up the stairs, and opened the door.

Johnny was alone, lying upon the floor, with a very fretful, discontented expression upon his countenance.

He turned his head towards the door, and there, upon the threshold, blushing and laughing, stood Eric; and, better still, behind him was papa. The child uttered a joyful cry, and sprang into his father's arms, who hurried to meet him, exclaiming,—

“My boy, my Johnny-boy, what is the matter?”

“It’s only the mumps,” said Johnny, reassuringly, and holding out his hand to Eric. “O, ain’t I glad you’ve come!” he added. “It’s awful dull here, uncle Charlie is away at the hospital so much.”

“Well, how have you been, excepting the mumps?” inquired his father, relieved enough to find nothing serious the matter with his petted boy.

“Bully!” exclaimed John, very improperly. “See how strong I’m getting, papa!” and he threw out his fist suddenly, giving his father a very uncomfortable punch in the side.

“I’m glad you didn’t illustrate on me,” said Eric, laughing. “Uncle John, are you a tester?”

“I’m an *at*testor, certainly,” replied his uncle. “Johnny, if you demonstrate your power of strength so forcibly and practically, some one will apply oil of birch to you.”

“Then I’ll be in first-rate running order,” retorted Johnny, “and you’ll have to take me to Strasbourg.”

“Indeed,” said his father, “I think so.”

As they all sat, merrily talking, Dr. Ward returned, and was pleased and surprised enough to find his unexpected guests. His greeting was very cordial.

Eric he was particularly glad to see; he had been worried about leaving him so long, alone, at the Hague; and Johnny had been too ill to travel or to be left with strangers, and Eric was too inexperienced, his uncle thought, to go from the Hague to Paris alone. So it was quite a relief to find him safely at hand.

“And now,” he said, after talking about home affairs for quite a while, “I see my way out of a dilemma. I have been anxious to attend two or three medical lectures at Heidelberg, and if you will look after the boys for a day or two, I can have my desire.”

“Certainly; I will for a day or two. At the end of that time I must go home. Here’s this dutiful boy of mine, with never a word for mamma, Annie, or Adolphe.

“Well,” said Johnny, remonstrating, “you took me so by surprise, papa, that I forgot all about them.”

“Your filial affection must be strong,” said his father, laughing at him.

Johnny did not like this, and proposed to Eric to take a walk, and “see Paris.”

While they were gone, Mr. Van Rasseulger arranged with the doctor to meet them again at Heidelberg; meanwhile he would keep the boys with him for a week. They would leave Paris the next day, if John was well enough.

Dr. Ward thought he would be.

Mr. Van Rasseulger explained that he had been obliged to visit Rotterdam and Hague suddenly on business, and must go to Vienna, in Austria, and start for home, within a fortnight.

“Don’t neglect to take the boy to Munich, and show him to his grandfather; and don’t forget your promise to ‘make him as hearty and strong as Eric,’” he said.

Poor little Johnny, in the interval between his own birth and that of his baby brother,—a space of seven years,—had been petted and pampered, and almost thoroughly spoiled. His temper had suffered with his constitution, and he became a delicate, sickly child. His parents, while living in New York, had lost three boys, and fearing to lose Johnny, too, had sent him to travel abroad, under Dr. Ward’s care. Mr. Van Rasseulger was a native of Germany, and thought there was no air so invigorating as that breathed in on German soil. He had great hopes of its curing John’s delicacy; and Dr. Ward thought that a strange country and traveller’s hardships would be excellent aids in restoring the boy’s natural health and good-nature.

Meanwhile, Eric was seeing Paris under Johnny’s guidance. To be sure, he could not see much in a day; but he took a look at the war column in the *Place Vendôme*, saw the *Palace of the Tuileries*, the *Jardin des Plantes*, and entertained his little cousin with an account of his visit to the King of Holland, and his submarine diving, both of which Johnny thought very wonderful. Eric was not much concerned at seeing so little of Paris at the time, for he knew that the doctor intended to spend a month there, after visiting Munich. He bought a guide-book while out with Johnny, and then they returned to their rooms in time to see the doctor start for Heidelberg.

“Eric,” said Johnny, when Dr. Ward had gone, “I must show you the American railway here.”

“Why?” said Eric; “I’m sure that is the last thing I came to Paris to see.”

“Now,” said Johnny, importantly, “I suppose you think you know just what it is; but you’re quite as mistaken as if you were a donkey without ears.”

“John!” said his father, reprovingly.

“That was only a ‘simile,’ papa,” answered Johnny, roguishly, as he led Eric out again.

Sure enough, when they reached the railway, Eric found that his idea of it had been far from correct.

“It is nothing at all but an omnibus running upon rails,” he said: “I don’t see why they call it American.”

“It isn’t anything like as nice as our street cars—is it?” answered Johnny, with a flourish of

national pride quite pardonable in so young an American.

Just then the conductor, supposing the two boys wished to be passengers, saluted them politely, exclaiming, “*Complete, complete!*” and the omnibus rolled off along the rails.

“What did he mean?” asked Eric, quite puzzled.

“He said the coach was full,” Johnny replied. “They are never allowed to carry more passengers than there are seats for.”

“That is still less and less like an American railway,” said Eric, laughing, and thinking of the crowded cars and overstrained horses he had so often seen and pitied, wearily perambulating the streets of New York.

“Let’s have some cake and coffee,” Johnny proposed, as they were strolling towards home. “I think French coffee is hard to beat.”

“When I was your age,” remarked Eric, “mamma almost decided to live in Paris; but I am very glad she did not, for I think New York a great deal nicer.”

Johnny led the way to a café—that is, a coffee-house,—and here they regaled themselves with rolls and delicious coffee.

Eric was shocked to see Johnny appropriate a couple of cakes and two lumps of sugar, left over from their repast, and convey them to his pocket.

“Why, Johnny!” he exclaimed, in a tone of mortification.

“They all do so,” said John, laughing. “A Frenchman thinks he has a right to everything that he pays for. Watch the others.”

Eric looked around and saw several Frenchmen, who had finished their lunch, following John’s example.

“Well,” said he, “if I should do that at Millard’s, how they *would* all stare!”

Johnny was quite pleased with his own importance in being able to show Eric around the city, and proposed several places that they “ought to see.” But the afternoon was waning, and a damp, chilly breeze sprang up, which Eric knew, from experience, was not at all good for the mumps. So he very prudently hurried Johnny home, holding forth Froll’s loneliness as an additional inducement.

CHAPTER X.

STRASBOURG.

“Uncle John,” said Eric, the next morning, “do you think of going through Strasbourg, when we leave for Munich?”

“No,” said his uncle; “I have business to attend to on another route.”

“But, papa,” expostulated Johnny, “we want to see the great clock in the Strasbourg Cathedral.”

“It will be impossible for me to go,” Mr. Van Rasseulger said, very decidedly; but seeing that both the boys were greatly disappointed, he added, “If you could be a sober boy, Johnny, I might trust you alone with Eric, and you might go to Switzerland by the Strasbourg route, meeting me at Lucerne.”

“By ourselves? O, how jolly!” Johnny exclaimed, turning a somersault upon the floor.

“But the question is, my boy, *Can* I trust you?”

“O, papa!”

“I will consider it, John. I can trust Eric, but your inclinations are apt to be rather unsteady.”

That was certainly true, for Johnny’s inclination just then was, back parallel with the floor, heels at a right angle with his head.

“But I think I will try you,” continued his father. “I shall put you under Eric’s care, and require you to obey and refer to him. You may start to-morrow morning, which will give you time to spend a day and night at Strasbourg, and to meet me at Lucerne, on the evening of the day after to-morrow.”

“Hurrah! hurrah!” screamed Johnny, leaping to his feet, “hurrah for Strasbourg and its wonderful clock! Three cheers for—Good gracious!”

The excited boy’s exuberant spirits went up with Eric’s guide-book to the ceiling of the room, and returned in bewilderment as the unfortunate book came down in a basin of water in which he had been sailing his magnetic ship.

“An encouraging beginning that,” remarked his father, gravely.

“I didn’t mean to, Eric,” Johnny said quite meekly; “I guess ‘twill dry in the sun.”

“Then you had better put it there,” said Mr. Van Rasseulger; “you are tearing the leaves by holding the book in your wet hands.” Johnny spread the guide-book upon a sunny window-seat, listening with interest to Eric’s proposal.

“I must study the route on the map down stairs; and if you are willing, uncle John, I will go out now with Johnny and get the tickets.”

“Certainly,” said his uncle; “but my advice would be to study a dry guide-book and the map before getting the tickets; there may be a choice of routes.”

This was excellent advice, as the boys soon found. There were three routes, and some time elapsed before they decided upon one.

At length they chose the shortest of all, as their time was limited and they wanted it all for Strasbourg. Their choice, therefore, fell upon the most direct route, it being straight across the country of France, and for a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles traversed by rail.

They consulted with Monsieur Richarte, the landlord, and their uncle, and decided to take an early train on the following morning. A ride of eight hours would suffice for the journey, and their early start would enable them to have a few hours for sight-seeing in the day and twilight.

But tourists should always allow for detention. For although Mr. Van Rasseulger saw them safely aboard the early train in the morning, an accident detained them at Vitry, and when they reached Strasbourg it was night—a dark, rainy, dismal night.

They rode directly to the principal hotel, a large, roomy, comfortable-looking place, and immediately after supper proceeded to their room for the night.

Before retiring, Johnny looked out from between the crimson window curtains, to see what he could of the city; but little was visible. Opposite the window was a little two-story house, with queer stagings about the chimneys. He called Eric to look at them, saying he guessed the chimneys were being rebuilt.

“No, Johnny,” said Eric. “You will find those stagings upon almost every house here. They are erected by the house-owners for the especial accommodation of storks that build in the chimneys and are the street scavengers of Strasbourg.”

“Are they?” said Johnny, sleepily; “well, let’s go to bed.” They were both very tired and sleepy boys, and prepared for a good night’s rest.

“I think I shall sleep well,” Johnny remarked.

“And I’m sure I shall,” said Eric. “I’ve travelled nearly six hundred miles since night before last.”

But they were destined to disappointment, for from the large, open fireplace in the room there issued, all night long, a continuous wailing, moaning, rustling sound, caused by the wind; added to which were the dismal groanings of the old storks and piping of the young ones.

It seemed to Eric that he had but just fallen asleep, when Johnny was shaking him and hallooing in his ear.

“Eric! Eric! it’s a splendid morning! Get up quick. I want to go out and see the sights. Hurry up!”

“Yes,” said Eric.

Johnny scampered down stairs, and before long Eric joined him in the hall, where the impatient boy was walking on his hands, with his heels in the air, by way of diversion.

“All ready?” he cried, and resumed a position more convenient and becoming for a promenade, as they started.

They had a fine, breezy walk.

Strasbourg is not far from the Rhine; and one of its tributaries, the graceful, sparkling *Ill* River, which, as Johnny suggested, is a very *good* stream, washes the city’s walls and supplies it with water.

This city is famous for its immense fortifications, its Minster, or Cathedral, and the Astronomical Clock of the Three Sages.

Its form is triangular, and the entire city is enclosed by a bastioned line of ramparts and several outworks.

There are seven entrance gates, and on the east side is a strong pentagonal or five-sided tower.

There is a network of sluices, by which the surrounding country can be inundated. Strasbourg is one of the most important fortresses and arsenals of France, besides being its principal depot of artillery. It is pleasantly situated, but most of its streets are narrow, with lofty eaves-drooping houses.

The boys were surprised to hear its inhabitants speaking German instead of French, but learned that the town was originally German, and was ceded to France in one of the Louis XIV. wars, when it became the capital of *Bas Rhin*, a division of France, on the eastern frontier.

In many of the streets of Strasbourg are little wooden bridges, similar to canal bridges. These are built over the Ill, which intersects the city in all directions.

When Eric and Johnny took their stroll, it was market-day, and, even at that early hour, the

streets presented a lively scene.

Carts and drays were the stalls in the open street, and people were buying and selling at a great rate.

The fish stalls were surrounded by storks; but the people seemed to mind them no more than the birds minded the people. These storks are great favorites with Germans. In Strasbourg they are as tame as our domestic hens, and it is very comical to see them strutting importantly about, as if they had as good a right to the sidewalk as the other citizens.

The boys returned to the hotel with ravenous appetites, but, hungry as they were, could not appreciate the described daintiness of a most apparently unpalatable pie, called *pâté de foie gras*; so they were obliged to content themselves with other edibles and fragrant French coffee.

“Now for the minster!” said Eric, as they arose from the table.

“The *minister*?” exclaimed Johnny; “what for?”

Eric laughed.

“Not *minister*, but *minster*. A minster is a cathedral church.”

“I don’t care much about the minster, then,” said Johnny, running up stairs on all fours. “I’ve seen cathedrals till I’m sick of them. But this clock *is* curious, and I’m anxious to see it.”

“Johnny,” expostulated Eric, “walk properly. You ought to have been a monkey.—And that reminds me,” he added, “I must feed Froll and fasten her, that she may do no mischief while we’re at the cathedral.”

Little Froll received an ample breakfast, and her silver chain was securely fastened. Then the boys left her.

When they had been gone a while, and her breakfast had disappeared, Froll became lonesome, and cast her eyes about to see with what mischief she might best employ herself. But thoughtful Eric had placed every temptation out of her reach.

Meanwhile Eric and Johnny were viewing the wonders of the famous astronomical clock.

This clock is in the Strasbourg Cathedral. It was built in the cathedral, before its completion, in the year 1439, and was invented by Isaac Habrecht, a Jewish astrologer.

European clocks were first invented in the eleventh century, by the Saracens, and used principally for monasteries. They were very rude, simple affairs, and sometimes would only “go” when somebody pushed the pendulum, which was rather inconvenient than otherwise.

So wise mathematicians tried to make improvements; and some succeeded, among whom was Isaac Habrecht, who, in the fourteenth century, invented the most wonderful clock in the world, and called it the “Clock of the Three Sages,” because once in every hour the figures of the Three Kings of the Orient came out from a niche in its side, and made a reverential bow before an image of the Virgin Mary, seated just above the dial-plate, on the front of the clock.

It is built of dark wood, gilded and carved, and is sixty feet high. In shape it is somewhat similar to a church, with a tower on either side of the entrance; and these towers of the clock are encircled by spiral staircases, which are used when repairs are necessary.

When Isaac Habrecht invented this wonderful clock, he meant it to run forever, always displaying to the good people of Strasbourg the days of the month, places of the sun and moon, and other celestial phenomena; and while he lived it worked admirably: but when he had been dead a while, the clock stopped; and as nobody else understood its machinery, it had quite a vacation.

After a while, however, the good people of Strasbourg took it in hand, and it was repaired and set going—only to stop again. Thus it went on until Napoleon’s time.

Strasbourg, originally a German town, was ceded to Louis XIV. in 1681; so the clock was French property, and Napoleon decided it must be brought to life again. Under the most skilful French and German machinists this repairing took place. It was eminently successful *this* time, and, when completed, was a great improvement on the old clock.

It will now give not only the time of Strasbourg, but of every principal city in the world; also the day of the week and month, the course of the sun and planets, and all the eclipses of the sun and moon, in their regular order.

In an alcove, above the dial, is an image of the Saviour; and every day, at noon, figures of the twelve apostles march round it and bow, while the holy image, with uplifted hands, administers a silent blessing. A cock, on the highest point of the right hand tower, flaps his wings and crows three times; and when he stops, a beautiful chime of bells rings out familiar and very musical tunes.

A figure of Time, in a niche on one side, strikes the quarter hours from twelve to one; and four figures—Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age—pass slowly before him. In a niche, on the other side is an angel turning an hour-glass. The clock is in the south transept of the cathedral.

Persons travelling abroad usually take Strasbourg on their route, to visit its cathedral,—the spire of which is the highest in the world, being four hundred and sixty feet high,—and to see its wonderful astronomical clock.

Eric and Johnny were very much pleased with the famous clock. The guide who explained and

told its history to them was very good-natured, and even allowed them to ascend the tower of the cathedral, which, usually, is not allowable.

Here they had a most magnificent view, which I cannot attempt to describe, and only advise you to go and see it for yourself.

Before leaving the cathedral, they bought two photographs of the wonderful clock, intending to send them home, with a description of their visit to Strasbourg.

By the time their explorations were finished, Johnny declared that he was so hungry, he could almost eat one of those goose pies. The morning was quite gone. It would soon be time to take the train for Lucerne, and they must have dinner.

"Won't Froll be glad to see us back!" exclaimed Johnny, as they reached their room; "she doesn't like to be left alone."

Eric had bought some nuts for the little creature, and went with them straightway to her cage.

The cage was just as he left it; the silver chain was there, too, fastened to one of the bars and to the tiny collar; but the collar hung dangling at the end of the chain, and Froll was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER XI.

ERIC IN TROUBLE.

A thorough search was instantly made; but neither around the room, nor behind the furniture, nor upon the gallery roof, were any traces to be found of the lost Frolic.

"It is too bad," cried Eric, in perplexity, while Johnny looked ready to cry. "We must speak to the landlord, and ask him what we are to do."

Eric's German was by no means perfect; but he managed to make the good-natured landlord understand their trouble. He made inquiries of all, directly; but no one had seen the little monkey since the boys had left her. He did not think it at all likely that she had been stolen, for no one could get to the boys' room without being noticed by some of the servants, and he was quite sure that she would return safely to her comfortable quarters; so he advised the boys to leave the window open for her, and to go at once to the dinner he had been for some time keeping for them.

His sensible advice was unwillingly followed; but Froll took no advantage of the window left open for her benefit.

Eric and Johnny waited and watched impatiently, until it was almost time to start for the train. Then Eric left directions with the landlord, in case the monkey should be found and captured; promising to send for her. He was just going to call Johnny, when he heard his voice, crying, excitedly, "Eric, Eric!" and hoping Froll had returned, ran quickly up the stairs.

"See there, what I found on the floor," exclaimed Johnny, as he entered the room, and held up before Eric's astonished gaze a jewelled ring, that flashed and sparkled in the sunlight.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Eric; "on the floor of *this* room?"

"Yes," answered Johnny, "on the floor, just where you're standing. It's a mercy we haven't stepped on it. Don't you think so?"

"We must find the owner at once. Isn't it splendid!" said Eric, admiringly; "three diamonds and an emerald; it must have cost a fortune."

Just at this juncture the door opened, and the landlord, followed by a French officer and a civilian, entered the room. The landlord exclaimed, in German,—

"I beg your pardon, young gentlemen, but a serious loss has occurred in the house, and as you are about leaving it, perhaps you will be kind enough to let us inspect—"

"*Ah! mon Dieu! il y ait!*"[1] screamed the French civilian, darting towards Eric and John, and, snatching the ring from Johnny's hand, displayed it triumphantly before the landlord and the officer.

"I found it on the floor," said Johnny. "Is it yours?"

"A likely story!" muttered the Frenchman.

"I'm very glad you've got it," said Eric, with dignity. "My cousin found it on the floor a minute ago, and we were on the point of taking it to the landlord when you came in."

Eric spoke slowly and distinctly, and with an air of honest truth that at once convinced the landlord. But the excitable little Frenchman, who had been clasping the precious ring, and murmuring, "*Ciel, ciel! ah, ciel!*" in an incoherent way, now sprang at Eric, and grasping him by the collar, exclaimed, angrily, "O, you fine fellow! you wicked one! where is my—my gold?—my

gold? where is it?” and he gave the boy a series of shakes.

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Eric’s anger was fully aroused. With flashing eyes, “How dare you!” he said, indignantly, and, turning upon the Frenchman, flung him with some violence against the wall.

This made the little Frenchman still more furious; he would have sprung again upon Eric, but the officer interfered. Johnny, with his eyes almost starting from his head, had terrifiedly regarded this little scene, doubling his fists to aid in Eric’s rescue.

Eric turned indignantly to the landlord,—

“What is the meaning of all this? Are two defenceless American boys, your guests, to be openly insulted in your presence without protection?”

“Count D’Orsay has been robbed of his diamond ring and a sum of money,” explained the landlord. “He insisted that no person should leave the hotel without examination. That is why we came to you. He has found the ring in your hands, which is very astonishing, and he now suspects you of having the gold.”

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The landlord spoke gently, and seemed grieved to be obliged to hurt their feelings, as he knew his implied meaning must.

Poor Eric’s face flushed hotly with shame and anger, while Johnny cried, furiously, “Eric, Eric, for pity’s sake send for papa! He will teach that hateful Frenchman what it is to call us thieves.”

“Be quiet, John!” said Eric, imperiously. “Come here.”

“Now, sir,” turning to the landlord, “please to let your officer search us, and then our baggage. Do it at once, for we are to leave Strasbourg directly.”

“Indeed!” sneered Count D’Orsay. “Perhaps you will not leave Strasbourg for the present. Search them, officer.”

The officer advanced reluctantly, and, by his expression of sympathy, showed himself much more a gentleman than the titled count, whose habitual politeness had been driven away by Eric’s powerful thrust.

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The landlord, although deeply sympathetic, and convinced of their honesty, was powerless to resist Count D’Orsay. He was a German innholder, and the count a wealthy, influential French nobleman, with a proper warrant for searching his house. So he could in no way protect the boys from the indignity put upon them. But he hailed with joy Johnny’s suggestion to send for his father, deciding to do so at once, if they should be detained.

Of course no gold was found upon either of them, except that given to Eric for tickets and hotel expenses, and none was found in their baggage.

But just as they were preparing to leave the place, having been released by the officer, Count D’Orsay uttered an exclamation, and pointed to a *fauteuil*—an easy chair—by the window.

“*Celui-là!*”

The officer stepped to the chair, and found, tucked between the cushion and the arm, a silk purse, full of gold pieces.

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Eric and Johnny were horror-stricken, and the good landlord was dumb with astonishment.

The French count held up the purse triumphantly, and jingled the gold before Eric’s eyes, exclaiming, tauntingly,—

“It is mine, and I have it. The *prison* is yours, and you shall have it.”

“Eric, Eric,” cried Johnny, in agony of terror, “they *can’t* send us to prison. We haven’t done anything. We didn’t know the money was there, or the ring. O, what shall we do? Send for papa!”

Eric’s face was very white, and his hand trembled visibly, as he wrote his uncle’s address on a card, and requested the landlord to send for him.

Count D’Orsay wished them to be at once conducted to prison: but this the landlord would not allow, and the officer declared was unnecessarily severe. They might remain in their room, with a guard, and the landlord would be responsible for their remaining.

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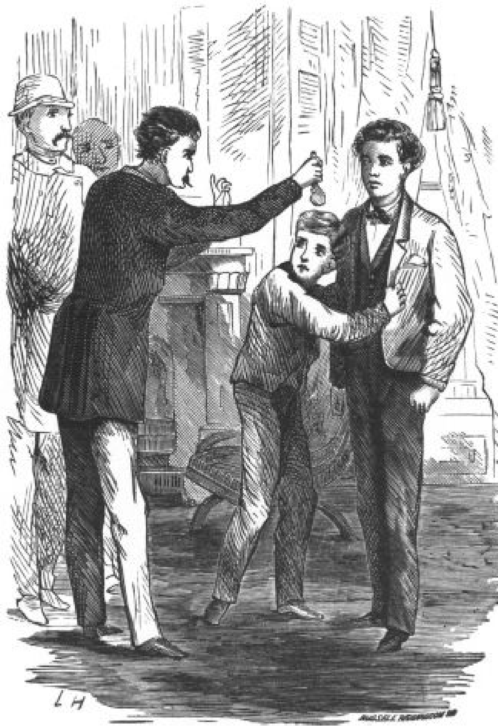
As soon as the detestable Frenchman had gone, Johnny threw himself at full length upon the floor, crying violently. Eric could not comfort him, but sat at the window, with a proud, defiant face and swelling heart.

Presently the kind landlord came again to them.

He had sent word by telegraph to Johnny’s father, and received a return message. Mr. Van Rasseulger would be with them by night.

This was comforting. And gradually the boys thought less and less of their trouble, and became quite interested in making conjectures with the landlord as to when and how the money and jewels came into their room, and if Froll’s disappearance could be owing to the same cause, or in any way connected with it, and if she would probably return at night.

“It’s an ill wind that blows nobody good,” said Eric; “and perhaps, by being detained here, we shall find her.”



Eric and the French Count.—Page 143.

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“I don’t care what they do when papa gets here,” said Johnny, whose faith in his father’s power was limitless. “He’ll just *fix* that Count D’Orsay.”

Meanwhile Mr. Van Rasseulger was whizzing rapidly towards them in the afternoon train, and another powerful friend was coming from an opposite direction.

[1] O Heaven! he has it!

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CHAPTER XII.

“A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.”

One, two, three, four, five, six, sounded a deep-throated bell upon the evening air, and then a chime of bells played Luther’s Chant.

“O, dear!” groaned Johnny; “that’s the wonderful clock; I wish we had let it alone.”

“Hark!” exclaimed Eric.

His quick ear had caught the sound of footsteps upon the stairway leading to their room, and he fancied them to be his uncle’s. He was right. The door opened presently, and Mr. Van Rasseulger was with them.

“Well, what is all this nonsense?” he exclaimed, grasping Eric’s hand, and drawing Johnny into his lap. “A good-natured guardian lets you off for a good time, and you get into trouble the first thing.”

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Eric related all that had occurred, a little embarrassed at Johnny’s admiring remark,—

“You ought to have seen him spin that little dancing Frenchman against the wall, papa. I wish I’d been big enough! I’d have thrashed him!”

“Hush, Johnny,” said his father. “Go on, Eric. You say he found the money in the fauteuil. How in the world did the things get into this room?”

“That is just what puzzles everybody,” answered Eric, earnestly. “Uncle John, how *could* it have got there? and the ring, too?”

“Where did you find the ring, Johnny?”

“Right here, sir, upon the floor, by Froll’s cage;” answered Johnny, getting up and standing in the place.

“It is very mysterious, certainly,” Mr. Van Rasseulger said, “and the strange circumstances give the man strong grounds for suspicion against you. Of course, it is absurd to think that two little

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boys would have committed such a robbery; yet the ring was found in your hands, and the money concealed in your room, and therefore you are accused.”

“But, papa, can’t you take us away? We didn’t do it.”

“You silly boy, I *know* you did not do it. But would you not rather stay and prove satisfactorily to all that you did not? I should not wish to take you from here while the faintest shadow of a suspicion lingered that you were guilty.”

“Nor would I wish to go,” said Eric, proudly.

“Well, then we’ll stay,” said Johnny, dolefully; “but I think it is dreadfully unjust to spoil all our good time. We Americans wouldn’t do so to a Frenchman.”

“I’m afraid we would, under such suspicious evidences,” said his uncle. “But you needn’t worry about it, boys; every cloud has a silver lining.” 148

“It isn’t pleasant to know we can’t go out of our room,” said Eric.

“No: I must arrange about that,” Mr. Van Rasseulger answered. “I will write a note to the American consul, and get you released.”

Eric started suddenly to his feet.

“I am sure I heard Mr. Lacelle’s voice,” he said.

“You couldn’t have,” said Johnny. “You left him at Amsterdam.”

“I did, I know I did!” persisted Eric. “There it is again: that is he! O, Uncle John, go out and tell him about it.”

His uncle left them, and before long returned, actually bringing Mr. Lacelle with him.

The diver was surprised beyond measure to find his favorite Eric in Strasbourg, and highly indignant at the circumstance which detained him.

“You are the most honest boy that ever lived,” he cried, and told Mr. Van Rasseulger about the box of sovereigns. “But come, tell me all about this,” he added. 149

Eric again related the incident, beginning with his discovery of Froll’s disappearance, and ending with the charge of theft and threat of prison.

Johnny, who despite his dislike of Frenchmen in general, cordially liked Mr. Lacelle, was surprised to see his gradually increasing excitement as Eric’s story progressed. At its termination, he started to his feet, and rapidly pacing the floor, exclaimed, joyfully,—

“*Ha! a bon chat, bon rat!*”[2]

“What have cats and rats to do with it?” thought Eric.

“He is crazy!” thought Johnny.

“Ah!” thought Mr. Van Rasseulger, “can he see through the millstone?”

“Eric, your good name shall be cleared of all suspicion. Give me your hand!” exclaimed Mr. Lacelle. “I congratulate you, lad! I know who did the mischief.” 150

“Do you?” exclaimed the astonished boy.

“Yes, my friend,” answered the Frenchman, and darted from the room.

“Here’s a go!” cried Johnny, thrusting his hands into his pockets and striking an attitude; “he knows, and he hasn’t told us what he knows, and I think *his* nose ought to be pulled.”

“Do be still, Johnny,” said Eric, “it’s no time for jokes. Uncle John, what could he have meant?”

“I am totally in the dark,” replied his uncle.

“I wish Froll would come back,” murmured Johnny.

“I have it!” cried Eric, suddenly, rushing from the room, by the guard at the door, and after Mr. Lacelle.

“Well,” said Johnny, “I wish I had!”

Count D’Orsay’s conscience was not quite easy in regard to the manner in which he had persecuted the two friendless American boys. His suspicions had been aroused merely by the fact that they were about to leave Strasbourg; and the discovery of the missing articles in their possession had seemed at the time to prove their guilt conclusively. But upon reflection, the honest surprise expressed in little Johnny’s eyes, and Eric’s look of proud, indignant disdain, haunted him with suggestions of their innocence. 151

Might it not have been just possible that they did find the ring upon the floor, and did not know of the money’s concealment? But, then—how could it be so? How could the ring and money have happened in their room, and for what purposes? Yet, again, if they did intend to steal, they had given up everything. He had lost nothing; and the French government would not thank him for quarrelling with an American just at that time. He would send word to the landlord to dismiss the policeman and let the boys have their liberty. 152

Just as this conclusion was reached, there came a tap at the door, and the waiter entered with Mr. Lacelle’s card, followed closely by Mr. Lacelle.

Count D’Orsay expressed great pleasure at the unexpected visit; but Mr. Lacelle, waiving all

ceremony, explained that he had come to clear his dear American friends from the disgraceful charge against them.

He then spoke rapidly, in French, to the count, who appeared at first surprised, then credulous, then convinced.

With sincere regret, he asked to be allowed to apologize at once, and begged Mr. Lacelle to tell him of some way in which he could make some amends for his unjust accusation.

"I wish you to be thoroughly convinced," said Mr. Lacelle. "Place the articles upon the table, open the window, and conceal yourself behind the curtain."

Mr. Lacelle did so.

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[2] "To a good cat, a good rat!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REAL THIEF.

Eric, when he reached the hall, was called by the landlord, who said,—

"I am having the rooms searched, at Monsieur Lacelle's request, for your little monkey. Will you come with me? We may catch her more easily."

Eric was very glad to assist in the search. When nearly all the front rooms had been thoroughly examined, to no purpose, the little truant was found at last in the upper story asleep, on a soft cushion, in the sunlight. Eric stole up softly and took possession of her.

She awoke with a loud chatter of defiance, and tried to escape, but Eric held her fast.

The landlord then ordered a servant to close all the windows in the front of the hotel, excepting those of Count D'Orsay, whose room was above that of the two boys.

Eric hastened, at his request, for Froll's collar and chain, which were fastened upon her, and then she was released upon the balcony under the window of the boy's room, the landlord, Eric, Johnny, and Mr. Van Rasseulger watching her movements with intense interest.

Meanwhile the count and Mr. Lacelle were stationed behind the window curtains, on the lookout for the marauder.

Presently there was a sliding, scrambling, shuffling noise, and the thief came in through the window—not Eric, nor Johnny, but a being very insufficiently attired, and possessed of a long black tail; no less a personage than the little monkey, Froll.

She walked straight to the table, climbed upon it, seized the ring, purse, and a gold pencil which Mr. Lacelle had laid there. Then she withdrew to the window, but to her rage and disappointment it was shut tight, and the two gentlemen confronted her.

The little beast recognized Mr. Lacelle, and coolly handed him her stolen freight, which was quickly restored to its rightful owner.

Thoroughly convinced of his unjust cruelty to Eric and Johnny, Count D'Orsay descended to the balcony, offering sincere and earnest apologies.

Eric and Johnny, by turns hugging and scolding Froll, freely forgave the indignity put upon them, and shook hands cordially with the mortified count.

Mr. Lacelle was in his glory. He shook hands with the monkey, stroked the boys' heads, and called Mr. Van Rasseulger "my dear" in his excitement; telling everybody how he had instantly surmised the true offender, on hearing of Froll's disappearance, and recalling the scene at Gravenhaag, when she had stolen his glasses, climbing in then through the open window. Finally he expressed an opinion that Froll had formerly belonged to an unprincipled master, who had trained her to climb in at windows and take away valuables.

And here we will take an opportunity to remark that this was really the case, and that Eric subsequently learned that the man of whom Mr. Nichols bought her was arrested and imprisoned for practising with another monkey the same trick.

Count D'Orsay could not be pacified until Mr. Van Rasseulger promised that the boys should visit him at the *Hôtel D'Orsay*, on their return to France.

His conscience smote him for his unjust severity and unkindness, all the more for the frank, confiding way in which the two little heroes begged him to forget the incident.

When they shook hands cordially with him, a glad cheer ascended from the throng of servants and spectators, whose honest hearts took a lively interest in the affair.

The boys and Froll were made much of; and Mr. Lacelle delighted Johnny for hours with accounts of the wonders of the sea, so that the young gentleman, completely fascinated, made up his mind to be a submarine diver when he grew up.

Froll's collar was tightened, and she was fastened to her cage, after having a bountiful feast of nuts.

When the evening was about half spent, a waiter brought a large parcel to the door. It was addressed to "The Two Young Gentlemen at Room No. 37," and contained books, toys, games, and confectionery, of which the count begged their acceptance.

"This has been a day of adventures," said Eric, as he and Johnny were retiring late at night.

"Yes," answered Johnny, sleepily, nestling between the sheets, "it has been a day of adventures, beginning with the wonderful clock, and ending with—Froll's—Froll's—the count—" and with a little more indistinct muttering, Johnny was fast asleep. Eric had read his chapter, and said his prayers with Johnny; but now, as he looked at his little cousin asleep, a sudden impulse seized him, and falling upon his knees by the bedside, he prayed that his influence over Johnny might always be for good, and that God would bless the bright, loving little boy, and make him a lamb of His fold for the good Shepherd's sake.

CHAPTER XIV.

PERCY, BEAUTY, AND JACK.

Mr. Van Rasseulger decided to take the boys to Heidelberg, and there await Dr. Ward. It was inconvenient for him to do this, but he was unwilling to let them travel alone with the monkey again, for Froll was certainly a serious trouble.

So on the morning of the following day they took the steamer for an eighty mile sail down the Rhine.

The landlord, Mr. Lacelle, and Count D'Orsay bade them an affectionate adieu, after the two former had been sincerely thanked for their kindness to the young strangers, and the latter had begged them to renew their promise of a visit before they returned to America. To Mr. Van Rasseulger he extended an urgent invitation to visit him, whenever it should be convenient to him.

Just before they left, Mr. Lacelle requested Eric's address, saying that he had written to Mr. Montgomery about the box of money, and would forward his reply to Eric.

The boys were not sorry to leave Strasbourg, because Mr. Van Rasseulger had told them he should propose to the doctor to obtain horses there, and travel on horseback through the Black Forest, and over the mountains, to Munich, in Bavaria.

They were enchanted with this idea, and during their sail down the Rhine lost much of the beautiful scenery about them in mutual conjectures as to whether uncle Charlie would like the proposition. When they reached Heidelberg, the doctor was already there, waiting for them.

He was quite well satisfied with the plan, and said he would give the boys two days to explore Heidelberg, and would meantime be making the necessary arrangements.

The boys did not like Heidelberg particularly, and Eric's shoulders were shrugged expressively when his uncle told him he was to be a student in the university, after his school course was completed.

The only building of which they took any notice was the Church of the Holy Ghost—a large structure with a very high steeple, divided so that Protestant and Roman Catholic services were held in it at the same time.

But perhaps the picturesque old town might have had more attraction for them, had not Dr. Ward and Mr. Van Rasseulger been looking up good horses to purchase for the journey.

They soon found just what they wanted—a large, powerful horse for the doctor, and a couple of small horses, almost ponies, for the two boys.

It was amusing to see the different evidences of delight manifested by Eric and Johnny.

Eric's face flushed with glad emotion, and a quiet "Uncle John, how good you are!" was all that he said.

But Johnny danced around the horses, wild with delight, throwing his cap in the air, dancing and hurrahing with all his might, and bestowing kisses indiscriminately upon his good papa and the dumb animals.

One of the horses was coal black, with a white star upon his forehead, and one white foot; he was for Eric.

Johnny's was a bright bay, with four white feet and a white nose: and the doctor's was a

chestnut-colored horse, with a darker mane and tail.

Of course the first great question was, what they were to be called.

“I have named my horse ‘Perseus,’” said the doctor, “in honor of the illustrious slayer of the Gorgon Medusa, and the deliverer of Andromeda.” 163

“I’ll call mine ‘Jack,’ in honor of papa,” said roguish Johnny.

“And mine,” exclaimed Eric, “shall be Bucephalus.”

Eric had just finished reading a classical history, and was greatly interested in the account of Alexander’s power over Bucephalus.

These names were soon abbreviated to “Percy,” “Beauty,” and “Jack.”

After the horses had been duly admired, Mr. Van Rasseulger took the boys with him, selected saddles, with travellers’ saddle-bags, rubber cloaks, a couple of blankets, and two tin boxes for provisions, with an inside compartment for matches. The rubber cloaks were made with hoods, which could be drawn over the head, completely protecting it.

Dr. Ward provided himself with similar apparel, and numerous little things which the boys had no idea would be necessary, and even Mr. Van Rasseulger overlooked.

164 The next morning everything was in readiness. The blankets, light overcoats, rubber cloaks, and a change of clothing, were made into a roll, and strapped behind the saddles. The tin cases were filled for luncheon, and deposited in the saddle-bags, and the boys declared themselves in readiness.

But when the doctor presented them each with a light knapsack, a tiny compass to wear upon their watch chains, and a pocket drinking cup, they instantly discovered that they could never in the world have got along without them.

The horses were pawing the ground, impatient to be off, their long manes and tails floating in the cool morning breeze, their noble forms quivering with life and excitement.

Johnny, divided between regret at parting with his father, and delight at the novel excursion; Eric, eager and excited, with mischievous Froll, demure enough just now, seated composedly upon his shoulder; the doctor coolly testing the saddle girths, and Mr. Van Rasseulger seeing them off, happy in their pleasure. 165

“Be good and kind to my boy, as you have always been, Eric,” he said, bidding his nephew “good by.”

“You mean, uncle John, as you have always been to me,” Eric replied, with gratitude beaming in his eyes. “And Johnny is a dear little fellow; no one could help being good to him.”

“I hope he will grow like his cousin,” said Mr. Van Rasseulger, with a hearty smile; “and, Johnny-boy, you must be very obedient to uncle Charlie. Do right, be a gentleman, and grow stout and healthy for papa.”

“We will write from Baden and Ulm,” said the doctor. “We ought to get there by next week.”

After a few more words of parting they set off, and were soon out of sight.

166 Three hours later, as Mr. Van Rasseulger, on his way to Vienna by rail, passed a turn in the road, the three travellers were in sight for an instant, apparently in good spirits and prime condition.

He was extremely pleased with this unexpected view of them, and for some time after they had again disappeared the wealthy New York merchant lay back in his cushioned seat, building hopes of high promise upon the future of Johnny’s life.

Poor Johnny! he had been almost spoiled at home, but under the doctor’s firm guidance and Eric’s good influence, was wonderfully improved. The bright, merry little fellow was exhibiting his true character, long hidden by ill-advised indulgence.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST.

Up the banks of the beautiful Rhine, through picturesque hamlets, over high, rugged mountains, and in the glory and grandeur of the forests, our horseback travellers sought and found the best of all treasures—health and happiness.

The Swabian Mountains, and the Schwarz Wold, or Black Forest,—a group of mountains covered with forests,—through which they rode thirty-seven miles, required from them the greatest endurance.

Nevertheless, upon the woody mountains, steep and difficult to climb as they were, they found 168

several thriving villages, where they were kindly received, and where all their wants were generously supplied.

But on one occasion, when a violent storm arose, and they were near no village, they were obliged to take shelter in an empty barn, and there remained through the night, sleeping, with their horses, upon the hard, board floor, with their knapsacks for pillows.

And Johnny had one thrilling adventure.

They had encamped for the night upon a small plateau, and, before dismounting, Johnny rode back to the edge, and was looking down upon the plains beneath, when suddenly he felt the ground give way from above where his horse was standing, and in an instant horse and rider, covered by a bank of sand, were sliding helplessly down the mountain. The shower of sand smothered their cries, and neither the doctor nor Eric noticed their disappearance at first. But presently Eric, turning to speak to him, exclaimed,—

“Where in the world is Johnny?”

The doctor looked hastily up. Seeing the fresh earth at the edge of the plateau, he rushed to the spot, examined it, and exclaiming, “Heavens! the child has fallen down a slide!” prepared to descend in the same place.

“Eric, stay up there, and take care of the horses,” he said, and was soon out of sight.

Eric secured the horses, and then crept to the place from which the doctor had disappeared. He found, just beneath him, a long line of large troughs, open at both ends, and overlapping each other like shingles. It extended entirely down the side of the mountain, and to his horror Eric saw at its foot a lake.

“O, Johnny, Johnny! my dear little cousin! And uncle Charlie, too—they will surely be killed!” he cried, in agony. For he knew at once that they had gone down a timber slide, and was afraid they would be drowned in the lake.

And now I suppose I must tell you what a timber slide is.

The Black Forest Mountains are covered with large and valuable trees, which are felled and sold by their owners; and as it would be decidedly inconvenient to take horses and carts up the mountain, and utterly impossible to get them down with a heavy load of those giant trees with sound necks, an ingenious Swiss invented the cheap and rapid way of getting the trees off the mountain by means of a slide, formed of immense troughs lapped together, and terminating in the lake, where the heavy logs are chained together and floated to a railway or wharf, just as they are done in our own country by the loggers of the Maine forests and other woody regions.

Of course a descent in one of these slides, under ordinary circumstances, would be extremely dangerous to human life and limb. But it fortunately happened that neither the doctor, Johnny, nor Jack were seriously injured, for the slide had been disused for some time, and in consequence of an accident, somewhat similar to Johnny’s, had been partially removed, and a high, soft bank of sand lay at its new terminus.

Johnny and Jack were pitched violently into this, and rescued from their very uncomfortable position by a party of English travellers encamped near by.

Many were the exclamations uttered at the marvellous and sudden entrance of our young friend upon the quiet beauties of the twilight scene, and bewildered Johnny scarcely knew whether to laugh or cry.

His first anxiety was for Jack, but the English gentleman who drew him from the sand-bank would pay no attention to the horse until he was convinced that Johnny was unhurt. Assured about this, he patted and soothed poor frightened Jack, and walked him carefully over the soft greensward, to see if he appeared at all lame; and then Johnny was delighted enough to hear the horse pronounced all right.

Johnny had several pretty bad bruises, which the Englishman, who was a physician, dressed for him.

By the time this was done Dr. Ward, whose descent had been much slower and more careful than Johnny’s, reached them, and his anxieties were at once quieted by Johnny’s assurance that it was

“Just the jolliest coast I ever had.”

After examining both Johnny and Jack, to assure himself of their well-being, and heartily thanking the Englishman for his kind assistance, the doctor asked permission to leave Johnny under his care until he could get Eric and the horses from the top of the mountain.

The new friend willingly undertook the care of Johnny, and the doctor hastened up the mountain to relieve Eric’s anxiety.

Johnny seated himself near the door of the tent, and a young man of the party brought him some grapes. Jack neighed wistfully for his share, for Johnny had made a great pet of him, always dividing his fruit with him.

“I’ll give you some, Jack,” he said, walking towards the horse. “Gracious, how stiff and sore I feel.”

While Jack was champing his feast with great satisfaction, an English boy, of Johnny’s size, came towards them.

"Is that your horse?" said he.

"Yes," answered Johnny; "isn't he a good one?"

"*Is* he a good one?" asked the boy.

"I guess he is," said Johnny, hotly; "there isn't a better horse anywhere."

"But papa's groom told me," persisted the English lad, "that a horse with four white feet and a white nose was worthless. He says,—

'One white foot, buy him,
Two white feet, try him,
Three white feet, deny him,
Four white feet and a white nose,
Take off his skin and throw him to the crows.'"

Johnny detected a roguish glitter in his companion's blue eyes, and with a corresponding twinkle in his own, merely answered,—

"My old nurse says,—

'There was an old woman went up in a basket
Seventy times as high as the moon.'

I suppose you believe that, too."

This ready answer pleased the other, and they were soon fast friends.

"What is your name?" Johnny asked.

"Arthur Montgomery," was the reply.

Johnny wondered where he had heard the name before; but though he was sure he had heard it, he could not remember where.

He began to feel quite tired and sleepy before the doctor returned for him, and his bruises ached badly. Once he would have cried and worried every one about him, if in such an uncomfortable state; but now he bore the pain like a Spartan.

The doctor came at last, and after thanking the Englishman again, he led the tired horse, with weary Johnny upon his back, to a wood-cutter's cottage near at hand, where they were to pass the night.

Eric welcomed them with tears of joy in his eyes.

"O, Johnny, what a narrow escape you have had!"

"We ought to be very thankful," said the doctor.

"Yes," said Johnny, sleepily, "I am thankful!"

He woke up just before Eric went to bed, and said,—

"That boy said his name was Arthur Montgomery. Where have I heard that name, Eric?"

"Why," exclaimed Eric, "that was the name on the box of money I found!"

"I knew I'd heard it somewhere," murmured Johnny, dropping off to sleep again.

Eric ran to tell his uncle.

"Ah," said the doctor, quite pleased to be able to return a good deed, "we will see them in the morning."

But in the morning the English travellers had disappeared, and our party could find no trace of them.

Eric was much disappointed. Now he would be obliged to wait patiently for Mr. Lacelle's letter.

Johnny and Jack were not injured by their descent of the mountain, whose only effects were some pretty sore bruises, which Johnny tried not to mind, and an obstinacy in Jack's disposition that no human powers of persuasion could ever remove. He could never, after that memorable slide, be induced to go near the edge of any kind of an embankment; and he always declined going aboard a steamer, until Beauty and Percy had gone safely over the gangway.

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