Title: Foxholme Hall, and Other Tales

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"Foxholme Hall"

"And other Tales"

Story 1--Chapter I.

STORY ONE—Foxholme Hall; or, Christmas at an Old Country House.

We had our choice given us whether we would spend our Christmas holidays with our most kind and estimable old relative, our mother's cousin, Miss Gillespie, in Russell-square, and go to the theatre and panoramas, and other highly edifying entertainments, or at Foxholme, in the New Forest, with our great uncle, Sir Hugh Worsley. "Foxholme for ever, I should think indeed!" exclaimed my brother Jack, making a face which was not complimentary to Cousin Barbara. "But she is a good kind old soul, if she wasn't so pokerish and prim; and that was a dead-alive fortnight we spent with her two winters ago. I say Foxholme for ever."

"Foxholme for ever," I repeated. "Of course there couldn't be the thinnest slice of a shadow of doubt about the matter. There'll be Cousin Peter, and Julia, and Tom and Ned Oxenberry, and Sam Barnby, and Ponto, and Hector, and Beauty, and Polly; and there'll be hunting, and shooting, and skating, if there's a frost—and of course there will be a frost—and, oh, it will be such jolly fun!"

A few weeks after this we were bowling along the road to Southampton on the top of the old Telegraph, driven by Taylor—as fine a specimen of a Jehu as ever took whip in hand—with four white horses—a team of which he was justly proud. I see him now before me, his fine tall figure, truly Roman nose, and eagle eye, looking as fit to command an army as to drive a coach, with his white great-coat buttoned well up to his gay-coloured handkerchief, a flower of some sort decking his breast, a broad-brimmed beaver of white or grey, and a whip which looked as if it had just

come from the maker's hands—indeed, everything about him was polished, from the crown of his hat to his well-fitting boots; and I believe that no accident ever happened to the coach he drove. There was the Independent, also a first-rate coach, and, in those days, Collier's old coach, which carried six inside, in which we once made a journey—that is, Jack and I—with four old ladies who ate apples and drank gin, with the windows up, all the way, and talked about things which seemed to interest them very much, but which soon sent us to sleep.

The sky was bright, the air fresh, with just a touch of a frosty smell in it, and we were in exuberant spirits. We had our pea-shooters ready, and had long been on the watch for the lumbering old vehicle, when we saw it approaching. Didn't we pepper the passengers, greatly to their indignation! What damage we did we could not tell, for we were by them like a flash of lightning.

At Southampton we changed into a much slower coach, which, however, conveyed us safely through the forest to the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst, when, waiting in the road, we espied, to our intense delight, a pony-carriage driven by Sam Barnby, who held the office of extra coachman, gamekeeper, and fisherman, besides several other employments, in the establishment at Foxholme. With us he was a prodigious favourite, as he was with all the youngsters who went to the place; and Sir Hugh, I know, trusted him completely, and employed him in numerous little private services of beneficence and charity when a confidential agent was required. He was the invariable companion of all the youngsters in our boating, fishing, and shooting excursions.

It was dusk when we got into the carriage, and as our way lay for some distance through the thickest part of the forest by a cross-road which few people but Sam Barnby would have attempted to take at that late hour, we could often scarcely distinguish the track under the thick branches of the leafless trees which, stretching across it, formed a trellis-work over our heads, while the thick hollies and other evergreens formed an impenetrable wall on either side. Now and then, when the forest opened out and the forms of the trees were rather more clearly defined, they often assumed shapes so fantastic and strange, that I could scarcely prevent a sort of awe creeping over me, and half expected that the monsters I fancied I saw would move from their places and grab up Jack, Sam Barnby, the carriage, and me, and bolt off with us into some recess of the forest. Jack was talking away to Sam. I had been up bolstering the night before, and had not slept a wink. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and I heard Sam and Jack utter an exclamation. I echoed it, and pretty loudly too; for I thought that one of the monsters I had been dreaming about had really got hold of us.

"Hillo! who have we got here?" exclaimed Sam. "Do you hold the reins, Master Jack, and I'll get out and see."

I was now fully awake. I asked Jack what it was.

"We nearly drove over somebody; but the pony shied, fortunately. There he is; I can just see him moving."

"Why, I do believe it's poor silly Dick Green!" exclaimed Sam. "Is it you, Dicky? Speak out, man! How came you here?"

"Yes, it be I," said the idiot. "Can't I sleep here? It's very comfortable—all clean and nice—no smoke, no noise."

"Why, you would be frozen to death, man, if you did," answered Sam. "But, I ask, what brought you here?"

"That's a secret I bean't a-going to tell thee," whispered the idiot. "But just do thee stop here; thee'll foind it very pleasant."

"No, thank you; we'd rather not," said Sam. "But just do thee get into the carriage alongside Master William there, and we'll take thee to the Hall, and give thee some supper—that's what thee wants, lad."

"Well, now, that's kind like," simpered the idiot. "I know thee well, Sam Barnby; thee had'st always a good heart."

"Well, well, lad, don't stand talking there, but scramble in at once," cried Sam, as he forced the poor creature down by my side.

Soon afterwards we passed a woodman's or a keeper's hut, from the window of which a gleam of light streamed forth on the idiot's face, and a creeping feeling of fear stole over me as I caught his large lack-lustre eyes peering into mine, the teeth in his ever-grinning mouth looking white and shining under his upturned lip. I knew that he was said to be perfectly harmless and good-natured, but I would have given anything if Jack would have changed places with me. I did not drop off to sleep again, that is very certain. The way seemed far longer than I had expected, and I almost fancied that Sam must have mistaken his road—not a very likely thing to occur, however.

As we neared the lodge-gate of Foxholme, I shut my eyes, lest the light from the window should again show me the poor idiot's face staring at me. All disagreeable feelings, however, speedily vanished as we drove up in front of the chief entrance, and the hall-door was flung open, and a perfect blaze of light streamed forth, and the well-known smiling faces of Purkin, the butler, and James Jarvis, the footman, appeared; and the latter, descending the steps, carried up our trunk and hat-boxes and a play-box we had brought empty, though to go back in a very different condition, we had a notion. Then we ran into the drawing-room, and found our uncle Sir Hugh, and our kind, sweet-smiling aunt, and our favourite Cousin Julia—she was Sir Hugh's only daughter by a first marriage—and our little Cousin Hugh—his only son by the present Lady Worsley; and there, too, was Cousin Peter. He was Sir Hugh's cousin and Aunt Worsley's cousin, and was cousin to a great number of people besides—indeed everybody who came to the house called him cousin, it seemed.

Some few, perhaps, at first formally addressed him as Mr Peter, or Mr Peter Langstone; but they soon got into the way of calling him Mr Peter, or Cousin Peter, or Peter alone. He wasn't old, and he couldn't have been very young. He wasn't good-looking, I fancy—not that we ever thought about the matter. He had a longish sallow face, and a big mouth with white teeth, and lips which twisted and curled about in a curious manner, and large soft grey eyes—not

green-grey, but truly blue-grey—with almost a woman's softness in them, an index, I suspect, of his heart; and yet I don't think that there are many more daring or cool and courageous men than Cousin Peter. He had been in the navy in his youth, and had seen some pretty hard service, but had come on shore soon after he had received his promotion as lieutenant, and, for some reason or other, had never since been afloat. Sir Hugh was very much attached to him, and had great confidence in his judgment and rectitude; so that he tried to keep him at Foxholme as much as he could. He might have lived there and been welcome all the year round.

I have said nothing yet about Cousin Julia. She was about twenty-two, but looked younger, except when she was about any serious matter. I thought her then the most lovely creature I had ever seen, and I was not far wrong. There was a sweet, gentle, and yet firm expression in her face, and a look—I cannot describe it—which would have prevented even the most impudent from talking nonsense or saying anything to offend her ear.

Our uncle, Sir Hugh, was tall and stout, with a commanding and dignified manner. No one would have ventured to take liberties with him, though he was as kind and gentle as could be. He had been in the army when he was young, and seen service, but had given it up when he succeeded to Foxholme, and the duties attached to its possession. "I should have been ill serving my country if I had remained abroad and left my tenants and poor neighbours to the care of agents and hirelings," I heard him once observe. He was very fond of the army, and it was a great trial to him to leave it.

Our aunt was a very pretty, lively, kind, amiable woman, and devotedly attached to our uncle. She was small, and slight, and young-looking, though I don't think that she was so very young after all.

Hugh was a regular fine little chap, manly, independent, and yet very amiable. He might have been rather spoilt, because it was a hard matter not to make a good deal of him. People couldn't help thinking of him as the long-wished-for heir of the old place and the old title, and what joy he had brought to Sir Hugh's heart and what pride and satisfaction to that of his mother, and that he would some day be the master of Foxholme (all hoped that day might be far distant); and they prayed that he might worthily represent his honoured father.

After all, however, there was no one we thought so much about as Cousin Peter. How full of life and spirits and fun he was! A shade, however, of gravity or melancholy occasionally stole over him. He had an inner deeper life of which we boys knew nothing. We used to be surprised, after he had been playing all sorts of pranks with us, to go and see him sit down as grave as a judge along with Sir Hugh, and talk as seriously as anybody else. Then he would jump up and say something quiet and confidential to some young lady, and crack a joke with some old one; and again he would be back among us, baiting the bear, standing on his head, or doing some other wonderful out-of-the-way thing. I remember that even then I more than once remarked that whenever he drew near our Cousin Julia, there was a greater sobriety and a wonderful gentleness and tenderness in his manner; and often, when she was not looking, and he thought no one else was looking, his eyes were turned towards her with a look which older people would easily have interpreted. I thought myself, "He must be very fond of her; but that is but natural—everybody is."

Story 1--Chapter II.

I should like to give a full description of the events of those never-to-be-forgotten Christmas holidays. Besides ourselves, we had two cousins and the sons of some of Sir Hugh's friends, and no end of grown-up guests, young ladies and their mammas and papas, and several gentlemen who were in no ways stiff or distant, and we didn't mind

saying what we liked to them. I remember that Christmas-day—how happily it began—how, on a fine frosty morning, we all walked to the village church—how we found it decked with hollies, reminding us that, even in mid-winter, our merciful God never withdraws His blessings from the earth—how we could not help listening with attention to the sermon of the good vicar, who reminded us that we were assembled to commemorate the greatest event that has occurred since the creation of the world. He bid us reflect that the Christ who was on that day born into the world, a weak helpless infant, prepared to endure a life of toil, of poverty, and of suffering, and at the same time of active unwearied usefulness, was our Lord the Son of God himself; that He took our sins upon Him, shed His blood on the Cross, suffering agony and shame, which we had merited, that He might wash our sins away; died and was buried, that He might, though sinless himself, for our sakes endure the curse sin brought on mankind, and thus accomplish the whole of the work He had undertaken to fulfil; how He rose again, ascending into Heaven triumphant over death, that He might then, having lived and suffered as a man on earth, feeling for our infirmities, plead effectually for us; that He had suffered the punishment due to us, before the throne of the Almighty, an offended but a just and merciful God, full of love to mankind.

I never before understood so clearly that the whole work of redemption is complete—that Christ has suffered for us, and that, therefore, no more suffering is required. All we have to do is to take advantage of what He has done, and put our whole faith and trust in Him. The vicar then described most beautifully to us how Christ lived on earth, and that He did so that. He might set us an example, which we are bound in ordinary love and gratitude to imitate, by showing good-will, love, kindness, charity in thought, word, and deed, towards our fellow-men. How beautiful and glorious sounded that Christmas hymn, sung not only by all the school-children, but by all the congregation. Sir Hugh’s rich voice, old as he was, sounding clearly among the basses of the others. He did his best, and he knew and felt that his voice was not more acceptable at the throne of Heaven than that of the youngest child present. Then, when service was over, Sir Hugh came out arm-in-arm with our aunt, followed by Julia and little Hugh, and talked so friendly and kindly to all the people, and they all smiled and looked so pleased, and replied to him in a way which showed that they were not a bit afraid of him, but knew that he loved them and was interested in their welfare; and Lady Worsley and Cousin Julia talked in the same kind way, and knew everybody and how many children there were in each family, and asked after those who were absent—some at service, and some apprentices, and some in the army or at sea. Master Peter also went about among them all, and seemed so glad to see them, and shook hands with the old men, and joked in his quiet way with the old women. He contrived to have a word with everybody as he moved in and out among them. Then the vicar came out, and a few friendly loving words were exchanged with him too.

“We shall see you and Miss Becky at dinner as usual, Mr Upton,” said Sir Hugh, as they parted.

“I should be sorry to be absent, Sir Hugh. On twenty-nine Christmas-days have we taken our dinner with you, and this will make the thirtieth, if I mistake not,” answered the vicar.

“Ah, time flies along, and yet Miss Becky does not, at all events, remind us of it,” said Sir Hugh. Whereat Miss Becky, who was very fair and somewhat fat, laughed and shook hands heartily with Sir Hugh and Lady Worsley, and smiled affectionately at Julia and little Hugh, and we commenced our homeward walk. How enjoyable it was—how pleasant was, our light luncheon! for we dined at five that we might have a long evening. We all looked forward to the evening with great delight. Scarcely was dinner over than a sound was heard—a bell in the hall striking sweetly. We all jumped up, led by Master Peter, and arranging ourselves, some on the great oak staircase and others in a circle at its foot, we stood listening to the Christmas chimes and other tunes struck up by a dozen or more men with different-toned bells—one in each hand. Scarcely had they ceased and received their accustomed largesse from Sir Hugh’s liberal hands, than some young voices were heard coming up the avenue. They, as were the rest, were admitted at a side-door, through the servants’ hall, where tea and ale, and bread-and-cheese, and cakes, and other good things, were ready to regale them. The young singers came trooping into the hall, one pushing the other forward; shy and diffident, though they well knew that they had no reason to fear the lord of that mansion nor any one present. At length they arranged themselves, and the leader of the band beginning, they all chimed in, and sang, if not in a way to suit a fastidious taste, at all events, with feeling and enthusiasm, a beautiful Christmas carol. The words are simple, but often as I have heard them I have never failed to feel my heart lifted up to that just and merciful God who formed and carried out that great and glorious work, the scheme of the Redemption, thus wonderfully reconciling the demands of justice with love and mercy towards the fallen race of man. Surely this is a theme on which angels must delight to dwell, and to which they must ever with joy attune their voices and their harps; so I used to think then and so I think now, and hope to think till I reach the not unwelcome grave, and find it a happy reality. Several hymns and other appropriate songs were sung by the children, and then the leader began to sidle towards the door, while the rest nudged and elbowed each other, and at length they all shuffled demurely out again, but not a minute had passed before they were heard shouting and laughing right merrily in the servants’ hall. Their places were quickly supplied by a very different set of characters. They were dressed with cocked hats and swords, and uniforms of generals and princes, which, though highly picturesque, were not of a very martial character, or calculated to stand much wear and tear, being chiefly adorned with coloured paper and tinsel. The tones of their voices showed that, notwithstanding the lofty-sounding names they assumed, they were not of an aristocratic rank, nor, though they all spoke in poetry, was that of a very marked order. There was Julius Caesar, and Mark Antony, and Caractacus, and the Black Prince, and King Arthur, and Richard the Third, the Emperor Alexander, Marshal Blücher, and several other heroes, ancient and modern, including Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Wellington. Some were tall, and some were short, and some fat, and others thin, and I had, even then, strong doubts whether they bore any similarity to the heroes they represented as to figure, while, certainly, they were not in any way particular as to correctness of costume. One little chap, who was evidently looked upon as a star, came forward and announced that he was Julius Caesar, and a short time afterwards he informed us that he was Marshal Blücher. Having marched round the hall in a very amicable way, they ranged themselves in two parties opposite each other. One hero on one side defying another on the other, they rushed forward and commenced, in the ancient Greek and Trojan fashion, a furious verbal combat, always in verse, the last lines in one case being:

“I tell thee that thou art but a traitrous cheat,

So fight away, or I will make thee into mince-meat."

They were not in the least particular as to who should fight one with the other. Julius Caesar and the Black Prince had a desperate combat, and so had Mark Antony and King Arthur, the two British heroes coming off victorious, and leaving their opponents dead on the field. The most terrific combat was that between the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte. For folly five minutes they walked about abusing each other in the most unmeasured versification, I was going to say language, flourishing their swords, and stamping their feet. They put me much in mind of two turkey-cocks preparing for a fight. It might be remarked also that in this, as in the previous instances, the modesty of the heroes did not stand in their way, when singing their own praises:

"I am that hero, great and good,
Whom France and Frenchmen long withstood.
I beat them all well out of Spain
And I will beat them all again.
And Bony, as you know 'tis true,
I thrashed thee well at Waterloo
So if you have not had enough,
All will allow you're very tough;
Come on, I say, I do not mind thee,
For as I was, you still will find me."

Thus spoke the great Duke of Wellington. Bony answered in a similar, only in a somewhat more abusive strain, when, throwing the sheaths of their swords on the floor, they commenced a furious and deadly combat. At length Napoleon was slain; but, somewhat outraging our school notions of history, Julius Caesar rushed forward to avenge his death. He, however, got more than he expected, and was soon laid alongside Bony. One hero after another rushed forward, but all were finally slain, and the Iron Duke remained master of the field. He, however, overcome by fatigue and numberless wounds, sunk down at last, and died also. Now a new character appeared at the door, in the person of a doctor, with a long nose and a stick, which he held constantly to it. Having explained who he was and what he would do, or rather what very few things he couldn't do, he produced a huge snuff-box from his pocket, and first approached the slain hero of Waterloo, saying,—

"Take some of my sniff-snuff,
Up thy riff-ruff,
And rise up, brave Duke of Wellington."

Up jumped the Duke with wonderful agility, and began dancing about right merrily. The same words produced a similar effect on all the late combatants, and, the doctor helping them up, they were all soon dancing and jumping about as merrily as the Duke. This amusement was of short duration, and a moral was taught us as to the brevity of all worldly happiness, for suddenly, the door bursting open, in rushed a huge figure like a moving holly-bush, but it had a head and arms and legs. It was of an allegorical character, intended to represent Time; but, instead of a scythe, the arms held a broom, by lustily plying which, he speedily swept all the heroes and the great doctor off the stage. These mummers, as they are called in that part of the country, always used to excite my warmest admiration. We used to call them jiggery-mummers at Foxholme, because they danced or jigged in the peculiar fashion I have described. They are a remnant of the morris-dancers of olden days. They were generally called on to repeat this play in the servants' hall, and often in my younger days did I steal down to witness the exhibition. This closed the public amusements of the evening. The evening of that holy day at Foxholme was always spent in a quiet, though in a cheerful way. Sir Hugh would have preferred having the mummers perform on another day, but the custom was so ancient, and the people were so opposed to the notion of a change, that he permitted it to exist till he could induce them to choose of their own accord another day. We spent a very pleasant, happy evening, and we knew that for the next day Master Peter had prepared all sorts of games for our amusement. Little Hugh had been with his mother watching the mummers, and highly amused, giving way to shouts of hearty laughter. Then he ran off to Julia, while Lady Worsley was attending to some of her guests; next he attached himself for a time to Master Peter, and from him made his escape into the servants' hall to witness the mummers' second representation. I remember that Jack and I, with several other boys, went out before returning into the drawing-room to smell the air, and to discover if there was a frost. How pure and fresh and keen it was. The gravel on the walk felt crisp as we trod on it. The stars in countless numbers shone with an extraordinary brilliancy from the dark cloudless sky. There was no doubt about a frost, and a pretty sharp one too, and our hopes rose of getting sliding, skating, and snowballing to our hearts' content. While we were standing with our faces turned towards the park, I remember that Jack, who had a sharp pair of eyes, said that he saw a deer running across it. We declared that it must have been fancy, as it was difficult to make out an object through the darkness, except it was against the sky, at a distance even of twenty yards. As we had run out without our hats, we very quickly returned into the warm house.

Story 1--Chapter III.

We were sitting round Master Peter, listening to an account he was giving us of a trip he once made, when a midshipman, through Palestine, when the drawing-room door opened, and Mrs Moss, little Hugh's nurse, appeared, to beg that he might be sent up to bed. There was nothing unusual for Nurse Moss coming for Master Hugh, who always objected to be sent off to bed, but I saw Lady Worsley turn suddenly pale.

"Why, nurse, I thought that he had gone to you nearly half an hour ago," she exclaimed. "He has not come into the drawing-room since the mummers were here. Oh! where can he be?"

"Probably coiled up in an arm-chair in the other drawing-room, or in the study," said Sir Hugh, calmly, seeing our aunt's agitation; but I thought that even his eye looked anxious. The next moment everybody was hunting about in every possible direction. The child was not in the north drawing-room, nor in the ante-room, nor in the study. That

was soon made clear. Where was he, though? Some of the party went down-stairs, to help the servants look in that part of the house; others searched through the bedrooms. Every cupboard, every chest and box, was opened. We looked under every arm-chair, and bed, and sofa in the house. We boys were, I must say, the most active in our movements, and it was a mercy that we did not set the house on fire. We looked into every attic—those inhabited and those full of lumber. In the latter I should not have been quite happy alone. They were full of so many strange articles of furniture and ornaments, or what were once considered such, and pictures in corners, with eyes, as the light of our candles fell on them, staring out so curiously, that I could not help fancying that some person had got in there to frighten us. Frequently the cry was echoed through the house—"Is he found? is he found?" with a reply in the negative. Sir Hugh headed one party, Lady Worsley another, Cousin Peter a third, and Julia a fourth. After a most systematic search not a trace of the lost child could be discovered. Matters had now become very painful. Our aunt was almost overpowered with her feelings of anxiety, and Julia was nearly as much agitated. Sir Hugh next summoned the servants, as well as all the family, into the hall, and questioned every one to discover by whom his son had last been seen. Several of the servants acknowledged to have observed him enter the servants' hall, but no one could say positively that he had gone out again. No further information could be elicited from any one. The matter had become truly alarming and mysterious. While the female part of the household continued the search within the house, we, with all the lanterns which could be mustered, and extemporised torches, began a search outside. The ringers and the singers and the mummers had taken their departure. Messengers were, therefore, sent after them to the village, to call them back, that they might be questioned. The child would scarcely have left the house of his own accord, and yet, if not, who would have ventured to carry him away? What temptation, indeed, would there have been for any one to do so? That was the question. I had never seen Cousin Peter in such a state of agitation as he now was, though he tried to be calm and composed. Round and round the house we went, and looked under every tree and bush, and into every dark corner. At last the mummers, and the singers, and ringers, began to come up from the village, accompanied by the greater part of the population of the place, all anxious to know what had happened. A variety of rumours were afloat. Everybody sympathised with our uncle. As soon as they were assembled he addressed them, and then begged those who had anything to say to step forward that he might hear them one by one. Not a word of information, however, was elicited of any value. They had seen little Hugh in the servants' hall, and on one occasion he had darted forward and run in and out among the mummers; but they thought that he had gone back again among the servants. Hopes had been entertained that he, for a freak, had run off with the mummers or singers; but they all positively asserted that he was not with them when they left the Hall. Inquiries were made whether any suspicious characters had been seen in the neighbourhood. The people talked for some time among themselves. Then John Hodson, the village blacksmith, stepped forward, and said that two days before a stranger had spoken to him as he was working in his smithy, and asked a number of questions about the place; but he didn't mind them at the time, and thought that it was only for curiosity's sake. The cobbler, Ebenezer Patch, also recollected that a stranger had spoken to him, but he didn't heed much at the time what questions were asked or what were answered.

"What was he like, Patch?" asked Sir Hugh, in a hoarse voice, which sounded strange to my ears.

"Why, Sir Hugh, he had, I marked, a very white, long face, and he had an odd bend in his back, which made him look somewhat short. He spoke gently, I mind, just like a gentleman, and I made no doubt that he was one," answered the cobbler.

The blacksmith gave the same account of the stranger. It seemed to agitate our uncle strangely; so it did Cousin Peter. They talked aside for some time.

"Can that wretched man have had anything to do with it?" I heard Sir Hugh say.

"Too probably, indeed, should he really have been in the neighbourhood. I fear so," remarked Cousin Peter. "At all events, we must endeavour to discover where he has gone. He is capable of any daring deed of wickedness. My only hope is that we are mistaken in supposing that the person seen was he."

"The description suits him too closely to leave any doubt on my mind."

I did not hear more, and I had no idea who the person was of whom they were speaking, except that he was the stranger seen in the village; nor could I tell why they should fancy he had had anything to do with the disappearance of little Hugh.

After a further consultation, Cousin Peter and two other gentlemen went to their rooms, and returned booted and spurred, and, putting on their great-coats, accompanied by Sam Barnby, rode off in two parties in different directions. Notwithstanding this, another search, intended to be still more rigid than the first, was instituted, both inside and outside the house. Meantime, Sir Hugh had ordered lights into the library, and spent the night writing letters to magistrates and others, and papers of all sorts for printing, offering rewards for the recovery of the lost child. Lady Worsley was for most of the time in the drawing-room with Julia and several other Indies, who were in vain attempting to comfort her. No one went to bed that night at Foxholme Park. We boys were called in by Sir Hugh, and highly proud at being employed by him in copying notices to be sent out in the morning, offering a reward for the discovery of little Hugh. We were all very sorry for the loss of our small cousin; but we liked the excitement amazingly. For my part, I must own that I could not, however, altogether forget the games Cousin Peter had prepared for us, and the amusement we had anticipated, and regret for the fun and frolic we should miss, mingled somewhat with the sorrow I really felt for the loss of little Hugh, and the trouble which had come on our uncle and aunt and all the family.

Story 1--Chapter IV.

Morning came at last, and as the family assembled in the breakfast-room with pale anxious faces, the question again and again was asked if any trace had been found of little Hugh, Cousin Peter and the other gentlemen, and Sam

Barnby, came back; but they did not appear to have anything satisfactory to communicate. Poor Cousin Peter, I never saw his face look so long and miserable. I thought the anxiety would kill him. He deemed to feel the event even more than Sir Hugh, who several times murmured, “God’s will be done, whatever has happened to the child.” It must be a great thing to be able to say that under all the trials of life. With daylight the search through the park and grounds was recommenced. I know that I cried outright when I saw men with nets dragging the ponds. I had not realised the possibility that the dear little fellow might actually be dead, as this proceeding suggested. I was very thankful each time that I saw the drags come up empty. As I remarked, the ground had become so hard early in the evening, that no footprints could have been left on it. This circumstance made it impossible to discover the direction little Hugh could have taken, had he gone off by himself, which it was utterly improbable he should have done, or that of anybody else.

Several gentlemen, county magistrates, and lawyers, and constables, came during the day to see Sir Hugh, some to offer him advice and assistance, others to receive his directions. He and Cousin Peter seemed at last to have made up their minds that little Hugh had been carried off by the mysterious individual who had been seen by the blacksmith and cobbler; but how he had contrived to get into the house, no one could tell. The mummers indignantly denied that any stranger could have come in with them, while the servants as positively asserted that no one whom they did not know had entered the house that evening. Another guest had been expected in the afternoon, a Mr Strafford. I had remarked that whenever his name was mentioned, Cousin Julia had looked very interested, and once or twice I saw a blush rising on her cheek. He had been there before, and Sir Hugh spoke highly of him. Julia had met him at a house where she had been staying in the summer. Cousin Peter, on the contrary, looked sad and pained, I fancied, whenever he was spoken of; and putting that and other things together, I had little doubt that Mr Strafford was a suitor for Cousin Julia’s hand. I was, therefore, curious to know what sort of a person Mr Strafford was. Both Sir Hugh and Julia expressed themselves anxious for his arrival, under the belief that he would materially assist in discovering what had become of little Hugh. Why, I could not tell, except that he was a barrister, and that barristers were supposed to be very clever fellows, who can always find out everything. It was late in the afternoon, growing dusk, when a post-chaise drove up to the door, and a slight, active, very intelligent and good-looking young man got out of it. I was in a low window in the ante-room reading, hidden by the back of a large arm-chair. I looked out of the window and saw the new arrival, who the next instant was in the room, when Julia went out to meet him. From the way they greeted each other, I had no longer any doubt of the true state of the case. They of course did not see me, or they might not have been so demonstrative. Mr Strafford listened with knitted brow to the account Julia gave him of little Hugh’s disappearance, or rather I may say of his abduction, for she had no doubt of his having been carried off by the mysterious stranger.

“It is a sad alternative, for the sake of the family; but I see no other course to pursue,” said Mr Strafford. “The unhappy man must be captured at all hazards. If we attempt to make any private compromise, he will escape, and too probably never allow us to hear more of your brother. For his own sake, I do not think that he will have ventured to be guilty of violence.”

“Oh! the disgrace, the disgrace to the family!” dried Julia. “Yet he cannot be so cruel, so ungrateful, so wicked, as to venture to hurt poor dear little Hugh.”

“On that score set your mind at rest,” answered Mr Strafford. “He will try to escape with him, I suspect, to the coast of France, and his plan will be to take him to some distant place where he thinks we shall not discover him. I have no doubt that your father and cousin have already taken measures to stop him. At all events we will see about it at once, as there is no time to lose.” Mr Strafford now went on into the drawing-room, where Sir Hugh and Lady Worsley were waiting to see him. From what I had heard, I now began to suspect who the mysterious stranger was. I hurried off to consult with Jack on the subject. He agreed with me that he must be a cousin of Sir Hugh’s, who, being his nearest kinsman of the male branch of the family, would succeed to the title and estates, should he die without a son. This man, Everard Worsley, was always a wild profligate character, and was at present outlawed, so that he could not venture to show his face openly in England. Of course it would be a great thing for him to get the heir out of the way, as should no other son be born to Sir Hugh, he would probably be able to have the statute of outlawry removed (I think that is the proper term), and come and take possession, and turn Lady Worsley and Cousin Julia out of the house, and send all the old servants about their business, and fill the place with his own abandoned, reprobate companions, and hangers on. This was a possibility, I had heard it whispered, might occur. It was the skeleton in the family cupboard; it was the not improbable event of all others to be dreaded and deplored. I had heard, too, that this disreputable kinsman was nearly related to Cousin Peter, and that Cousin Peter had an unbounded abhorrence for him, that is to say, as much as he could have for any human being. I fancied that Cousin Peter himself was in the line of succession, though I did not know exactly where; but I was very certain that nothing would have caused him more acute sorrow than to see those he loved so well removed to make way for him.

I observed that Cousin Peter met Mr Strafford in the most frank and cordial manner, and at once entered with him into a discussion as to the steps which should next be taken for the recovery of the child. I did not hear all that was to be done. I knew, however, that a number of the most intelligent and trustworthy men in the neighbourhood were engaged. Some were sent off to all the places on the coast whence boats could get off, to ascertain if any had gone across the channel, and to examine any which might be going, while other parties were, as soon as it was daylight, to scour the forest in every direction. We boys, under Sam Barnby, were, much to our satisfaction, to engage in this latter service. Sir Hugh and the rest of the family, overcome with fatigue, were compelled to go to bed; but all night long people were coming and going with messages, showing that a very vigilant and active search was being carried on. Neither Cousin Peter nor Mr Strafford, however, went to bed, as they had taken upon themselves the direction of the search. Indeed, unless Everard Worsley had succeeded at once in getting away from the neighbourhood, it seemed scarcely possible that he should now be able to make his escape.

Story 1--Chapter V.

Long before daybreak we boys were up, called by Sam Barnby, and, having breakfasted, and by his advice, filled our pockets with bread and ham and tongue and brawn, set off while the first streaks of dawn were still in the sky, to commence our search through the forest. The sky was cloudless, the stars shining brightly at first, but one by one they disappeared as the light streaming through the leafless trees on the one hand, seemed to be rolling back the gloom of night on the other. The air was pure, but keen as razor-blades, as Sam observed, and would have saved us shaving, if we had had beards to shave. The crisply frozen grass crackled under our feet as we trod rapidly over it, with difficulty restraining our inclination to sing and shout out, so high were our spirits raised by the exhilarating atmosphere.

We walked on rapidly, covering, by Sam Barnby's directions, as much ground as possible, while, however, keeping each other in sight, which could be more easily done at that time of the year than in the summer. Every now and then we came on a herd of forest ponies, which went scampering away, shaking the hoar frost from the bushes as their shaggy coats brushed them in passing. Less frequently we encountered herds of the fallow deer, once so numerous. They would stand for an instant gazing at us, as if wondering why we had invaded their domains, and then, fleet as the wind, they would fly, following one after the other, till they reached some knoll or thicker wood, where they would stop and scrutinise us as we passed. We were all soon in a thorough glow from the exercise we were taking, for the ground was far from level. Now we had to ascend a height, now descend into a valley, circuit a marsh, or leap across a stream—a feat not always easily accomplished.

We passed many spots of historic fame which I cannot here stop to describe. Many were highly picturesque and beautiful, and had attracted, I doubt not, the pencil of Gilpin, who was minister of Boldre, not far off. On we went, hour after hour, unflaggingly, till Sam called a halt, and each of us produced the provender we had brought. Sam had strapped a large fishing-basket to his back, and to our infinite satisfaction, when we found that our own supplies were totally inadequate to satisfy the cravings of our keen appetites, he brought forth an abundance of eatables and a bottle or two of the stoutest of stout ales, that, as he remarked, a little might go a long way. There must have been real stuff in it, for, though he gave us each but a few thimblefuls, it set us up amazingly, and away we went as full of spirit and strength as when we first started.

I cannot describe all the adventures we met with. Jack was on the right of the line, I was next to him. Suddenly I heard him cry out. I ran up to him, calling to the others to halt. Jack pointed to an object under a bush. It was the body of a man.

"Is he asleep?" I asked.

"He is very quiet," said Jack.

Indeed he was quiet. All our shouting did not arouse him. He was dressed in a smock frock and long brown gaiters; but his hands were white, and his face fair. "He is dead, young gentlemen!" said Sam Barnby, gravely, when he came up. "Who can he be?"

We all stood aloof. None of us had ever seen a dead mail. It was a sad object. Sam, stooping down, examined the body.

"To my mind, this is no other than the unfortunate gentleman we are looking for. He is no carter, and under his smock his dress is that of a gentleman."

This was indeed valuable information to carry home. Sam wanted as to help him remove the body, but we had no fancy to do that. What, however, had become of little Hugh? If the miserable man had really carried him off, where had he bestowed him? Could he have murdered the child first, and then destroyed himself? The thought was too dreadful to be entertained. How had he met with his death? That was another question. Again Sam examined the body.

"This tells a tale, at all events," he exclaimed, holding up a little shoe.

It was evidently Hugh's. This man had carried him off—of that there was no longer a shadow of doubt. What had become of him though? We searched round and round the spot, under every bush, and in the hollow of every tree. Not a further sign of the child could we discover. There would be still daylight sufficient for us to go to the Hall with the information, and to return. The question was who should go and who should stay by the dead body, which we considered that we ought not to leave. Without Sam we could not find our way, so it was necessary that he should go, at all events. At last my brother Jack asked me if I would remain with him. I own that I did not like it. There was something terrible at the thought of being out alone with the dead body of our wicked kinsman, as we supposed the man to be. Yet I did not wish to exhibit any fear, and put as bold a face on the matter as I could.

Yes, of course, if you wish it, Jack, I'll stay with you," I answered at once. "Somebody must stay, and I suppose that we are the right people to do so."—*Page* 28.

"Yes, of course, if you wish it, Jack, I'll stay with you," I answered at once. "Somebody must stay, and I suppose that we are the right people to do so. We can run about to keep ourselves warm. I shan't, of course, mind it a bit, if you don't. You'll not be long gone, will you, Sam?"

"Oh, no fear, Master William," answered Sam Barnby; "we'll be at the Hall and back in no time. We've come a long round to get here."

This answer encouraged me a little, and I managed, I flatter myself, to look thoroughly unconcerned. We had each of us thick sticks: not that there was anything to fight with; for even wild hogs don't attack people who let them alone; but I know that I clutched mine very tightly as the rest of the party disappeared among the trees of the forest, and Jack and I were left on guard. As to looking on the dead man, that was more than I dared do; so I walked about, flourishing my stick and talking to Jack, as far as I could get from the spot where the dead man lay, consistently with my undertaking to keep guard over it. Jack did not seem to care very much about the matter. Now he walked close up to the spot; then he joined me and talked on indifferent subjects, though I don't think that even he cared to look directly at the dead man. We began at last to become very tired of our guard, and to wish that our friends would return and relieve us. I had no watch. Jack had forgotten to wind up his, so we could not tell how time sped.

Not far off was a dark clump of hollies, to which I had extended my walk. As I was turning round, I heard a slight rustling of the leaves, and, to my inexpressible horror, I caught a glimpse of a pair of eyes gleaming out at me through an opening in the boughs. I instantly connected them somehow with the man supposed to be dead, and, when I hurried back to Jack, I half expected to find that the body had got up, and, by some means or other, gone round into the holly-bush. No; there it lay, quiet enough, never more to move of its own accord. But to what could those eyes belong?

"Jack! Jack!" I stammered out, feeling that I must look very pale and frightened, "I have seen a pair of eyes!"

"Whereabouts?" asked Jack. "I suppose that they are in somebody's head, then?"

"That's the question," said I; "I am not quite so sure of it."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Jack; "let's have a look at the place. Where did you see them?"

I pointed to the spot, and plucking up courage as he walked up to it, followed him, clutching my stick tightly. The

holly-bushes formed a tolerably large screen, so that we should have to make a wide circuit to get to the rear. Nothing was to be seen in front. No eyes were visible where I had caught the glimpse of them. Jack said it was fancy, but still he had an inclination to examine further. I would rather have waited till the arrival of our friends, but he, telling me to go round one end, ran round the other, that we might catch anybody who might be there. I didn't like it, but still I went, feeling that I was performing a deed of mighty heroism. I was resolved not to allow Jack to call me a coward; indeed, he very seldom did so, because anything that he dared do, I did; the only difference was that he liked it, and I didn't. I got round therefore as fast as he did, and just behind the spot where I had seen the eyes, there they were again, but this time I discerned a head and face into which they were fixed—a face I had seen before.

"There, there!" I cried, pointing to the face as Jack came up.

It was that of the poor idiot lad, Dicky Green. He was crouching down, evidently trying to conceal himself from us.

"Why, Dicky, what are you doing here?" cried Jack. "We won't hurt you."

"I was a looking to see what'd happen next. He's a sleeping, bean't he?" answered the idiot, pointing in the direction of the dead man.

"It's a sleep from which he will never awake, lad," said Jack. "He is dead, lad."

"Lor', be he? Then you won't go for to tell of I?" exclaimed Dicky, whimpering. "Mother sent I to look for the little one's shoe, when I told her how I'd got hold of him and gi'en the man as was a trying to take him from me a pretty hard clout on the head. I thought I'd made him quiet, but I ne'er meaned to kill him, that I didn't."

"The little one!" cried Jack, a new light bursting on us. "What do you know of him? Where is he?"

"Oh, he's all right, and happy as he can be, I wot," said Dicky, with a grin, which made us doubt the truth of his assertion.

Our fear now, however, was that the idiot would escape from us before we could ascertain whether or not he really did know where little Hugh was. Still, we could not help hoping that the child was safe. Jack therefore did his best to keep him talking till our friends should come from the Hull. Happily, the poor creature was very fond of keeping his tongue moving, as other people with a limited supply of brains are apt to do. Though he talked on, we could not make out more than we had already. To our great relief, we heard at length the sound of voices approaching us. Soon Sir Hugh, with Cousin Peter, Mr Strafford, and several other gentlemen on horseback, with Sam Barnby and a whole posse of men, appeared in the distance. We shouted to them to come to us. No sooner did Dicky Green see them, than he began to tremble violently; then, looking to the right and left, he bolted off through the forest. Fortunately, Cousin Peter saw him, and gave chase on horseback; Sam Barnby also followed in the direction we pointed. Still Dicky ran very fast, dodging in and out among the trees. Meantime, Sir Hugh and Mr Strafford rode up to where the dead body lay on the grass. As soon as Sir Hugh saw the features of the corpse, he said in a sad voice:

"It is that unhappy man, cut off in the middle of his career; but my boy, my boy, where can he be?"

Though Dicky Green ran fast, he was ere long overtaken and brought back. He stood before the gentlemen with one of his most idiotic looks, which made it seem hopeless that anything could be got out of him.

"Come, come, Dicky, that will not do for us," said Cousin Peter; "rouse yourself up and tell us all you know about this matter. No one will do you any harm, lad."

Thus spoken to kindly, after some time, Dicky looked up and said:

"Thee wants to know about the little chap, and if I tells thee, thee won't ask how that one there came by his death?"

"If we do ask, it will not be to bring any harm on you, Dicky. You may be assured of that," said Cousin Peter.

Dicky thought for some time, and then began to move off through the forest.

"He is going towards his mother's cottage; I shouldn't be surprised if little Master Hugh be there safe enough," whispered Sam Barnby.

"Bless you, bless you, Sam Barnby, for those words, and I believe that they are true," exclaimed Sir Hugh, as we all followed the idiot, except a couple of men, who were left with the dead body.

In a short time we reached a wretched tumble-down hut of mud, with a roof of thatch, green with age, and full of holes, in which birds had built their nests. There at one end we found a bed-ridden old woman, the idiot's mother, and on a little pallet-bed in the further corner lay a blooming child fast asleep. Sir Hugh stepped forward, signing to us not to make a noise, and lifting the child in his arms, bestowed a kiss on its brow. The boy awoke, and seeing his father—for it was our dear little Hugh—threw his arms round his neck and exclaimed:

"You've come, papa, for Hugh at last; Hugh is so glad, so happy!"

It was a happy meeting we all had at the Hall that evening, and grateful were the hearts of Sir Hugh and Lady Worsley at the recovery of their darling boy. I remember that afterwards there was an inquest, and that the magistrates met, but, except from the ravings of poor Dicky Green, there was no evidence how the deceased gentleman who was found in the forest came by his death. He was accordingly buried quietly in the parish churchyard, and as little fuss as possible made about the matter, though of course it had the usual run of a nine days' wonder. I am happy to say that little Hugh grew up, and as he is the father of a number of boys, there is not much chance of the property going out of the old line for want of a male heir.

Story 2--Chapter I.

Two of the most powerful nobles of England, the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Warwick, were one fine summer's day, in the year of our Lord 1449, walking together in the Temple Gardens, on the banks of the Thames. Their conversations were on affairs of state. Ere long they expressed decided differences of opinion. Their tempers warmed up; the dispute ran high. They appealed to the nobles and gentlemen attending on them, but all drew back. They had long been rivals, each seeking for power and influence. Warwick possessed immense popularity both with the soldiery and populace. He is since well known in history as the Kingmaker. He was not a man to brook opposition.

"It is well that we should know our foes from our friends," he exclaimed, plucking as he spoke a white rose from a bush which grew near. "Let all who claim to be my friends wear henceforth the white rose in their helms or caps."

"And I, too, wish to know who are my friends and who my foes," said the Duke of Somerset, walking on rapidly till he reached a red rose-tree which he saw in the distance. "I shall expect all those who love me, or the cause I espouse, to wear this flower of blushing hue."

Several knights and gentlemen hurried after the duke, and imitated his example in placing red roses in their caps. The earl watched the proceedings of his rival with a smile.

"My challenge is quickly accepted," he observed, turning to those who surrounded him. "But am I to stand alone? Have I no friends who wish to show that they are ready to espouse my cause?"

"Ten thousand swords would be ready to leap from their scabbards the moment you summon them," answered a sturdy knight, Sir Herbert de Beauville. "I, for one, am ready to risk castle, and lands, and jewels, and life itself, in your service; and as a pledge of my sincerity, I place this white rose in my helm, and, so help me Heaven, may I ever be true to it and to you while life remains!"

The rest of the party, following the knight's example, pledged themselves to the earl, and placed white roses in their helms or caps. It was curious to see the two parties, as they henceforth walked apart with the insignia they had so hastily assumed prominently displayed, eyeing each other with glances indicative, it might be, of that fearful struggle which was so soon to commence, and to devastate the fair land of England and deluge it with blood. Some of those present turned traitors to the cause they had espoused, and others more than once changed sides, but amply did Sir Herbert de Beauville fulfil the pledge he had given on that occasion. He was one of those men who consider that black is black, and white is white, and so, having passed his word that he would wear the white rose and support the house of York, he fought on, amid all its changing fortunes, till he had lost the larger portion of his once ample possessions. His ancestral castle of Beauville, in the north of England, in a sadly dilapidated condition, with its park and a few hundred acres of land, was at length all that remained to him. In the fatal fight on Bosworth Field, holding himself bravely, as was his wont, he was desperately wounded. He would have fallen from his horse had not he been supported by his faithful servitor, Roger Bertrand, who led him from the fight to a retired spot near a brook, where he could attend to his gaping wounds, and stanch the life-blood flowing from his veins. In vain, however, the brave squire exerted all his skill. It was too clear to him that his beloved master's hours were numbered. The knight also was well aware that his last blow had been struck for the cause he had so long espoused, and that he should soon be numbered with the dead. He committed, therefore, his wife and young son, who was named after him, to Roger's care.

“Mark you, Roger, watch over the boy as a precious jewel. Remember his noble blood and parentage, bring him up as becomes both, and above all things, when he comes to man’s estate, take care that he finds a bride befitting him, and does not wed beneath him. I fear me much that I do not leave him as rich a heritage as I received, but should quiet times ever come back to this realm of England, with your careful nursing, it may once more be made as profitable as of yore. You know my wishes, good Roger; I can speak no more. Especially in that one point of marriage guide the boy aright. Lift me up. How goes the fight? Let me behold the white rose of York once more triumphant. See—see—they charge forward! No—alas! they turn and fly. Then welcome death!” The old knight, pressing Roger’s hand, uttered the word, “Remember,” and fell back and died.

The brave serving-man, rising to his feet, stood over the dead body of his master with drawn sword, to protect it from spoliation, and ultimately succeeded in bearing it off from the field, so as to give it honoured sepulture in the precincts of the neighbouring church. The priests were desirous to keep the knight’s armour in pawn, that masses might be said for the repose of his soul.

“Thanks, reverend and worthy gentlemen,” answered Roger, quietly. “But my dear master was as hearty a prayer as he was a fighter, and methinks if he’s failed while he lived to make his peace with Heaven, nothing that you or any other can say will aid him now that he is gone, and knows more about the matter than you and all the world besides put together.”

“What rank heresy is this you are speaking?” exclaimed the priest. “The prayers of the Church not of use to the dead, do you say? This savours strongly of the abominable tenets of Wycliffe. Why, you must belong to the abominable sect of the Lollards, Master Roger.”

“Nay, but I was only speaking in the case of my good master,” answered the latter, in his quiet tone. “I said that he was a hearty prayer; and what is the use of a man’s praying if his prayers are not to be heard? But if my master’s prayers were heard—and I am sure they were—then there is no further need of any one praying for him. I am a true son of Holy Mother Church. I know nothing of Master Wycliffe, and conclude that he has been dead no small number of years.”

The priest, not accustomed in those days to controversy, had nothing to say in reply to Roger’s remarks, though, still suspecting him strongly to be a Lollard, he would have liked to entrap him, and have the power to bring down punishment on his head. Honest Roger, however, not aware of the feelings of animosity he had excited, frankly wished the irate ecclesiastic farewell, and with the arms and armour of his late master, all that remained of him, took his departure for the now mourning castle of Beauville.

It is not necessary to describe the grief of the Lady Beauville, nor of the young Herbert, who was of an age to feel deeply the loss he had suffered. As may have been suspected, Roger Bertram was a Lollard, as was also the mistress of the castle, though they had found it necessary to conceal their opinions. Young Herbert was accordingly brought up in the principles of Wycliffe, a copy of whose New Testament was one of the most prized possessions of his mother. It was her chief delight to instruct her son in the glorious truths it contained. Alas! however, the shock she received on hearing of the death of her beloved lord, and the complete overthrow of the cause for which he had so long striven and fought, was so great, that from that time she sank gradually, and ere long followed her husband to the grave.

Roger Bertram thoroughly carried out his promise to his master. Young Herbert de Beauville grew up into a noble-looking youth, who, though he did not possess any large amount of book-learning, was the leader in all the manly exercises of the period. He was brave and open-hearted, of a kind and generous disposition, and had ever proved himself affectionate and obedient to the guardian placed over him. He had, however, a determined will of his own, and Roger discovered that, if he wished to retain his influence over his ward, he must not pull the reins of authority too tightly.

As Herbert increased in years this became more and more evident, especially when the youth mixed in the world, and there were not wanting those who urged him to assert his own independence, and who hinted that, now he had grown nearly to man’s estate, it was no longer incumbent on him to obey implicitly one who had merely been placed in authority to watch over him while he was a boy. Good Roger Bertram, though he was able conscientiously to do his duty with regard to watching over his young charge, found that it was a difficult matter to restore a fallen house, and to bring long-neglected lands again into cultivation. The old retainers and tenants who once cultivated the fields had been carried off by their feudal lord to the wars, and their bones lay bleaching on many a battle-field. The lands could not be let, and no money was therefore forthcoming to restore the dilapidated castle fast crumbling to pieces. It had never been restored since the last siege laid to it by the Lancastrians. At that time a large portion of the walls had been battered by cannon, then only recently introduced, and another part had been undermined: the enemy, indeed, were on the point of forcing an entrance, when it was relieved by the appearance of the Yorkist party. Roger’s hope, therefore, was that as soon as his young lord was of age he would retrieve his fortunes by a wealthy marriage. Unfortunately there would, he knew, be much difficulty in finding a bride for him among the fallen Yorkist families, us greedy King Henry took good care to confiscate all the property he could from any excuse lay hands on. Roger was also himself much attached to the principles of the Lollards, and he wished, if possible, that the young Herbert should marry into a family which held them. There were many families at that time who read Wycliffe’s Bible and Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales”—more, indeed, than are generally supposed. The English, as a nation, never bowed the neck very readily to Rome, and even in the darkest days there were some who put no faith in her assumptions and pretensions. The more enlightened had also ere this discovered what a clog to the prosperity and progress of the country existed in the many thousands of lazy and idle monks and friars, and other members of what were called religious orders. Still it may be considered that the lower classes generally, and many of the upper, were ignorant in the extreme, and believed in all those gross superstitions which have ever been the direct result of the teaching of the Church of Rome, where no counteracting influences are at work. As Roger did not himself possess much book-learning, he was compelled to leave young Herbert under the instruction of Father Mathew, the curate of the parish, to whom Sir Herbert had confided the charge of his education. Not that the knight had any great esteem for the learning of the

father, but simply that he knew of no one else under whom he could place his son.

Father Mathew was not a learned man, but he had cleverness enough to conceal his ignorance, and Sir Herbert, who, though a brave soldier, was no clerk, was not likely to find it out. If the truth must be said, the curate was himself fonder of hawk and hound than of his books, and it was whispered that if a fat pullet came in his way, even on a fast day, he did not always turn aside from the temptation. He could, however, do more than many of his brethren, for he could not only read his breviary, but write a neat hand and copy manuscripts with precision—an art he had learned in the cloister, and which was still the chief mode of multiplying books; for printing had only been introduced into England about twenty years before. Such was Father Mathew; in the main, with all his faults, an honest man. Roger, who had more shrewdness than his late lord, was not altogether satisfied with him, but he consoled himself with the thought that his young charge might have had a worse preceptor when he saw him growing into a fine handsome young man, with many noble and generous qualities, though certainly more addicted to field sports and athletic exercises than to the study of any of those branches of knowledge by which he might restore the fallen fortunes of his house.

Meantime, Roger was not unmindful of his purpose to secure a rich wife for his young lord. He looked about in every direction, far and near; but the only damsel he could hear of at all likely to prove suitable was the Lady Barbara, the only child of the stout Baron Fitz Osbert. She was said to be fair to look on, and pious and good, and possessed of all the accomplishments which distinguished well-brought-up young ladies in those days. There were difficulties to be overcome, however. Herbert had not seen her, and might not be willing to wed her when he did. Her father, the baron, had been a stout Lancastrian, and, although the rival houses of York and Lancaster were now united under Tudor rule, he was very likely to be prejudiced against the son of an old opponent. While the honest Roger was travelling about the country and troubling himself greatly in search of the desired heiress, an event occurred which seemed likely to bring his schemes to naught. Herbert was one day returning from hawking—the quarry having led him a long distance from home—when, as he was passing through a wood of some extent, he heard a cry and loud shouts for help. Urging on his steed over the green sward, he saw two persons on horseback endeavouring to escape from three armed men on foot. That the latter were robbers he had little doubt—Cornishmen, from Lord Audley’s wild troops, after the fight at Blackheath. One of the persons on horseback was a country damsel, and, from the panniers between which she sat, it appeared she had been to dispose of the produce of her farm at market; the other was a serving-man, or farm-servant, apparently, for he also had a number of baskets slung about his horse. He had a bow at his back and a trusty sword by his side, with which he might, if necessary, defend his young mistress. These ideas passed through Herbert’s mind the moment the scene appeared before him. The serving-man had drawn his sword, and was endeavouring to keep the robbers at bay. The robbers, however, seemed to be laughing at his efforts, and while one of them was keeping him in play, the other two had run round on either side, and were on the point of seizing the reins of the damsel’s pony, when Herbert appeared. He dashed forward, and, with the impetuosity of youth, without asking any questions, cut down one of the robbers, and was about to treat the other in the same way when he made his escape between the trees. The serving-man had in the meantime given a good account of the robber who had attacked him, who lay wounded and, to all appearance, dying on the ground. He had, however, first contrived to give honest Rolfe a severe cut on the arm and another on the side, which would probably have compelled him to yield to the attacks of the other ruffians had not young Herbert de Beauville come to his assistance. The damsel had wonderfully maintained her self-possession during the events which have been described; but when Herbert reached her, and, taking her hand, assured her that all danger was past, her pale cheeks and quivering lips told him that she could not longer contain her feelings. He helped her to dismount, and placing her on the trunk of a fallen tree, endeavoured to calm her spirits, while Rolfe limped off to fill a bowl, which he had just purchased in the market, with water from a neighbouring brook. This revived the damsel, and, as soon as she was able to speak, after thanking Herbert for the service he had rendered her, she told him that her name was Gertrude Alwyn, and that she lived with her father, stout John Alwyn, a yeoman, on his farm nearly a league off.

“Then I must offer my services to escort you to your home, sweet Mistress Gertrude,” said Herbert, in as courteous a tone as he would have used towards a princess. “I can take no denial, as it is unbefitting that you should continue your journey alone. Mayhap some other robbers may meet you, or you may be beset by some other danger.”

Whatever might have been the fears of the damsel, she was not unwilling that so handsome and courteous a young man should escort her homewards. Not till honest Rolfe had come up to hold her reins while she again mounted, did she and Herbert discover how badly he had been hurt by the robber who had attacked him. He made light of his wounds to save his young mistress pain, but she refused to proceed till they were bound up, and some further time was lost in this operation. Herbert rode by the side of Gertrude, conversing with her as he went. He thought that he had never seen so fair a damsel, so gentle and so lovable, while she was certain that she had never met so kind and courteous and noble a youth. It was late when they reached Donington Farm. Master Alwyn, the owner, did not seem much surprised to see his daughter escorted by so gay a cavalier as young Herbert de Beauville. Having thanked him warmly for the protection he had afforded to his daughter, and her deliverance from the danger which had overtaken her, with much courtesy he invited him to remain to supper, which meal was even then being placed on the table.

Young Herbert was not unwilling to accept the invitation, seeing that already his heart, or fancy, or whatever organ or sense by which young men are moved, had already been captivated by the bright eyes and sweet face of the fair Gertrude. There was a bright moon about to shine, and he had no tender mother or loving sisters who would be anxious at his non-appearance at the usual hour. Gertrude did not omit to tell her mother of the hurts Rolfe had received. On hearing this, the dame, with alacrity, examined them, dressing them with much skill, of the possession of which she was not a little proud.

After this, three demure damsels and seven stout labouring men came into the hall, and took their seats at the table. They then ate in silence the messes which Mrs Alwyn served out to them. Master Alwyn, meantime, kept up a very pleasant conversation with his guest. He was evidently far superior in attainments to men generally of his position in life, for he could both read and write, and knew something of what was going forward in the world. In appearance he was not, however, superior to other yeomen or well-to-do farmers; and his dame, though evidently a notable thrifty housewife, was not above her class in manners or in information. As Herbert looked from one to the other, and then

exchanged a few sentences with their daughter, he wondered how so fair a creature could have sprung from so rough a stock. He sat on, unwilling to leave the society of so charming a being, till at length he had no excuse for lingering longer.

As he rode homeward, with his hawk sleeping on his shoulder, and his hounds by his side, his thoughts were so completely occupied with the fair Gertrude, that he reached the castle gates almost before he was aware of it. Good Roger was away on the errand which has been spoken of, and Father Mathew had never been wont to chide his pupil very severely. Now that he had come to man's estate, he wisely abstained altogether from doing so. Herbert was therefore accustomed frankly to tell him all that occurred. He accordingly described how he had met the damsel and her servant, and saved them from robbers.

"You have acted bravely, my son, and you deem the damsel fair to look on?" said Father Mathew.

The last words were uttered quite in an indifferent tone, as if the matter were of very little consequence.

"Oh yes; the damsel is perfectly beautiful," exclaimed the youth, enthusiastically. "I have never seen one I could so devotedly love and adore."

The priest gave way to a low laugh, and remarked:

"Perchance the next time you see her she may not appear so charming, and still less so the following. Methinks, too, that she is not such a one as the young lord of Beauville ought to wed."

"I have heard of noble knights wedding with maidens of low degree, whose beauty and rare excellence made them fit to take their place among the highest in the land. Such is the damsel of whom I speak. It would be a grievous pity to let so charming a rose bloom unseen, or to allow her to mate with some rough thistle or thorn unworthy of her."

The priest laughed outright.

"Certes, the charms of the damsel have made you poetical, my esteemed pupil," he remarked. "I must go forth to see this rare piece of perfection. I wonder whether I shall esteem her as you do."

Now, although Herbert had a great regard for his reverend tutor, he did not altogether desire to have him become acquainted with the damsel, and he at once, therefore, began to repent that he had praised her in such glowing terms. He scorned, however, to retract anything that he had said, yet he determined to try and prevent Father Mathew from visiting Donington Farm till he had secured, as he hoped to do, the affections of its fair inmate. It was not till late at night that the priest and his pupil retired to their beds. At an early hour the next morning the young lord of Beauville was on his way to Donington to inquire if Mistress Gertrude had recovered from the effects of the fright to which she had been subjected. He also persuaded himself that he was anxious to learn how it fared with sturdy Rolfe.

He went well armed in case he should meet any of the band of robbers whose comrades he had so roughly handled. On reaching Donington, he saw Father Mathew's grey mare at the gate. The father must have left the castle by break of day, and have ridden pretty fast to get there before him. Herbert met him coming out.

"Ah, my son, you said not that you were coming here to-day," he remarked quietly. "However, I am not surprised. The damsel is truly fair to look on, and calculated to win a young man's heart. But beware, I say—beware. Now go in and pay your visit and inquire after her health, and say all the foolish things you proposed saying, and then come out again. I will wait for you, and we will ride back to Beauville together."

This was not at all according to Herbert's intentions, yet he could not help himself without positively refusing to comply with the father's wishes. He found the dame and her fair daughter within. There was some constraint in their manner at first, but the latter was evidently pleased to see him. He thought her not less lovely than on the previous evening. The visit, however, was not such as he had anticipated. In vain he tried to learn what Father Mathew had been saying about him. At last he was obliged to take his leave and join the latter, who had been walking his horse up and down, waiting for him. The young man had learned wisdom.

"I will be even with him," he thought to himself. "I will let him suppose that he is right, and that on a second visit I have not found the damsel as charming as I at first described her."

He carried out his plan, but whether or not Father Mathew was deceived he could not tell; for the wary priest made no reply to his remarks by which he could judge what was passing in his mind. When Roger returned, Herbert took good care to say nothing to him about fair Mistress Gertrude, and, somewhat to his surprise, Father Mathew was equally reserved on the subject.

It was curious, however, that from that time forward his hounds or his hawks always led him in the direction of Donington, and, though he brought home less game than formerly, he never grumbled at his ill-luck. Perhaps both Roger and Father Mathew were watching him, but, if so, he was not aware of it, and was perfectly well satisfied with the course he was taking. He found that Mistress Gertrude was not over strictly brought up, and that her parents did not object to her mixing with other young people, and enjoying the spoils and pastimes suitable to their age. At all festivals and merry-makings Herbert became her constant attendant. He cared not if any one remarked that he demeaned himself by associating as he did with a yeoman's family. Master Alwyn did not object to his consorting with his daughter, and therefore no one else had any business to find fault with him. He engaged warmly with other young men of his age in the various athletic sports then generally practised. It was his delight to excel in them, and whenever he won a prize, as he often did, he was wont to bring it and place it at the feet of the fair Gertrude. He did so with a right noble air, and it was often remarked that she received these attentions with a grace which not the first lady in the land could surpass. He was not without rivals who desired to gain the chief place in her affections; not that

she gave them any encouragement, for her heart was already entirely surrendered to Herbert.

Among the many devices employed by that money-loving monarch, Henry the Seventh, was that of confiscating the property of any of his nobles or other wealthy persons who gave him cause of offence by rebelling or intriguing with his enemies. Not far off resided a certain Master John Fisher, once a wealthy merchant in London, who had in an evil hour for himself purchased one of these estates, lately belonging to a Lord Nevile, of ancient lineage, much beloved in the country. Master Fisher was a worthy honest man, and would have proved a greater benefactor to the people among whom he came to reside than he had afterwards the power of being, had not the king looked on his hordes as a mine of wealth from which it was his royal privilege to extract whatever he might require. The merchant had several sons, who naturally desired to live like the young lords and gentlemen around them. One of them, Thomas Fisher, had set his eyes on Mistress Gertrude. He had more fortune than his brothers, money having been bequeathed to him by an uncle, also a merchant. His personal appearance was in his favour, and, altogether, he might have been considered a very good match for the yeoman's daughter. Master Fisher, his father, however, did not approve of it, and desired that he should wed into some noble family, which would give him a better standing in the country than he could otherwise obtain. Thomas, however, was of an obstinate disposition, and would by no means give her up. Wherever there was a prospect of meeting her there he was always to be found, though he had to confess that of late she certainly had given him very little encouragement.

There was in the neighbourhood of Beauville Castle a large open common, in the centre of which were certain Druidical remains—huge blocks of stone, some like pillars standing upright, and others placed on a pivot over another by means the knowledge of which appears afterwards to have been lost. One of these stones, the largest in the group, was so placed that the slightest touch would set it vibrating. It was generally believed, however, that this could only be done by the good and virtuous, and that any one not deserving that character, though they might shake it ever so violently, could not move it. Here, from near and far, it had been the custom of the youths and lasses to assemble on festivals and holidays to amuse themselves with the games and sports then in vogue. Archers came to exhibit their skill. Quintains were set up, at which young men delighted to run, with lance in rest, either on foot or on horseback. Here were practised hurling the bar, casting the lance, running races, and other similar active sports; while on May-day a pole was set up, round which the morris-dancers assembled, and the Lord of Misrule held his court. People of position in the county did not disdain to come to these merry meetings. One fine afternoon, on the 1st of May, 1493, a large number of persons of all ranks and ages were assembled in the neighbourhood—of the rocking-stone. The still wealthy merchant, Master Fisher, and the yeoman, Master Alwyn, and Herbert's faithful guardian, Roger Bertram, and several knights and justices with their families, and Father Mathew, and other priests and curates, and not a few monks and friars, who had come with the spirit of pickpockets of the present day to try what they could filch from the pouches of the merry-makers.

After the gay assemblage had got somewhat weary of the ordinary sports, a number of persons repaired to the rocking-stone, where they amused themselves by daring each other to give evidence of their virtuous lives by setting the stone rocking. Several had gone forward, when the stone was clearly seen to vibrate. At length the names of several damsels were called out, and, among others, Mistress Gertrude Alwyn was summoned to go forward and move the stone. There might have been a slight blush on her cheek at appearing before so many people on such an undertaking; but yet, with a slight laugh and a smile on her lips, she advanced towards the stone. There was a perfect silence among the crowd of spectators as she touched the stone. It did not move. Again and again she touched it, with all the force she could exert. The stone remained as immovable as if part of the mass on which it rested. There was a general groan uttered by the crowd, an evidence of their full belief in the truth of the legend, while, at the same moment, a piercing cry was heard, and the unhappy damsel was seen to fall fainting to the ground. Dame Alwyn ran forward to raise her daughter, followed by young Herbert de Beauville, who declared aloud that, for his part, he believed the stone might sometimes rock and sometimes cease to rock, but that this had nothing to do with the virtue or want of that quality in those who touched it. There was a cry of "Heretic Lollard" from among the crowd, but Herbert silenced it by declaring that he would slit the tongue and break the head of any one who uttered it, or a word against the fair fame of Mistress Gertrude Alwyn. The poor girl was mounted on a pillion behind her father and conveyed back to Donington, weeping bitterly. A number of persons collected round the stone, and soon afterwards, on being touched by chance, it was seen to rock as before.

Herbert remained some time behind the Alwyn family, stalking about with his hand on the hilt of his sword, evidently longing for an encounter with some one; but as no person present seemed disposed just then to beard him, he at length mounted his horse and rode after his friends. Again and again he assured Master Alwyn, and his dame, and sweet Mistress Gertrude of his disbelief in the knowledge of the stone of the character of those who touched it, and that he would not credit a word against her fair fame should the cardinal, or bishop, or the Pope himself utter it. Gertrude thanked him with tears in her eyes, but begged him to return home and talk the matter over with Master Roger before he took any steps to vindicate her character, which he told her that he was resolved to do. His worthy guardian did not look on the matter in the light he did. He confessed that he did not believe that Mistress Gertrude was of light character, but that if the world did so, it was nearly as bad, and that she was not a fit bride for him. Herbert did not see the matter in this light, and argued the point with great vehemence, and declared that nothing should prevent him from vindicating her character by marrying her forthwith.

In this same year a claimant to the throne of England appeared in the person of a handsome youth, who pretended to be Richard Duke of York, second son of Edward the Fourth. He had married the Lady Catherine Gordon, a cousin of the King of Scotland, who espoused his cause. No sooner did he appear in arms than Herbert, faithful to the traditions of his family, prepared to join him. He had no retainers, no money, only his own good sword and ardent young heart. Roger was now too old to bear him company, much as he wished it. He would, indeed, have dissuaded his young master from the enterprise, on the ground that the Houses of York and Lancaster were already united, and that, after all, the new claimant to the crown might be only a pretender, as was asserted, and not the true prince; but then he thought that absence might cure him of his love for Gertrude, and that mixing in courtly society might make him desirous of wedding with the fair Lady Barbara Fitz Osbert. Roger was, however, far too wise to hint anything of the sort, and with inward satisfaction he saw him go to bid farewell to pretty Mistress Gertrude, hoping that the young

people might never meet again. Herbert, however, had no such thoughts in his mind. Again and again he repeated his promise to Gertrude that he would remain faithful to her, and that, come weal or come woe, he would return, if alive, and marry her. The world might say what it dared—might traduce and scorn her, but he would believe her true. He spoke with so much earnestness that she believed him, and pledged her own word to be faithful to him in return.

Not till Herbert had paid this farewell visit to Mistress Gertrude did the wily Father Mathew attempt to cast any slur on her character, or to dissuade his pupil from his intended marriage. He left nothing unsaid which he thought could produce that result. Every insinuation he dared make he whispered into Herbert's ear. Roger also was not slow to support the curate's remarks, while at the same time he warmly praised the charms of the Lady Barbara Fitz Osbert, the heiress of the castle of Hardingham and its broad domains. Herbert listened, pained in mind, and moved, but not convinced. "Should she be fake, there is no virtue or faith in womankind, and I would as lief throw away my life in the first battle in which I am engaged as live." Many young men have thought the same thing, and changed their mind.

No sooner had Herbert taken his departure than Father Mathew, who had got into the confidence of Master Thomas Fisher, urged him to press his suit. Old Master Fisher had become very much averse to it, on account of the reports which were current; but Thomas asserted that he disbelieved them, and that, in spite of all that might be said against Mistress Gertrude, he was resolved to marry her.

Years rolled on; news came of the expedition of the Scotch king and the supposed prince into England, and of its failure. After that nothing more was heard of the unfortunate husband of the Lady Catherine Gordon or of young Sir Herbert de Beauville, who had been knighted by the King of Scotland.

Meantime a visitor had come to Donington. He was evidently a man of superior birth. He was frequently seen in the company of Mistress Gertrude, and various were the surmises about him. Both Master Alwyn and his dame paid him the greatest respect. He was somewhat advanced in life, though still strong and active. His bronzed complexion, and more than one scar visible on his cheek, showed that he had been engaged in war in southern climes. He did not appear to seek concealment, but at the same time not a word did he let drop which could allow people to guess who he was. At length one day a dozen men-at-arms and several knights, with two led horses, appeared at Donington, and the stranger and Mistress Gertrude were seen to mount and ride away after an affectionate farewell of Master Alwyn and his dame. No people were more puzzled than Roger Bertram and Father Mathew. They remained at Beauville, holding the castle for Sir Herbert, though it seemed very doubtful whether he would ever return. One day a wandering minstrel came to the neighbouring hamlet. He approached a house, the bush hung over the door of which showed that entertainment for man and beast was to be obtained in the establishment. The minstrel took his seat in the public room, and quickly entered into conversation with those around him. His object seemed to be to obtain information about the persons in the neighbourhood. Among others he asked after Master Alwyn and his dame. They were living as before in the old house, and enjoying good health and strength.

"They had a daughter," observed the minstrel, in a calm voice.

"Oh, the hussy!—she long since went away with a gay knight, who came with a band to carry her off, and no one knows what has become of her," answered his loquacious informant.

"It is false!" exclaimed the minstrel, starting up. Then, suddenly checking himself, he added: "I mean, such reports as these often get about without due foundation."

However, he could not calm the agitation this information caused him, and, having paid his reckoning and slung the harp he carried over his shoulder, he left the house. He took his way towards Beauville. Father Mathew was standing at the entrance as he approached the old castle.

"Go thy way—go thy way; we want no vagrants here. We have enough of our own starving poor to feed without yielding to the rapacity of strangers," cried the father, eyeing him askance.

The minstrel humbly turned aside, and, not far off, met old Roger Bertram. He was about to avoid him, when Roger, eyeing him narrowly, hobbled forward, for he could not run, and, taking him in his arms, exclaimed:

"My son—my own boy—my young master—and art thou really come back sound in limb and health? Thrice happy is this day."

The minstrel was no other than Sir Herbert de Beauville. He seemed too much broken in spirits even to laugh at the way Father Mathew had treated him. He had escaped, not without difficulty, after the defeat of the pretended Richard of York, who, acknowledging himself as Perkin Warbeck, had surrendered to the King. Herbert had now only one object on earth for which he desired to live—to establish the fair fame of Mistress Gertrude Alwyn; and he had resolved, he said, to trace out the author of the calumnies he had heard against her, or, if he could not do that, to punish every one who had been known to utter them.

It appeared that her disappointed suitor, Master Thomas Fisher, had been heard to repeat the evil reports concerning her. Here, then, was an object on whom he could wreak his vengeance. Master Fisher had, by means of the wealth which had fallen to him, been able to purchase a title and honours of the mercenary king, and he now gave himself all the airs of an old noble. When, therefore, Sir Herbert challenged him to mortal combat on account of words uttered against the fair fame of a damsel undeserving of such reproach, he was compelled to accept the challenge. Space does not permit a description of the combat. The newly-made baron was overthrown, and as Sir Herbert stood over him with his drawn sword, he confessed that he had himself, in revenge, inserted a small pebble in a hole under the rocking-stone, by which it became fixed and incapable of moving. On this Sir Herbert granted him his life, on condition that he should repeat the statement whenever he should so require him to do. He had it also made out in writing and duly attested, and, with this document in his hand, he set out to visit Master Alwyn and his dame. His heart sank within him when he learned from them that Mistress Gertrude was not their daughter, but the only child of the Earl of Fitz-Stephen, who had, by the sacrifice of a portion of his patrimony, which had gone into the king's

coffers, lately regained the remainder. His spirits, however, rose again when they encouraged him to hasten forthwith to, the earl’s castle and to try his fortune with the lady, showing her the document he had brought with him. He followed their advice; the Lady Gertrude received him in a way to satisfy his utmost hopes, and presented him to her father as the only person she would ever marry. They were accordingly wedded, and by living in privacy till the death of Henry, Sir Herbert escaped being implicated in the attempts made by the pretended Richard of York to gain the English crown.

Story 3--Chapter I.

STORY THREE—Reginald Warrender; or, Early Days at Eton.

“Reginald, my boy, I was at Eton myself, and, in spite of some drawbacks, I loved the old place right dearly, and so I intend to go with you, and to introduce you to all the spots I remember so well; but I don’t suppose any of my old acquaintance and chums are still to be found there. However, the very sight of the walls and towers of the school, the meadows, the river, and the Castle in the distance, will make me young again. You will find a good deal of difference between it and where you have been before. The discipline there is apt to take a good deal of pride and self-sufficiency out of a fellow—not that you have much of them, I hope. The tutor I have chosen for you, Mr Lindsay, is a first-rate man. You are to live in his house. I was at a dame’s—a real dame—a very good, old lady, though some are men you will find. There is much the same discipline and order kept in both. We will have our portmanteaus packed by Friday, so that we will sleep in London, and go down there on Saturday morning, that you may have the best part of that day and Sunday to look about you.”

These remarks were made by Squire Warrender to his son, who had hitherto been at a boarding-school, where he had received the first rudiments of his education.

Reginald thanked his father for his intentions.

“It will be very delightful to have you with me, papa,” he exclaimed; “it will not feel at all as if I were going to school; and, besides, Eton is the place of all others I wished to go to. I don’t much fear the fagging or the bullying, and I can take pretty good care of myself now.”

In truth Reginald had no longer any dread about going to school. He had accepted schooling as a necessity of boyish existence, and had made up his mind to endure all its ups and downs with equanimity. The day for their departure arrived. Mary, his sister, did not fail to promise to write as usual, and John assured his young master that he would take good care of Polly, his pony, and Carlo and the other dogs, and the ferrets, and all his other animate or inanimate treasures. Reginald had been disinclined to accept Mrs Dawson’s offer to fill a hamper with her stores; but the Squire recollected that in his time, at all events, such things were not looked on at all with contempt by the youngsters at Eton; so a hamper even better supplied than before was provided for him. The Squire and he started away in very good spirits, cutting jokes to the last as they drove off. They had no time to see sights in London, and early the next morning, after breakfast, they started off with all Reginald’s property for the Great Western station, and within an hour the latter found himself in the long-thought-of and often-pictured town of Eton. He looked out eagerly on either side as they drove along towards his tutor’s. So did the Squire, especially when they reached the High Street. Many a place did he seem to recognise.

“Ah! there it is just as it was,” he was continually exclaiming. “There’s my old sock-shop—*soake*, a local term for baking, is the better spelling. I spent money enough there, so perhaps they will remember me; so we will have a look in there by-and-by. Ah! there’s the Christopher too, where we will go and dine. I dare say Lindsay will ask us; but I must be back in town to-night, and it would delay me to accept his invitation, and perhaps we may fall in with some acquaintance whom you may like to ask to dine with us.” The Christopher was an hotel, Reginald found, much patronised by the boys and their friends. Mr Lindsay was in school, but Mrs Lindsay was at home, and received them very kindly. Reginald thought her a very nice person, and so she was, and contributed much, as a lady always can if she sets the right way about it, to make the house thoroughly comfortable and pleasant to its inmates. She told Reginald that his room was ready for him. How proud he felt to find that he was to have one entirely to himself! His things were at once taken up to it, and he begged the Squire to come up and have a look at it. It was not very large; but the walls were neatly papered, and it looked perfectly clean. Neither was the furniture of a grand description. There was a bedstead, which, when turned up, looked like a cupboard, and a sideboard of painted deal, a small oak chest of drawers, or rather a bureau, in the upper part of which cups and saucers, and plates, and a metal teapot, and a few knives and forks and a muffin-dish, were arranged, and there was a deal table covered with a red cloth, and two rather hard horsehair-bottomed chairs.

“Here we are, sir,” said Reginald, as the maidservant with considerable discretion retired, that the young gentleman might look about him. “Sit down and make yourself at home; I feel so already. The place has capabilities, and I hope that the next time you pay me a visit, you will find that I have taken advantage of them. I will get some pictures, and hang them up, and some pegs for my hats find fishing-rods, and hooks for my bats, and then a Dutch oven, and a frying-pan, and a better kettle than that will be useful in winter.”

“Perhaps you will not object to an arm-chair or a sofa,” observed the Squire.

“An arm-chair, certainly,” answered Reginald, “thank you; but with regard to a sofa, they are all very well for women. I think, however, that if a fellow’s legs ache, he may put them up on another chair, and if he has got an arm-chair to lean back in, he will do very well.”

“You are right, Reginald; I hate luxurious habits,” said the Squire. “Do not give way to them. They are not so bad in themselves as in consequence of what they lead to—self-indulgence and indolence: this is the vice of the present day. But come along, we have plenty to do.”

The Squire, leaving word that he would call again, took Reginald back into the town. They were getting hungry, so very naturally they proceeded in the first place to the well-remembered sock-shop, known by the world at large as a pastry-cook’s. A supply of ices and strawberry messes was at once ordered and discussed with great gusto, buns and other cakes giving some consistency to the repast. Who would have expected to see Squire Warrender, of Blessingham, who had not perhaps for years taken any other than a solid meat luncheon, with bottled stout, or a biscuit and a glass of wine, lunching off sweet cakes and strawberries and cream? But the truth was, that he did not feel just then a bit like Squire Warrender, of Blessingham; he was once more little Reginald Warrender, somewhat of a pickle, and very fond of those said luscious articles. To be sure another Reginald Warrender stood by his side; but he was, as it were, a part of himself, or it might he himself, or a younger companion. At all events he felt a great deal too young just then to be anybody’s father, and was quite surprised that the young women behind the counter did not recognise him. Surely they were the very same he must have known. While they were eating away, an old lady with spectacles on her nose, and a high white cap on her head, came into the shop.

“I have come with this youngster here to show him about the place,” said the Squire. “This is a shop I used to know well once upon a time; but the young ladies here don’t seem to recognise me.”

“I should think not,” said the old lady, laughing, as did the young ones. “Perhaps I might though, if I knew your name. What years were you here?”

The Squire told her.

“I was about their age then, and stood where they now stand,” she observed, as she went into an inner room, and brought down a longish parchment-covered volume. “Oh, I now remember you perfectly well, Master Warrender,” said she, turning over the pages, and evidently also forgetting how many years had rolled away since the Squire was Master Warrender. “You were a very good customer of ours, that you were, indeed. You had a good healthy appetite: six dozen oranges, three dozen queencakes, a couple of dozen hot-cross buns for breakfast on one occasion. I suppose you didn’t eat them all yourself though. And now I see you left owing us a little account. It was no great matter; only fifteen and sixpence for cherries and strawberries.”

“Sold, papa!” whispered Reginald, aside, and highly amused. “It is pleasant, however, to be able to pay off old scores.”

“I fear that the account is too correct,” said the Squire. “Let me see, how was it? Ah, I recollect—a wager, I am afraid. Cleveland and I. We tried to see which could eat the most in a given time. Don’t you go and do such a silly thing though, Reginald, or I’ll disinherit you. He ought to have paid, for I beat him; but I ordered them. Well, I will pay you now with interest.”

“Oh no, no, sir, thank you; I could not think of it,” said the old lady.

However, as she said the words in a tone which evidently did not mean that she positively would not receive the amount, the Squire pulled out a sovereign, and handed it to her.

“There is the sum with interest—very small interest though,” he observed. “I wish that I could pay all the debts of my younger days as easily.”

The old lady was highly pleased, and promised to stand Reginald’s friend, and to give him good advice whenever he would come to her.

“And I wish, sir,” said she, “that I could as easily get in all the debts owing to me.”

Thereon the Squire took occasion to impress very strongly on his son the importance of not running into debt. “If you cannot pay for a thing, you should not get it,” he remarked. “Never mind how much you may want it. You may fancy that you can pay some day; but before that day comes you will have wanted several other things, all of which have to be paid for out of this sum in prospect, which may possibly never come at all. Then one person will press for payment, and then another, and then you will think that there can be no harm in borrowing, and the chances are that you become the slave of the person from whom you borrow. Take my advice, Reginald, keep out of debt and be free. I have spoken only of worldly-wise motives for keeping out of debt, but it is morally wrong—it is dishonest. The Bible says, ‘Owe no man anything.’ That is right, depend on it. Some fellows fancy that it is fine and gentlemanly to run into debt, and that it is a spirited thing to bilk a tradesman. I think, and I am sure you will, that it is one of the most ungentlemanly and blackguardly things to deprive any man of his just rights, not to say unchristianlike and despicable.”

This conversation took place as the Squire and his son were walking towards the school-house. They walked about the noble edifice, under the fine arched gateway, and beneath its venerable walls. Then they looked out upon the rich green meadows, and the avenue of lofty elms, and Reginald thought it a remarkably fine place, and began already to feel proud at being able to call himself an Eton boy. As the boys were still “up,” that is, in school, the Squire proposed walking down the town to have a look at the Castle, and some of the old places on the way. As they

were leaving the building, they met an old man with a vehicle loaded with tarts and buns, and cakes of all sorts. As they passed close to him, he looked hard at the Squire, and said, “Beg pardon, sir, but I think I know you, sir, though it is a good many years since you ate any of my buns.”

“And I am very certain that I know you, old fellow,” answered the Squire, highly delighted. “You are Spankie himself, or I am very much mistaken.”

“You are right, sir, the same, and that young gentleman is your son just come up here; I should have known him in a moment from his likeness to you,” said old Spankie. “Never forget anybody I have once known. Now I think of it, were not you one of those young gentlemen who played the trick to Mr Fowler, I think it was, or one of the masters of his time? What a good joke it was! Ha, ha, ha!”

“What joke do you mean?” asked the Squire. “I remember no good joke that I ever played. I am afraid that I had not wits enough.”

“I’ll tell you, sir; if you were not one of them, it was somebody else,” answered old Spankie, who probably knew that well enough, but wanted to tell a good story to gain time that he might find out, if possible, who the old Etonian was—a fact of which he was in reality perfectly ignorant. “Two of the young gentlemen, tall big lads for their ages, took it into their heads to dress up as foreigners of distinction, with moustaches and beards, and corked eyebrows, and spectacles, and large shirt-collars, with no end of gold chains, and such flash waistcoats, all of satin, and covered over with green and yellow and pink flowers. One was a Greek prince, and the other a Polish count, travelling for the improvement of their own mind, and with the intention of establishing a great public school like Eton in Greece or Turkey, or some outlandish place or other. Well, there they were walking arm in arm through the High Street, looking into the shops and around them on every side, and stopping to admire the prospect whenever there was a prospect to admire, just for all the world like strangers who had never seen the place before. They caught sight of Mr Fowler coming along; so says one to the other, ‘Let’s sell him, and make him show us over the place.’ ‘Agreed,’ answers the other. They had been keeping up all their airs, and they knew that he had seen them, so they marched boldly up to him, and making him a polite bow, says one of them, ‘Saire, I see dat you are one academic gentleman, and if you will be kind to two strangers vill you have de great goodness to show us over dis grand, dis magnificent town?’ Mr Fowler, who was born and bred in Eton, and was very proud of it, was highly delighted, and said that he would have the greatest pleasure in doing what they wished. They knew that, and so they knew when to lay it on the thickest. And so didn’t they just praise the place and the masters, and everything they saw, and a great deal they said that they had heard, till he was quite beside himself. Then they began talking Greek and Latin to him, and if he hadn’t been so pleased he would have found them out. Then they asked all sorts of questions about the school, and he promised to write out all the rules and regulations, and the whole plan on which it was conducted, and a good deal of its history, and all his own ideas about founding a school. The more inclined they found him to write, the more questions requiring answers they plied him with; and ever after they boasted of the long imposition they had set him. They gave him an address of a friend of theirs in London, and begged him to send what he had written there. He did send it, and they got it too, and they used to show his lucubrations with no little pride, and all he had said about the school. He would have been in a rage had he found them out. They asked to see one of the houses just as they were passing their own tutor’s, with whom they knew he was intimate, and they actually made him show them their own rooms. It was a wonder they were not discovered, for there on the table in one of the rooms was a wig and a false pair of moustaches. They hurried out in a great fright, saying that they did not think it was right to intrude on the privacy of any young students. At last, when they had pretty well walked Mr Fowler off his legs, and got tired themselves, they wished him good-bye, with a profusion of thanks, and betook themselves to the Christopher. They had invited him to dine with them at an hour they knew he could not come—not but what they would have been very happy to see him, but they thought the risk was too great—he might have found them out eating. They had a jolly good dinner at the Christopher, and then they paid their bill and waited till dark, when they pulled off their moustaches and beards, and put on pea-coats, slipping out unobserved, and so got back safe to their rooms. One of them told me all about it afterwards, and I couldn’t help thinking you was him, sir.”

The Squire was milch amused, and encouraged old Spankie to continue his narrations.

“Well, sir, if it wasn’t you sold Mr Fowler so cleverly, it surely was you who got up the great donkey race on the Slough road, just outside Eton.”

“Suppose it was me, or suppose it was not, just do you tell my boy here all about it. I like to hear you speak of old times,” answered the Squire.

“Well, sir, the young gentlemen got hold of two fine donkeys, and turned out in regular jockey costume,—caps, silk jackets, top boots, and all. Great swells they looked, and there was no end of boys went out to see them. The whole road was full for a mile or more. A course was formed, and off they set; but donkeys never will run when you want them, or, rather, they always will run when you don’t want them. As ill-luck would have it, who should come by but the Doctor. He wasn’t a man a bit less than the present to play a joke with. What should one of the racers do but run right against his carriage, and make the horses kick and rear, and, in spite of all the unhappy jockey could do, he couldn’t get him away. The Doctor just saw who they were, and though it may be supposed he was in a towering rage, says he quietly enough, ‘Go to your tutors and report yourselves, and come to me this evening.’ Of course they knew that they would get flogged, and so one of them provided himself with a pair of wicket-keeping gloves, and went in quite boldly. ‘It’s my duty to flog you,’ says the Doctor—‘strip.’ ‘It’s my duty to save my skin,’ says the young gentleman, putting on his gloves quite deliberately; and when the Doctor began, he warded off all the cuts till the master grew weary. Then he handed them to his friend, who put them on and saved himself in the same way. Of course they got all the credit of being flogged, and were laughed at for their pains, till they told how they had saved themselves with their cricketing gloves.”

“Tell that story to the marines,” said the Squire. “However, I dare say some of it is true enough; but I wasn’t one of the jockeys, and I wouldn’t advise my son to imitate them either. However, old friend, I like to hear you talk of

bygone days, and here's a five shilling piece. Let my son take it out in buns and tarts when he has a mind to do so."

"Thank ye, sir, thank ye," said old Spankie, and the Squire walked on, knowing that he had secured another friend for Reginald. They hurried on to Windsor Castle, which had been much altered and beautified since the Squire had seen it, and certainly, rising up as it does from its richly-green forest, with its terraces and towers, it has a peculiarly handsome and regal appearance. When they got back, the boys were just coming out from two o'clock absence, and were running off to their dames' and tutors' houses. The Squire looked narrowly at them as they passed, to try and find the sons of any of his acquaintance who might be there. Had he written to ascertain the houses they belonged to, he would easily have discovered them. Suddenly Reginald left his father's side, and ran after a boy whose hand he seized and wrung warmly.

"What, Warrender, are you come here?" asked his friend.

"Indeed I am," answered Reginald; "but I had no notion that you were here, Power. How very fortunate I am to find you! But come along, I'll introduce you to my father. He'll want you to dine with us."

Of course Power was nothing loth to accept the invitation. He had come up just in time, before he was too old, and had at once taken a fair standing in the school, being in the upper division of the Fourth Form, and about to go into the lower remove. He was, too, in Reginald's own house, which was a very great satisfaction. The Squire at length found out the son of a friend of his—young Anson, and invited him to join his dinner-party at the Christopher. As he wanted to see the cricketing and boating in the afternoon, he had ordered dinner early; and, saying he might not exactly know what Eton boys of the present day liked, he had left the selection of the dishes to the landlord. A very merry party they were seated round the dinner-table at the Christopher, and ample justice did they all do to the dinner provided. The Squire wished to give the boys the best of everything, so he ordered champagne and claret.

"Wine?" said Anson, looking at Power.

The latter nodded, and with due gravity they hobnobbed together, tossing off the sparkling contents of their tall glasses.

"Very good wine they give at the Christopher," observed Anson to the Squire; "in my opinion, this Château Margaux claret is about as first-rate tipple as one finds anywhere."

"I fancied their Lafitte was better, and ordered it accordingly," answered the Squire, much amused at his young friend's remarks.

"Oh, certainly, I am very glad of that," quickly replied Anson. "The fact is, I had not tasted their Lafitte, and supposed that they could have nothing better than their Château Margaux."

"Try this, then," said the Squire, pushing a bottle of freshly-decanted claret towards him; "say what you think of it."

"Perfect nectar," answered the young gentleman, smacking his lips. "This beats the other hollow. I must row mine host for not giving us his best wine the last time I dined with my uncle here."

"We were not so particular in my days," observed the Squire; "good honest port and sherry sufficed us. But I tell you what, lads, stick to the light wines, and a moderate quantity of them will do you no harm; but eschew spirits-and-water, or spirits in any shape, as you would poison, and when you drink beer, don't go swilling away huge quantities, as I see some fellows doing, as if their insides were mere tuns made to hold liquor. Just look at the great, fat, pursy, bloated fellows you often meet, and think how you would like to become as they are. Well, they brought themselves to that state by swilling beer and spirits-and-water. Others have sent themselves to their graves by the same means, and others, though not pursy, have lost their health and stamina, and spirits, and are burdens to themselves, and useless in the world."

Reginald used to say of his father that he did not preach much, but that he had a wonderful way of bringing in good advice, and sugaring it at the same time. In the present instance he was washing down a temperance harangue with champagne and claret. He knew that his advice would much more likely be taken than if he had ordered toast-and-water and small beer for dinner.

In very good humour with themselves, with the world in general, and with Eton in particular, which Reginald thought a first-rate place indeed, they sallied forth into the playing-fields, where several cricket matches were going on. One, Oppidans against Collegers, excited most interest, because there always is, though there ought not to be, a good deal of party-feeling between the collegers, the boys on the foundation, and those who are not; the latter, who are more frequently sons of men of wealth and influence, looking down upon those who have gained their position by their talents and industry. The broad smooth green meadows, with the fine grey school buildings, and their magnificent trees rising up behind them, presented a very gay and animated appearance. Numbers of boys in their picturesque cricketing costumes were lying about in all directions—England's nerve and spirit, and head and heart—those who were hereafter to head her armies and guide her councils. Little wotted they then of the destinies in store for some of them. A stranger might have said, as he saw their active forms bounding here and there—There is England's bone and muscle. So there was, but that is to be found rather in her wide fields, in her mines, her coal-pits, on her broad quays, in her manufactories, in her towns, and on her railroads. The different games were sufficiently apart, so as not to interfere with each other. Round each of the scorers knots of amateurs were collected, watching the game with intense interest, and applauding or condemning, as each hit was well or ill made or fielded. At a respectful distance from the wide-flying balls, a number of ladies, and children, and nurses, and other spectators, wandered about admiring the play or the cricketers.

"Come along here," said Power to the Squire and Reginald, as he led them up to one of the best spots for witnessing the sport; "it's a hard-run game—well hit, Hawkins—beautifully run!—he's my tutor's pupil—the others will have hard

work to get him out—I've known him score twice as many as any other fellow in the eleven—bravo, Langdale!—a first-rate hit—well fielded, too—he'll get caught out though—he often does—he hits too wildly."

So Power ran on. The Squire at once entered into the spirit of the game. He clapped his hands as enthusiastically as any boy. "Capitally hit!—Smartly run!" he shouted. "Reggie, my boy, I wish that you were playing. Well done! Who is that tall fellow with the light hair? He caught out Langdale in fine style. You said he would be caught out."

"Oh, that's Gull, an Oppidan," answered Power; "he's one of their best fielders. Who is going in next, I wonder? Beaumont, I see. Ah, he's one of our crack players."

"Beautiful! beautiful!" shouted the Squire, as other hits were made. "Capital—first-rate—bravo—bravo—well run—a superb hit!"

His animated remarks soon drew the attention of the boys towards him. When they heard from Anson that he was an old Etonian, they regarded him with a respect he might not otherwise have obtained, and all were eager to show him any attention in their power. They went on end had a look at the other games, and at last the hour came when it was necessary for the Squire to turn his steps towards the station. He had also on his way there to introduce Reginald to his tutor, Mr Lindsay. Old Spankie had been looking out for them. He had seen Power with him, and thus learned his name and all about him.

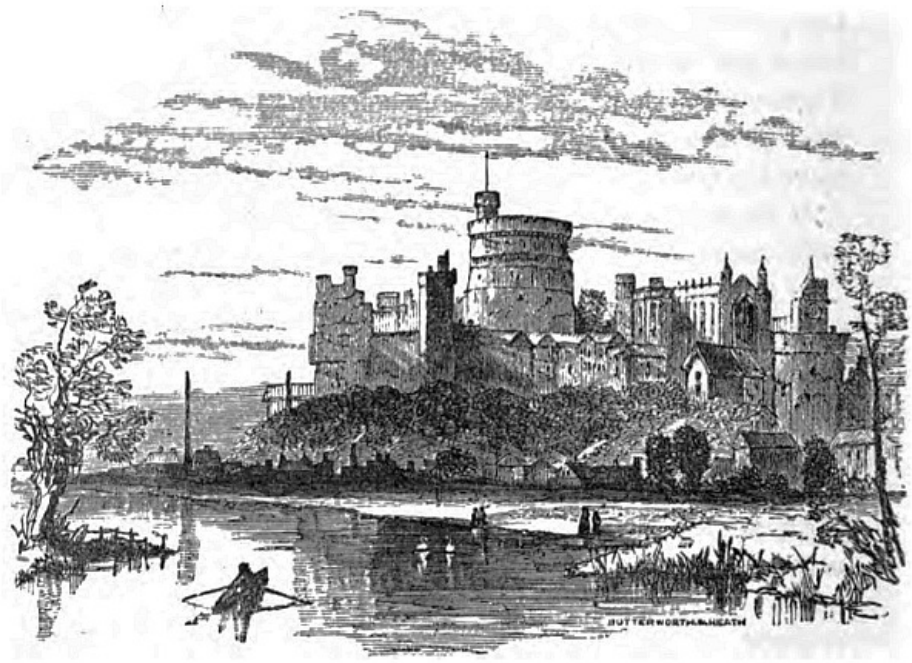
"Ah, Mr Warrender," quoth the man of buns and tarts; "it's a great pleasure to feel that you remembered me, as well as I remembered you. The moment I set my eyes on that young gentleman, I was certain that he was your son. If he had come alone, I should have known that his name was Warrender."

This assertion was even more than the Squire could well swallow.

"I used to find your buns more digestible than your word; I hope they are so now," he answered, laughing.

The Squire did not forget a good thing when he said it himself, and this saying was many a time afterwards repeated to his own infinite satisfaction at Blessingham. He was able most conscientiously to introduce Reginald with a very good character to Mr Lindsay, who being a good physiognomist, was satisfied that he had got a tractable pupil. The three boys accompanied the Squire to the station. Reginald did not feel a particle of sadness till just as the Squire was getting into the carriage, and then a suffocating sensation rose up in his throat which made him feel that he must have a good hearty cry—not for himself, but it was a reminder of how much he loved his father. Away rattled, and puffed, and smoked, and steamed the train, and Reginald Warrender was left to his own resources.

Story 3--Chapter II.



Reginald, with Power and Anson, as soon as they had seen the Squire off, hurried back to the Brocas—some fields on the banks of the river. The rapidly-flowing stream passes by them, and on its smooth but somewhat sedgy current all sorts of boating were taking place, and Reginald was quickly initiated into a knowledge of the variety of craft used by the boys. As he was very well up to boating, he found no difficulty in the matter.

"Here, you see," said Power, "we have one ten-oared and six eight-oared boats. Any boy in the Fifth form may join them. There is another upper and four lower Fifth-Form boats. We speak of the three upper and four lower boats. There is a captain for each of them, and he selects his crew from among the fellows who wish to join. You observe that the crew of each boat has a different uniform, and on grand occasions, when all appear in full dress, we flatter ourselves that we appear to great advantage. Besides these, there are what we call outriggers, and tunnies, and tubs; and, of course, you will at once have one of them."

"Which do you intend to be, Warrender, a 'dry bob,' or a 'wet bob'?" said Anson, coming up to them. "I hope the

latter."

Reginald did not exactly know what this meant; but as Anson had given him a hint, he answered, "Oh, of course a wet bob."

"Oh, ah, that's the swell thing. I am glad of it. I thought you were the sort of fellow for wet-bobbing."

Reginald found that wet-bobbing consisted in paddling about in a boat of one's own, even though it might be only a "tub," or dinghy.

"But, I say, can you swim?" asked Anson; "because you know that you will not be able to boat till you have 'passed.'"

"What's passing?" asked Reginald.

"Oh, I'll tell you," said Anson. "A good number of fellows from time to time got drowned from boats being capsized, and at last a law was passed that no fellow should be allowed to boat till he had passed a swimming examination before certain of the masters. We have an old waterman, Harry Cannon, who teaches the lower boys to swim at Cuckoo Weir. As soon as he thinks a fellow can swim well enough he advises him to have a try the next passing day. It's great fun to see the weather-beaten old fellow Harry in his Eton blue coat and Eton arms worked in silver on his sleeve, as he sits in his punt from one end to the other of a summer's day, dangling lower boys at the end of a short blue pole. Often fellows, if they have any pluck, can swim in two or three weeks. They make nothing of bathing three times a day in summer when they are learning to swim. Just go any warm summer day to Cuckoo Weir, after twelve, or after four, or after six, and you'll find it crowded with fellows bathing, and many of them waiting till Harry can give them a turn in his belt. On a passing day two or three of the masters come down and take their stand just above 'Middle Steps.' A punt then carries out a number of shivering and rather funking fellows into the middle of the stream, and as the master gives the word, one after another jumps overboard, and according to his pluck takes a 'rat's header' or 'forter.' Then away they swim to the lower steps, and if they get there in safety and in pretty good style, they have to swim out again from where the master is standing, turn, and come back when he calls. If they sing out like Caesar, 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink,' they are handed over again to Harry Cannon for further instruction; but if the master says 'You'll do,' then the chances are that some of the friends of the fellow who has passed have come up in a boat, and they say that they will take him down to the Brocas if he will steer them. The probabilities are, that he knows nothing about steering, and as little about the sides of the river he ought to keep; so, of course, he will run them into the bank once or twice, if not oftener, before they get into the real river at 'Bargeman's Bridge,' and he is certain to get in the way of an eight just below Brocas Clump, from not crossing over soon enough. But you'll know all about this before long, so I needn't have told you, except that it is useful to know what you have to go through. I forgot to tell you that the bathing-place to which the fifth form go is called Athens, and of course it is a good deal better than Cuckoo Weir."

Reginald thanked Anson very much for his graphic account of their bathing and boating, and he said that he should, thanks to Toby Tubb's instruction, get passed on the first passing day, that he might at once begin boating.

This resolution was very much applauded, for both Power and Anson were warm advocates of boating. It was now nearly lock-up time, so they had to go back to their tutors. On their way Reginald was accosted by a number of boys, who, in pretty sharp tones, inquired his name.

"Are you at a dame's house?"

"No; I am in Mr Lindsay's house," he answered.

"I say, are you come to school here? What's your name, then?" asked another. "What house are you in?"

Reginald told him. So on it went till nearly a hundred boys had made the same inquiries, and received the same answer. Reginald was not sorry to get back to Mr Lindsay's, for he was really beginning to get tired, and be a little hungry, too, in spite of his dinner at the Christopher. Power and Anson came to his room to help him put it in order; but he had a considerable number of other visitors, mostly Fourth-Form boys, who came in to ask him his name, and to make him tell all about himself.

"I knew a Warrender," said one. "Are you his cousin? He was a fellow with a hooked nose and hawk's eyes."

"Warrender you mean," put in another; "Warrender who was here was a very good-looking fellow, only he squinted with one eye, and never could parse a line of Horace correctly."

Reginald said that he had no cousin that he knew of, though he might possibly be related to the talented individual spoken of. The answers he made to the very miscellaneous and unexpected questions put to him satisfied them that the new boy was no "muff." The lower boys especially felt a great respect for him, because he acted in so very different a way from what they had done, and took all things so completely us matters of course. He went into Power's room to take tea, where Anson and two or three other fellows of Power's standing joined them. He was in the lower Fifth Form. Shortly before bed-time they went down to the hall to supper. Here he, of course, had again to reply to the various questions put to him by boys he had not before met. Then Mr Lindsay invited him to come and have some conversation, and seemed tolerably satisfied by the answers he made to all the questions put to him. A bell then rang, and the names of all the boys belonging to the house being called over by one of the praepositors, to ascertain that none were missing, prayers were read by Mr Lindsay, after which all the boys retired to their rooms to go to bed. Reginald, as may be supposed, very quickly tumbled into his, and went to sleep. Thus ended the first day at Eton.

At his age we are apt to count time by days, and to note especially the events of each day. As we grow older, we reckon oftener by weeks—advancing, we think it enough to note what has happened during each month, till at last

the years themselves slip by with almost the rapidity, we fancy, of our earlier days. Two important things with reference to this remark should be remembered when we are young. One is, that we must prepare for the future, or the future which we have fancied so far off will come suddenly and find us unprepared; another is, that we should learn to wait patiently for events till they occur, being assured that they will occur, and that we should, in the meantime, endeavour to employ ourselves to the best possible advantage. Many a young man fancies that it is not worth while preparing for what cannot happen for so long a time; or again, that the time has already passed for doing a thing, and that it is useless to attempt it. This is especially the case with regard to commencing some useful employment, or preparing for a profession. It is never too late to be employed usefully. Many a man has risen high in a profession into which he has not entered till late in life.

Sunday is truly a day of rest at Eton. Reginald found that he was not expected to get up till nearly nine o'clock. As he was always an early riser, he was dressed before eight, and set to work systematically to unpack his clothes and to put them away. Then he sat down to read, and the book he read every boy will do well to read, not only on Sundays, but on other days in the week. After he had read a couple of chapters, he found that he had still some time to spare, so he arranged the books he had brought on some book-shelves hanging against the wall, and then Power came in and told him that he must come and breakfast with him. Prayer bell next rang, and all the boys in the house assembled in the hall, when, as usual, Mr Lindsay read prayers.

Reginald was much surprised to find so many big fellows either in the sixth form, or in the upper Middle-Fifth—from fifteen years old up to nineteen and even twenty—in every respect full-grown men. As he looked at them he thought to himself, "I suppose that I shall have to be fag to some of those big fellows—clean their boots, and brush their clothes. Well, patience; many a better fellow than I am has done the same thing, and not been the worse for it. Whoever fags me shall not have to complain that I am in a sulky pet—that I'm determined." Prayers over, they all hurried to breakfast.

Reginald accompanied Power to his room, where three or four other fellows were assembled. He was scarcely prepared for the capital repast he found spread. There were a couple of cold chickens and a tongue, some potted meat or other, and his well-known acquaintance, a pot of orange marmalade, one of strawberry jam, and some honey. There were both tea and coffee, a good allowance of butter (there is a regular quantity served out), and a large pile of hot rolls,—three, he found, being served every day to each boy.

Breakfast occupied nearly an hour, and very pleasant Reginald found it. He then had to get ready for morning chapel at eleven.

"I am glad to see that you have brought a couple of good hats," observed Power. "I was afraid that you might have thought that you could go about Osberton fashion in a cap or tarpaulin. We here, you see, never wear anything but black hats, except with cricketing and boating dresses. Remind me to have a look at your other things to see that they are all right. It's as well to be particular. If you are, you'll take a good standing at once in the school among the fellows: better by half be a dandy than a sloven or a muff."

On their way to chapel Reginald was accosted continually as on the day before by fellows asking his name and all sorts of questions, but he had a ready and a good-natured answer for all.

He did not think that there was much devotion at chapel, especially as a great number of the boys came provided with a store of sacking things, with which they were continually filling their mouths, such as lollipops, sugar-candy, barley-sugar, and other sweet compositions.

It is extraordinary what an amount of these inside-deranging mixtures, supplied by the renowned Spankie and other men at the Wall, lower boys at Eton will consume. The Wall, *par excellence*, Reginald soon found out is a low wall in front of the upper school, outside the school-yard. "The men at the Wall" are sellers of "sock;" that is, eatables—sweet mixtures generally. They are so called from usually taking their stand there. Old Spankie has been described as a soft-tongued fat old man, who professed to know about everything and about everybody. He carries a tin, and deals mostly in buns and jam. Another man wheels in a hand-cart after every school-time, from which he produces ices, strawberry messes, and sucking-things of all sorts.

"You remember the Squire's advice," observed Power; "I adhere to his principles, but all the fellows don't. It is extraordinary how they will run into debt with those men, and more than anticipate their next half-year's pocket-money—little geese that they are. It enrages me to see some of them sucking and eating away all the day long, as if that was their chief object in life. I call them sucking babies, but it would be difficult to break them of the practice. I have known fellows at the beginning of the half obliged to dodge those cake-men as if they were bum-bailiffs and they gentlemen in difficulties, either going into the school-yard by the lower school passage, or else sneaking in close behind a master, knowing that they would not attempt to attack them in his presence. It is extraordinary what some of them will eat. I was once fagged by two Fifth-Form boys who were 'staying out,' that is, supposed to be too unwell to go into school, and what do you think it was for? You would scarcely believe me when I tell you that these sick fellows, and I suppose that there was something the matter with them, had laid a wager one against the other, that they would eat six dozen oranges a-piece. The one who could not manage it was, of course, to be the loser. The two dozen I got them was, I know, the fifth instalment. One ate rather more than six dozen, the other was very sick when he had finished the fifth; but you may depend on it, both of them had to 'stay out' for two or three days after it, and to take no end of medicine."

"I should think so, nasty pigs!" exclaimed Reginald, who, although he could make very good play with his knife and fork at dinner or breakfast, had a great contempt for sweatmeat and sugar-plum eaters.

"You are right," said Power. "Those sort of fellows are mere gratifiers of a low animal propensity, like the unlicked cubs of a bear, who will steal sugar wherever they can find it. I never put much confidence in such fellows, and I wish Etonians could be cured of the habit."

Reginald was very anxious to have an insight into the plan of the school arrangements, and Power undertook to enlighten him.

“In the first place,” he observed, “you must understand that there is the Lower School, and whatever the boys belonging to it may think of themselves, it is but a very insignificant appendage to the establishment of Eton. It is generally composed of small boys, who have been to no other school. It is, indeed, more of a private school with none of the advantages of one, and all the disadvantages of a public school. So I will say no more about it, and you, at all events, will not belong to it. The Upper School, which is really Eton, is divided, in the first place, into Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Forms. The Fourth Form is again separated into two parts—the lowest retains its name, and the other is called the Remove. The Fourth Form is subdivided into Lower, Middle, and Upper, and the Remove into Lower and Upper. The Fifth Form is also divided into Lower, Middle, and Upper, and these divisions are again subdivided according to convenience, usually into three divisions each. The Sixth Form consists of twenty fellows, namely, ten Oppidans and ten Collegers. The boys on the foundation are called Collegers: the management of the College and the Collegers is a very complicated matter. They are the fellows you see going about in heavy black cloth gowns. They go by the name of ‘Tugs,’ which is short for tug muttons, because they used, it is said, to be fed on tough mutton. The lower boys treat Tugs with great contempt, because they look down upon them as belonging to an inferior class. This they should not do, and it is arrant folly into the bargain; for many a Tug has risen to be a Lord Chancellor, or to fill one of the highest offices of the State, while the self-satisfied Oppidan, who has snubbed him as a boy, has ended his days as a sub in a marching regiment, having run through all his property before he was of age. High up in the school there is a good deal of party-feeling indulged in by fellows who ought to know better. It comes out when ‘Collegers and Oppidans’ are being played, either at football or cricket.”

“I do not think that I shall ever be able to remember all about the Fourth and Fifth Forms and Removes,” said Reginald.

“Here you have it in black and white, then,” said Power. They were sitting in his room after chapel, enjoying that *otium cum dignitate* which an Etonian learns so well to value.

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1. Lower School, composed of small boys neither learned nor wise.

Fourth Form: 2. Lower. 3. Middle. 4. Upper.

Remove. 5. Lower. 6. Upper.

Fifth Form.

7. Lower, with about three divisions.

8. Middle, with about three divisions.

9. Upper, with about three divisions.

10. Sixth Form, composed of ten Oppidans and ten Collegers.

“When a fellow like you, for instance, arrives first, if he has been at a good private school, his tutor examines him. If he thinks well of him he is placed in the Upper Fourth, or perhaps in the Remove at once. If he is not above the average, he joins the Lower Fourth, with the rest of the unplaced. He remains in it till ‘Trials,’ which come off about a month after the beginning of the half. According to his knowledge, he is then placed finally in the Lower, Middle, or Upper Fourth. Now you must understand that although Fourth Form is in the Upper School, yet all below Fifth Form, that is, Upper and Lower Remove, and Fourth Form, are called ‘Lower Boys.’ All Lower Boys are liable to be fagged, so that ‘Lower Boy’ is equivalent to ‘Fag.’ Lower Fourth is generally in the hands of a young master, and, like puppies not yet broken in, they are consequently very disorderly. There are also always a few fellows at the top of the division who have come out of Lower School, and take considerable delight in putting the new-comers up to mischief. New-comers have a fortnight’s ‘law’ before they are liable to be fagged. This is to give them time to look about them, and to learn the ways of the school. At the end of that time the captain of their house allots them to some master. As to fagging, I decidedly say in a large school like this it is a very great advantage, and wonderfully assists the governing powers by giving a number of fellows who would otherwise be idle something to do. It teaches, also, fellows to take care of themselves, as well as some accomplishments which they may find very useful in after-life, when they come to knock about the world. After all, too, what are the hardships? A fellow has to lay his master’s cloth for breakfast, get his muffins and eggs, make his tea and his toast, and be ready to cook a mutton chop and anything else he may require. He may also have to clean his shoes and brush his clothes, but in that there is nothing very terrible. The only disagreeable part of house fagging is being sent out at odd hours or in bad weather to get things when a fellow would be rather sitting in his own room. There is no cricket or football fagging here, but out of doors a Fourth Form boy is liable to be fagged by any one in the Upper or Middle Fifth Form, either to run on errands, to buy things for him, or to stand behind a Five’s court, and to pick up the balls, or to carry books for him. This may be called miscellaneous fagging. The captain of Upper Remove is excused fagging by custom. Lower Fifth neither fags nor can be fagged. ‘Upper Lower’ can fag miscellaneously, but cannot own private fags. Middle Fifth seldom have fags ‘of their own,’ as the captain of their house probably appropriates three or four, and gives the second captain two or three, and so on, and thus uses up the ‘Lower boys,’ before they come to the end of the Upper Fifth. The most unpleasant fagging certainly is behind the ‘Five’s walls.’ The old ones, you will find, are between the chapel buttresses in the school yard. You are fortunate in having come up in the middle of the half, because you will have time to become known to fellows, and will be saved a considerable amount of annoyance. If you had come at the beginning of the half, you would have found that the Fifth Form arrived two or three days after you. The next day all the Lower boys are collected together, and are then allotted to the Fifth Form, as I have described. The Fourth Form are made to do the greater part of their lessons under their tutor’s eye, but boys higher up in the school do nearly all their work in their

own rooms, and only just go over it with their tutor when it is known. This, of course, is a great advantage, as we can learn all our lessons when we like, and are not tied down in any way.

“There are two examinations—one from Upper Fourth into Lower Remove; and the second, which is the hardest, from Lower Fifth into Upper and Lower Fifth. A boy takes a step upwards twice a year, unless he should be plucked at one of these examinations; so that suppose he is placed in the Middle Fourth—about the average place occupied by a new boy—it will take him two years to get into Lower Fifth, the ambition of every one, as he is then, as I have said, exempted from fagging.

“Every saint’s day here is a whole holiday. Saturday is always a half-holiday, and there is one other half-holiday every week; so that the number of hours we are in school is very limited. Yet it is so contrived that we have at no time but a little over two hours to ourselves. On whole holidays there are two chapels—one at eleven o’clock, and another at three o’clock. There is a roll-call at two o’clock, just before dinner, and another at six o’clock.

“Generally speaking, we get up at half-past seven. There is school for three-quarters of an hour. We have repetition usually for most days in the week. Breakfast always at nine. School at eleven, as also at three, and a quarter-past five. School lasts only about three-quarters of an hour at a time. Dinner always at two. Lock-up at night varies from five to a quarter to nine. We have supper at nine, and go to bed at ten. So you see, in the natural order of events, we have no very overpoweringly hard work. The time from morning school to breakfast is known as ‘After Eight,’ because, you see, we come out of school at eight. From breakfast till school again, ‘After Ten,’ because breakfast is supposed to be over at ten; and for the same reason from school to dinner is called ‘After Twelve,’ from dinner to school ‘After Two,’ from school to school ‘After Four,’ and in summer from school till lock-up ‘After Six.’ There is, I should have said, also every week one play after four, which means three o’clock school, but none at five o’clock. On half-holidays there is ‘absence,’ that is, calling over names at two o’clock, and in summer at six; and on half-holidays there is church at three instead of school. On whole holidays there is ‘absence’ at a quarter-past nine, and church at eleven as well as at three.

“Of late years, mathematics, which used to be neglected entirely, have, with great advantage, been introduced at Eton. There are several mathematical masters, who have their different schools. Each division goes to the mathematical school three times a week. At first the fellows set their faces very much against the system, and even the classical masters didn’t seem much to approve of the innovation; but they now all see the importance of it, and mathematical studies are now as popular as any other. The Reverend Stephen Hawtrey is the principal. Donkeys may sneer and bray at him, which donkeys always find it very easy to do; but a more philanthropical, kind-hearted, sensible, and religious man is not to be found. I remember when the mathematical schools were first opened, the fellows tried to cough down the masters when they began to lecture. They got also cat-calls, penny-trumpets, and all sorts of things to make a noise, and then had strings made fast to them, which they carried up their sleeves. Scarcely had the masters begun to speak than they commenced their row. Now one of the masters was an old naval officer who had been to Cambridge, and not at all a sort of person to play tricks with. They tried it on once or twice with him, and he seemed not to take much notice of their proceedings. His eye, however, was marking those who were making most noise, and in the midst of the greatest row down he pounced upon them, and, feeling for the strings inside their waistcoats, made a grand seizure of penny-trumpets, whistles, cat-calls, and similar musical instruments. He told them quietly that he did not wish to have any of them flogged, but that if it occurred again he should desire the praepositor to put them ‘in the bill.’ This is, as you will find, for a fellow to have his name written on a slip of paper, and sent up to the Head Master. The fellow whose name is in the bill is told ‘to wait,’ which means that he is to go to the Head Master’s room after school to be flogged. It is an unpleasant operation, and a fellow looks thoroughly foolish when he comes down after it, and his friends kindly ask him how he likes it—what he thinks of it—how he feels? On the occasion I am speaking of, the fellows did try it on again the very next day of attendance, and half a dozen of them got a good flogging for their pains. After that they behaved with much more quietness.”

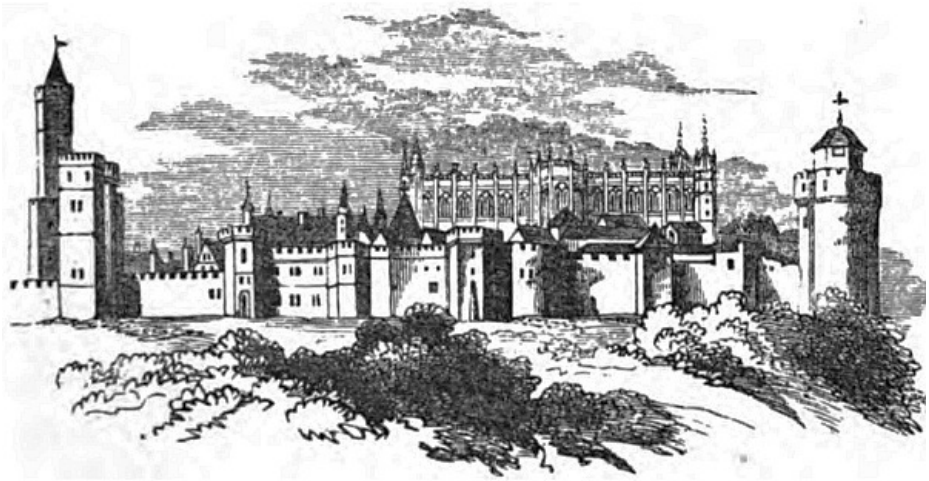
While they were talking, Anson came in.

“There is one more point I have to tell you about,” said he, “and very important too: it is as to the rules of ‘shirking.’ You must know that everywhere except just in college,—that is, about the school, and in the playing-fields, or on the way to your dame’s or tutor’s,—is ‘out of bounds.’ Therefore, if you meet a master, you have to get out of his way into some hiding-place. In the country you get under a hedge or behind a wall. In the town you run into a shop, and if you do this at once, so as to show respect to the master, very few will say anything to you, though they see you as clearly as possible, and know perfectly well who you are. The Sixth Form need not shirk, as they may go anywhere. Of course, there are certain places if a fellow is seen in, a master will follow him, otherwise he never attempts to do so.

“There is a small house just outside the bounds, where the people are licensed to sell beer. It is called the Tap. It is used almost exclusively by us. If a fellow is caught going in or out, he is pretty severely punished, and yet no master ever thinks of coming in to look for us. Not long, ago a number of our fellows were in the passage, when who should walk in but one of the masters to order some beer for himself. He couldn’t with a very good conscience punish us, so he took not the slightest notice of us, though we made sure he would. To our great satisfaction, away he walked again as if we had not been there. They keep there a long glass, which is brought out and emptied on important occasions by certain fellows, such as the winners of the pulling or sculling races—the eleven who have gained a well-contested match. It is a long tube with a bulb at the bottom, and holds about a pint and a half. Its contents must be drunk off without stopping to take breath, and the difficulty is when one gets down to the bulb to prevent it all rushing out at once, and running over one: a fellow stands by and marks the time one takes to drink the contents. I must take you there some day. There are several places of the sort up the river, where we are pretty well known. I must introduce you also to our favourite liquor, and I think that you will agree with me that it is first-rate. We call it ‘Shandy Gaff.’ It’s a mixture of beer and ginger-beer in equal portions, and on a hot day I know nothing more refreshing.”

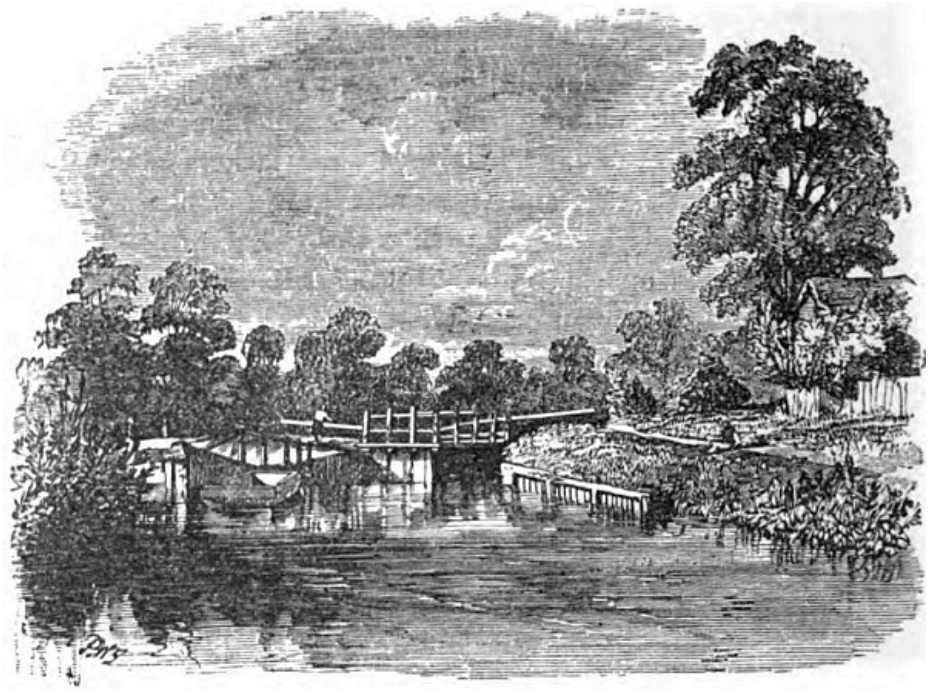
“I feel as if I knew all about Eton already,” said Reginald; “you have told me so much.”

His friends laughed. “There are a good many more things which you will have to learn not yet dreamed of in your philosophy,” answered Power. “I haven’t told you anything yet about our games—football, cricket, running, jumping, steeple-chasing. They are very different from those at most private schools. It will take you the best part of a year to learn all the rules of football alone. It will take you nearly as long before you know all the regulations about boating. However, now, when Eton is in its glory, is the time of the year to pick up all that sort of information. We think more of play than lessons, and even the masters never expect to get more than the regular schoolwork out of the boys. You’ll probably stay on till you have worked your way up to Sixth Form, which just now perhaps looks at a very unapproachable distance. I forgot to tell you that the Sixth Form have the power of setting ‘poenas;’ Collegers sometimes do it, and are thought great ‘brutes’ for so doing. Oppidans rarely ever use their power. It assists them somewhat in keeping the Lower boys in order. You’ll observe, too, how particular we are about our costume. Those who wear jackets always keep to black ties, and those who have taken to tail-coats invariably appear in white ties. These sorts of customs may appear trifles, but they all contribute to keep up discipline and order in the school. I, at first, thought them very nonsensical; I now see their use.”



Reginald, when he went to his snug little room that night, thought that he knew a great deal more about Eton than he did in the morning; and though he was glad to be there, he felt altogether thankful that he had not come at an earlier age.

Story 3--Chapter III.



The important day arrived when Reginald was to be examined by his tutor, that it might be ascertained where he was to be placed in the school. He got up before the bell rang, soused his head thoroughly in cold water, and, having sponged himself all over, dressed briskly, and sat down to look over some of the books he knew. He was pretty well up in Greek as well as in Latin, though he had not gone very deep into the intricacies of either language. Mr Nugent, his tutor, had grounded him well also in mathematics, so that he was in no particular fright as to the result of his examination. He wanted, however, to be as well placed as possible, if the truth might be known, to get out of fagging as soon as he could.

After prayers, Mr Lindsay told him to come to his room with his books. He went there with a good heart also. His Latin construing and parsing seemed to satisfy his tutor, and then he read some Greek. Mr Lindsay looked pleased. This encouraged him. He went over book after book with perfect ease. The chances are, that he knew less than many a

boy who had passed a much worse examination; but he had the advantage of possessing well-strung nerves, and of not feeling that he was doing anything dreadful or out of the way. Whatever he did know he recalled at once to his memory. He had also no wish to pretend to know more than he did. All was perfectly natural with him. His head and his voice were clear, and so on he went without the slightest hesitation. Had he been suddenly asked to sing a song which he knew, he could have done so with ease.

“You have got through very well,” said Mr Lindsay; “I am happy to say that I shall be able to get you very satisfactorily placed.”

Reginald was not a little pleased. He would have liked to ask “Where?” but he thought that might not be etiquette; so he restrained his curiosity, and ran off with a light stop to deposit his books in his room, and afterwards to join Power at breakfast, with a remarkably good appetite.

“Where do you think I shall be, though?” he asked more than once. Power guessed, but did not like to run the risk of disappointing him, so wisely would not give an opinion. At last, a short time before eleven o’clock, he set off with Mr Lindsay to make his *début* in school. He was left by himself in the school-yard while Mr Lindsay, as did most of the masters, went into “Chambers,” to have a talk with the Doctor. He felt for a moment a little forlorn, standing in that wide place with so many boys around him, and yet not one he could call a friend or even an acquaintance; for neither Power nor Anson had yet come.

The boys now began to pour into the school-yard. Many came up to him and began the old standard questions.

“What’s your name?” asked one; “any relation of Warrender at Rowley’s?”

“No,” answered Reginald. “I have had no relation here since my father was at Eton, that I know of.”

“Oh, yes—but surely you’re a cousin of Tom Jones?” observed one who was looked upon as a great wag.

“I am not aware that I have that honour,” answered Reginald.

Several similar questions he had to answer, which he did in perfect good humour. At last a big, hulking fellow, who looked as if he had got fat on sucking-things, rolled up to him. There was something in the boy’s air which reminded him wonderfully of a bully at his former school.

“How are you, Master Jones?” said the fellow, with a supercilious look.

“Pretty well, Tommy Green,” answered Reginald, giving him back glance for glance.

“How dare you call me Green!” exclaimed the big boy, looking angry.

“Because you have a remarkably verdant hue about you,” answered Reginald, who felt galled by the tone of bullying superiority assumed by the other.

The big boy’s rage at the unusual impudence of a new fellow instantly blazed forth. “Take that for your pains, young one!” he cried out, giving Reginald a blow on the chest; “and that—and that—and that.”

Reginald was for a moment staggered, but instantly recovering himself, he flew at the big fellow, and returned the blows with interest.

“A mill—a mill—a mill!” was the cry, and fellows rushed up from all parts of the yard, and closely surrounded the combatants. Reginald defended himself as well as he could from his big antagonist, who, fortunately, though evidently inclined to bully, was no great adept in the science of pugilism. At another time Reginald would have fought with the hope of victory; now his chief object was to defend his face, so that he might not have to make his appearance before the Doctor with a black eye or a bleeding nose. He made up for want of size and weight, and science also, for he had not much of it, by his activity, and consequently the big fellow exhausted his strength by frequently striking at the air, when he thought that he was going to put in an effective blow. As Reginald’s courage and coolness manifested themselves, he gained plenty of supporters, and he soon guessed that his opponent was no great favourite. The exclamations and cries in his favour every moment grew warmer and warmer. This encouraged him, or rather, for he did not want much encouragement, discouraged the other. He continued fighting as cautiously, but commenced more aggressive operations, very much to the astonishment of the big fellow, who had fancied that he was going to gain an easy victory,—in fact, intended to give the new-comer a thrashing for his impudence.

“Well done! well done! Famously hit! Bravo! Pitch into him, little one!” were the exclamations over and over again repeated by his friends; while the opposite party kept shouting, “Go it, Cicester!—Give it him soundly!—Hit him hard!” Cirencester, however, did not seem to be very successful in putting this advice into execution, and impartial observers were of opinion that Warrender was getting the best of it, when the cry was raised of “All up—all up!” and the masters were seen coming out of the Doctor’s door. After stopping a minute to have a short chat together, they proceeded to the school.

The moment the masters appeared, the combatants were separated, and Cirencester drew off without making any remark. The delay enabled Reginald to arrange his neck-tie, smooth his hair, and shake himself into his jacket. He felt rather bruised and heated, but he bore fortunately no remarkable outward traces of his combat. He soon rejoined Mr Lindsay, who took him to the Doctor, who looked, he thought, benignantly at him, and great was his satisfaction to find that he was placed in the Lower Remove.

From that moment he resolved to show that he had not been wrongly placed. It was a great satisfaction to feel that he should have only to remain a year numbered among those who could be fagged. He was thus also only one division below Power. He found that unless he was “plucked,” he should rise one division every half-year, with certain

trials and examinations interposed, into Fifth Form, and so on, but that there was no trial into Sixth Form, the vacancies in it being filled up by seniority.

Power and Anson congratulated him on his successful *début* in the school-yard.

“Cicester, big as he looks, is below you in the school,” observed Anson. “He is an earl, but we don’t take note here of titles. He eats too much to be strong, and thinks too much of himself to have many real friends. I am very glad that you treated him as you did, because I think that it will sicken him of attacking you again, and make other fellows treat you with respect. Of course, however, there are tuft-hunters here as well as elsewhere, and as some of the Fifth Form are among his friends, you must expect to be fagged a little sharply by them occasionally, if you get in their way. However, you’ll know how to manage to keep out of rows. One thing I have found out; there is no use attempting to shirk fagging. A fellow is always certain to get the worst of it. There is no dodge a fellow can try which the Fifth Form are not up to, because you see that they have tried them all themselves. The worst thing a fellow can do is to show the sulks. He is certain to take nothing by it. I always find it best to do a thing willingly and promptly, however disagreeable it may be.”

Reginald thanked his friends for their advice, and moreover took care to follow it.

The next day, when he went into school, he was found to have prepared his lessons particularly well, and the master looked at him with an approving eye, as a boy likely to do credit to himself, and some little, perhaps, to the school. From the very first Reginald set himself against the use of cribs. He was rather laughed at for this, at first, by his associates, who were aware of what they considered his peculiar crotchet.

“I have just a question to ask you fellows,” he observed one day. “Do you think it right or gentlemanly to tell a lie? Answer me seriously, not in joke.”

It was agreed that a lie was ungentlemanly and wrong.

“Well, is it not equivalent to the telling a lie to pretend to have obtained knowledge in one way, when you have obtained it in another? Is it not the same to take up a copy of verses or an exercise which you did not write, and to pretend that you wrote them? That is one reason why I will not use a crib. I should feel ashamed of myself, and disgraced every time I did so. Another reason is, that we came to school to gain knowledge, to prepare ourselves for college, and for our future course in life, as completely as we can; and the use of cribs prevents our doing this, for though they may enable us to get through a lesson, depend on it a lesson learnt with them is very quickly again forgotten. There is nothing like having to turn over the leaves of a dictionary that we may find a word, to enable us to remember it.”

“Yes, but few fellows can turn over the leaves as quickly as you can,” observed Anson.

“I learned the knack at a private tutor’s long ago,” answered Reginald. “I thought it a bore at first, but he showed us how to do it properly, and I very soon found the advantage of what he insisted on.”

Power supported Reginald in this and many other respects, when he held out boldly against what his straightforward, honest mind at once saw to be bad practices. He made enemies by so doing, but he also made friends; the enemies he made were the least worthy, and the friends the most worthy of his school-fellows—many of them becoming and continuing firm and fast ones.

Reginald very soon made acquaintance with old Harry Cannon, the waterman at Cuckoo Weir. Fully thirty fellows were either standing on Lower Steps or in punts, without a rag on them, ready to plunge into the clear stream; or were swimming about by themselves, spluttering and coughing; or were being dangled at the end of old Harry’s blue pole. Reginald had thought that it was necessary to go, at all events, in the first place, to old Harry. Many of the fellows, not knowing that he could swim, tried to frighten him; but, without much ceremony, he doffed his clothes, and in he went with a “rat’s header” at once, and swam boldly up the stream, stemming it lustily; then he turned a sommersault, trod water, and went through a variety of manoeuvres to which the youngsters present were but little accustomed.

“You’ll do, sir; you’ll do,” shouted old Harry, quite delighted with the spirited way in which he took to the water; “a Newfoundland dog couldn’t have done it better.”

Of course, on the first “passing day,” Reginald—who was to be met by Power, Anson, and some others of his new friends, in a boat—started off for Middle Steps.

The masters stood ready. Reginald jumped into the punt, and, with several others, was carried out into mid-stream. Several were ordered to plunge overboard before him. Most of them went in with “footers,” and now two or three were ordered to come out and take further lessons from old Harry. Reginald waited patiently till his turn came, and then overboard he went with a fine “rat’s header,” and downwards he dived. He did not come up. The masters were alarmed, and shouted to old Harry to look for him.

“What can have become of the boy?” exclaimed one of them, in real alarm.

Suddenly, not far off, up came Reginald, with a big stone in his hand.

“All right!” he exclaimed. “I wanted to bring a trophy from the bottom;” and, depositing it on Middle Steps, away he swam in good style to Lower Steps. Just touching them, away he went—now swimming with one arm, now with the other, now with both hands like a dog, now turning on his back and striking out with his feet.

“You’ll do, and do famously!” exclaimed the master, who was not famed for bestowing unnecessary compliments on

any one.

Reginald came out with no little feeling of allowable pride, and, dressing quickly, stepped on board the boat, when, taking the yoke-lines in a knowing manner, he steered away for Bargemen's Bridge, where the stream once more joins the river.

Reginald at once threw himself into boating most zealously. He was always on the water, practising away, and soon became as proficient with oars as with sculls—his great ambition being to belong to an eight-oar. He and Power took a lock-up between them, for which they paid five pounds; and though they liked it very much, they agreed that it was not half so much fun as their boating in old days at Osberton, with Toby Tubb as coxswain. Reginald did not neglect cricket, however; but as he was still numbered among the Lower boys he could only belong to the Sixpenny Club.

The playing-fields at Eton are divided between different clubs. The boys subscribe to one or the other according to their position in the school. Above the Sixpenny, to which the entrance is only one shilling, is the Lower Club, to which those in the Fifth Form belong who are considered not to play well enough to belong to the Upper Club. To the Upper Club the clever and all the first-rate players alone belong. The grand cricketing time is "after six," when, in the playing-fields, the balls are flying about as thickly as in a general action, or, at all events, as at "Lord's" on practising days; while, especially at the great matches in the Upper Club, the non-players lie on the turf, indulging largely in Bigaroon cherries and other fruits in season, and making their remarks on the game.

Such is the every-day Eton life in which Reginald found himself placed. There was abundance of occupation to pass the time, and yet no very salient events worthy of description. After he had been there about a fortnight, he found himself apportioned, by the captain of his house, to a master who had already another fag. That fag, Cross, had been all his school-life at Eton, and was well accustomed to the work, so thought nothing of it; but when Reginald first found himself ordered to perform some menial office, he could not help his spirit rising in rebellion; but he soon conquered the feeling, the absurdity of which he acknowledged to himself, and he at once set about his task with a cheerful countenance and willing hands. The out-of-door fagging went more against the grain, as he did not like to be sent here or there by any stranger about some trifle, when he wanted to be doing something else; but he soon got reconciled to that also, with the reflection that all Eton fellows had to go through it.

Cross and he got on very well together. They were not great friends, but they never quarrelled. Their master, Coventry, was good-natured, though strict in having the duties they owed him performed, and his orders obeyed.

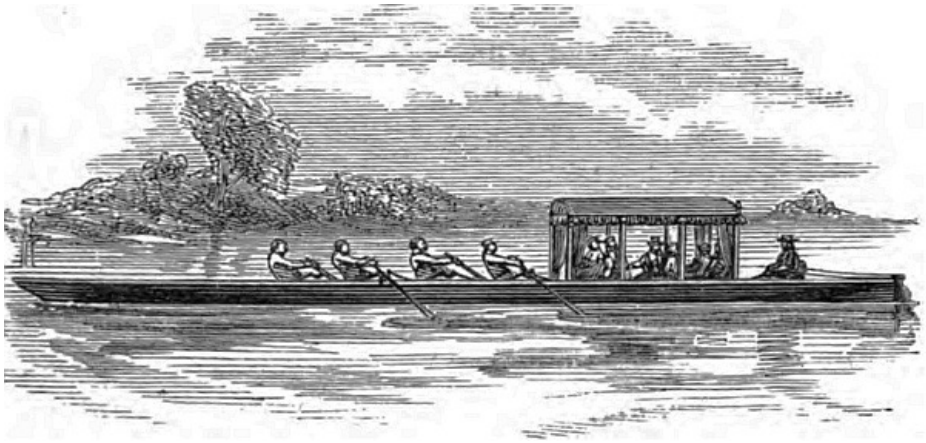
Reginald was talking over Coventry's character with Power, and observed—"I would fifty times rather serve a strict master like him than one of your easy-going, idle fellows, who all of a sudden takes it into his head that he will have everything in apple-pie order, and thrashes you because you do not know what he wants."

"Certainly," answered Power. "When I first came I had a master who never by any chance was in the same mind two days together. He would have different things for breakfast and tea, and everything in his room arranged differently. He kept my mind on a continual stretch to guess what he would want, till he made me very nearly as mad as himself. At last I informed him that I would do anything that he told me, but that I could not undertake to guess his wishes. He could not see the reasonableness of my arguments, and so I at length gave up any attempt to please him—he of course never being satisfied; and thus we went on till the end of the half."

What with observation, conversation, and his own personal experience, Reginald daily gained a larger amount of knowledge of the world in which he was destined to move—not of the bad which was taking place, but of the way to conduct himself in it.

Story 4--Chapter I.

STORY FOUR—The Crew of the Rose.



A crew of Johnians were rowing down the Cam on a fine summer day, in their own boat Two of them were freshmen—sixth form boys in manners and pursuits; the coxswain had entered on his third year, and was reading for honours. These were English youths. The fourth—Morgan ap Tydvill—was from Wales, a pleasant, companionable fellow, proud of his country, proud of his own family in particular, and proud of the boat, of which he was part owner; generous and friendly, but very choleric, though easily calmed down. The fifth was Gerald O'Mackerry, of Irish genealogy, as his name intimates, and his patronymic was a subject of much harmless pride with him. These two latter personages were in their second year.

For some time the four rowers bent earnestly to their oars, the coxswain doing the principal part of the talking work; but as the stream carried the boat along, and there was no necessity for constant pulling, they at times restrained their arms to let their tongues run free. The chatting commenced thus:—

"We haven't given a name to the boat yet."

"Well, I vote for the 'Hose.'"

"I think the 'shamrock' sounds well," said O'Mackerry.

"The Leek," was Ap Tydvill's suggestion.

"'*Leek*!'—an unlucky name!" observed Green, the coxswain, who, though a gentlemen and a scholar, was sadly addicted to punning; but they were all of Saint John's College, and therefore punsters by prescription. This bad pun let out a good deal of punning; when it ceased to flow, the original subject was renewed.

"Will the Trinity boat beat us next month? They have a choice crew, all in capital condition, and heavy men. O'Mack is the only twelve stone man here," (all gownsmen, you know, are *men*, however boyish in years and appearance), "and Tyd is such a little fellow!"

"I'm five feet seven," replied he, rather snappishly; "and I can tell you that the mean height of a man's stature is but five feet four. (Murmurs of dissent.) O'Mack is about ten inches above the standard; but I'll back a man of my own height (drawing himself up majestically) against him for walking, jumping, running, fighting, wrestling, swimming, throwing a bar, or rowing a long distance—if he have my breadth of chest and shoulders, and such an arm as this," displaying a limb as hard and muscular as that of a blacksmith. By his own estimate he was of the perfect size and form.

> "In wrestling nimble, and in running swift;
> Well made to strike, to leap, to throw, to lift."

His vanity, however, though quizzed unmercifully, was not humiliated by any detected failure in his bodily proportions, which he submitted to measurement. The circumference of his arm and wrist was considerable—the whole limb and his chest brawny, hirsute, and muscular.

"I'm not afraid of Trinity," shouted he loudly, if not musically. "*Sumamus longum haustum et fortem haustum, et haustum Omne simul*, as Lord Dufferin said at the Norwegian Symposium, and we shall bump them."

At the spirited Latin watchword, our Cantabs commenced a chorus, "*Omne simul, omne simul*," etc, etc, which Tyd himself had set to an old Welsh tune of the Bardic days. The effect was thrilling—the coxswain, both sonorously and with a correct ear, singing, "*Omne simul, omne simul*," and beating time with his feet against the stretcher, while the rowers, arms and lungs and all, pulled and chorused sympathetically.

This sport lasted about half an hour, and then the question was again mooted, "What name shall we give to the boat?"

Green, the steersman, put the question: "Those who vote for the Rose will say ay—three ays; those who vote for the Shamrock—one; those who vote for the Leek—one."

"The ays have it."

Three triumphant cheers for the majority.

The freshman, quite cockahoop at the victory gained over Ap Tydvill and O'Mackerry, ventured to ask the Welshman

“how it happened that a leek became the national emblem of Wales?” He readily answered, “When my country was able to lick (query: leek) your country,—I don’t include yours, O’Mackerry,—one of our jolly old princes having gained a great victory over one of your Saxon leaders and his army, took up a *chive*, which he found growing somewhere near the Wye, and said, ‘We’ll wear this henceforward as a memorial of this victory.’”

“Pooh, pooh,” said the coxswain; “the true version is this. Once upon a time, Wales was so infested with monkeys that the natives were obliged to ask the English to lend them a hand in destroying them. The English generously came to their assistance; but not perceiving any distinction between the Welsh and the monkeys, they killed a great number of the former, by mistake of course; so, in order to distinguish them, clearly, they requested that the Welshmen would stick a leek in their bonnets.” A running fire (though on water) commenced against poor Monsieur Du Leek—as the bantering youngsters, with profound bows and affected gravity, chose to name Ap Tydvill—of pedigree immeasurable.

However, he recovered his serenity, after an explosion of wrath somewhat dangerous for a moment; and, on the free trade principle, began to quiz some one else.

“Mack,” said he, “do you remember the ducking you got *there*, among the *arundines Cami*?” pointing to a deep sedgy part of the river.

“I do; and I had, indeed, a narrow escape from drowning, or rather from being suffocated in the deep sludgy mud.”

“How was it?” one of the others asked.

“I was poling a punt along the bank, looking for waterfowl to have a shot, you know, and I pulled myself into the river!”

“You mean, Paddy,” said Mr Tydvill, “that you pulled yourself out of the river.”

“No; I mean what I say; there is no blunder for you to grin at. I stuck the pole so firmly into the deep mud, that I could not pull it out; but it pulled me in.”

“Why didn’t you let go at once?”

“I hadn’t time to think of that; instinctively I grasped the pole, lost my balance, and tumbled into the river.”

The unfortunate youth was extracted from the deep slime among osiers by a labourer near hand, and he dried his clothes in a cottage—

> “Quae villula tectum,
> Praebuit—”

without any bad results.

“But, do you remember, Master Tydvill,” said O’Mackerry, “the day when I was so near catching you and throwing you into the deep hole—clothes and all? Ay, and you deserved a ducking?”

“But really, Mack, would you have pitched me in, when you knew that I was a bad swimmer, especially when dressed?”

“Assuredly I would have done so, for I was unusually hot in my temper, though very cold in my body at that moment; however, I suppose that I should have acted the part of the Newfoundland dog, and dragged the puppy by his neck out of the water.”

This complimentary part he addressed to the crew at large, and then described the incident.

He had been sitting on the top bar of a ladder, of which the lower end rested on the bottom of a very deep part of the river under a high and steep bank, for the purpose of aiding a swimmer in his ascent from the water. The day was cold, and O’Mackerry remained in a crouching posture for a few moments on the ladder, meditating the plunge, but not taking it. His playful friend stole behind and jerked him, heels over head, into the water, and immediately ran away. O’Mackerry, after recovering from the shock and getting out of the river, pursued the offender nearly half a mile, and happily without catching him. Tydvill rather unhandsomely afterwards caricatured his friend as a barometrical green frog in a broad pellucid bottle partly filled with water, squatting on a rung of a ladder, ingeniously serving as a graduated scale, to show the condition of the atmosphere; the frog rising or descending as its sensations led it to immerse its body in water, or rise more or less above it. O’Mackerry was a capital swimmer, and was sometimes seen to capsize himself from an Indian canoe, which he had purchased somewhere on the river Shannon, into its tidal waters with his clothes on, for the purpose of habituating himself to swim under such difficulty. He had the satisfaction of saving the lives of two persons in danger of drowning, by his skill, courage, and presence of mind.

“But how did you learn to swim and dive so well?”

“When I was a little boy, I was fond of books of Voyages, and I liked, above all things, to read the description of the bathing pranks of the Otaheite savages, who were such active divers, that when a nail was thrown overboard, they would plunge after it, and catch it before it reached the bottom. I thought that I could do what a savage did so easily, and I soon learned to do what so many animals do without any instruction at all. If you want a model, take a frog, and imitate its motions in the water. Courage is everything.”

“But, Mack, every one hasn’t such long and strong legs and arms as you have—just like a frog’s.”

“Thank you for the comparison—not for the first time, Master Tyd—but I have not a great belly like a frog’s, which is useful in swimming—at least in floating. A large pot-bellied man may lie on the water as long as he likes, if he keeps his head well back so as to have it supported by the water—and with his heels closed and neck up.”

“But surely in that position he would be like a log on the water, and make no way,” remarked some one of the listeners.

“True, but he can rest himself in that position until he chooses to strike out again. Just fancy yourself a fish: you are specifically lighter than water, and you can lie as near the surface as you please; use your fins and you can move about to the right or left—as a boat is moved by its oars; use your tail and you steer in any direction—as the rudder turns the direction of the boat. Then fancy your fins and tail cut off—there you lie like a raft—without poles or oars—but you do not sink. If you have one fin, or part of one, you move like a boat with one whole or broken oar. Now our bodily apparatus is not designed like that of a fish for swimming, but it is capable of enabling us to swim sufficiently well for our necessities. Just read Old Franklin on the art of swimming, and you will understand the theory of the matter at once. The great difficulty in practice is the fear which people have of being drowned, and this can only be overcome by accustoming ourselves to the water.”

“Now, Mack,” said Tydvill, “you know I cannot swim; what ought I to have done if you had pitched me into that awful hole?”

“You should have kept yourself from struggling and plunging, letting the back of your head lie quietly under the water, with your mouth free for breathing—but not for screaming and water-drinking—till I had taken the trouble of catching hold of you.”

“But surely,” replied Tydvill, “the weight of my clothes would have sunk me?”

“I think not,” rejoined his friend; “the water would have supported them too, though you’d have found them very heavy when you came out of it. Will you try the experiment?”

“The theory is sufficient for me,” concluded the sprightly Welshman. However, another of the crew put this question:—

“Since the body can be supported on the surface of the water, as O’Mackerry has said, and with little exertion, or without any, as in swimming on the back, how is it that a drowned body sinks, and often rises some days afterwards?”

“Because,” said our philosopher,—who had been crammed on the subject,—“the lungs of a drowning person become filled with water, and therefore the body, becoming specifically heavier, sinks. The body remains at the bottom only until the water has been quite freed from it by *compression*; it then is swelled and expanded by gases generated within, and becoming lighter than the water, rises to the top.”

They had for some time been leaning on their oars, enjoying this chat, and were about to retrace their course, when one of the English lads asked O’Mackerry if he had ever been in real danger in a boat. The other reflected a little, and then thought of an incident which had occurred to him some years ago, before he had learned to swim. “Yes,” said he, “but for God’s good providence I would have been,” (“You mean *should*, I suppose,” said Coxswain Green, in an under tone) “assuredly drowned. I had been contriving how to put out striker lines in a deep loch near my father’s house, and, not having a boat, I substituted a stable door, taken from its hinges, as a raft for my purpose. I had read of rafts on the Rhine with whole families on them—with a cabin and cow-house and pig-sty; and why should not my miniature raft support my weight? I floated the door—balanced myself nicely upon it—put out for the middle of the loch, gently paddling it with a pole, and fearful of the slightest change of my position, which would have destroyed the horizontal equilibrium of my feeble raft. When I had gone far enough—into water thirty or forty feet deep—I sent off the strikers, but unfortunately flung away my paddle along with them. My insensibly nervous movements caused the door to incline into the water at one side an inch or two. I moved a hair’s breadth; it then declined to the other side. It would sink. I had no doubt of this. Then I gently stooped to try if I could unfasten a shoe; but this was impracticable. I tried a balancing movement again, and the door righted, but not entirely. My presence of mind, however, did not fail me. I took off my hat, and paddled myself with this from side to side alternately, until I reached the strand—through thick masses of aquatic plants—the water-lily in particular, whose long and interlacing stems would have embraced me to death, if I had fallen among them. I have never known any one to swim or bathe in that dangerously deep loch. I do not see how I could have escaped drowning at that time if I had slipped from the raft.”

This led the adventurous youth to narrate another difficulty from which he had been mercifully extricated by God’s providence. He had been snipe-shooting in an Irish hog, and thoughtlessly trod upon a green, firm, and sound-looking, but very treacherous quagmire, us he was watching a snipe which had just sprung up. He was suddenly immersed in the semi-fluid peat to his shoulders, and only saved from quickly subsiding into the depths of the morass by a solid bed of clay, at the depth of five feet and a half. He sank to his under lip, barely escaping suffocation, and having his breath spared for shouting. He was pulled up by various contrivances, a reeking column of black mire. As it seemed clear that Mr O’Mackerry must have been engulfed in the bog if he had been half an inch under six feet two in stature, it was illogically argued that it would be a general advantage to manhood if all were exceedingly tall—suppose of the height of the suite of the Duke of Brunswick (composed of men some inches above seven feet), which came to London a hundred years ago.

“Of course,” said Tydvill, “Churchill is right in the Rosciad when he says:

”‘Your hero should be always tall, you know.’”

But the wiser ones of the crew showed that the ordinary height, as fixed by the Almighty, is the best. If the scale of men were raised a foot or so, with proportioned frame and weight, horses and other beasts of burden should be

increased also; else the giants could neither hunt nor even travel, nor find beef and mutton, etc, for their support. And if the animals were larger, more grass, etc, would be required than at present. The whole scale of proportions would require alteration. Who can dare to think that God's design is not the best? Neither giants nor dwarfs form the general rule, and extreme exceptions are happily very rare.

"What became of the gun?" inquired one of the party. "I hope that was not swallowed up?"

"No; that was pulled up with me. I had kept fast hold of it; we fell and rose together, and so I was not—

"'Doomed to perish by the slaughtering gun.'"

However, it was unfit for service, like its owner, for the remainder of that day; its chilled barrel looked as if it were moaning forth to me, in hollow tone,—

"'Stay by me—thou art resolute and faithful;
I have employment worthy of thy arm.'"

It will be seen that Mr O'Mackerry had a smattering of classical lore. He was asked to name his last poet.

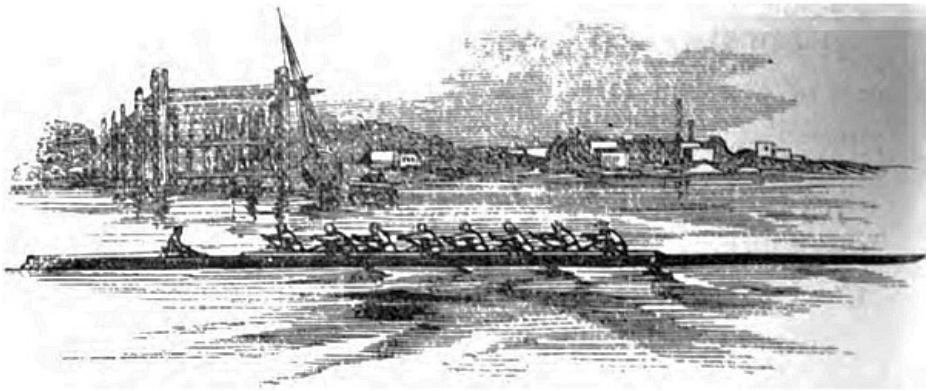
"Dryden," said he, off-hand.

"You hadn't a *dry* den when you were up to your chin in the wet, black hole," quickly added Tydvill. Here there was unanimous applause.

This led to some conversational nonsense about punning.

"What is a pun?"

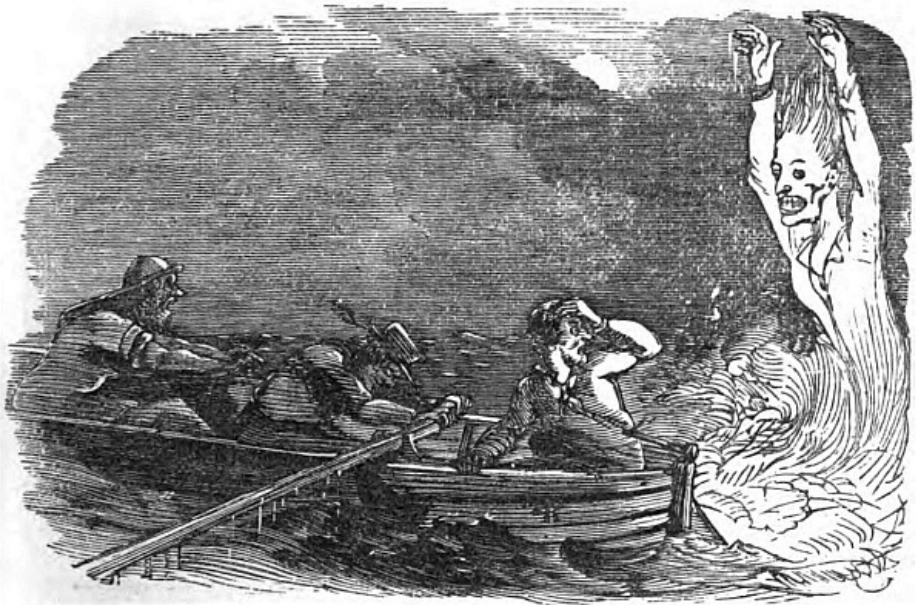
"Don't you know," said O'Mackerry, "Swift's definition in the essay which he entitled 'The Ars Punica sive flos linguarum, by Tom-Pun-Sibi, Dublin?'" None other of the crew knew anything concerning it; O'Mack therefore gave them the concluding part as a specimen, and in reply to the question. "Punning is an art of harmonious jingling upon words, which, passing in at the ears and falling upon the diaphragms, excites a titillatory motion in those parts, and this being conveyed by the animal spirits into the muscles of the face, raises the cockles of the heart, and promotes the end of good fellowship, which is laughing."



Just at that moment the crew in training for the coming race between the rival universities neared the Rose, for so the boat must now be called, and, as in duty bound, the latter drew to the opposite bank to allow the eight-oared cutter to pass at fullest speed, and then following in her wake, the rest of the trip was passed in comparative silence, so eagerly did our freshmen note each movement of that skilful crew.

Story 5--Chapter I.

STORY FIVE—The Force of Conscience—A Tale by a Naval Chaplain.



Soon after I entered Holy Orders I joined the old —, 74, in the West Indies. As we were for a considerable time stationary at Port Royal, Jamaica, and my health was suffering from the climate, I obtained leave to take a few weeks' cruise with an elder brother, who commanded a brig of war on the station. While I was on board the brig, she was sent in search of a piratical craft, which had of late been committing great depredations on British commerce in those seas. At length, after a long search, we sighted her, made chase, attacked, and, after a desperate fight, captured her, with a loss of several of our own men, and one-third of the pirates killed and wounded.

Among the pirate crew a young man was brought on board badly wounded, whose countenance exhibited such an expression of deep melancholy and despair, that I could not help feeling compassion for him; indeed, I persuaded myself that he must be less guilty than his companions. They were, or their physiognomies woefully belied them, as villainous a set of scoundrels as were ever collected together, and their captain, if report spoke true, was the greatest miscreant of them all. I attended daily by the bed-side of the unhappy youth I speak of, and had hopes, although he said little, that I had worked on his mind some impression of the awful state in which he was placed; but as he recovered his strength his obduracy of heart appeared to return, and he seemed to have persuaded himself that he should escape the punishment of his crimes.

After a long beat we at length entered Port Royal in triumph with our prize, and were thanked by all the merchants for the service we had rendered them. The pirates were tried without delay, one of them turning king's evidence, and being all convicted of the most atrocious murders on the high seas, with this single exception, they were all sentenced to death.

The evening before his execution the young man I spoke of sent to entreat me to visit him. I gladly acceded to his wish. I found him heavily ironed and chained to the ground, in a room with a strongly-grated window, where three of his piratical shipmates were also confined. These latter were Spaniards, and dark ferocious-looking ruffians they seemed—more like beasts than men with immortal souls, so brutalising are the effects of habitual crime.

They regarded me as I entered with glances of furious hate, for they recognised me as having belonged to the ship which captured them, and, had they not been manacled, they would, I truly believe, have rushed at me to satisfy their longing for vengeance, but their chains, fortunately for me, holding them down, they again sank into the sullen apathy from which my appearance had roused them.

Sitting down on a low stool, furnished by the gaoler, I expressed my willingness to afford the prisoner every aid in my power that his awful state demanded.

"You were kind to me, sir, when I lay wounded, from the first, on our passage here, and I thought you would excuse me speaking to you," he answered, looking furtively around as if some one was watching him. "Oh, sir, there are many, many things weighing like hot lead upon my mind, and I must tell them to some fellow-creature before I am sent on my last voyage, or I should have to come back again to haunt this world, which is already sick of me and my crimes. Oh, sir, it is dreadful to think of dying when one has lived as I have done; yet my life for some years has been one of misery, ever haunted by a hideous spirit or a being of— There it is, sir! see, see! I knew that I could not talk of him without his coming! There, there, there!" he shrieked out.

I exerted all my powers to soothe the mind of the poor wretch, throwing in such observations as I thought might tend to bring him to think on the new state of existence he was about to enter. Pirate as he was, I felt that he was still a fellow-creature, and who can tell what strong temptations might have led him into crime? Who among us can say how we should have withstood the same? Let us feel grateful that we have received the benefit of a religious education, and pray Heaven to keep us from sin. Seeing that until he had relieved his mind by a narration of the circumstances in his career which pressed most heavily on it, he would be unable to attend to me, I told him that I was prepared to listen to anything he might have to say. On this he immediately commenced a sketch of his life in almost the following words:—

“I am a Devonshire man, and was born near Salcombe. A wild-looking place is Salcombe Range. My father’s cottage stood on the hill facing directly down the bay, or range, as they call it in the west country, so that the only view I remember in childhood was that of the dark cliffs on each side of its entrance, with its heaving and foaming waters; the only music I ever heard, their hollow melancholy sound.

“My father had been an officer of excise at Plymouth, and, having somehow or other made his fortune, retired here to end his days. This he soon did, for, shortly after I was born, my mother dying, he took to drinking harder than ever—he was never a very sober man—and before I was seven years old I was left an orphan. I had now no one to look after me, except an old woman, whose chief occupation was mixing smuggled spirits to fit them for the market; when she used to taste and taste the stuff till she went reeling to bed. I consequently had plenty of time and opportunity to follow my own inclinations, and was early taught all sorts of wild pranks by boys older than myself.

“For some time my principal employment consisted in dodging the steps of the revenue officers, both when a run was about to be made, and afterwards when the tubs and cases were to be carried up the country. I could neither read nor write, and as for religion, I never heard of it; indeed, I was as ignorant as could well be. At last, the clergyman of the parish took compassion on my unprotected state; and the old woman who had charge of me dying, like my father, in a fit of drunkenness, he sent for me up to his house, and asked me if I should like to go to school. Though I did not know what school meant, I answered ‘Yes,’ for I wanted to go somewhere; it little signified to me where. As I was treated kindly I got on very well, so that in three years I was considered one of the best scholars in the school, though at the same time one of the wildest. The vicar was a strict man, and, though he expressed himself satisfied with my progress, I was never a favourite of his.

“Although I had continued my intimacy with several of my early smuggling companions, I managed to reach my eighteenth year without being considered worse than a wild sort of chap. About this time I formed an acquaintance with a pretty girl, the daughter of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood. Her old father spoke to me on the subject. I knocked him down and fled. I had behaved like a villain. I knew it then; I feel it now. The poor girl refused to see me when I afterwards tried to meet her, and soon died of a broken heart. The neighbourhood was no longer to my liking. I felt that every finger was pointed at me; but I stifled conscience, and tried to appear indifferent as to what folks said of me. Oh, that I had listened to that small voice then! My after-life would have been very different.

“I had always been accustomed to get about in boats; and having just before formed the acquaintance of a noted smuggler, one Brand Hallton by name—I then thought him one of the finest fellows on either side of the channel—I made my first trip across to the coast of France in his company. That man was the chief cause of my subsequent career in crime and misery—my evil genius. Oh, sir, warn all the young men you may meet to shun the company of the wicked and immoral as they would a pestilence! They are the instruments with which the devil works out his deeds of darkness. I did not know how bad he was, or, perhaps, I might have avoided him and been saved. For two years or more, I was constantly in some smuggling craft or another; and though we frequently lost a cargo, we managed to escape being taken and sent on board a man-of-war to serve the king. This hazardous varied sort of life just suited my taste, and, as I had more learning than the rest of my companions, I was looked up to by most of them. However, our success was not to last for ever: through the treachery, as we afterwards discovered, of one of the people we employed on shore, we were unusually unfortunate; and, suspecting what was the case, we vowed to be revenged on whomever it might be.

“I had never seen blood shed—my hands were free from that crime. Oh that they were so now, I should not care so much about dying! We had a large cutter, carrying four guns, with forty stout hands on board, Brand Hallton being our captain; so that we could easily beat off any revenue boats which might attempt to board us.

“Every one was armed to the teeth; and on the occasion I am about to speak of, the word was passed that all the helpers on shore should come prepared for resistance, in case of being molested. We took in our cargo, consisting of silks, laces, tea, and other valuable commodities, at Cherbourg, and made the land just before sunset. We stood in at once, and found the spotsman at his post, with a signal that all was clear. The night was pitchy dark, though calm; and, except the signals, not a light was shown. About fifty men were stationed on shore, to carry the things inland.

“We set to work as fast as possible getting the things into the boats, and all went on well for some time. I, with some others, in one of the boats, had left the cutter, when a pistol was flashed from the shore as a signal for us to return; but, before we had pulled many strokes, there was a rapid discharge of fire-arms, while loud shouts, oaths, and cries arose: torches were kindled, and by their light we could see our friends on shore mixed in a hot fight with a number of red-coats.

“As soon as we made out what was going forward, we pulled back as fast as we could to the vessel, to put the bales into her, intending to return to assist our people; but, before we reached her, a splash of oars was heard close to us, and in a moment a large boat was alongside our galley. At the same time, a loud voice ordered us to surrender; but, as we were not the chaps to do that in a hurry, our coxswain drew his pistol, and fired it towards the boat. A deep groan was the answer, and immediately other pistols were fired on each side. By the flashes we saw a number of men, their cutlasses shining brightly, about to spring into our boat; but, at the same time, we knew that we must beat them or die. They were brave fellows, and would, perhaps, have taken us all; but we were fighting with halters round our necks; for after the resistance we had offered, we knew that, if made prisoners, we should be hung. They had already cut down two or three of our people, when another of our boats came up, and attacked them on the other side. There was now little chance for them: we dared not save them if we would. They fought bravely to the last—every one of them was killed.

“They were countrymen, and were only doing their duty. That night’s work, sir, weighed like lead upon my conscience, till other crimes drove the thoughts of it out, and my heart became seared. It is only now that I am about to quit the world that my conscience is roused up. It is very terrible, sir. My life seems a dreadful dream; and I cannot even now believe that I am to die to-morrow to go where I have already sent so many others, not more fit to die than I am. It is too much to think of. I wonder what sort of a place I shall be in to-morrow at this time!” he suddenly

exclaimed, after a long silence.

“You must trust in the mercy of One who is all merciful,” I answered, “and repent of your crimes, and then be assured, as was the thief on the cross, you will be forgiven.”

“I wish I thought it might be so, sir,” he observed, “but I have been too wicked—too great a reprobate for pardon; and *he*—*he* knows better!—that ghastly figure there!—*he* shakes his head, and grins at me, mocking at the very idea of it! Oh, that I could have another spell of life to get free of him! Is there any chance of being let off?” he asked, with sudden animation.

“Not the slightest,” I answered. “Do not for a moment indulge in such a hope.”

“Well, sir, well—perhaps it is best as it is. I have thought a good deal about death since I lay wounded, and have made up my mind to the worst. My life has long been a burden to me; but it is the future—the future which makes me tremble; and then that dreadful ghost-like figure unnerves me. Off with you—off!” he shrieked out. “Leave me for this once at rest!”

The Spaniards, aroused by his cries, scowled fiercely on him, and cursing him for a noisy madman, again sank back upon the stone floor. After being silent for a minute, he appeared to have perfectly recovered his senses, and continued—

“I will go on, sir, with what I was telling you about—I want to get it off my mind. Well, after we had killed the people in the revenue boat, we hove the things into the cutter, and pulled again to the shore to assist our friends. It was fortunate for them that we did so, for the soldiers had come down in great numbers, and completely got the better of them. Some were made prisoners, numbers were either killed outright or desperately wounded, and the remainder were fighting hand-to-hand for their lives, close down to the water’s edge. Some of the best men were with us. We were fresh and desperate; so, managing to drive back the soldiers for a minute, by a furious charge, before they again came on, we covered the retreat of the rest to the boats, and then followed ourselves. In a moment they were afloat, and we were pulling off from the shore. Several volleys were fired at us without doing us any mischief, and we could see the soldiers, by the flashes of their pistols, galloping up and down along the beach, in search of those of our friends who were trying to escape. About twenty of our people got off, but of course all the things, except a few we had on board, were lost, and we vowed vengeance against whomever had betrayed us. We all took a dreadful oath to that effect, which we most fearfully fulfilled. Oh! I wish that it had been broken.

“We were sullen and out of humour enough when we got on board; but there was no time then to meditate on revenge, so we lost not a moment in making sail and standing off the coast. We well knew that, after what we had done, the revenue cruisers would be keeping a very sharp look-out for us; but we were not to be daunted, even by the certainty of death, if taken. We spoke a lugger standing in for the coast, and two nights afterwards we ourselves followed her, and ran the rest of our cargo. When on shore, about that work, we discovered who it was who had betrayed us, and we renewed our oath to be revenged on him whenever we could get him into our power. He was a man who often had acted as spotsman for us, and in whom we placed entire confidence, though with the world in general he did not enjoy the best of characters. His name was Arnold, a tall, fine-looking fellow, still in the prime of manhood. He had been bribed to deliver us into the hands of the law, and, fancying that his treachery was undiscovered, he was now looking forward to getting a larger reward by informing against us a second time. We did revenge ourselves! Oh, it was dreadful! Ah!—there he is! His livid, corpse-like face is laughing, and muttering at me behind your back. I knew I could not speak of him without his coming. Yes, yes, yes!—I’ll follow! I’ll follow!—I know I must!”

And the wretched man broke into loud shrieks for mercy. He soon recovered, and continued—as if he had not interrupted himself—

“We allowed two months to pass before we ventured back to the coast, when we ran in with a valuable cargo, which we landed without his knowing anything about the matter. Five of us, among whom was Brand Hallton, who had dependence on each other, then went on shore at night. We had been persuaded by Hallton that we had but one course to pursue, and we had promised to obey his directions. While we waited hidden among the rocks on the beach, at some short distance from Arnold’s house, we sent word by a lad we took with us, that we wished to speak to him about running another crop of goods. It was a dark night, with a drizzling rain, but perfectly calm, the only noise we could hear being the ripple of the water on the sand, while nothing could be seen but the high beetling cliff above us. For a long time we waited; the moments seemed hours to me. We then thought he suspected something, and would not come. At last we heard the sound of footsteps on the beach moving towards us. My heart beat faster. I ground my teeth in my eagerness. I thought I was about to do an act of justice. That he might not by chance take alarm, one of our men went forward to welcome him as a friend. The stranger proved to be Arnold. Another then joined him, and began to talk about the business in hand. He took the bait eagerly, and offered to lend us his assistance. As he came by where I, with the other men, lay hid, the first two put their pistols to his head, and threatened to blow his brains out if he uttered a word, while we rushed on him, pinioned his arms, and gagged him, to make sure of his not giving an alarm. Powerful man as he was, he trembled violently in every limb, for he then felt that we were aware who had before betrayed us; and more than that, he well knew it and our *laws*; he knew that we were not men to hesitate at punishing a traitor. From the moment we seized him we did not exchange a single word with each other; but, lashing his feet, we lifted him into our boat, which was close at hand. At the same time, also, we lifted into her a large stone, with a rope made fast to it, and then shoved off from the shore.

“We pulled off for a mile or more, and then laying on our oars, we told the miserable wretch what we were about to do, giving him one minute to prepare for death. In his struggles to free himself, as he heard his doom, he contrived to loosen one of his hands, and to slip the gag from his mouth. He shrieked out in an agony of fear, and, as he entreated us to let him live, he trembled as if every limb in his body would part. He talked of his wife and family, who would starve if he were taken away from them; he promised, in the most abject terms, to be our slave—to work for us to the

utmost of his power—to do all we could require of him; but we laughed at his offers; we reminded him that he had shown no pity to us—that he had caused the death of several of our friends and the imprisonment of others, and that he must take the consequence of his treachery. Again, with groans and tears, he petitioned for mercy; he was not a man much given in general to words, but now they flowed forth, like a torrent in winter, with prayers for life; but nothing, he could say could alter our determination. At first, he attempted to deny what he had done, but we soon made him acknowledge his crime: he had broken our laws, and must abide the penalty. At last, we got tired of listening to him; we were eager for vengeance, and yet we felt a pleasure in witnessing his agony.

"'Come—we have had enough of this palaver,' said one of our people. 'If you have got a bit of a prayer to say, be quick about it.'

"'In a minute more you won't be in so great a hurry to open your mouth,' sneered another.

"The miserable wretch saw we were in earnest, and I believe he did try to say a prayer; but we were in a hurry to finish the job. I fully believe, indeed, that every one of us had thought we were going to do an act of strict justice; but when it came to the point, my mind misgave me. There was, however, now no drawing back; I dared not even utter my thoughts to my companions. My hands trembled as I assisted to make the rope, with the stone to it, fast round his feet; but the darkness prevented their seeing my agitation. We then let the stone hang overboard, while we lifted our victim, thus bound hand and foot, on to the gunwale of the boat. For a moment we let him remain there; and oh, what a cry of agony he gave as we tilted him up, and down he went straight into the deep sea!—the water closed over his head, and not a mark remained to show that a moment before another living being had been with us in health and strength! We thought the sea would for ever hide the deed from mortal eye, and that no one but ourselves would ever be able to tell how Arnold died. Ah! fools that we were to think to escape punishment for work like that!

"As soon as all was over, for an instant we sat silent and stupefied, and then shipping our oars, we pulled towards the cutter as hard as we could, away from the accursed spot. We had not pulled many strokes when a horror seized me. I could have shrieked aloud, but my fear was too great, for there, directly in our wake, was Arnold! Up he had risen—his body half out of the water—his countenance blue and livid—his eyes starting from his head—his hair on end—his arms extended towards us, as if he would clasp the boat in his embrace, and carry us down with him to the dreadful place he had come from! Larger and larger he grew—a pale flame seemed to play round his features, distorted with rage and agony! As fast as we could pull, he came hissing after us! We all shrieked with horror—we stretched every nerve to get away from him—but the harder we pulled the faster he came along. We sent the water flying from our bows, our oars bent and cracked; but nothing would do—on, on he came! Oh, how I wished I had had nothing to do with the foul deed! We had shown no mercy to him—we knew he would show none to us. You do not believe what I am saying; but it is as true as that I am speaking to you. See, sir!—see, there is his face at the farther end of the room—just as he appeared to me on that fatal night! He has never quitted me since, and never will—he will be with me on the scaffold to-morrow, jeering and cursing me, and I shall meet him where I am hound to in the other world. Oh! why did I do that deed?

"The dead man had got within a few fathoms of us, when, expecting every moment to feel myself within his cold grasp, I could bear it no longer, and swooned away.

"The pale, waning moon was shining on my face from out of the pure sky when I came to my senses, and I found myself lying on the deck of the cutter, which was running briskly across the Channel. I got up and looked around me; all that had passed seemed a horrid dream, but I knew it was too true. I was afraid to speak of what had happened, and, when I once referred to it to one of my partners in crime, he reminded me with a dreadful threat of my oath of secrecy. In vain I tried to banish the thoughts of it from my own mind; every night did the accusing spectre recall it with terrible certainty, for no sooner did darkness appear, than, whenever I looked out on the sea, whether in storm or calm, when the stars shone bright, or the sky was overcast, there, in the wake of the ship, appeared the blue, livid figure of the wretched Arnold. It was very, very dreadful, sir. I dared not return to my native place, nor to any neighbourhood where I was known, for I felt that everybody would point at me as a murderer; I knew the mark of Cain was on my brow. I grew weary of existence, even a smuggling life was too tame for me; I longed for a change of scene, for more excitement; and falling in with a French brig bound for the coast of Africa, I shipped on board her. Her sails were loose and her anchor spread, as I handed my traps on deck, and, before I had time to see the faces of all her crew, we were standing with a strong breeze out of the harbour of Bordeaux.

"My evil destiny still pursued me. There was one on board, whom rather than have met I would have jumped overboard and swam on shore again, had it been possible. That man was Brand Hallton. He had been the first to lead me into crime, and I knew of so many black deeds he had done, that I feared and hated him more than any man alive, though I could never withstand his evil persuasions. A short time passed before he came on deck, as he had been attending to some duty below. I knew him in a moment, but he pretended not to recognise me, though he soon afterwards took an opportunity to assure me that he would stand my friend if I would not attempt to claim his acquaintance. I found that he had entered before the mast under an assumed name, but on what account he did not choose to inform me, though I had little doubt it was for the sake of performing some piece of villainy or other. I dared not disobey him; indeed, I should have gained nothing if I had attempted to betray him, and thus we appealed by degrees to form an intimacy.

"We had on board a freight of coloured cottons, beads, and other trinkets, with hard dollars to exchange for slaves, with manacles to keep them quiet when in our power. That coast of Africa is a deadly, burning place, as we had soon reason to know; but I cared not for heat or for sickness—neither could increase the wretchedness of my own miserable fate. For some days after sailing I began to hope that I had escaped from my tormentor, but one night, on going on deck to keep my watch, as I looked over the side to observe how fast the ship was going through the water, there, on the sea, a few fathoms only from her, appeared that dreadful figure. He has never since then quitted the ship I have sailed in. Sometimes, as the moonbeams played upon the waters, I have seen him following in our wake, with his arms spread out, leaping from the waves and making horrid faces at me. When I have been keeping a look-

out ahead, he has appeared as if leading the way, pointing with one hand and threatening with the other, and every now and then turning round his gibbering distorted countenance, his eyeballs starting from their sockets, and his hair on end as I first saw him. Night after night have I thus been haunted, till life became a burden to me, and I should have jumped overboard and drowned myself, but I knew that he in a moment would fly at me like a shark at its prey, and carry me down in his cold clasp to the unfathomed depths of the ocean. I was afraid to ask any of my shipmates if they saw him, for they would at once have said I was a murderer; and thus my mind was left to brood in silence on my awful destiny; yet I fear, sir, there were many of those with me who were likely to have seen sights almost as dreadful. Oh! what a dreary voyage that was. At last, we sighted a long, low line of coast, with the trees gradually rising from the water, and a grey, sandy beach below them. This was the deadly coast of Africa, somewhere about the mouth of the Gambia; but we stood on farther to the south, and came to an anchor a short way up the Gaboon River, our yard-arms almost touching the lofty palms, cotton-trees, and monkey-bread trees, which grew on its banks. It was a beautiful-looking spot, but death was in every gale, and those of our crew who slept on shore died soon afterwards of a fever, which carried off several others of our men. I wished to be of the number, but neither sickness, shot, nor the sea, could have power over one accursed like me.

“We found the greater part of our living cargo already assembled in barracoons close down to the shore; and the remainder arrived in a few days from the interior—men, women, and children, to the number of three hundred. They were all prisoners, taken in war with a neighbouring tribe—hostilities being continued solely for the purpose of making slaves. As we received them on board, we stowed them away as close as they would pack between low decks, where there was barely room for them to sit upon their hams; but you know what a hell-afloat a slave-ship presents, and, though we did our best to keep them alive, we lost many before the voyage was over. After leaving the coast, we shaped our course for Martinique, where our captain intended to dispose of his slaves, and then to go back for another cargo. What with the stench of the slaves, the heat of the weather, our bad food and water, I wonder any of us survived. We used to have the poor wretches in gangs at a time upon deck to air themselves and to take exercise, but they were quickly sent down again below, and I believe, had it not been for fear of their dying, they would never have been allowed to taste the fresh air of heaven. The captain and the first mate used to sleep in a sort of round-house on the after-part of the deck, with arms by their side ready to defend themselves in case of a surprise, for they had not much confidence even in their own crew, though they were not worse than the general run of slavers.

“One day I was sitting in the shade under the foot of the foresail, trying to get a little fresh air as it blew off the sail, when Hallton placed himself near me, pretending to be busily engaged in working a Turk’s head, or some such thing. The rest of the people were either in the after-part of the ship, or lying about the decks asleep. Looking cautiously round to see that no one observed him, he addressed me.

”‘How like you a slaving life?’ he began; ‘pleasant isn’t it? Black fever, yellow fever, and the stench of these negroes in one’s nose all one’s days. For my part, I’d as soon mend shoes, or turn tailor, as spend my time in this way.’

”‘Then why did you join the brig? You knew how she was to be employed,’ I observed.

”‘I, my fine fellow! I never, for a moment, intended to keep at this work; I had other objects in view. I know I can trust to you, so I do not mind talking of them. I have long formed a plan by which we can make a rapid fortune, and spend our days, like gentlemen, in luxury and independence. Ah! you are a lad of spirit, and will join me; but the idea must not be hinted at, even to the stars.’

“He thus continued for some time, letting out by degrees what he was thinking of, so that the whole of his proposal should not take me by surprise, when he explained it to me.

“Well, we reached Martinique in safety, and, after landing the slaves, prepared for another trip across the Atlantic. How Brand Hallton gained the information, I do not know; but, while lying here, he learned that on our return the brig was to be fitted up with cabins, and that the merchant who owned her intended to return in her to France, with his family and all the wealth he had amassed. In the meantime, he was busily employed in working his way into the confidence of the worst disposed of the crew, and was very active in engaging several new hands to supply the place of those who died by fever.

“The second voyage was much like the first. We took on board a still larger number of blacks, and lost many of the whites by sickness. Day after day we lost one or other of our crew, till scarcely any of those who sailed with us from France remained. The first man we lost died raving mad: it was dreadful to listen to him. No sooner did he touch the water than there was Arnold’s ghost, with its fierce staring eyes, surrounded by a pale, blue light, and, seizing the corpse in its grasp, it turned it round and round, gibbering and mowing at it with delight, it seemed, and then plunged with it beneath the waters. I shuddered as I saw it, for I felt that such would be my fate, or, perhaps, a worse one; for I fancied that if I was seized with the fever, I, perhaps, should be thrown overboard while yet alive, and I pictured to myself the horror of feeling myself in *his* power, carried down—down—down to eternal fire and torment. I could not withdraw my eye from the spot where I had seen the corpse disappear. As I watched, that dreaded figure again rose to the surface without his prey; and, as we sailed along, he kept following in our course, his countenance now assuming a look of eagerness, as if watching for further victims. He was not disappointed: two days afterwards, another Frenchman died, and his fate was like that of the first; and such was the lot of every one who died on board the ship. Though I felt on each occasion that my turn would come next, I lived on, and did not even catch the fever. After landing the blacks in Martinique, we found that Hallton’s information was correct; and the brig, a remarkably fast sailer and a fine vessel in every way, quickly prepared to take the merchant, his money-chests, and his wife and daughters, on board. Once or twice I thought of warning them of what I more than expected their fate would be; but fear of Hallton, and the influence he had gained over me, prevented me from saying anything; and they embarked.

“The old gentleman was in high glee at the thought of returning once more to his *belle France*. His wife was a Creole, and did not seem much to like the trouble of moving; but his daughters were in raptures with the idea of visiting Paris and all its wonders. There were three of them; all remarkably handsome girls, tall and slight, with clear olive

complexions and sparkling eyes. The old man loved his daughters almost as much as his dollars, of which he had many thousands on board, the greater part of the wealth he had accumulated during upwards of thirty years' banishment from his native land. For some days after sailing all appeared to go on well, and I hoped that Hallton had given up the evil intentions I knew he had entertained; for I began to feel a tender interest in one of the younger daughters of our owner. What is strange, sir, is, that whenever she was on deck at night, where she often came to watch the bright stars glittering in the water, the dreaded ghost of Arnold never appeared. Those few days were the only ones of anything like peace or happiness I have enjoyed since I plunged so deeply into crime. She was indeed to me a ministering angel: and I determined, for her sake, to try and reform. Hallton suspected something and watched me narrowly, keeping his plans entirely from me, so that I was not prepared for the tragedy which was soon to follow. Two of our mates having died from the fever, I was appointed to do duty in the place of the youngest, and, by this means, had opportunities, which I should not otherwise have enjoyed, of paying slight attentions to the young ladies.

"I was not long in discovering that my unfeigned devotion had its due effect on the heart of Mdlle. Julie, the youngest of the three. Though respectful and tender in my manner, I was bolder than under other circumstances I should have been towards one so much my superior in rank and education. She either did not consider how much below her I was placed, or disregarded the circumstance, for in perfect innocence of heart she encouraged my advances; and her old father and mother being generally in their cabin below, had no opportunity of discovering what we were about. At last I ventured to offer my arm to assist her in walking the deck when the ship rolled much. She accepted it with but slight hesitation; and from that day forward I was her constant companion, her sisters being rather amused than otherwise by what they considered merely a sailor's gallantry towards the youngest and prettiest lady present; the captain, who, in his way, was a very respectable man, taking them under his especial care. They were, however, not so fond of the fresh air as Mdlle. Julie, and thus she was often on deck alone with me. Often would she stay by my side, watching the sun sink with a halo of ruddy flame into the ocean, till the twinkling stars came out, and the pale moon cast its tranquil light upon the sea. She used to recount to me, with artless simplicity, the events of her short life, and all her hopes and prospects for the future. She was not ambitious: she would like to see Paris and all its wonders; but after that, she would be content to settle down in a quiet little country village, with—

"'One you love,' I added, as she paused.

"'Yes,' she answered, blushing. And I thereon spoke of my love and devotion, but confessed my poverty and the hopelessness of ever gaining sufficient to support her.

"She smiled at my scruples; told me that she had wealth enough for both, and that she valued a true and honest heart more than all the riches of the world.

"Poor girl! she little knew the accursed wretch to whom she was ready to link her fate. Once or twice I thought of telling her the truth; but I dared not: indeed, while I was by her side, I already felt better, and thought I might reform. Dreams—dreams, which were soon to fade away, and leave the frightful reality more glaring before my eyes. Some time had thus passed; the winds were light and baffling, so we had not made much way, when one night, during my watch on deck, I found Brand Hallton standing close by me, just before the mainmast. Besides the man at the wheel, there was only one lookout man forward awake; the rest of the watch were fast asleep, stowed away under the poop-deck.

"'How fares your love with the old Frenchman's pretty daughter?' said Hallton, touching my arm.

"I shuddered as he did so, and could scarcely answer.

"'What matters that to you?' I at length replied. 'She is not likely to think of one so mean and poor as I am,' I added.

"'No, no,' he answered, in a low, jeering tone; 'you can't deceive me, my man. She looks upon you as an officer and a gentleman. Ha, ha, ha! With one like me, a poor man before the mast, the case would be different. I'll tell you what it is, Hawkins. The girl loves you, and would marry you to-morrow, if we had a priest to join your hands. She does not know that you are a murderer,' he hissed in my ear. 'If any one told her, she would not believe it. I know what women are when they are in love, as that girl is with you; but the old father would not be so deaf; and, at all events, he would as soon see his daughter in the grave as married to one like you. Ha, ha, ha!'

"'I do not know what you are aiming at,' I exclaimed, turning round on my tormentor. 'Do you wish to provoke me?'

"'Pardon me, Mr Officer,' he answered, laughing; 'I forgot your rank. No, I do not wish to provoke you; but I wish to tell you the truth, that you are following a wild-goose chase, which will only lead you among shoals at last. Take my advice: change your course, and give up this sentimental work. The girl shall be yours, if you follow my advice; but if not, you will lose her to a certainty, and do yourself no good into the bargain.'

"I told you, sir, how complete was the power that man exercised over me from my having participated with him in the murder of Arnold, nor was he lenient in exercising it. Though my spirit was rising, he soon made me quail before him. He so worked upon me, that he at length brought me over to agree to a plan he had formed. This was to put under hatches the master and such of the crew as would not join us; then to alter the ship's course towards the coast of America, where he proposed to make off with as much of the gold as the boats would carry—with Mdlle. Julie as my share—after cutting away the masts, so that we could not be pursued, should the master and his companions, by any chance, break loose from the hold. He sneered when I told him, that as there was to be no bloodshed, I did not object to join him in his plan. I was very wicked, I know it; but bad as I was, he was worse. I was tempted by the hopes of winning Julie, for he had convinced me that I could never gain her by fair means. He was deceiving me all the time.

"It did once cross my mind that I would try to make amends for my former crimes by endeavouring to save the old merchant, and trust to his gratitude to reward me by his daughter's hand; but my courage failed me when I thought of the difficulties I should have to encounter, besides the risk, even should I succeed in preserving the father, after all, of losing the young lady. You see, sir, I had no ballast to keep me steady; from the want of it the first breeze

capsized me, as it will every man who attempts to sail without it. The next morning the young lady came on deck, looking fresh and fair as the flowers in May. I walked with her as usual before her sisters appeared, but there was that on my countenance which prevented me meeting her eye. She rallied me on my silence, and I tried to recover my spirits, but in vain. I was on the point of telling her of the danger she was in, and of vowing to protect her and her family with my life, when, as my lips were about to utter the words, I caught the dark eye of Brand Hallton watching me at a distance: pretending that the duty of the ship called me away, I quitted her side. I cannot tell you, sir, what my feelings were as I walked for'ard. I would gladly have cut the villain down as I passed him, but I dared not, my eye quailed before his dark sneering glance. I dived below to my cabin, and buried my face in my hands; I thought my heart would have burst. Again and again I cursed the bitter fate which had delivered me into the power of that more than fiend. I was aroused from my stupor by a dreadful shriek. I rushed on deck. Near the companion lay the old merchant, life ebbing fast away from a deep gash on his head, which had rendered him all but senseless; one of his daughters was kneeling over him, her hands uplifted as if to protect him from further violence. Brand Hallton was furiously engaged with the captain, whom he had driven right aft, and, as I appeared, a blow from his cutlass sent him reeling into the sea. Giving one cry for help, which Hallton answered with a laugh of derision, he cast a look of despair towards the ship, and the waters closed over him for ever. The murderer then turning upon me, exclaimed—

"'You would have betrayed us, would you? You shall suffer for it.'

"I was unarmed, and before I could seize anything to defend myself, a blow from his cutlass stretched me on the deck, but not senseless; I wish that I had been so, I should have been spared the horrors I was witness to.

"Apparently satisfied with his vengeance, the miscreant turned to other acts of blood. Some of the men had overpowered the first mate, who had remained faithful to the master, and who, even now, while death was staring him in the face, refused to accept his life on the dreadful terms the mutineers proposed. Lashing his hands behind him, they placed him at the outer end of a plank, which they shoved over the stern of the vessel, some of them holding it down in-board.

"'Will you join us?' said Hallton.

"The mate was a brave fellow.

"'No!' he exclaimed with a firm voice; 'never!'

"'Let go,' cried Hallton, with an oath, 'he would have hung us if he could.'

"The man jumped off the plank. Not a cry escaped the mate, as, with a sullen splash, he fell into the sea, and sank immediately.

"The deeds of horror which followed I will not describe.

"The ship was now entirely in the power of a gang of the most murderous ruffians who ever dared the vengeance of Heaven.

"During all this time the eldest of the three young ladies lay senseless on the deck; but what had become of Julie and her sister I knew not. A minute afterwards I heard a shriek; I opened my eyes; Julie herself rushed on deck. She cast one terrified glance around—not a friendly eye met her sight.

"She saw me bleeding, and apparently dead; she would have thrown herself down near me"; but she encountered Hallton on the way. Darting from his grasp, before any one could stop her, she fled aft, and threw herself over the taffrail into the sea. Hallton immediately ordered a boat to be lowered, but the falls were unrove, and it was some time before it was in the water, and the brig hove up into the wind. Oh! what an agony I was in! I did not wish her to be saved.

"I could only hear Brand shouting to the men in the boat, and pointing out to them the direction they were to pull; I watched every movement anxiously; I conjectured that she was still struggling in the waves—love of life triumphing over her fears—and probably kept up by her garments.

"'Pull away, and you'll have her yet,' shouted the chief mutineer. There was another horrid pause. 'No, she has sunk,' he cried. 'A few strokes more, and watch for her if she rises. I see her hair below the water. Oh, you fools, you have missed her!'

"He still stood watching—an age it seemed to me. My feelings almost overpowered me. He stepped down on the deck. I heard the boat alongside: the men came on deck: they brought not Julie. She had escaped them; and, had I dared to pray, I would have thanked Heaven for it.

"After this, I know not what occurred for several days. I was in a raging fever; and, had I not lost so much blood, I should have died. Hallton had spared my life, both because I was the only man, besides himself, on board, who understood how to navigate the ship, and because he knew my temper, and that I was completely in his power: he had only to threaten to deliver me up as the murderer of Arnold, and I was again his slave.

"Well, sir, when I was able to crawl on deck, we were running up the Gulf of Mexico; and, after changing our destination several times, we stood for Vera Cruz. Hallton never once referred to what had occurred: he spoke to me soothingly, telling me that, as he had been elected captain, I was to be his first mate, and that a Spaniard, called Domingos, was to be second. I told him that I was ready for anything; for, in truth, I had no longer any power of thought. All I wanted was excitement; and when he talked of the wealth we should gain by pirating, I only longed for the chase and the fierce fight. When we were within two days' sail of our port, the captain told me that he was convinced it would never do to take the brig into the harbour, where she might be recognised by the people on board

some of the other vessels; that we must look out for some other craft; and then taking the two to one of the quays at the south of Cuba, where the old pirates used to resort, we must refit, and alter one of them, so that she could not possibly again be known. I had nothing to say against his plan, which, being agreed to by all the crew, we once more changed our course.

“We cruised for some days on the Spanish main, when we sighted a large schooner, which was at once pronounced to be an American merchantman. They are very fast vessels in general; so that, if we alarmed her, we could not hope to come up with her in the chase. Sending down our topgallant-masts, we clewed up the topsails, and, slacking the braces, we let the yards swing every way, while, at the some time, we hoisted signals of distress. The schooner made us out before long, and stood towards us to see what was the matter. When she was about a mile from us, it fell a dead calm, and we were consulting whether we would get alongside her in boats or wait for a breeze to board her, when the captain ordered all the men to lie down; and, standing upon the taffrail, he made signs that we were in want of water. On this, a boat was lowered from the schooner, with six hands in her, and we saw a couple of kegs handed down the side.

“Oh! sir, it was a devilish trick we played those who were ready to relieve our distress—one that a seaman naturally looks on with peculiar abomination; but we seemed to delight in outraging all the laws both of God and man. With rapid strokes the boat pulled towards us; and as her crew eagerly jumped on the deck of the brig, they were knocked on the head and tumbled below. The last two who remained in the boat were stabbed, so as not to make any noise. We then stripped off their shirts and hats, and six of our best hands, including Hallton, dressing up in them, with three others concealed at the bottom of the boat, pulled towards the schooner. Another boat was got ready on the opposite side, to where the schooner lay, to support the first, if necessary.

“Our people were not suspected till they got almost alongside the schooner, when the Americans, seeing strange faces instead of their own friends, could not doubt what sort of customers they had to deal with. They seized what arms they could lay their hands on to defend themselves; but it was too late for resistance. Hallton and his crew were on board before they had time to load a musket.

“The greater number were cut down on the instant: a few defended themselves on the fore port of the vessel, but the second boat following, boarded on the bow, when these too were quickly overpowered. Not one of our party was hurt. The master of the schooner and his two mates were killed. Some of the crew, to whom we offered their lives on condition of joining us, accepted our terms; but several refused to do so. After taking possession of our prize, which was a remarkably fine schooner, just suited to our purpose, we set to work to dispose of our prisoners. Hallton, with his usual diabolical cunning, hit upon a plan to secure the obedience of those of the schooner’s crew who had joined us, by making them murder the remainder of their shipmates.

“It was cold-blooded, dreadful work. The victims were compelled to stand at the gangway, while, one by one, their former friends advanced with a pistol, and, blowing out their brains, hove them into the sea. Two men had thus been murdered, when it came to the turn of a youth of respectable appearance, the son of the owner, I think he was, to perform the part of executioner. He had at first consented to live, but I have my doubts whether he did not even then contemplate what he afterwards attempted.

“Seizing the pistol which was offered him, with a stern look he advanced towards the wretch he was ordered to kill; but, instead of drawing the trigger, he turned suddenly round, and taking a deliberate aim at our captain, fired. The ball grazed the captain’s cheek. With a look of fury he rushed with his drawn cutlass at the daring youth, who, standing firmly prepared for his fate, was cut down on the deck. Life ebbing fast away from several tremendous gashes, the young man lifted himself from the deck on one arm—

”‘Wretch,’ he said, ‘my pistol missed its aim, or I should have saved the lives of my companions, and your crew from further crime; but be assured that your career of wickedness will quickly be brought to a close, and that the fate to which you have consigned so many others will soon be your own. May Heaven pardon me for what I would have done!’

”‘Heave the young villain overboard, some of you! and stop his prating,’ exclaimed the captain, stamping with fury.

“But none of us stirred—hardened as we were, we could not do it: even we were struck by his heroism; and at that moment, had he chosen to be our captain, we would gladly have deposed Hallton and followed the dying youth in his stead.

”‘Am I to be disobeyed?’ cried the captain as he gave another cut across the face of the unhappy man; and dragging the yet living body to a port, with his own hands hurled him overboard.

“That murder cost him his influence over us; and I think even the worst of us would have been sick of him had he been destined much longer to command us; but the words of the murdered youth were soon to prove true.

“You will scarcely believe it, sir, but not only were all the prisoners made to walk the plank, but Hallton—fearing that some of the others might attempt his life—murdered the rest of the schooner’s crew who had entered with us, not excluding the two who had commenced their career by shooting their own shipmates. Well, sir, I shall soon have done with my history. After taking everything out of the brig, we scuttled her, nor did we leave her till we saw the waves close over her topgallant masts. We then did all we could to alter the appearance of the schooner, and shaped our course for Cuba.

“We there passed some weeks, spending our ill-gotten wealth in every kind of debauchery and folly. We then refitted our craft and again went to sea. After taking and sinking several merchantmen, with all their crews on board, we returned to our former rendezvous; and this work continued for some time, till we fell in with the ship of war which captured us.

“There, sir, I have given you a sketch of the greater part of my career, the rest you know; and I assure you, sir, that I have been far happier since I was taken than during any former time of my manhood. That one dreadful thought oppresses me, that I must meet Arnold and be carried in his cold embrace, down, down, down—

“Oh, save me from him—save me!” cried the pirate, hiding his face in his hands, and cowering down towards me, to escape from the vision which haunted his imagination.

I remained with him for the greater part of that night; and, at length, quitted him more composed in mind and resigned to his fate than I could have expected. The next morning was to be his last; and at his particular request, I accompanied him to the fatal scaffold. A large crowd had assembled—blacks and whites, soldiers and sailors, to witness the execution of the noted pirates. With a firm step he walked from his prison to the foot of the gibbet, and mounted the steps. Resting a moment, he addressed the spectators, exhorting them to take example from his dreadful fate, and to avoid the evil courses which had, step by step, conducted him to it. At length the executioner warned him that his time was up.

“I am ready,” he answered, and was about to submit his neck to the fatal noose, when, starting back, he exclaimed in a voice of agony, “He is come! he is come! Oh, save me from him!—save me!”

Before he could utter more, the drop was let fall, and all was soon over. The rest of the crew died making no sign.

Such was the closing scene in the life of a pirate—the dreadful phantom conjured up by his conscience haunting him to the last.

Story 6--Chapter I.

STORY SIX—The Spirit of the Storm.

There once existed in the Pacific Ocean a beautiful island, called the Island of Gracia. In the early ages of the world, before the human race had begun to explore the more distant regions of the globe, it was probably a wild and barren rock, with abrupt sharp-edged hills and dark pools of stagnant water, without a patch of green herbage, or animal or vegetable life of any description to enliven its solitude; while the only sound heard around it was that of the wild waves dashing ceaselessly on its rugged shores. Ages passed away, and those indefatigable insects, the coral worms, built up their wonderful habitations, like lofty walls, around it; toiling, seemingly, for no other purpose than to show how for their structures can surpass in size the most mighty efforts of men. The reefs thus created broke the force of the fierce waves; a soft yellow sand was formed, and shells of many shapes and delicate tints were washed up uninjured on the beach. The sun and rain, with alternate influence, softened also the hard rock, and a soil was formed, and birds of the air rested there in their passage across the ocean, and brought seeds of various descriptions from far-distant lands, which took root and sprung up; and the hills became clothed with fragrant shrubs and gorgeous flowers, and tall trees with luscious fruits grew in the valleys, and a soft green herbage covered the banks of the silent lakes and murmuring streams. Thus the island became a fit habitation for man. Now, it happened that a canoe or a galley with many oars, or a vessel of some description, such as was used in ancient times, with a chief and his followers, and their wives and children, set sail from a remote country. Either they fled from their victorious enemies, or they were driven by a storm so far from their native shores that they could not return. Thus they floated over the ocean, till they reached the Island of Gracia. So shattered was their vessel by the tempest, and so delighted were the chief and his people with the appearance of that beautiful land, that they were well contented to remain. Their chief now became their King.

In the course of a few generations the descendants of the first adventurers had thickly peopled the whole island, and had lost all record of the land from whence they came, nor did they know whether it lay to the north or south, or to the east or west.

Monarch succeeded monarch, till King Zaphor came to the throne of Gracia. Everybody loved King Zaphor, for he was a benignant and paternal sovereign, who attended to the wants of his subjects. The King had a daughter, the Princess Serena; he loved his people, but he absolutely doted on his daughter. She was the child of his affections, the sole relic of a departed wife, the soother of his regal cares, the companion of his hours of retirement. The people loved their King, but they almost adored the Princess, and there was not a man in the island who would not have gladly died to protect her from harm.

Her heart was tender and good, and if she heard of any persons who were ill or in trouble, she was not contented till she had done her utmost to relieve them. Her blooming countenance was radiant with smiles and animation, and she was beautiful, too, as she was amiable. The poets of Gracia used to liken her to a graceful sea-bird floating on the calm bosom of the deep, as, followed by her attendant maidens, as was her daily custom, she tripped across the flowery mead, or through the shady woods, or along the yellow sands, herself the fairest and most agile of them all!

The Princess and her youthful maids loved to pluck the sweet-scented flowers to make chaplets for their hair, or wreaths to twine round their sylph-like forms. At other times they would amuse themselves by dancing on the smooth sands, or they would plunge fearlessly into the water, and would sport like sea-nymphs in the clear bright waves within the coral reefs, while the rocks and adjacent woods rang with their joyous laughter.

The Princess also had a beautiful bower, where none but her own attendants dared intrude. It was formed of branches of red and white coral, beautifully polished and interlaced. The roof was covered with the long, thick leaves of the palmetto, and the outside walls were built of the long-enduring bamboo, so closely placed together that neither wind nor rain could penetrate; while the whole was shaded by a wide-spreading palm-tree, and surrounded by a grove of cocoa-nut and plantain-trees. In front, through an opening in the wood, the sands of the sea-shore and its fantastic-shaped rocks, and the blue ocean, glittering in the sunshine, could be seen.

Here the Princess Serena and her attendants used to retire during the heat of the day, to partake of their simple but delicious repasts of bread made from the quick-growing cariaca or the cassada root, the nutritive and luscious plantain, the heads of the cockarito-palm, and boiled pappaws, with sea-side grapes, and other fruits and vegetables too numerous to mention; or they would ply the distaff, or would make dresses of feathers and baskets of reeds, while they amused themselves with pleasant talk; and thus their days passed innocently and happily away.

Story 6--Chapter II.

In the very deepest part of the Atlantic Ocean, directly under the Equator, Neptune, the Sovereign of the Seas, once held his regal court. His palace was of vast dimensions, capable of holding all the Ocean Spirits, the rulers and guardians of the realms of water below, and of all the islands which adorn its surface. Its outside was composed of huge black rocks piled up like mountains, one upon another, and covered with dark masses of seaweed, which, floating upward, appeared like a forest of trees, of a growth far more gigantic than the earth can produce, and yet it seemed but like lichens growing on the roof of a house in comparison with the size of the edifice. The inside was more magnificent than mortal eye has ever seen. There was one vast hall, pervaded by a green yet clear light, which came from above, and increased the grandeur and solemnity which reigned around. To say that the walls were of red coral and immense shells, each of which was as large as many a vessel which floats on the ocean, while pearls of surpassing brilliancy and whiteness were interspersed among them, and that the roof was of crystal of gorgeous tinge, can in no way picture the surpassing magnificence of the structure. At one end was a lofty throne, proportioned to the size of the building, of jet-black rock, glittering with that gold which the toil of man had won from the bowels of the earth, but which his carelessness had lost in the stormy sea. It was surrounded by many thousand other thrones, the seats of Neptune's vassal Spirits—his Governors, Tritons, and other attendants. It must be understood that, once upon a time, whatever may now be the case, every fish which swims, every insect which crawls in the sea, had its governor and king. The largest was the King of the Whales. He was a vast monster of dark form, whose dwelling was in the regions of icebergs and glaciers at the North Pole. The fiercest was the King of the Sharks; he had sharp teeth, and eyes full of malignancy and hatred to the human race. He was the most wicked of all the Spirits. The fastest and most beautiful was the King of the Dolphins; the most unwieldy the King of the Porpoises; the ugliest the King of the Cat-fish; and the tallest the King of the Big Sea Serpents—for they all partook somewhat of the forms of the fish over whom they were placed to govern. Their thrones, too, were of appropriate forms; some sat on huge sea-eggs, others on shells. The King of the Whales sat on an iceberg, but the King of the Big Sea Serpents was obliged to twist himself in and out about the pillars of the hall to find room for his long body. It is impossible to describe their vast mysterious forms, shrouded as they were in their dark-green mantles of vapours and obscurity.

That portion of the Pacific Ocean in which the Island of Gracia is situated was ruled over by a sea spirit of the name of Borasco. As he was not the king of any particular fish (indeed, he was superior in power to most of them), his appearance was a mixture of many. His body was covered with scales, and from his back mighty wings projected, to aid him in his flight across the ocean, while his feet were like those of a seal; his eyes were large, fierce, and glowing; his mouth had large tusks, and on either side were black bunches, like the feelers of a walrus. On his head grew masses of long hair, like seaweed, streaming in the wind; while his arms and hands had more the appearance of the claws of a shell-fish than of anything else; at the same time that his vast size, and the indistinctness which surrounded him, gave to his appearance a grandeur which partook more of the terrific than the hideous. Borasco had a palace which might vie in magnificence and beauty, though not in size, with that of Neptune. One day he sallied forth, and mounting his prancing steed, which was a huge wave with a foaming crest, he rode furiously off, as he was accustomed to do, over the ocean. The water roared and hissed, the mid wind howled, as, shouting loudly with a voice like thunder, onward he went in his fierce career; and these were the words he uttered:—

"I'm a wandering spirit where rolls the broad sea,
For no bonds, for no bonds, can e'er fetter me:
My steed is a wave, with a white crest of foam,
Which gallantly bears me wherever I roam;
Lashed to fury, he dashes the waters on high,
As bounding he lifts his proud head to the sky.
Oh! no charger of earth can so rapidly flee,
While no bonds, while no bonds, can e'er fetter me.

"I fly on the tempest while loud shrieks are heard,
And more shrilly I cry than the roaming sea-bird:
When rocks are resounding with ocean's loud roar,
And forms are rebounding, pale waifs on the shore—
When barks are deserted to roam o'er the waves,
And mortals are hurled unprepared to their graves—
Then, then is the time I shriek loudest with glee,
And no bonds are so strong they can e'er fetter me.

"My hair, the thick mist or the wild-driving snow,
All wildly floats round when the northern blasts blow;
My breath's in the whirlwind, my voice in the clouds,
And night, as a mantle, my stern visage shrouds.
The vivid fork'd lightnings which dart from mine eyes
Flash fearfully over the dark low'ring skies:
Oh! then my wild voice is heard shouting with glee,
As I ride o'er the boundless and fathomless sea."

On, on he flew, terror before him, devastation in his rear; the footsteps of his steed, the dark furrows of the foaming

waves; his track marked by the shattered wrecks of the hapless barks over which he passed, till at length he reached the Island of Gracia, his strength exhausted and his fury assuaged. He gazed, delighted, on its smooth yellow sands, sparkling in the beams of the sun, its cool and waving groves giving forth their rich perfumes, and resounding with the harmonious notes of their feathered denizens; its smiling hills, its green meadows, and the thousand beauties of the landscape before him. The light spray, tinted with the varied hues of the rainbow, played round his mysterious form, as his steed, with a loud roar with echoed from rock to rock, receding towards the ocean, left him standing on the shore.

Wildly throwing his arms around, he shook the water from his robe, which, as it fell, appeared like the spray from some mighty cataract, and then, reclining beneath the shade of an overhanging rock, he stretched forth his huge limbs, and, calmed by the fragrant air and the tranquillity of the scene, he slept.

Tempted by the beauty of the evening, after the fierce storm which had raged all day, the Princess Serena and a troop of youthful maidens took their way to the sea-shore. For a time they sang and sported in exuberance of spirits; then they formed a circle and danced around their mistress; then they bound her hair with bright flowers, and decked her neck with softly-tinted shells, and then, hand-in-hand, they ran towards the water; now they retired, and now advanced, uttering peals of laughter, as the bright waves rippled over their feet. At last one, more daring, rushed into the sea; others followed, and as they threw about the sparkling spray in mimic fight, the rocks and woods echoed with their merriment.

The sounds reached the ears of the sleeping Borasco. He awoke, and rising, listened, when, advancing from among the rocks which had hitherto concealed him, he suddenly appeared before the eyes of the astonished maidens. No sooner did they see the monster, than with shrieks of terror they fled into the woods, forgetting even the Princess—or, rather, they thought she was flying with them.

Instead of flying, however, she stood entranced with horror, her feet refusing to move, and her eyes fixed on the hideous being before her. Borasco gazed at the Princess with deep admiration. Neither on the sea nor under the sea had he ever in all his wanderings beheld anything to be compared to her in beauty. Feelings totally strange and new to him rushed like a torrent into his bosom.

The purest and most exalted love took possession of his soul; horror, disgust, and loathing, were the feelings most powerful in the breast of the Princess as she beheld him. At length, forgetting the hideousness of his shape, and the natural repugnance she must have felt for him, he advanced towards her to address her. “Beautiful creature!” he exclaimed in a voice as loud as thunder—“What are you? Whence come you?” No sooner did he speak than the spell was broken, and with a cry of fear she fled away from him as fleetly as a startled fawn.

Her voice and action would have convinced an ordinary mortal that he had no hope of gaining her affections. Not so the Spirit of the Storm.

“Stay, sweet being! oh, stay and listen to me!” he repeated, but the words only hastened her flight. He gazed after her till she disappeared, and when he found that it was useless to follow, and that there was not the remotest chance of her returning, he sat himself down on a rock which hung over the sea to consider what he should do. As he sat, the water became perfectly calm as a glass mirror; and looking into it, after some minutes’ deep meditation he beheld the reflection of his own monstrous form. He had been so long accustomed to look at Tritons, and other sea spirits as hideous as himself, that he was not aware how ugly he was. Now, with grief at his heart, he at once saw the difference between the Princess Serena and himself. His late exposure to the sun had not added to his beauty, for his hands and arms and the top of his head had become red, while the anguish he was suffering increased the wild expression of his countenance.

With good reason, he was at length very nearly giving way to despair.

“Alas! unhappy spirit that I am,” he cried, “why did I look at that mortal maiden? Why do I long for what is beyond my reach? Why am I not content with the enjoyment proper to my own fierce nature? Alas! this new feeling overpowers me, and a delicate maiden has enslaved the mighty Borasco.” While he was speaking a sound reached his ears. He knew it well, for it was the summons to Neptune’s conclave. “Ah!” he exclaimed, “I will consult King Neptune, and ask his aid. If any one can help me, he can, to win the heart of that lovely damsel.

“And now my bold steed, with the white-flowing crest,
Come hither, come hither, arouse thee from rest.
Oh! what courser like thee can so rapidly bound,
When I mount thee to ride o’er the waters profound?
Then haste, my brave steed, again hie to me,
And together once more we will range o’er the sea.”

While he was uttering these words, a mighty wave rolled in towards the shore. Leaping on it, away he went over the ocean at a rapid rate, leaving in his track a line of glittering foam, till he reached the centre of the Atlantic, over the palace of Neptune—then down, down he descended, till he entered the gateway of its rocky halls.

Story 6--Chapter III.

King Neptune, in great state, sat on his throne; the Tritons stood before him, but the chief seats were empty. Waving his trident round his head, he spoke. The words were those which reached the ears of Borasco, then thousands of miles away:—

“Haste hither, wild Spirits,

Who wandering roam
The wide-rolling ocean,
When covered with foam.
Abandon your fierce work
Of death and dismay;
Haste, fly o'er the billows,
My mandate obey.
From where the north gales
So ragingly blow,
On whiten'd wing flying
From frost and from snow;
Ye, in the storm striving,
To swell the loud blast,
The helpless bark driving,
While shivers the mast,
When a shriek is heard sounding
Mid ocean's wild roar,
And the doom'd bark is grounding
Upon the dark shore,
Haste hither, Sea Spirits,
I bid ye appear;
Haste, haste, at my call;
I summon ye here!"

Even while Neptune was speaking, troops of sea-monsters of every wonderful form, and of every colour, came rushing into the hall, and having made their obeisance to him, took their seats on their respective thrones. In they came, till the edifice, vast as it was, was almost full of them. There were the King of the Whales, the King of the Sharks, the King of the Porpoises, and the King of the Dolphins, the King of the Cat-fish, and the King of the Big Sea Serpents; the Kings of Ice and Snow, of Tempests and Whirlpools, and there were the guardian spirits of every headland and bay, and of every island and river in the universe; so that it is not surprising that their number should have been so considerable. Neptune then inquired in a loud voice how each had been occupied since the last convocation.

"I," answered the King of the Whales, "have been engaged in protecting my subjects by hurling together large masses of ice, and by crushing the ships which come to attack them, even to the very heart of my kingdom." "And I," said the King of the Sharks, "have been engaged in sinking all the ships I could meet, so that I might give to my subjects an abundance of the food they like best." The King of the Porpoises replied, that he had been teaching his subjects to keep in the deep sea out of harm's way; and the King of the Cat-fish said, he had advised his to make themselves as disagreeable as possible, so that no one would wish to catch them; while the tall monarch of the Big Sea Serpents observed that he had strictly enjoined his to keep out of sight altogether, which fully accounts, for so few of them having ever been seen. Among the Spirits there was one who, in beauty of form, surpassed them all, for it was almost that of a human being, but more grand and majestic. The Spirit rose and spoke:—

"I have, mighty sovereign, been engaged in watching over the island of which you have made me guardian. I found the women good and beautiful, and the men brave and hardy, true sons of the ocean, their barks roving to every distant clime, and bringing back the produce of each to their sea-girt shore."

"'Tis well, Britannia," said the sovereign of the ocean; "let them understand, that as long as they remain faithful to me—as long as they keep their fleets well manned, their sea-barks ready to repel any aggression—as long as they refuse to submit to the slightest interference of any foreign prince or potentate, Albion shall be my favoured isle, the land of peace and liberty."

When Neptune had ceased speaking, all the Kings of the Sea and Tritons signified their desire to support their sovereign's wishes. Neptune then looked round, and seeing Borasco's throne vacant, inquired what had become of him. Before any one could answer, the Spirit of the Storm entered the hall, and making a low obeisance, walked with a dejected air to his seat.

To the customary inquiry, Borasco informed his sovereign of all the storms which had blown, and the shipwrecks which had occurred.

"Now tell me, Borasco," asked the monarch, "why have you the downcast look I see you wear?"

Borasco replied, "Dread chief, I come to crave your aid for a cause in which all the power I possess I find of no avail. As I was lately wandering over the ocean, I reached the shores of a lovely island clothed with beautiful shrubs and trees and sweet-scented flowers, and canopied by skies of purest blue. Never have I seen a spot more beautiful; and yet it is but the setting of a precious jewel—a pearl of matchless price. That jewel is a lovely and youthful maiden, a princess, the daughter of the mortal sovereign of that island. As I slept, concealed beneath the rocks, she and her maidens, she outshining them all, came to sport upon the sands. Their laughter, sweet as the murmuring of the breeze upon the summer waves, roused me from my slumber; but no sooner did I present myself before them, than they fled with shrieks of terror, fast as the fleet dolphin from the voracious shark. She alone remained behind. I gazed delighted. I endeavoured to approach her, to behold her nearer; but no sooner did I move, than, affrighted, she fled far away from me into the woods, where I could not follow. I endeavoured to shout to her, to entreat her to tarry, to listen to what I had to say; but my voice (it was somewhat loud, I confess) only made her fly the faster. When she and her attendants had disappeared, I sat me down on a rock, disconsolate, to consider the state of the case, when I by degrees began to suspect that she was frightened by the form I am doomed to wear, which I fear is somewhat more hideous than she is accustomed to see. I meditated still further, and at length I came to the conclusion that I am what

human beings call desperately in love. Yes, dread Sovereign, the fierce Borasco is in love!”

On hearing this confession of Borasco, all the Kings of the Sea and Tritons lifted up their hands with surprise, and a smile of incredulity rested on their countenances, while a murmur ran through the hall, “Borasco in love! Borasco in love! oh, oh!” for no one would have guessed that he could have become a slave to the tender passion. They smiled, too, at his only then having discovered his own ugliness, for, frightful as they were themselves, they all fancied that he was more so.

Britannia was the only spirit who compassionated him, and she pleaded his cause with Neptune so successfully, that the Monarch expressed his willingness to assist him, if means so to do could be found. “Tell me by what rules, in thy favoured island, youths manage to win the hearts of the maidens they love?” said Neptune, addressing Britannia.

The Spirit smiled and replied: “In the first place, the youths wear forms somewhat more attractive than that of Borasco; but as to rules, I can lay down none, so various are the means by which the hearts of maidens are won, and of such different materials do they appear to be made. Some seem to me to be composed of iron or adamant, some of glass, some of wax, some of lead, and some of stuff not more consistent than butter, while a few, I suspect, have no hearts at all. Sighs and timid looks attract some, laughter and bold admiration others, and gold has no little influence in affairs of that description; but the man who requires rules to make love has but small chance indeed.”

Borasco sat in a very melancholy and downcast mood, with his chin resting on his hand, while several deep sighs, which sounded somewhat like thunder, burst from his heaving bosom, and echoed round and round the hall. At last he looked up and said, “It is very well for you, brother Kings, who are fancy free, to laugh; but let me tell you, if you felt as I do you would find it no laughing matter. And thou, O mighty Neptune, if thou canst not help me to win the lovely in aid, I know not what I shall do, while I remain as hideous as I own I am.”

Neptune, on hearing this, thought deeply for some minutes; he then spoke:—

> “Be not, my brave Borasco, thus dismay’d,
> You know my love, and I will give thee aid.
> I grant thee leave to seek some human form
> In which the life-blood yet is flowing warm,
> Which from some sea-tossed, shattered wreck is torn,
> And on the shore by raging billows borne.
> Such you may enter, while your present form
> Returns to mingle with the air and storm.
> But also learn, the force of fire or steel,
> Like other mortals, you’ll be doomed to feel;
> And if of mortal life you are bereft,
> You must resume the native form you left,
> And thence for ever in that shape remain,
> Nor e’er in human semblance shine again;
> And also, every year you most repair
> To this my court in that same form you wear,
> Leaving your mortal shape in seeming sleep,
> While for one day you stay beneath the deep.
> Such is, Borasco, tried and faithful friend,
> The best assistance which I now can lend.”

On hearing these words, the looks of the Spirit of the Storm brightened. He rose and made obeisance. “Thanks, mighty Sovereign,” he exclaimed; “my hopes brighten, my courage returns. I will, with your permission, at once hasten and put into execution this most excellent plan. It must succeed, and cannot fail to secure my happiness; and I here promise to obey your mandates, and faithfully to return once a year, to pay my respects at your court.”

“Do so,” replied Neptune; “but remember that I can give you power only over the form of a human being who in his lifetime has been guilty of many crimes. With the innocent and virtuous no Spirit must interfere. Now let our court break up; and, Kings of the Sea, and ye, great Spirits of the Wind and Air, disperse yourselves across the billowy main.”

On hearing these words the Spirits answered:

> “We fly, mighty Monarch, we fly at thy will,
> With tempest and tumult the ocean to fill;
> Where rocks and where sandbanks and whirlpools abound,
> And barks are hurled onward, we there shall be found.”

When the Spirits ceased speaking they dispersed, with a loud rushing sound, in all directions, while the Kings of the Sea, the Islands, and Rocks, retired with a more dignified pace, and the vast hall was left, as before, in solitude and silence.

Story 6--Chapter IV.

The seas were, in those days, infested by a band of pirates, who were possessed of several large ships, with which they defied all efforts to destroy them. The chief of the pirates was called Don Alonzo. Though very blood-thirsty and wicked, for he robbed all he met, and spared no one who made any resistance, he was very brave, and young, and handsome; indeed, on looking at him, few would believe that he could commit the crimes of which he was guilty. It

happened that his ship, having separated from her consorts, was sailing across the Pacific.

Now, as Borasco was returning from Neptune's conclave to his own palace, he espied her in the far distance floating calmly on the waves. He soon knew her to be the ship of the pirate Alonzo, and instantly summoning all his wildest spirits to his aid, a violent tempest began to rage, and thus the Spirit of the Storm sang, as, riding on his foam-crested steed, he followed the doomed bark:—

"'Tis now that the billows are covered with foam—
'Tis now my wild spirit rejoices to roam,
When waves tossing high with dark clouds are at play,
To dim the pale moon with their bright frothy spray;
When loud-rolling thunder resounds thro' the skies,
And fast through the night air the northern mist flies;
Oh! now is the time when my spirit is free,
And wildly I ride o'er the fathomless sea.

"Yon tempest-toss'd vessel before me now flies,
And loudly I echo the mariners' cries,
As sadly they gaze on the breakers before,
Which madly leap over the iron-bound shore,
When hope has deserted, and, pallid with fear,
The stoutest heart trembles at death drawing near.
Oh! now is the time I shout loudest with glee,
And gaily ride over the foam-covered sea."

Onward sailed the sea-robbers, thoughtless of coming danger, when suddenly the gentle breeze, which had hitherto been wafting them on their course, rose to a furious gale. Over the ship heeled to its rage. The tall masts bent and cracked, and one by one, with crash upon crash, they were carried away, till the ship drove before the tempest a helpless wreck on the waste of waters. The wild cries of the seamen, as they saw their doom approach, rose above the shrieks of the sea-bird, or the mocking laughter of the Spirits of the Storm. Their chief alone stood undaunted, youth in his eye, and manly vigour in every limb; though the lightning flashed around his head—though the foaming billows washed over the frail planks on which his feet were planted, and death with all its horrors frowned upon him.

On, on drove the ship—dark clouds above, the yawning waves below—till the land (it was the Island of Gracia), at that part fringed with sharp, threatening rocks, appeared ahead. On she went. The eager waves leaped round her; they lifted her to their summit, and then down she came, crashing upon the rocks. Her timbers were riven asunder and scattered far and wide, and of the human beings who lately trod her deck but one alone was washed on shore, and from his body life had departed, though it was uninjured, either by the rocks or shattered planks and spars. It was that of Alonzo, the captain of the pirate crew. No sooner did Borasco behold the work which his powers had accomplished, than he hastened to the beach, and there he found, stretched on the sand, the body of the pirate. He looked at it delighted, for the form was very handsome; and though life was gone, it yet retained its warmth. High rocks surrounded the spot, so that no human being could observe what was happening. A voice (it seemed to come from the air) then uttered, in an awful tone, the following spell:—

"Dark form! my mystic words obey,
To thin air vanish, haste away!
Go, wander o'er the boundless main,
Nor dare this shape resume again,
Till by dark spells of potent might,
I summon thee to re-unite."

As he spoke the hideous form began gradually to expand into vast proportions, growing each moment more mist-like and indistinct. Signs of animation now returned to the body of Alonzo, who speedily arose, and while he waved his arm, the shape Borasco had lately worn mingled with the surrounding atmosphere, till it finally disappeared like a mist blown off from the sea.

Alonzo, or rather Alonzo's form animated by Borasco's spirit, walked slowly on, for he felt weary, as a person does who has long buffeted with the waves, for with the form so he partook in a measure of the human feelings of the pirate. His nature, however, in other respects was not altered; his love for Serena was rather increased than lost, and he was still the same bold Spirit he had before been, with the same power, only softened and refined by the magic influence of love.

He looked into a mirror-like pool of water among the rocks, and there, seeing his new figure reflected, he drew himself up, and stretching out his arms proudly, he exclaimed, "Ah, I now look like a man indeed; I feel the life-blood rush fleetly through my veins, my pulses beat steadily; methinks when the maiden sees me she will not fly from me as she did before. Ah, now in truth I have a chance of winning her. Thanks, thanks, mighty Neptune! for the aid you have afforded me. The dawn approaches; she will soon be here! and then once more, lovely Princess! I shall again behold thy matchless beauty." As he spoke a few faint streaks, the harbingers of the rising sun, appeared, in the eastern sky, the wind went down, and the sea grew perfectly smooth.

After wandering along the sea beach for some distance to stretch his legs, for he naturally felt somewhat strange in his new form, he at length, overcome with fatigue and a desire for repose, laid himself down on the dry sand under the shade of an overhanging rock. Here, in the course of a few minutes, he fell fast asleep; and so sound was his sleep that he appeared like some shipwrecked mariner who had been drowned and washed on shore by the stormy waves.

Story 6--Chapter V.

The bright sun was shedding his beams across the dancing waves, when the lovely Serena and her maidens, tempted by the beauty of the morning, left the palace to enjoy the fresh air on the beach, no longer dreading to meet the hideous monster who had once so frightened them in the same spot. As they walked on they talked of the storm which had raged during the night. “And, my Princess,” said Linda, one of the maidens, “they say that there was seen last night, by those who were on the watch, a huge black mass driving towards the shore, but that it burst asunder, and only fragments of wood and some extraordinary-shaped things were found among the rocks. Some people think it was a big canoe, and others a monster, but no one is certain.”

“There are many strange things happening,” replied Serena. “Last night my father dreamed a dream; he dreamed that one of the sages of our people came to him, and reminded him of a prophecy which was uttered years ago: it ran thus:—

”‘In hour of danger
Saved by a stranger,
The King and state
Give him guerdon great,
But a Sea-monster will prey
On his reward that day.’

“My sire awoke repeating the words, and the sage was gone, but the storm was raging with greater fury than before.”

“Since the day we saw the dreadful monster, wonders have never ceased,” observed Linda; “now, I should not be surprised if some other wonder was going to happen.”

While they were speaking they happened to approach the very spot where the form of Alonzo was sleeping. The Princess and her maidens started with surprise, and then cautiously drew near, curious to know what strange being he was; for, from his dress, which was the costume of Spain, and from his appearance being so totally different to that of the islanders, they did not at first suppose that he was a human being.

Remembering the fright they had had before, from the strange monster which had appeared so suddenly out of the sea, they approached very cautiously, thinking this might do them some harm if they were not careful. Hand-in-hand they advanced, treading lightly, and uttering no sound, and ready every instant to run away. At last they all got close up to him, and began to examine him with curious eyes, their fears gradually growing less and less. Linda was the first to make the wonderful discovery, that instead of a strange monster, he was a young and handsome man. “Oh, my dear mistress, I am sure he must be a Prince, for he is so very good-looking and prince-like,” she exclaimed, bending over him; as she did so she uttered an exclamation of sorrow, and wrung her hands; “Alas, alas!” she cried, “but I fear he is dead!”

The maidens now all drew near, and knelt mournfully round him, when at last the Princess ventured to take his hand. Instead of letting it drop, she exclaimed joyfully, “Oh, no! he is not dead; his pulse yet beats with life, and look, the colour mantles on his cheeks.”

Her touch, or the voices of her maidens expressing their satisfaction, awoke Alonzo, as Borasco now called himself, out of his deep sleep. He opened his eyes, and fixing them on her, he said in a low voice, expressive of his surprise, “Do I dream? Are you a mortal? or have the skies sent some being radiant with beauty to dwell on earth?”

The Princess was not insensible to the compliment, though it was rather high-flown; but she was so astonished at hearing him speak, that, instead of answering him, and not knowing what else to say, she asked, “What are you? whence do you come?”

Before Alonzo could answer these questions he had to collect his thoughts sufficiently to frame a story; for he had had till then no idea that they would naturally be put to him. He therefore rose, and, kneeling at the feet of the Princess, took her hand, and replied, “I come from the sea, fair Princess! My ship was dashed to pieces last night on those pointed rocks, while I, her chief, was cast on shore, and am the sole survivor of her crew. My name is Alonzo, and I am your humble slave, fair lady.”

The Princess, though she did not comprehend all the stranger said, and certainly did not understand his compliments, had not the slightest doubt of the truth of the story. She entreated him to rise, and then retired with her maidens to consult what should be done; for there existed in Gracia a law which condemned to death any stranger who should venture to the island, of whose character and history the chiefs and magistrates were not fully satisfied. Without, therefore, their permission, she could not venture to invite him to her father’s palace. At this juncture a number of the islanders appeared from the wood close by, and seeing a strange person standing by himself, for the Princess and her maidens were hid from them by the rocks, they rushed down and seized him, demanding who he was. The Princess heard their voices, but before she could interfere, overwhelmed by numbers, the stranger was borne to the ground. He struggled in vain, and was surprised to find how easily he was overcome; for he forgot that with a mortal form he possessed only the strength of a mortal, and had at first supposed that he could drive them off with as much ease as he would have done had he retained the form of Borasco.

The Princess hurried forward. “Oh, spare him! spare him!” she exclaimed; “I am certain he will do no harm. See how amiable and gentle he looks!”

The islanders loved their Princess, and therefore refrained from offering further violence to the stranger, but still they held him tight, and insisted on carrying him into the presence of King Zaphor. Now, Serena, as she felt that she might

more successfully plead his cause before her indulgent father than any one else, gladly consented to this arrangement.

King Zaphor sat in state, with his wise men and councillors around him, when Alonzo was brought bound before him by a large concourse of his subjects. The Princess, attended by her maidens, also appeared in court, for there was no one else to plead his cause; and as she had been the first to discover him, she considered that she was in duty bound to protect him. Alonzo stood before the King with a dignified air, and his arms folded on his bosom, his personal appearance gaining him many friends; but when he was questioned as to his occupation and calling, he began to reflect whether he had not done an unwise thing in entering the form of so wicked a person as the pirate captain, handsome though he was; for he feared that should the Princess discover that his form was that of Alonzo, nothing that he could say to the contrary would persuade her that he was not Alonzo himself. He felt, indeed, the truth that beauty, without real goodness and a good character, is worthless indeed. He, however, gave the same account of himself that he had done to the Princess, in so clear and concise a way, that he gained much in the good opinion of the wise men. He then vowed so earnestly, that far from wishing to injure any of the inhabitants of the Island of Gracia, he would devote himself to their service, that he made a still further advance; and when the Princess spoke in his favour, it was unanimously decreed that, not only should his life be spared, but that full permission should be given him to remain in the island.

The fair Serena was delighted at her success, and consequently took greater interest than before in the stranger. King Zaphor, with great courtesy and kindness, invited him to his palace, where a feast was prepared, and a chamber made ready for him. All the chiefs of the island attended the feast, and were much pleased, as was the King, with his wisdom and general information. The King, indeed, confessed that he was superior to any of the councillors who sat at his council-table; and this made them not a little jealous of him, as people of small minds are apt to be of strangers who surpass them in intellect. Meantime the Princess listened attentively to all Alonzo said, and the interest she felt ripened into a still warmer feeling—a feeling with which Borasco in his proper shape would never have inspired her. The stranger rapidly gained his way into her good graces, and days, weeks, and months passed happily away without their finding them an hour too long.

Story 6--Chapter VI.

Months wore on, and the wisdom of Alonzo had wonderfully increased the prosperity of King Zaphor’s dominions. All the people began to respect the stranger, and to look upon him as the husband of the Princess, and their future sovereign. One day, as Alonzo and Serena were wandering by the shore, they saw approaching far off on the sea, a number of large canoes. Alonzo regarded them attentively till he felt convinced that they were war-canoes full of warriors, intending to attack the island. So he hurried back to collect all the fighting men to repel the enemy. On came the canoes, and it was soon seen that Alonzo was not mistaken, for before the fighting men of the island could assemble, they had run upon the beach. Alonzo and a few followers were the only persons ready to meet, the invaders, who had already formed on the sand, expecting an easy victory. With a sharp sword in his hand—a sword forged within the bowels of the earth, and which had been brought to him by a Sea Spirit from an island in the Mediterranean—he rushed down among them. His sharp sword flashed fire, as he whirled it round his head, among the showers of arrows which flew about him, and numbers of the enemy lay cut to pieces at his feet. Fearless of the deadly weapons aimed at him, so rapidly did he perform his work, that all the invaders were either destroyed or had fallen on their knees to sue for mercy before the King and his followers could get up to the scene of action.

Thus the Island of Gracia was delivered from the greatest peril to which it had ever been exposed. Then the King gave a banquet to commemorate the happy event, and he summoned to it his lords and councillors, and all the chief men of the island, and they all came and congratulated the King on his victory.

The King, however, graciously would not claim the credit which was not his due; but, pointing to Alonzo, who sat on his right side, told them that they owed their freedom to him. Then, taking him by one hand, he took Serena by the other, and informed his chiefs that he thus betrothed those whose hearts were already one, and he inquired whether they would consent to receive the stranger as their future chief. No sooner had the King done speaking, than all the nobles arose, and exclaimed, “Hail to the brave stranger, our gallant defender! hail to Prince Alonzo, the husband of our beloved Princess, our future sovereign!”

The King was much pleased with this expression of the loyalty of his subjects, nor was the Princess less so at their approval of a husband to whom she was so devotedly attached. Thus the stranger Alonzo was raised to the highest dignity of the state.

Nearly a year had passed since his arrival, when one day he espied a large ship, under full sail, approaching the island. The people were surprised, and many were much alarmed, for they had never before seen so extraordinary a sight. Some thought it some mighty sea-bird, and others some monster of the deep; but none could tell what the portend might forbode. On the ship came, and, casting anchor, several of the crew landed. They wandered about through the woods, singing and carousing, and otherwise amusing themselves. When also they happened to discover any of the cottages of the natives, they did not scruple to enter, and to appropriate anything which struck their fancy. Alonzo was attending to the affairs of state when news was brought him of the behaviour of the strangers, and that they were actually approaching the precincts of the Palace. On this he immediately sent out to put a stop to the mischief. As he was proceeding a shriek reached his ear. He knew the voice at once—it was that of the Princess Serena—and, rushing on with the speed of lightning, he found her and her maidens in the rude grasp of the strangers. When they saw him and his followers, while some held fast the damsels, the rest advanced with arms in their hands to meet him. As, however, they got nearer to him, instead of attempting to run him through with their swords, they shouted out, “’Tis he! ’tis he! our long-lost chief! Why, brave Captain Alonzo, we thought you long since dead. What, don’t you know us? Don’t you remember Almagro, and Sancho, and Pedro?”

But Alonzo looked at them as on total strangers, for, of course, he could not remember having ever seen them

before. “I know you only from your own confession and your deeds to be wicked villains,” he exclaimed; “and I order you instantly to quit this island, or I shall hand you over to the laws of the realm. I spare you now. Begone, but remember my warning.”

This made them very indignant. “What, not know your old friends? Come, come, you look very magnificent, doubtless, but we cannot let you or any other man interfere with our proceedings.”

As they said this, some drew their swords, while others attempted to drag off Serena and her maidens. The magic weapon of Alonzo was in his hand in an instant, and as it struck the blades of the pirates, for such they were, it shivered them to atoms. Some of the pirates were killed, but Alonzo was merciful, and the Princess being placed in safety, he allowed the rest to escape, as they fled before him. That day he published a decree banishing the pirates from the island, on pain of death if they remained. Instead of going, however, they hid themselves among the rocks on the sea-shore, for the purpose of issuing forth at night to weak their vengeance on one whom they supposed to have been their chief, but who had now become their enemy.

Story 6--Chapter VII.

It required but one day to complete the year since the Princess Serena first beheld Alonzo, when, as they sat in her bower, watching the blue tranquil sea in the distance, he folded her in his arms, and told her, with a voice of tenderness, that he must for a short time quit her. In vain she endeavoured to draw from him the reason of his intended absence. He assured her that it would be but for a few short hours, that he must go to a distant part of the island, and that he would faithfully return. She entreated to be allowed to accompany him, but to that he could not consent. Had he entrusted his awful secret to her, though it would have terrified her to find that she had got a Spirit for a husband, it might have been happier for him.

Every argument which the Princess could use was employed in vain to induce the seeming Alonzo to remain; far more powerful were the stern decrees of Neptune. Once more pressing her to his heart, he tore himself from her, and rushed out along the beach till the tall rocks hid him from her sight. The Princess remained bathed in tears, and overcome with grief and forebodings of evil.

Meantime Alonzo wandered along the shore in search of some sequestered cavern, where he might leave in security the mortal form he wore, while he repaired, according to his bounden duty, to Neptune’s conclave. For some time he could not satisfy himself, for he was naturally fearful of being disturbed or injured. Far, far better would it have been had he entrusted his body to the safe and loving care of the Princess. At last he discovered a cavern which could only be entered from the sea. Inside it there was a small extent of sand and several ledges of dry rock, to which the waters never reached. Nothing could be better suited to his purpose; so, standing at the mouth of the cave, he stretched out his hand over the sea, and uttered this potent spell:—

“Haste, wandering form,
Dark mist o’er the main.
From wind and from storm,
I call thee again.
I once bade thee retire,
But now hither repair,
Whether glowing in fire,
Or sailing in air.
Again this stern spell,
Dark shape, thou must hear,
Come, come, whence you dwell,
Haste hither, appear!”

As he spoke a thick mist seemed to rise from the sea in the horizon, extending upward, and growing denser and denser, till it assumed the faint outlines of Borasco’s form. Then it glided forward, as if borne onward by a gentle wind, till it reached the mouth of the cavern. Meantime Alonzo placed himself on an upper ledge of the rock in an attitude of sleep, and forthwith his spirit passed into his proper form, from which an awful voice uttered these words:—

“Rest thee, mortal form, rest here,
Till I once again appear.
Cursed the hands that dare to smite thee,
Or by injury to blight thee.
Let with horror fate condemn them,
And the raging seas o’erwhelm them.”

While he was thus speaking, Borasco glided over the sea till he disappeared in the far distance.

Now it happened, as we have said, that the pirates, whom Alonzo had ordered to quit the island, instead of so doing, had hid themselves among the rocks on the sea-shore, waiting for an opportunity to wreak their vengeance on him; and as they were rowing along in their boat, they reached the mouth of the cavern in which he had left the body of Alonzo. Leaving their boat secured to a rock, they jumped on to the sand.

“Ah, here is a secure place indeed, where we may remain concealed though all the people of the island were hunting for us, till an opportunity occurs for punishing our traitor Captain,” said Almagro, who was now chief of the band, and was afraid, should Alonzo return, of losing his authority.

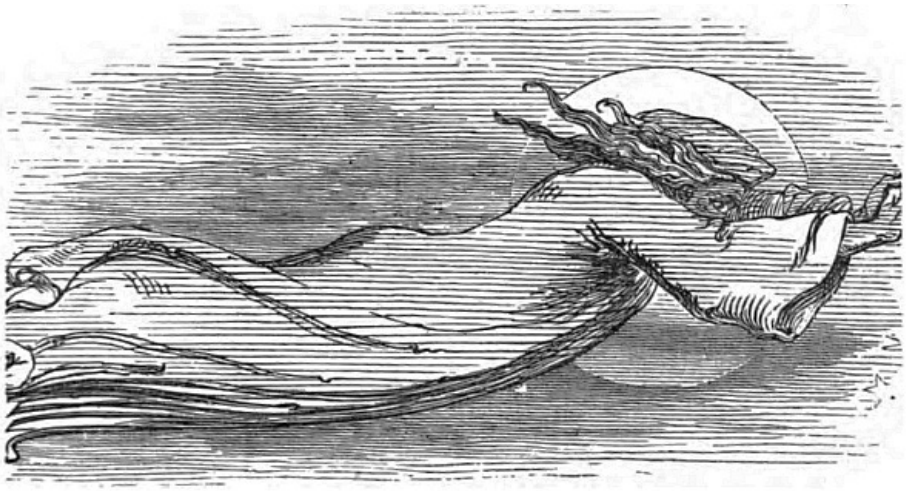
“It’s secure enough; but if the sea were to get up we should be caught, like mice in a trap,” observed Sancho, one of the lieutenants. “Why, where’s the boat?” As he spoke the boat drifted away from the cavern out of their reach.

“What clumsy fellow pretended to secure the boat? Ah, see, the sea is already rising,” ejaculated Almagro, in a tone of horror.

The pirates were now compelled to retire higher up the cavern. What was their astonishment when, as they reached the further end, they saw before them the very man they had been seeking, as they supposed fast asleep. Immediately they held consultation what should be done. Sancho, and some of the more merciful, were for binding him and carrying him off to their ship, but Almagro, who saw that thus his object would probably be defeated, was for destroying him while he slept. Several of the worst sided with him, and before Sancho could interfere, they sprang forward and plunged their daggers into Alonzo’s form. Scarcely had they done so, when loud peals of thunder echoed along the rocks, vivid lightning flashed from the skies, and the foaming waves rushed up into the cavern.

In vain the guilty and affrighted pirates fled into the interior of the cave. The angry waters foamed up on every side. Shrieking they fled from rock to rock; still the waves rose higher and higher, and swept them far off into the boiling sea, while the dead body of Alonzo was carried away into the depths of the ocean.

Story 6--Chapter VIII.



The sun had risen twice upon the world, and again set, and now the moon was casting her silvery beams upon the dancing waves, when the Princess Serena went forth, on the sea-shore, to search for the brave Alonzo, for he returned not as he promised. Long she wandered up and down, and with anxious gaze watched the shining ocean, but still he came not.

She listened for his voice, but no sound was heard, only the low murmur of the rippling water upon the yellow sand. Her heart sank with fear, and grief, hitherto a stranger to her, took possession of her bosom. At length she climbed to the summit of a high rock which overhung the sea. There she stood, with straining eyes and arms stretched over the ocean, calling in a tone of anguish on Alonzo to return to her. As she uttered his name, a form, vast, shadowy, and majestic, appeared beneath the moonlight, and a voice, so soft it seemed a note of sweet music, pronounced her name. The Princess listened with eagerness and astonishment. Again, from afar, came that low and sweetly solemn voice. “Serena, Serena, Serena!” it said. Well did the Princess know the voice. It was Alonzo’s. Though he was not seen, she felt that he was near her; nor did the vast form on the ocean bring any terror to her bosom.

“Serena, Serena!” repeated the voice.

> “Serena, dearest, haste to me,
> And I will bear thee o’er the sea,
> To halls so rich, so bright, so fair,
> Sparkling with every jewel rare,
> Where you, beloved, in peace shall reign,
> The gentle guardian of the main.
> Then, sweet Serena, come to me,
> And I will bear thee o’er the sea.”

“Yes, beloved one, I will go to thee,” she exclaimed, and fearlessly she sprang towards the bright ocean which slumbered below.

The waters sparkled as she fell, a joyous voice again uttered her name, and a form, though it was Borasco’s, no longer hideous in her sight, received her in his arms.

The maidens of the Princess, when they saw the vast form of Borasco floating on the water, were horrified; but when they observed her throw herself off the rock, and watched her carried away in the arms of the seeming monster, they fled terrified to the palace, and reported what had occurred. At first there was some doubt thrown on the matter, and when the stranger Alonzo did not return, people went so far as to say that the unhappy Princess had, in a fit of madness, thrown herself into the sea for love of him. The enemies of Alonzo, who had heard the pirates claim as a friend, said that he was a pirate himself, and that he had carried off the Princess. At all events, the poor King was

overwhelmed with grief at the loss of his daughter, and called his chiefs together, to consult as to what could have become of her, or if means could be taken to recover her.

The sages differed for some time in their opinions. One said, “If she had jumped into the sea and was drowned, they could not expect her to return.” Another observed that, if she had been carried away by a pirate, it was to be hoped that the pirate would bring her back again; while a third sagaciously remarked that, in order to recover her, not knowing where she was, it would be necessary to look for her.

At length one of the very oldest of the sages remembered the prophecy about which the King had dreamed on the night of the storm, when Alonzo came to the island. “There can be no doubt,” he observed, “that the first part referred to the stranger who had rendered such signal service to the state, for which service he received, as guerdon great, the hand of the Princess.

”‘But a sea-monster shall prey
On his reward that day,’

“Means, evidently, that a sea-monster will carry off and prey upon the Princess, who was his reward.”

The King and all his councillors acknowledged, with deep grief, that they saw the true interpretation of the prophecy, and from that time forth no one in the Island of Gracia doubted that the Princess had been carried off by a sea-monster.

Story 6--Chapter IX.

The mighty Spirit of the Storm bore in his arms the gentle Serena rapidly across the ocean, till at length they arrived in front of a palace of crystal, which stood so completely at the very edge of the sea, that the walls which were reflected on its tranquil surface seemed to rise directly out of it. No words can describe the beauty and elegance of its architecture, the gracefulness of its delicate pillars, and the light tracery-work of its innumerable arches, all of the same pure, glistening substance, extending on either side, in a succession of airy colonnades, as far as the eye could reach, and, arch above arch, rising almost, it seemed, to the skies. No mortal workmen could have raised that wonderful edifice.

The portals flew wide open as Borasco and the Princess approached, and placing her on the crystal steps which led down beneath the water, he conducted her forward through a hall, which surpassed in beauty and magnificence even the exterior of the building, so light and airy, so richly adorned at the same time was it with polished coral and delicate tinted shells, and emeralds, and precious stones of every description.

It far surpassed in beauty anything which Serena ever in her most romantic imaginings had conceived to exist in the world. Wonderful and strange as all appeared, no fear or misgivings of any description entered her bosom; for, although she saw that the shape beside her was wild and hideous, yet well she knew that the spirit which animated it was that which dwelt in the form of Alonzo, to which she had given her heart, her best, her deepest affections. A soft light radiated through the hall, and gentle music floated in the air, while forms of every graceful shape and hue appeared before them, and made obeisance as they passed. They advanced slowly among lines of aerial beings towards a superb throne at the further end of the hall, the canopy over which appeared as if formed of a fountain of glittering water thrown upwards, and petrified before it could again reach the earth. Serena remained mute with astonishment, till by degrees she found words to express herself. “Is what I see around me the work of enchantment, and do I tread on fairy ground?” she exclaimed. “And you, my Alonzo, why have you led me hither, and why are you so strangely disguised?”

“You tread, my Serena, the halls of my crystal palace, the home I have prepared for you,” answered Borasco. “Those bright gems are the same for which men toil and deem themselves happy if they gain a few, yet all you see and many more are yours.”

“Oh, I care not for those sparkling gems. It is your love, Alonzo, I prize above all,” said Serena, turning on him a look full of deep affection. “But why hide from me those features on which I fondly used to gaze?—Why envelop thus strangely your noble form?”

Borasco did not answer till he had placed her on the throne; then throwing himself before her on his knees, he told her of his plot to win her, and of all that had occurred, and implored her forgiveness. As he knelt, the thousands of Spirits who filled the hall followed his example. She answered in a gentle voice, that she had nothing to forgive; as she could scarcely find fault with him for falling in love with her.

“But who are the bright beings who fill these halls, and pay me so much respect?” she asked, as the graceful Spirits continued kneeling round her.

“They are,” replied Borasco, “the Spirits of the summer air, the guardians of the moon-lit waves, the utterers of murmuring sounds, when the calm sea is hushed to rest. Each light and easy duty is confided to their care. They are the Spirits which obey my will, and you, my beloved one, shall from henceforth ride over them. See also the mighty Monarch of the Ocean comes to kneel before your throne.”

As he spoke, a flourish of conch shells was heard, and Neptune, in a superb car, followed by an innumerable band of Tritons, glided into the hall. Descending from his car, he knelt before the Princess, and exclaimed:—

“Welcome, fair Lady! since you come
To these bright realms, my watery home;
When I the happy tidings knew,

I clave the limpid billow through,
And hasten’d here to kneel before
The Lady whom all hearts adore:
For know, we rovers of the Sea,
Are truly famed for gallantry,
And when a beauteous Lady deigns
To visit thus our broad domains,
The sons of Ocean strive to show
The pride with which their bosoms glow.
Then, Lady, deign our Queen to be,
And we will serve thee loyally.
This crown marine in token wear,
That Ocean’s realms confess thy care,
And to no other would I yield
The trident sceptre which I wield.
Now then let all with loud acclaim
And joy, our Ocean Queen proclaim!”

Neptune having presented a crown and sceptre to the Princess, the Tritons and Sea Spirits broke forth with a loud chorus:—

“Oh! welcome to these coral halls,
Fair Lady of the radiant brow,
Thy beauty every heart enthralls,
Thy virtues claim our willing vow.
The trident sceptre of the main,
Oh! long, sweet Lady, may’st thou sway,
And far as spreads yon liquid plain,
Let every realm thy power obey.”

Serena then answered in a sweet thrilling voice:—

“Thanks, thanks, Great Neptune, we will strive to prove,
How much we prize our loyal subjects’ love;
And long as o’er these noble realms we reign,
Will ever be the Guardian of the main.”

Neptune then again approached the throne, and bowing, said—

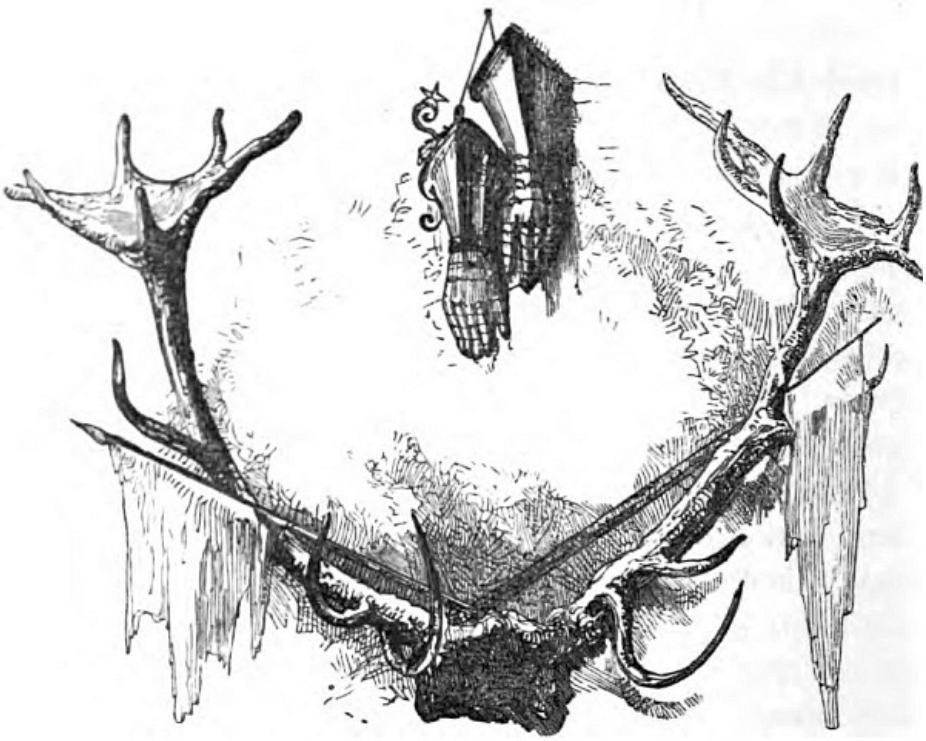
“Fair Queen, your brother sovereign hear;
I once more to your throne draw near,
And what I say will not displease
The gentle guardian of the Seas,
We made a law some time ago,
To which e’en you will gladly bow,
That those who in our realms remain,
Can ne’er their former name retain.
We’ll change the one you bore above—
Victoria, is the name we love,
That name shall through our realms resound,
And echo far the Ocean round,
And she beloved will ever be
By Neptune’s sons the bold and free.”

Once more the Tritons broke into an enthusiastic chorus—

“Oh! long may’st thou reign, fair Queen of the Ocean,
The blue waves are dancing in gladness and sheen,
We thy Empire proclaim with joyful devotion,
And repeat in glad chorus, Long life to our Queen.
The echoes are telling the tidings around,
And joy on her brow gives bliss to the scene.
And long may the realms of old Ocean resound,
That wish of our hearts, Long life to the Queen?”

Story 7--Chapter I.

STORY SEVEN—The Bogies of Glen Bogie.



A gaily-painted canal boat was gliding smoothly and swiftly through the still waters of the Crinan Canal, which intersects the Mull of Cantire in Argyleshire. A steep bank of overhanging wood lay on one side, and on the other an open view stretched toward distant hills.

The day had been showery; drops sparkled upon the leaves, and pattered down on the boat as she passed beneath the hanging boughs; light clouds were speeding across the clear blue heavens, and as the sun shone out a fairy-like rainbow lay along the hill-side.

With a rustling sound the boat cut through the placid water, and for a time none other broke the silence; the exquisite peace and beauty of the scene cast a spell upon the party who were passengers on board, and, different as were the various tones of mind, one feeling seemed now to pervade the group. During this pause, let us examine the figures composing it.

That active well-formed man, with good sense and merriment in his clear kindly eye, and about his firm mouth, is Arthur Hardy. His early life of laborious self-denial, in support of dependent young brothers and sisters, has been rewarded with success and present prosperity.

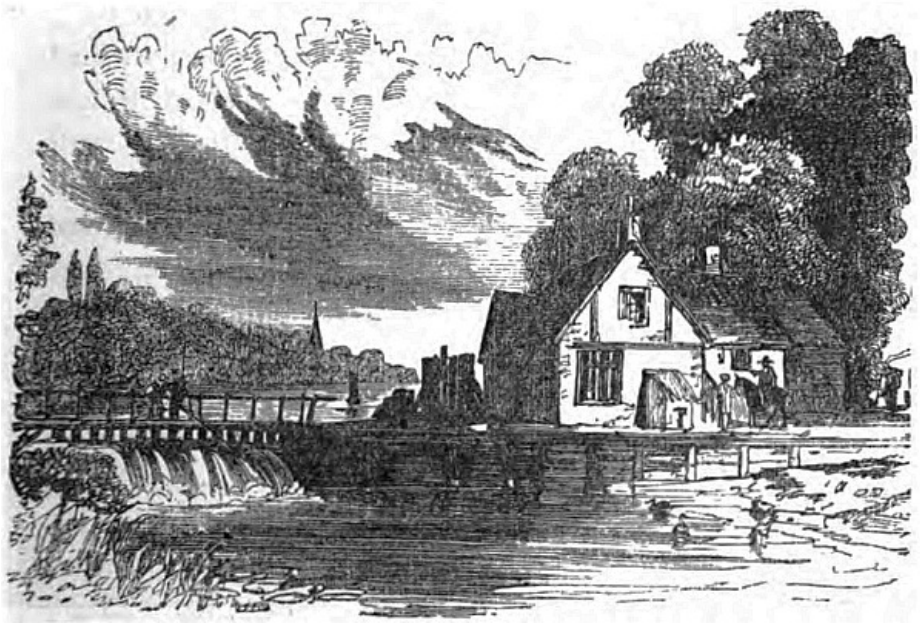
The graceful lounging figure beside him, whose handsome features are clouded by such a look of inward dissatisfaction, is Edmund Bayntun, the luxurious and self-indulgent course of whose days lacks the stimulus of any object to rouse his faculties, brighten his eye, and dispel the dreamy gloom now habitual to his manner.

He and Hardy were school-fellows, and have unexpectedly met, to their great mutual pleasure. Edmund has just been introduced to Mrs Arthur Hardy and her pretty and rather romantic little sister, Helen Grey, and has been persuaded to join them in a visit they are about to pay to a hospitable Highland friend, instead of continuing his languid solitary wanderings.

He and Hardy were soon agreeably engaged in talking over early recollections and subsequent events; and the genuine kindness and lively good sense of the whole party tended considerably to overcome Bayntun’s moody feelings, and dissipate the somewhat peevish melancholy in which he usually indulged.

Towards evening Hardy announced that they must prepare to go on shore, as they had reached the nearest available landing-place to Glennaclach, the residence of Mr Stewart. The mountain mists were tinged with glowing gold, and under the shadow of the dark hill-sides the waters of the loch looked grey and cold, when the party stepped into the little boat which came out to meet them. A few passengers of an inferior rank accompanied them, and were heartily welcomed by the men in the boat in their wild Gaelic. Suddenly they all seemed to remember that there were strangers amongst them, and, with a courteousness which might put to the blush many more cultivated societies, continued their conversation in English; and addressing Hardy, as the evident head of the party, volunteered any assistance or information they could give. His plan had been at once to obtain some vehicle to convey them to his friend’s house in Glennaclach, but this he found to be impossible, as the distance was considerable, and part of the road liable to be overflowed by the tide. The only arrangement to be made, therefore, was to pass the night at the little inn near the landing-place, and proceed the following day on their visit. So Edmund Bayntun was condemned to spend the evening in an uncarpeted room, redolent of whisky and tobacco, the fumes of which ascended from the kitchen, where, as their usual rendezvous was occupied, the frequenters of the inn were holding their evening carousal; but the moon shone in a spreading path of silver upon the waters of the loch as the tide came rippling softly and steadily in, and he gazed upon it, and actually felt enjoyment. Soon from the party below rose and swelled a wild and melodious chorus, then a single voice sang alone, and again the chorus joined in, till it was suddenly hushed, and, after a little consultation, the landlord came up to ask, in the peculiarly delicate tone in which the Western Highlanders speak English, whether the ladies were annoyed by the noise below, as it should cease immediately if they wished it. Softened as it was, the effect of the music added much to their enjoyment, and they begged it might

not be checked on their account.



Early the next day, in high spirits, and perfectly refreshed, though their accommodation had certainly been of the roughest description, the little party set off up Glennaclach, the gentlemen on foot and the ladies and carpet-bags in a cart full of straw, drawn by a rough wild-eyed pony, led by a Highlander equally so.

“Donald’s but a daft lad, but he knows the road and will guide ye safely, so ye’ll no be troubled with that,” said the mistress of the inn, as she shook up the straw in the cart so as to form cushions for the two ladies.

Donald was at first sight what would, in England, be called a lad, till, on closer inspection, his thick loose curls were perceived to be mingled, not sparingly, with grey. These he shook down over his wild light-blue eyes whenever he spoke, but, as he heard the mistress’s remark, he signified his appreciation of her confidence by throwing his head backwards, and, taking an inverted view of his charge, he opened his wide mouth and uttered the exclamation “Hech!” with a prolonged guttural aspiration. Then he addressed himself volubly to the pony in English and Gaelic indifferently, and not a word would he utter except for the information of this, his chosen friend and companion, in answer to any questions put to him.

Merrily they travelled, for the roads in Argyleshire are excellent, and the jolting of the cart, consequently, much less than they had ventured to anticipate; so that there was nothing to interrupt their enjoyment of the varied, always lovely, scenery through which their road lay. Now they crossed an elevated ridge, where heath and grey rock were mingled in rich though subdued tints; then they descended through a wood of fairy birches, whose light foliage quivered against the pure blue sky, to the margin of the loch, which glistened in the morning sunlight, on one hand, and the steep grey rock formed a wall on the other, over which, amongst pines and stunted oaks, the broad heads and short wide horns of the Highland cattle would occasionally appear. As they ascended the glen new hills came into view, some apparently of smooth velvet surface, descending with an easy slope towards the waterside, where a fringe of varied wood was reflected so clearly that it was difficult to distinguish it from the reality; others, dark and rugged, refusing to smile even under the joyous rays of the young day. Bayntun was less obdurate in his gloom, but he seemed to check himself whenever he yielded to the enlivening influences of place and circumstances; while Hardy gave himself up so entirely to the pure pleasure of the moment, that his chest heaved, and his eyes filled with tears, and he could have thrown himself down upon the heather in an ecstasy of joy.

“How dark and gloomy that glen looks between the steep mountain and the round smooth hill on the opposite side of the lake!” exclaimed Helen Grey.

“What is that glen called, Donald?” asked Mr Hardy.

“Ye ken the name as weel as any other word ye speak, Sandie, so come away and dinna be wasting your breath with asking idle questions,” said Donald, addressing the pony. Then, giving a leer at Helen from behind his grizzly locks, he began singing a few words of a Gaelic song; next he addressed some sentences in the same language to the pony, accompanied by a chuckling laugh; after which, he tossed back his head to take another inverted view of the party, and then giving a jerk to the short bridle by which he led the pony, he nodded to him in a patronising manner, saying, “Your memory’s short, Sandie; but we should ay pity folks that’s weak in mind, and so I’ll answer ye. Yon’s Glen Bogie, Sandie,” he continued almost in a whisper; “but ye shouldna go there in the full of the moon, Sandie, for there’s sights and sounds in Glen Bogie that would make a wise man quake and loosen his teeth in his head, much more a poor daft lad like you, Sandie. Dinna *ye* gang there, Sandie, to hear the Campbells come down the glen to cry the coronach over their dead, and them dead and gone themselves these hundred years. Ha! ha! Sandie. I heard it once mysel’ when the wind soughed in the trees and the burn roared amongst the stones; and I heard the rustle of their tartans, and when the moon shone out I saw them. Hush, Sandie! Whisht, my bonnie man! The sun shines now, and we’re no going to Glen Bogie.”

The convulsive jerks he had given to the bridle here made the pony so restive, that Donald’s whole attention was required to quiet him.

“That all sounds very delightful,” said Helen, still gazing at the dark glen which branched off from the wider one up

which they were proceeding.

“Have you a fancy for spectral coronachs, Helen?” asked Hardy, smiling.

“I must go to Glen Bogie,” she replied in a very decided tone.

“And what says the little wife?” continued Arthur.

“Oh, by all means give Helen an opportunity of making friends with real bogies, and in Glen Bogie they must be genuine,” answered Mrs Hardy. “Besides, I cannot help thinking that there really was some ghastly tragedy enacted about here in which the Campbells were concerned. Glen Bogie may be the very spot.”

“Oh, I hope so,” exclaimed Helen, turning quite pale.

Suddenly Donald checked the pony’s pace, and his own half-dancing ambling steps, as, after passing a few thatched cottages roughly built of stone, they came in sight of a moderately-sized house, with wings added apparently as they were required; out-buildings and farm-house, surrounded by stately beech and spreading gene or wild cherry-trees. Immediately in front of the house, which, like most Highland mansions, was slated and white-washed, a lawn, shaded by fine trees, sloped towards the lake, where two boats were moored close to a boat-house; while the adjoining portion of the slope was laid out in a garden, now basking in the sunshine.

“Tread lightly, Sandie; there’s sorrow and pain at hand,” said Donald, in a tone so mournful and different from the wild, half-scoffing manner he had before adopted, that a thrill of apprehension ran through the whole party. “There’s sorrow yonder in the house of Glennaclach, and no cheering welcome for the Sassenach strangers.” His keen wandering glance had discovered one of the boats now moored to the shore, rowed hastily across the loch a few minutes before, and two figures hurrying up from it to the house. One of these he knew to be the only doctor in the glen. There were other signs of alarm and confusion; servants hastening to and fro, cottagers meeting and pausing as if to ask questions; and with all his wildness, half of which was but assumed to excite an interest which flattered his weak intellect, poor Donald was an acute observer, and sincerely attached to the family of the laird of Glennaclach, so that he readily took alarm. To the travellers, not perceiving the tokens by which he formed his suggestion, it had all the effect of the supernatural.

“Go you forward alone, Misther Hardy,” said Donald, addressing him for the first time; “and if there’s a welcome for you, come back and fetch the ladies, and,”—here he designated Bayntun by a certain contemptuous turn of the chin towards him.

“But why should you doubt it, Donald?” asked Hardy.

“Go you forward, Misther Hardy, or I maun go myself,” repeated Donald impatiently, and holding the pony firmly, as if determined that he at least should not proceed.

To humour him, Hardy followed his directions, but as he neared the house, a sound fell upon his ear which alarmed him; a boyish voice uttered a suppressed moan of intense suffering, repeated, yet apparently controlled by an effort. Seeing him pause, one of the group of people who stood with grief and terror in their countenances outside the door came towards him.

“Make haste, sir, if you are a doctor and can do him any good. He is not dead, though I never thought to hear the sound of his voice again when the tree gave way with him, and I saw the bonnie lad go down over the crags like a stane.”

“What has happened?” inquired Hardy. “I am no doctor, but I will gladly give any help I can.”

Then followed a voluble explanation in Gaelic from the whole group, interspersed with a few words in English, from which Hardy learned that one of the laird’s younger brothers, in climbing along the crags by the side of a waterfall, had trusted his weight to a slight tree which gave way with him, precipitating him into the rocky bed of the foaming torrent. The doctor was now examining the injuries he had received. While the women were speaking, a young man appeared at the door and said a few words to them in a kind but determined tone, which had the effect of instantly silencing and dispersing them; and he then perceived Hardy.

“Hardy, is this your promised visit? Alone, and at this unfortunate moment? Not that you are the less welcome,” he added, shaking him warmly by the hand, and leading him into the house.

The gleam of reason which had dictated Donald’s suggestion vanished as soon as Hardy followed it, and he began indulging in crazy merriment at having produced the excitement and alarm so visible in the faces of the three remaining strangers. Though Bayntun would not have confessed it, his imagination was strangely excited, and his nerves shaken, when Hardy and the young laird came together from the house.

“I am sorry to say that Donald’s conjecture was but too correct,” said Arthur; after introducing his friend; “and I have succeeded in convincing Glennaclach, much against his hospitable inclination, that he would distress us all by receiving us under such circumstances.” He then briefly explained what had happened, and his own proposition that they should proceed to Glen Bogie.

“Since you will positively not remain with me, it is some satisfaction to know that at Glen Bogie, notwithstanding the ill-omened connection it has with my house, you will meet with a more hospitable reception, if you do not fear it for its reputation of being haunted,” said the young man. “My boats are at your service to take you there; and I am vexed at not having the pleasure of myself introducing you to the scenery of the Glen; but in my mother’s present anxiety respecting my brother, I cannot leave her even for a few hours. His hurts are not dangerous, however, and I

hope to-morrow to be able to bring you all back to my house."

As he spoke, he carefully assisted the ladies to alight from the cart, returning Donald's reverential salutation kindly, and desiring him to convey what Donald called the *thravelling* bags down to the boat. Helen thought of Fergus McIvor, of course, though nothing could be more dissimilar from the hero of Waverley than the frank, simple-mannered young Highlander, who, with kind quiet courtesy, was handing Mrs Hardy down the sloping lawn. Two men were ready in the boat, which was carefully spread with plaids, and Mr Stewart, or Glennaclach, as he was called in a district where the name Stewart is so frequent that it is absolutely necessary to distinguish the proprietors by the names of their estates, having given his orders to the men in their native language, and placed his intended guests comfortably, gave the boat a shove off from the shore, and lifted his bonnet as a parting salute.

"Now you have seen a real live Highland laird, Helen," said Mrs Hardy, smiling.

As the men plied their square-handled oars, the young laird called out something to them in Gaelic, which made them look shy and shake their heads.

"I want them to sing to you," said he in English; and after some hesitation, one of them struck up a wild song, which, in spite of the nasal sound he gave it, was full of beauty. So they glided over the still waters of the loch, which was—

> "All of the dazzling sheen,
> Like magic mirror, where slumbering lay
> The sun and the sky and the cloudlet grey;
> Which heaved and trembled and gently swung;
> On every shore they seemed to be hung;
> For there they were seen on their downward plain
> A thousand times and a thousand again;
> In winding lake and placid firth,
> Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth."

"Where did you learn that, Alice?" inquired Hardy gently, as his wife concluded these lines, which she murmured rather than pronounced, as she leaned back in the boat looking down into the water, and rippling it with her delicate fingers.

"It is in Hogg's 'Kilmeny,'" she answered. "You don't know the poem, Arthur, but we will read it some day. Kilmeny was taken away to the spirit-land, and allowed to revisit her native Scotland, to show what a woman can be and what she can do."

"And did she take you with her, Alice?" said her husband.

Mrs Hardy's cheek glowed at the implied compliment.

Soon they entered the little stream which Mr Stewart had pointed out to them, and truly it was a lovely scene. Although evidently deep, the water was so transparently clear that each pebble and fibre of weed was distinctly seen. Trees arched overhead, hanging at times so far across the stream that it was difficult to manage the oars. Where it widened, little islands, covered with trees, ferns, and wild-flowers, broke it into still narrower channels, forming leafy vistas, occasionally terminating in the blue hills.

"Oh, what is that?" exclaimed Helen, as a large bird rose with heavy flight from a point of land which they were approaching.

"Hech! yon's ta bhird," commenced one of the rowers, with great animation; then, checked by the consciousness that, however well he might be supplied with information regarding the bird, he could not communicate it in English, he continued in a more subdued tone, "Yon's ta bhird ye may often see nigh ta wather."

The heron, for such it was, continued to precede them up the stream, resting on a point of land till they came close to it, and then majestically and gloomily rising, to alight again. In about an hour the boat touched a sandy beach, surrounded with magnificent chestnut trees, amongst which the stream still ran, but so shallow and rocky a's to be unnavigable.

"And, now, are we in Glen Bogie?" asked Helen.

"Ay, ye may say that," said the man who had before spoken.

With some difficulty they followed him by the brink of the stream, as, with their bags on his arm, he led the way. The glen became darker and narrower; gloomy firs, through which the summer wind moaned sadly, replaced the varied wood; a lofty mountain interposed its precipitous rocky side between the stream and the sun, which seemed never to shine on its troubled waters. As if placed as far as possible within the dark ravine, stood the house of Glen Bogie, and immediately behind it rose a grove of firs.

"What a beautiful sketch this would make!" said Helen, as they came suddenly upon a foaming torrent, which, descending the hill-side, emerged from the rocks, heather, and stunted trees, and fell into the stream by which they were guided.

"We must have it, Bayntun," said Hardy. "The stream is swollen by yesterday's rain, and by to-morrow would appear to less advantage."

"I shall gladly attempt to render it justice," answered Bayntun, "but it must be a work of time."

“If you do not mind remaining, I will take Mrs Hardy and my sister on to the house and return to guide you, for I am sure they must be tired,” said Hardy.

Both ladies owned to considerable fatigue, notwithstanding their enjoyment. In answer to Bayntun’s inquiries, their guide assured him that he would have no difficulty in finding his way to the house alone, which he preferred.

Hardy and the two ladies then climbed the rocks from which the waterfall issued, and crossed by an old stone bridge; then again descending to the stream they had left, they followed it till they arrived opposite to the house, when they were greeted by furious barking from a number of dogs which simultaneously rushed from every angle of the building, ranging savagely up and down the waterside.

They were soon hushed by the appearance of a stout middle-aged woman, dressed in a gown of dark blue linsey-woolsey and a snow-white cap, who came out to see what had caused their noise.

“Yon’s Mrs Cameron,” said the guide; and in answer to her greeting, which was in Gaelic, and shouted with the full force of her strong vocal organs, he apparently told her who her guests were, and the cause of their coming.

“Any from Glennaclach are welcome to my roof,” said she in English, surveying them for a few minutes with her head on one side and her arms folded across her portly person. “Go you round to the bridge, and I will meet you; the lads are all away, but they’ll be at home the night, and meantime I will make you as welcome as a lone wife may.”

Still shouting to them across the stream, she stepped out firmly over the loose stones and met them on a high arched stone bridge, bestowing on each a hearty shake of the hand, and on Hardy a hearty thump on the shoulders, accompanied by the compliment—

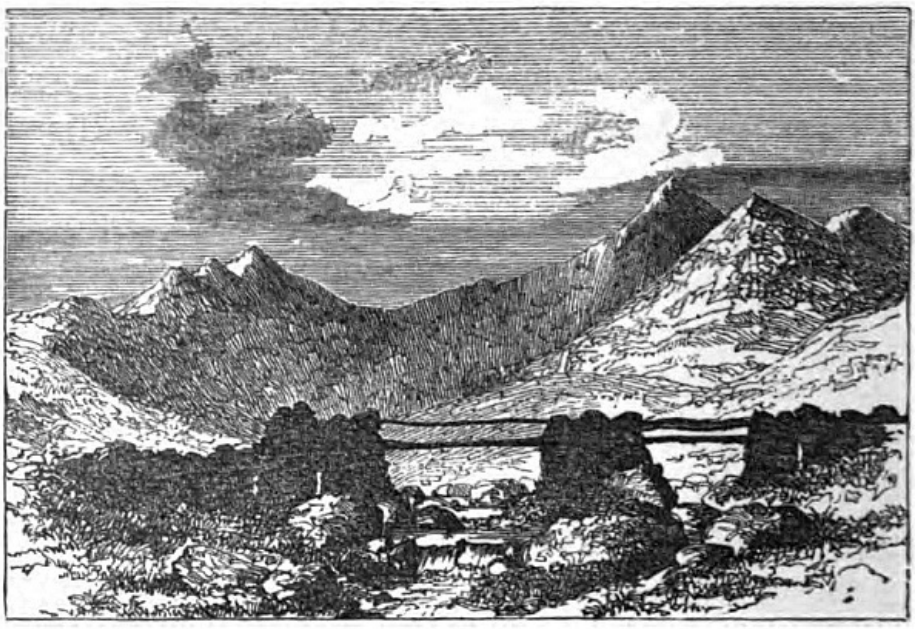
“You’ve a right honest face, my lad.”

She then spoke with respectful interest of the family at Glennaclach.

“There’s no race like the Stewarts, meet them when and where you will,” added she.

Passing by several out-buildings, from which all the dogs rushed forth again, she led the way to the principal entrance of what was once a Highland gentleman’s mansion, gloomy and desolate as it now looked.

“My daughters are all married and away, and none of the lads has brought home a bride to take their place,” she said, rather sadly, and then bursting into a loud laugh, she continued—“But I am more than wife to all of them; look here,” and opening a large chest, she drew forth pieces of cloth and linen of all descriptions. “Spun it all with these hands, and there’s plenty of work in them yet; and see there,” she said, triumphantly pointing to dozens of woollen hose which hung in the wide chimney of the kitchen, to which she now led the way.



Then remembering that her guests must be tired and hungry, she placed upon the table oat-cake, milk, and whisky in abundance, heartily inviting them to partake of them.

The task which Bayntun had undertaken was longer than he had anticipated. While engaged upon it, his mind recurred more than once to the hints he had heard of the place he was now in. Donald’s apparently prophetic announcement of the sorrow which had befallen the family they had intended to visit had also taken a strange hold upon his fancy. Moreover he was tired and hungry, and whatever ascetics may say to the contrary, the mind cannot work so healthfully in conjunction with a feeble body, as with one in such comfortable condition that none of the reasoning faculties are needed to master its sufferings. In fact, he was neither more nor less than nervous. The spot in which he was left was calculated to increase these feelings, so totally lonely and silent, except the sad music of the breeze in the fir-trees, and the stream gurgling and rushing down the rocks. Just below him—for, although far beneath the level of the top of the waterfall, he was some feet above its base—was a smooth grassy nook, protected from the water by a wall of black rock, in which was a shallow cave overhung by a weeping birch.

Bayntun had noticed this when he first began his sketch, but as his sight grew rather dazzled from watching the constant play of the water, and the sun sank behind the towering mountain, he lost sight of it altogether. As he concluded his work and prepared to follow his friends, his steps were arrested by a harsh chuckle unlike any human voice, but which seemed equally unlike the sound of bird or beast. It proceeded from the cave in the grassy nook, and so excited Bayntun's curiosity that he could not refrain from investigating its origin. With some difficulty he lowered himself down the face of the rock by means of the large ferns and bushes, and as he neared the cave the sound became louder and harsher, and expressive of terror. Just as he reached the spot and extended his hand to hold back the branches which overhung it, there was a shriek, and a violent rustle from within; and a form sprang out, passed him, and climbing the rock with the agility of a monkey, by clutching the boughs with its long lean arms and hands, fled away, continuing its wild chuckle.

Edmund stood paralysed. It must be something human or supernatural, but how it came there, and whether its glaring eyes had been fixed upon him as he sat there believing himself alone, he could not guess. Resolved not to give way to the strange fears which came crowding into his mind, he climbed up the rock again, and crossing the bridge, followed, as he thought, the path described by the Highlander. Instead, however, of soon finding himself at the farm-house, he lost all view of that or any other habitation; and pausing for a moment to peer amongst the trees for signs of a path, he heard again that unnatural chuckle at no great distance from him.

"Absurd folly!" said he to himself; "it must either be a poor maniac or some mischievous young mountaineer;" so he turned towards the sound, pushing his way through the underwood till he perceived an opening in the wood. There, on the shadowy hill-side, in a magic circle of mossy grey stones and whins, or furze, he witnessed a ghastly dance of pallid forms tossing their arms wildly above their heads, and, in the midst of them, the hobgoblin being which had just escaped from him, its grey garment fluttering, and its limbs jerking frantically as it bounded from one to the other of its spectral partners. Edmund paused in bewilderment.

"This is fearful," he mentally ejaculated. "I confess I don't half like it."

He then endeavoured to retrace his steps towards the stream, which he should have followed as a guide towards the house, and at length discovered it by the sound of its murmuring waters. Hastening on, he had almost reached the old stone bridge on which Mrs Cameron had received her guests, when he perceived, as he thought, a tall Highlander, kilted, plaided, and bonneted, leaning against a tree a little to the right of the path, in an easy attitude, with one foot crossed over the other, one hand on his side, and the other supporting his head. His face was ghastly in its whiteness, and not less so were his hands and knees, and Bayntun's first impulse was to hasten to his assistance, believing him to be ill. Greatly was he startled to find, on reaching the tree against which the figure had leaned so immovably, that he was gone. Not a trace or sound of him, and in the spot he had occupied was a twisted thorn, from which some branches had been lopped off. In Bayntun's excited state of imagination he never suspected the truth, that these twisted branches, with the light shining through them, and the white wood showing where boughs had been removed, had formed the figure he had seen. More than ever impressed with the idea that the place was haunted, or his own brain affected, he sprang upon the bridge, and in a few minutes was heartily welcomed into the kitchen of Glen Bogie, where Mrs Cameron and a stout Highland girl were busily preparing a substantial and savoury supper.

Soon afterwards voices were heard outside, and home came the "lads," as Mrs Cameron called her sons.

"Gude Lochaber stock, the whole of them," said she, giving each a hearty slap on his shoulders as he came in.

And they certainly all did credit to Lochaber, from the eldest, who was a thoughtful-browed Highlander, to Dugald the youngest, a slight active lad of nineteen, with mirth and daring in his eye.

The supper was laid out in what had once been the dining-room of the Campbells of Glen Bogie. When it was concluded, a short consultation between the mother and sons was carried on in Gaelic, the result of which was, that the eldest Cameron invited "Misther Hardy and his friend to take their pipes and whisky in the kitchen along with the rest of us."

"Might we not come too?" whispered Mrs Hardy, who felt rather oppressed with the idea of entertaining their hostess, who was rather deaf, in the dreary parlour.

To the kitchen they all adjourned, where a bright peat-fire glowed on the ground, in the centre of the wide chimney. Some of the dogs had crept in actually behind it, and lay dozing with one ear always on the alert. Wooden settles were placed in the ingle-nook for the young men, and the guests were accommodated with heavy high-backed chairs. Mrs Cameron drew her spinning-wheel towards her, and for a few minutes there were no sounds but its busy hum, and the roaring of the wind down the chimney, and amongst the old trees, and the ceaseless voice of the burn chafing in its rocky bed.

"Was there not some sad story of a quarrel between the Campbells and the Stewarts of this neighbourhood?" asked Helen of the company in general, very much afraid of hearing her own voice, but still more afraid of losing the delight of hearing the story, whatever it might be, on the very spot where the events took place.

"Neighbourhood!" repeated Mrs Cameron, "a neighbourhood should be a place where neighbours meet as friends, and the Campbells and Stewarts never can be friends. Did not I see a bonnie bride of the house of Stewart leave her father's house with a Campbell for her husband, and was not blood shed even on the threshold? for, as the horses started off with their white cockades, one of the lads that rode them fell from the saddle in a fit, and was trampled to death under their feet, and sickness and Borrow waited on the bride till she was at rest in her grave. There's no peace not friendship between the Campbells and Stewarts, and they should not be called neighbours."

"But, mother, the young lady was asking you about the quarrel," said Dugald, "and not wishing to mend it."

“The young lady is not angered with a foolish old wife,” answered his mother, bursting into her loudest, harshest laugh, and laying her hand kindly on Helen’s. “She will pardon me, for I was born a Stewart, and I cannot hear with patience when any talk of the natural enemies of my family. Do you tell how it fell out, Ian, for your English is better than mine,” said she, addressing her eldest son.

It should be remembered, that Gaelic being so universally spoken in the Western Highlands, English is only acquired in a degree to be spoken fluently by people of some education, and is pronounced by them with a softness and delicacy amounting to an appearance of affectation. Ian Cameron related his story deliberately, and in choice language, giving each word and idea time to take effect before it was succeeded by another.

“You will have heard that when the royal house of Stuart lost the day, the lands of many who had fought for the right were confiscated, and bestowed as rewards upon the Campbells and others who stood up for might rather than right. This estate of Glen Bogie was one of them, and with it the Campbell to whom it was given received favours and authority, which he used as you would expect from a man that was not born to it, and had got it by ill means. They that would rule over a Highlander must find their way to the heart, and must trust him as one honest man trusts another. Campbell never did that. He knew that he was not loved, nor welcome, but still there was not a man—from a Stewart to a McCall—that would have raised a hand against him, except it were in open fight.

“You will have seen the rocky peak of Skuliahams, which shuts in the head of Glennaclach, as you came up the Toberdhu; that is the stream which we call the Blackwater. Just to the right of that peak there is a pass over the hill, and for eight miles the way is rough and dreary. Often have I travelled that road by night and day, and with the snow drifting in my face I have thought never to see my own fireside again. Campbell had gone by that pass to collect rents, but he did not return when they expected him. His wife grew alarmed, for she knew the hearts of the tenants were not with him; so she sent first one, then another, of his people, and lastly she went herself to watch for them on the hill-side, whence she could see far up the glen. Singly the people crossed the hill, but they all returned together, and amongst them they carried the corpse of Campbell, who had been shot dead in the wood beyond the hills, which was on the property of a Stewart. The widow went out to meet them; but she shed no tears nor spoke a word. Some say she had been *warned*.

“They brought him across the meadow yonder, and carried him up into the room overhead, and the Campbells came from far and near, and vowed vengeance upon the Stewarts; and it is said that as they hung up the dead man’s plaid, all stiff with his blood, so they swore to hang up a Stewart on the spot where Campbell was found dead. There was a show of law, too; for having fixed their suspicions upon a tenant-farmer like myself, a man named Stewart, they tried him by a jury—all of Campbells—and in the wood they hanged him, within sight of six residences of Stewarts; and watch was kept, day and night, lest the body should be removed. Vengeance and law they called it, but it was murder; for before the bones of their victim had whitened on the gibbet, it was discovered that Campbell had been shot by a foreign soldier who had some private quarrel with him. Can the Stewarts and Campbells be friends after that?”

There was a pause, and the young Highlanders sat looking sternly into the glowing fire. Tramp, tramp, came, heavy steps overhead, as of several persons moving some heavy burden. Bayntun felt his heart beat faster. He would not for worlds have let any one suspect it. Even Mrs Hardy, drew involuntarily nearer to her husband, and Helen’s eyes opened wider, while the most ghastly spectre would not have burst upon her sight unexpected.

“The lassies are putting the Doctor’s room in order for your friend, Misther Hardy. Maybe he is not used to rough lodging, and it is well for him that, the Doctor being at the house of Glennaclach to-night, I can give him the room,” said Mrs Cameron.

Dugald made some remark in Gaelic, with a mischievous glance towards Bayntun, but was sternly checked by his mother. Nevertheless, Bayntun perceived it, and determined more resolutely than ever not to divulge the strange sights and fancies which had haunted him.

Night had fairly closed in, and the reflection of the lights in the room mingled on the window-panes with the other objects outside, just lighted by a crescent moon, when, as Bayntun glanced towards the window, he perceived close to it the face of the hideous goblin which had haunted him in the day, and at the same moment came that fearful chuckle.

“Poor Marie Vhan,” said Mrs Cameron, rising and going to the door; “where has the wild creature been straying?”

“Marie has been naughty to-day,” said Dugald, speaking in English from fear of another rebuke from his mother: “she has been tossing and tearing the fleeces which were left to dry upon the whins.”

“Poor body,” rejoined Mrs Cameron. “It is a poor daft lassie. Her father is one of our shepherds, and it is a sad trouble to a poor man to have a feckless child that can do naught for herself, so she bides with me when she likes, and I give her food and shelter; but she will not stay long in any place.”

As she spoke, one of the servant girls opened another door, and began scolding the child in no gentle terms for the mischief she had done, which was serious in its way, for the fleeces had been prepared for spinning in long loose bands, and were required for her mistress’s immediate use. Instantly the wild creature fled chuckling into the wood, and up the dark dreary glen.

“It is an evil deed you have done, Lizzie, to drive the poor body from the door with your angry tongue,” said the mistress, as she resumed her place at the wheel.

Lizzie was out of hearing, and could not have understood had she been in the room, but the expression of disapprobation relieved Mrs Cameron’s indignant feelings.

Bayntun's cheek glowed in the firelight at the solution of the terrific goblin dance which had so shaken his nerves. Fortified by a good sapper, and cheered by the sound of many voices, he now felt himself proof against bogies of all kinds, and at an early hour the party dispersed for the night. The home-made tallow candle which lighted Edmund's spacious and gloomy apartment rendered the outlines of the dark, heavy furniture more massive and unshapely than they really were. It had been the state-room of the mansion, and was now let to a doctor, who, though possessed of considerable skill, had so lost his reputation by his intemperate habits, that he was driven to conceal his disgrace in this unfrequented glen, where his services were valued and repaid, and his failings easily overlooked. In a large closet adjoining were kept the phials and jars containing his supplies of drugs, etc, and from this closet was a narrow staircase, with a door by which the Doctor could come in and go out without disturbing the family.

"It was in this room that the Campbells cried the coronach over their dead, and here the jury sat to try poor Stewart, and the dead man's plaid was hung in that closet, and by that staircase they brought Stewart in—the false-hearted murderers!" exclaimed Dugald Cameron; and having courteously begged the guest to ask for anything that was wanting for his comfort and repose, he left him to rest.

Completely yet healthfully fatigued, Edmund soon fell asleep. How long he slept, or whether he was still dreaming, he knew not, but distinct to his vision appeared the figure of a man leaning against the doorway of the closet adjoining his bedroom, from which shone a quivering spectral light. His plaid hung heavily, as if steeped in moisture, round his tall gaunt form. His bonnet was pressed down upon his brows, and under its shade his face looked pale and distorted by pain or sorrow, as he stood motionless, gazing intently upon the sleeper.

"This is a dream. The mysterious figure in the wood is haunting my memory. I will not give way to these fancies," said Bayntun, mentally. "It is a very uncomfortable dream, too," continued he, as the figure, still keeping its glazy eyes fixed upon his face, moved slowly towards him. The old floor creaked under his steps. "Dreams are often suggested by some real sound associating itself with the previous train of our thoughts. If I could but rouse myself, this phantom would be dissipated." Yet his eyes felt perfectly wide open, and there was none of the painful sense of oppression on the eyelids and restraint upon the tongue which usually attends an unpleasant dream. Nearer and nearer came that pale, haggard face, till the sound of his breathing became audible. "That is myself breathing quick, and no wonder," thought he. "Edmund Bayntun, why don't you rouse yourself? What a fool you are!" and uttering the last sentence with the full strength of his voice, Edmund started up, and at the same moment the spectre staggered back, exclaiming—

"Ay, sirs! That is not a civil way to speak to a gentleman, more especially finding himself turned out of his own bed when he comes home to it, wet and tired."

More and more perplexed, Bayntun stammered out, "Really, sir, I beg your pardon, but I thought—I took you—that is to say, I fancied that I was dreaming, and I don't feel quite sure whether I am awake now."

"Waking or dreaming, my man, you should always use civil language. When I saw you lying so comfortably in my bed, I was just thinking I would leave you there, and go down myself to the kitchen fire; but really, your uncivil speech!—Ha! ha! it is a good joke, too, to be mistaken for a dream. So, good night to you, young man, and I will not disturb you again."

The next morning the Doctor was found fast asleep in the kitchen. His young patient at the house of Glennaclach not needing his assistance so much as another sick person in the Glen, he had left him early in the evening, and preferred coming home to Glen Bogie rather than returning late at night to disturb the household of Mr Stewart. Early in the day the young laird arrived, with a pressing invitation to the four English strangers to come and stay at his house. They willingly accepted it, and whether they enjoyed the visit is a question to be best answered by those who have found themselves the guests of a Highland family, amongst their own beautiful glens, and mountains, and woods, and waterfalls, after passing months and years in cities, and amidst "the hum, the buzz, the crush of men."

Bayntun spent much time after this in the society of his friend Hardy, and, yielding to his advice and example, adopted a more stirring, healthful, vigorous course of thought and life, and his favourite motto was—

> "Let us, then, be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate."

Story 8--Chapter I.

STORY EIGHT—Piper's News—A Fairy Tale.

ALAISTER MACKINNON MEETING THE KING AND QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES AND THE WILLS-OF-THE-WISP.

There was once a piper, called Alaister Mackinnon, and he lived in the town of Inverknickle; he played better than any other piper in all the country side, and was deservedly esteemed by the gude wives, as he always brought the earliest news of the events in the distant villages; for though Alaister called Inverknickle his home, he rarely stayed there long at a time, but wandered about, hearing and telling news, and playing at all the merry-makings that were held within twenty miles. At these he was always to be seen dressed in full Highland garb, with gay streamers floating from his pipes, and his bonnet set jauntily on the side of his head, surrounded by young and old, who listened with equal delight to his tunes and his stories. Alaister's dancing was a thing of which he was very proud, as none of the lads could compete with him in it; he was, therefore, not so great a favourite with them as amongst the women, but none dared say a word against him, as it invariably reached his ears, and the next time he came to the village he was sure to have some story about them which turned the laugh against themselves. One day there was a wedding at a village some miles from Inverknickle, and of course Alaister was there, marching at the head of the party as it returned from the manse, dressed in his newest kilt and hose, and playing the most appropriate tunes, while the young men shouted and fired guns and pistols at irregular intervals to do honour to the occasion; and every time they fired, the women screamed, and the men laughed, and in short they were a very merry party. Then came the feast, which was more remarkable for quantity than quality, and was held in the house of the newly married pair; it was succeeded by dancing, the bride and bridegroom joining most energetically, but never being allowed to dance together.

Reels were the usual dances; but when the lasses were tired, and sat down and fanned themselves with their handkerchiefs, the lads began to dance the sword-dance. The lasses soon asked Alaister to dance; and after a great deal of pressing, for he always feigned modesty on such occasions, he danced, the men looking on anxious to catch him making a false step, the women in silent admiration of his neat foot, silver buckles, and new hose, which, from the beautiful shape of his leg, did not require to be gartered.

None of the women saw that he twice touched the sword; but it was not lost on the men, who looked at each other with pleased smiles, though no one ventured to say anything, and Alaister's performance was finished amidst loud applause.

Supper followed, which was much the same as the dinner, only there was more toddy, and therefore more noise; and Duncan Cameron, emboldened by the whisky, ventured to say that Alaister had not danced "clean" that night; to which Alaister answered, with a look of pity, that "Duncan, puir fellow, had never seen right since the night he had sic a fley wi' the fairies on the moor, when they shot him into a peat-moss, and the Will-of-the-Wisps ran so near him

that they singed his nose, and it had been red ever since.” This had the effect of silencing Duncan, who had fallen in as described when coming home tipsy from a wake, and had told many wonderful stories of his ill-treatment by the “gude fouk,” as he called the fairies.

The conversation now turned on fairies, and all professed the deepest admiration and respect for them. Alaister, however, rather laughed at the idea of their doing anybody good or ill, and even hinted that he doubted their existence. Then began a warm discussion; and by degrees Alaister grew bolder, and expressed in plain terms his entire disbelief in these gentle spirits, challenging them to meet him that night on his way home, and let him play on the bagpipes heard by so many of his companions in the gloamin’ among the heather on the hill-side; at the same time drinking glass after glass to his success in the exploit.

Soon after this the party broke up, and Alaister started for Inverknickle, playing what he intended for “Wooed and married and a’,” but it was a bad version of it, and sounded dismal and unearthly as it died away in the distance.

He crossed the moor in the bright moonlight, and at last reached the birch wood, where the white stems shone like ghosts in their winding-sheets, and the branches swung noiselessly in the night breeze, and gave out their fresh sweet smell. Let it not be supposed that Alaister actually observed all this, but it had an influence on his mind, and made him feel eerie, it was so different from the noisy scene he had left.

Just then he heard “Wooed and married and a’” played as well as he could play it (this he only confessed silently to himself, he would on no account have let any one else say so), but on a bagpipe of the softest and moat silvery tone, and soon a band of bright little creatures came from among the green grass and bracken, and stopped directly in his path. All wore the full Highland dress, but the checks in the tartan looked as if made of precious stones, for they sparkled and glittered in the moonlight, till Alaister was almost dazzled by their brilliancy; the red cherry tufts on their bonnets shone with a clear calm light, like glowworms, but as he had never seen one of these, he mentally said “like anything.” The party was headed by a piper, playing on pipes, the bag of which was a bluebell, the chaunter a hedgehog’s bristle, and the ribbons made of dragonflies’ wings. He was followed by the king and queen, who wore beautiful crowns, from which shot rays of variegated light; then came the train of followers, and round the whole ran three Will-of-the-Wisps. These were taller than the rest; from their hands, feet, and eyes came bright flashes like lightning, but their bodies were quite black and very slight.

When they halted in front of Alaister, the piper stopped playing, and even the Will-of-the-Wisps did not run quite so fast; the king and queen stepped forward, and asked who it was who dared to disturb their midnight march through their own domain, but such a hubbub arose amongst their followers that, without waiting for his answer, they turned to inquire into the cause.

This was very soon explained: it was an outburst of rage against the piper Alaister, with eager offers to bring forward proof of misconduct against him. These were immediately accepted, and an old fairy-elf was commanded to speak first.

There was now a dead silence, except when the night wind rustled amongst the birch branches, and bent the waving bracken, or some night bird uttered a wild cry. The old elf stepped forward, and then, by suddenly twisting his legs and arms together, and sinking his head between them, he changed into the cup, with the picture of the real king in the bottom, which stood on the chimney-piece of the room where the wedding feast had been held, and from this cup came a voice which repeated all the scornful words of Alaister against the fairies. When he ceased he resumed his former shape and retired; others were then called forward in his place, and took the form of cups, bowls, toddy ladles, and glosses, each repeating the same tale; but last of all appeared a lovely girl, who changed into the little square looking-glass in a red frame, in which Alaister had from time to time arranged his hair during that evening; and there was his face reflected in it, and it was his own voice which he now heard, and he saw his lips moving so distinctly, that he put up his hand to feel if he were really speaking, but his lips were still, and the loud ringing laugh of the glittering band made him feel so angry, that he tried to move away, but he then found that he was spell-bound, and must remain to be laughed at or ill-treated by his little enemies. Now Alaister was a very sensible man, so when he found that he must stay, he tried to look as if he liked to stay, and when he heard the king command that he should have his wish, and might play on their bagpipes that night, he smiled blandly, and took the little instrument, which looked like a large spider as it lay in the palm of his hand. In an instant it changed, and became as large as his own, which was carried off by one of the Will-of-the-Wisps, to whom he tried to say something civil, but before he could make up his mind what it was to be, the sprite was glancing amongst the trees far away.

Thinking it might be the wisest plan to conciliate the gude fouk, he played his best tunes, and never had they sounded so well, for the tones of the fairy pipe were far softer and sweeter than his own, and the fairies danced so lightly and nimbly, that he forgot it was against his will he had been ordered to play, and was sorry when the king waved his crystal sceptre, and, pointing to the moon, now fast sinking towards the distant hills, commanded his followers to return home. And now, of course, Alaister thought that he was to return home also, but no, he was commanded to follow, and in spite of himself he was obliged to run through the thick wood, down steep banks, and over rocks to the river-side, where a fleet of egg-shells came towards them at the fairies’ call, and each jumping into one, they shoved off, laughing to see how Alaister plunged into the cold water, and how the Will-of-the-Wisps jostled against him in the deepest parts of the stream.

Wet and weary, he at length reached the cave, which seemed to be the home of the party, and where he found many already busily employed in making preparations for a meal.

The cave was hung with the trailing moss, called tod’s-tail, while pieces of rock crystal, cairngorm, and amethyst reflected the light given out by the Will-of-the-Wisps, who suspended themselves like chandeliers from the stalactites which hung from the roof. The floor was thickly strewn with stag-horn moss, which formed a soft and elastic carpet. In the middle of the cave was a large mushroom, round which the fairies were now busy spreading the cloth, woven of the finest gossamer, and arranging the acorn-cups and dishes of delicate meats, which had been prepared during

their absence by those who remained at home.

When all was ready, numbers of green beetles ran forward to the table and ranged themselves round it; on these the fairies sat as they feasted.

Never was there a merrier party; they laughed and talked, and pledged each other in bumpers of mountain dew, and sang sweetly while bunches of white hare-bells, which hung from the roof, chimed in as accompaniment.

All this time Alaister had stood looking on, wondering what was to happen to him, and not feeling quite at his ease, for he knew it was a mark of displeasure when the gude fouk ate without offering anything to the mortal who was present, and besides, the younger fairies every now and then made faces at him. At length the feast was ended, and the king called together the oldest of his followers, and retired to some distance from the rest, where, for a time, they held eager consultation. The king then advanced to Alaister and told him that as he had played so well for them that night, they had determined not to change him into a Will-of-the-Wisp, as was the fate of all who spoke ill of them, and who afterwards fell into their power, but they would send him out into the world again, under a ban which would follow him to the end of his life, but which they would leave him to discover. While his sentence was being pronounced, the Will-of-the-Wisps were much agitated, darting about the roof, and giving out streams of pale cold light; the white hare-bells rang mournfully, shaken by a creeping blast which circled round and round; cold drops fell from the roof and trickled feebly down the sides of the cave, while the voices of the elves' and fairies sounded harsh and shrill.

A Will-of-the-Wisp was then commanded to be his guide to the birch wood, and Alaister was again led through the river, up the rocks, and through the woods he had passed on his way to the cave.

Arrived at the wood, his guide vanished, and he found himself alone on a bright sunny morning, the dew-drops glistening on the grass, amongst which he joyfully discovered his pipes; but at the same time he saw that his clothes hung about him in tatters, and oh! how wet and tired he was with his night's work! He could not, however, show himself at Inverknickle in so disordered a state, so was obliged to remain in the wood till the evening, when he thought it safer to go home, in case his tormentors should again carry him off. When he reached his cottage, he told his wife that he had lost his way in the dark, and had torn his clothes on the brambles and bushes, amongst which he had got entangled; but not a word did he say about the fairies, lest he should offend them, and be carried off, and turned into a black Will-of-the-Wisp, and have to dance about every night in the cold moonlight, which was not at all Alaister's idea of real comfort.

Now Mrs Mackinnon had what is called "an ill tongue," and she did not spare poor Alaister as she turned over his torn garments; but he was well accustomed to her attacks, and had learnt that silence was his only safety, so he took one child on his knee as he sat by the fire, and rocked the cradle with his foot, in hopes of softening his wife's temper. As the evening advanced, she became pretty tired of having all the talk to herself, so sat down opposite him, and with a cross face, and in a sharp voice, asked what made him sit there without speaking,—could not he tell her any news after being sae long away from his gude wife and the weans?

When this question was put, Alaister was always sure the scold was over, however cross the voice was in which it was asked; so he began at once to tell all the events of a harvest home at which he said he had been the night before, but he was at once stopped by an angry "Hout!" from his wife, and then followed a storm of abuse for telling her about things which had happened three years before; then, pointing to the fields of green oats that were to be seen all around, she asked him what sort of harvest home there could be at that time of year. Alaister was sorely puzzled, for certainly the corn was still green; but yet he felt sure it was only yesterday he had been at the harvest feast, and if not at that—where had he been? He could remember nothing of the wedding, and stared at his wife, who at last began to be alarmed at his perfectly stupid look, and said, "Is the man fey?" As soon as she said this, his night's adventure returned to his mind, and looking on the ground, he saw it alive with fairies, laughing and mocking him. Had it been earlier in the day, he would have run out of the house, but it was nearly dark, and the uncomfortable Will-of-the-Wisp came into his mind, so he sank down again in his chair, and shut his eyes, fully determined not to speak; but he could not keep this resolution. Again and again he was impelled to begin stories, and as often was he told that these things had happened years before. He then tried to play, but could remember none but the very oldest tunes, such as had been out of date for many years, and when, wearied in mind and body, he fell asleep, he dreamed of fairies and discomforts all night long.

Next day he set out again on his wanderings, hoping that it was only in his own house that the fairies would haunt him; but no—go where he would they were by him, nor could he tell any story which was not at least three years old. His former admirers, the women, now asked him, jeeringly, for "three-year-old news;" when he was seen coming towards a farm, he was treated almost as a beggar, and was sent to the back door, where he got a piece of oat-cake and a drink of milk, but was never asked into the house. Occasionally the servants asked him why he did not carry a wallet like other "puir bodies;" but Alaister, though often really in want, never would condescend to a wallet. By degrees he became more and more impoverished; he was thin, and had a look of great unhappiness. His hose hung over the heels of his worn shoes, from which the silver buckles had long since disappeared; his second-best kilt was very much the worse for wear, nor had he money to buy a new one; and as to the one he had worn on the night from which his woes dated, it had even beat the thrifty Mrs Mackinnon to get it into tolerable repair again.

In all the country side it had become the common expression, when any old story was told, "Hout! that's Piper's news;" and at last Alaister, feeling that he was despised where he had been respected, and laughed at by those at whom he had laughed, without even having a comfortable house in which to hide himself, for Mrs Mackinnon's tongue was more abusive than ever, determined to retire from the world.

Being in low spirits, of course he chose the most dismal spot he could find; it was a bleak glen, down which the north wind howled in winter, and in summer the sun hardly reached its depths; for the bare rocks were high and near each other, so that it was always cold and damp. But this suited Alaister's frame of mind. One chill day in autumn he crept

into a sort of hollow in the rock; there was a constant trickle, trickle, trickle, down the sides of this hole, and the water soaked through blackened patches of liver-wort and moss; the floor was damp and slippery, and on it Alaister sat down to think how very uncomfortable he was, and to abuse the fairies as the cause of all his misfortunes.

It grew colder and colder, and darker and darker, and Alaister began half to repent of his determination to die in a cave, when a flash of light shone into the hollow, and in an instant his old acquaintances, the three Will-of-the-Wisps, were dancing round him in a more frenzied way than ever; now they were up in the roof, now out in the open air, now far back in the darkness where he thought there was only rock. But the cave seemed to become larger every moment, and the water dried up as the Will-of-the-Wisps darted along the sides, and then Alaister saw the well-remembered tod's-tail moss hang where liver-wort had been before, and stag's-horn moss again covered the dark floor. The air felt dry and warm, and a comfortable sleepy peace crept over the heart of the distressed piper; he began to think that, on the whole, it was more enjoyable to be in the fairies' cave than in a hay-loft on a gusty autumn night; and when the glittering band sparkled into their hall he smiled, and offered to play to them again, and soon they were all dancing merrily on the moss, for it was now too cold, even for fairies, to spend the whole night in the woods.

Then came the feast, and this time Alaister was given on acorn cup full of brightest mountain dew; and though he thought it a small allowance for a full-grown man, still he knew that the little creatures had no larger cups; and not to disappoint them or fail in his manners, he nodded to the king, and with a "Here's your very gude health, sir," emptied his cup. Immediately he sunk back on the floor and slept, for the dew that had been given him has, it is said, wonderful powers, making mortals forget their homes and former lives, and desire only to be with the fairies.

How long he slept no one can tell; he never more was seen: but on calm summer nights his pipes can be heard droning under ground, or in the sweet birch wood. From their being heard to this day it is supposed that those who enter the service of the fairies become immortal; but no one has ventured to watch the gambols of the "gude fouk," so as to ascertain whether it is Alaister himself who still leads their march, or whether another has succeeded him; indeed, the glen is more shunned than ever, and the cave goes by the name of the Piper's Cave in all that district, while the expression "Piper's news" is known over the whole world.

Story 9--Chapter I.

STORY NINE—The Genius of the Atmosphere.

High up on the side of a lofty mountain, overlooking the wide ocean, several boys were seated together on the moss and lichens which clothed the ground, and were the only vegetable productions of that elevated region. The bright sea sparkled in sunshine, far, far down below their feet, though hidden at times from their sight by the dark clouds which came rolling on, sometimes enveloping them in mist, and at others breaking asunder and floating away far inland towards other ranges of distant hills. High above their heads rose a succession of rugged peaks, black, barren, and fantastic in form, which the foot of man had never trod. The boys on a party of pleasure had climbed up from a town by the sea-side, and had brought with them, in knapsacks and baskets, a supply of provisions, which they now sat down to discuss. The keen pure air, and the exercise they had undergone, sharpened their appetites and raised their spirits, and they sat laughing and talking, and apparently enjoying themselves to the utmost. Far below their feet sea-fowl were skimming rapidly through the air, wheeling and circling, now descending to the bright water below, and then rising again up into the clear expanse of ether, rejoicing in their freedom. On a crag below them, near where she had built her nest, stood an osprey. With wings expanding she prepared to take her flight; then off with a cry of joy she flew, darting through the atmosphere, away, away, over the ocean, looking down upon the tall ships which sailed along slow and sluggishly compared to her rapid progress. The boys eagerly watched her till she was lost to sight in the distance.

“Oh, how I wish that I could fly, that I might skim over the world like that sea eagle!” cried one, clapping his hands; “what glorious fun would it not be? I should never consent to walk again. All other amusements would be tame and tasteless in comparison. Truly yes, it mast be a fine thing to be able to fly like a bird. To fly!—to fly! Away!—away!” The speaker as he uttered these words rose and stretched out his arms over the ocean, as if in imagination at all events he was about to spring off from his lofty perch, and to follow the course of the osprey.

His enthusiasm inspired his companions. One after the other exclaimed—

“Yes, indeed, it would be grand to be able to fly. Glorious to mount up into the sky, without having tediously to climb up a hill as we have done to-day; or to plunge down beneath the waves, like those wild fowl; or to skim, as they can, over the crests of the raging seas when storms blow furiously, or to float in sunshine on the calm bosom of the ocean.”

“Ay, of all things I would rather be a bird,” cried another. “An eagle, a hawk, an albatross; any bird which can fly far and swiftly. That is what I should like,—to fly, to fly, to fly!” Thus one after the other they all expressed themselves.

Suddenly, as they were speaking, a loud crashing noise was heard, and as, alarmed, they turned their heads, the rocks behind them opened, disclosing a vast and glittering cavern, out of which was seen slowly to advance, a lady, whose garments shone with a dazzling radiance. Her form was commanding, her face beautiful and benignant. The

astonished and bewildered boys scarcely dared to gaze at her; but trembling and holding on to each other, they kept their eyes cost on the ground. She spoke, and her voice reassured them.

“You were all of you just now expressing a wish that you could fly,” she said, in a sweet silvery tone. “Why do you thus with to possess a power for which your All-wise Creator has not designed you? Even could you by any means secure wings to your body, of size sufficient to lift you from the ground, your muscular powers are totally inadequate to work them; your senses are not adapted to the existence of a fast-flying bird; your brain would grow dizzy, your eyes dim, you would be unable to draw breath in the upper regions, through which your ambition would induce you to wing your flight; you would speedily destroy all your other senses. Be content with your lot. Still, if you have a good object for your wishes, perhaps under certain limitations they may be granted. Let me hear why you wish to enjoy the power of flying?”

The boys looked at each other, and then up at the face of the lady, and finding nothing in its calm expression to alarm them, one after the other replied, the eldest speaking first:—

“Because I should like to see what people are doing in the world,” said he; “what nations are fighting with each other, and how the hostile armies are drawn up. I have read of fine processions, where priests walk with their sacred images, when kings come to be crowned, and when their subjects assemble to do them homage.”

“You need not say more,” observed the lady, and pointed to another boy.

“I should like to follow all those ships I see sailing out there,” he answered; “I should like to visit the strange lands to which they are going, and to examine the curious things they bring back.”

“You can accomplish thus much without flying,” answered the lady; and passed on to another boy.

“I should like to fly, because it would be so curious to hover about over cities, to look into houses, and to watch what the inmates are doing,” said the boy.

The lady shook her head. “Such an employment is utterly unworthy of an intelligent being,” she answered; “you would make but an ill use of the power if you possessed it. What have you to urge as a reason for obtaining the power you wish for?” she inquired of a fourth boy.

“Oh! it would be so delightful to feel oneself floating up and down in the air; now rising high, high up like a lark, now skimming along over the smooth sea,” he answered, giving expression to his words by the movement of his body.

“You evidently place the gratification of the senses above the employment of the higher powers of your nature. Such is but a bad claim for the possession of a new one.”

In this manner the lady questioned several other boys, but she did not appear satisfied with any of their replies. At last she asked a slight and thoughtful boy, who had been sitting a little apart from the rest, why he had wished to possess the power of flying?

“That I may better comprehend the glories of nature, and understand what now appear the mysteries of the universe,” he answered quietly, yet promptly; “whence the rains, and mists, and winds come, and whither they go. I would fly far away on the wings of the wind. I would visit distant lands, to observe their conformation, to discover new territories fit for the habitation of man. I would bear messages of comfort and consolation from those in one place to relatives far away. Oh! if I could fly, I am certain that I should never weary of the work I had to do.”

“Well and wisely answered,” replied the lady. “I am the Genius of the Atmosphere. The power you ask I cannot give you: but follow me; I may be able to afford you some of the gratification you so laudably desire.”

The boy, without hesitation, followed the lady towards the rock from which she had emerged. It closed round him, and he found himself in a cavern of vast size, and glittering with gems of every hue, and of the richest water. The Genius cast on him a smiling look, when she saw that his attention was but little engrossed by these appearances.

“I cannot enable you to fly,” she remarked, “but I can render you invisible, and bear you with me whither I go, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Come, note well what you see. You may never again have the some opportunity of observing the wonders of nature.”

As the Genius spoke, the boy found himself borne buoyantly from off the earth. He passed close by his companions, who were thoughtlessly laughing and talking as before, and on he rapidly floated, they neither observing him nor the Genius of the Atmosphere.

“Child of Earth, follow me,” said the Genius; and the boy floated gently on, till he found himself in a region of perfect calms. Below him, as he looked towards the earth, he saw mountains of snow, and fields of ice glittering gloriously in the slanting rays of the sun.

“We are at the north-pole of the earth,” said the Genius; “you desire to know the course of the winds, and how they are created—observe and learn.” As she spoke, she shook from her robes a shower of silvery particles, which floated buoyantly in the air. “See, at this point the silvery cloud does not partake of the diurnal motion of the globe, but a slight current of air, scarcely perceptible, is sending it forward. We will follow it towards the southern pole. You can scarcely see the earth, we are so high up. Lower down are currents rushing towards the pole, which would impede the progress of this silvery cloud.”

On, on, on, rapidly the Genius flew. A golden cloud appeared. The two clouds met, but so softly, that there was no commotion. Attracted by the globe, probably, they both descended, slowly followed by the Genius and the boy, till once more the earth appeared in sight, clothed with the palm-tree, the orange, the pomegranate, the vine, and

numberless tropical fruits and flowers.

“We have reached a calm region, the tropic of Cancer,” said the Genius. “Now watch the earth. It is turning from west to east, while we move on in the direct line in which we started, so that we appear to be crossing the globe diagonally, and to the inhabitants of the earth that silvery cloud appears to be coming from the north-east, and going to the south-west. That silvery cloud is merely a portion, made visible to your eye, of a great mass of air, which is continually blowing, and which the inhabitants of the earth, from the facilities it affords their commerce, call the north-east trade-wind. Now see a golden cloud approaching us; that is a mass of air coming from the southern pole. We are arriving near the Equator. See, the two clouds meet. They have an equal impetus; neither can give way, but, gently and noiselessly pressed together, they rise to a higher stratum of the atmosphere.”

On floated the boy and his guide, far up above the globe, still on, in rather a less direct line than before, till again a golden cloud was met, and gently that, and the cloud they followed, descended till the earth was seen once more.

“We have reached the tropic of Capricorn, where these two opposing currents form a calm, almost continuous, except when certain interposing causes break it, and which I may hereafter explain to you.” Passing out of the calm region, away they floated towards the southern pole.

“Remark,” observed the Genius. “The silvery cloud, having been pressed down by that other current from above, has a south-eastern direction given to it, and therefore appears to the people on earth to be coming, not from the north, but from the north-west.”

A wide extent of ocean was seen beneath their feet. On they floated. Then fields of ice and icebergs, and wide extended lands covered with snow, and vast mountains of ice. Once more they moved on, slowly as before.

“We are at the antarctic pole,” said the Genius. “See, our cloud of silver meets another of gold, pressing gently.” Up, up, they mount. “Once more we will move towards the tropic of Capricorn, high up above the globe. Now we descend in that calm region; and now close to the earth we are moving on. But see, coming from the southern pole, the globe moves as before, from west to east; and thus this mass of air, of which our silvery cloud, remember, is but a portion, seems to those on the earth to be coming from the south-east. As this wind is always blowing, and as ships by getting within its influence are borne easily forward, and it thus facilitates commerce, it is called the south-east trade-wind.”

On they went, till again the calms of the equator were reached, or rather, till the air, exhausted by its long course, met another gentle current, and the two pressing together rose upwards, the silvery cloud going on towards the tropic of Cancer, till forced by another current, known by its golden hue, to descend, it went on close to the earth towards the northern pole, where a calm, caused by another gentle current meeting it, was created. Gently pressed up, however, the silvery cloud finally reached the higher region, whence the Genius and the boy had started with it on its long journey.

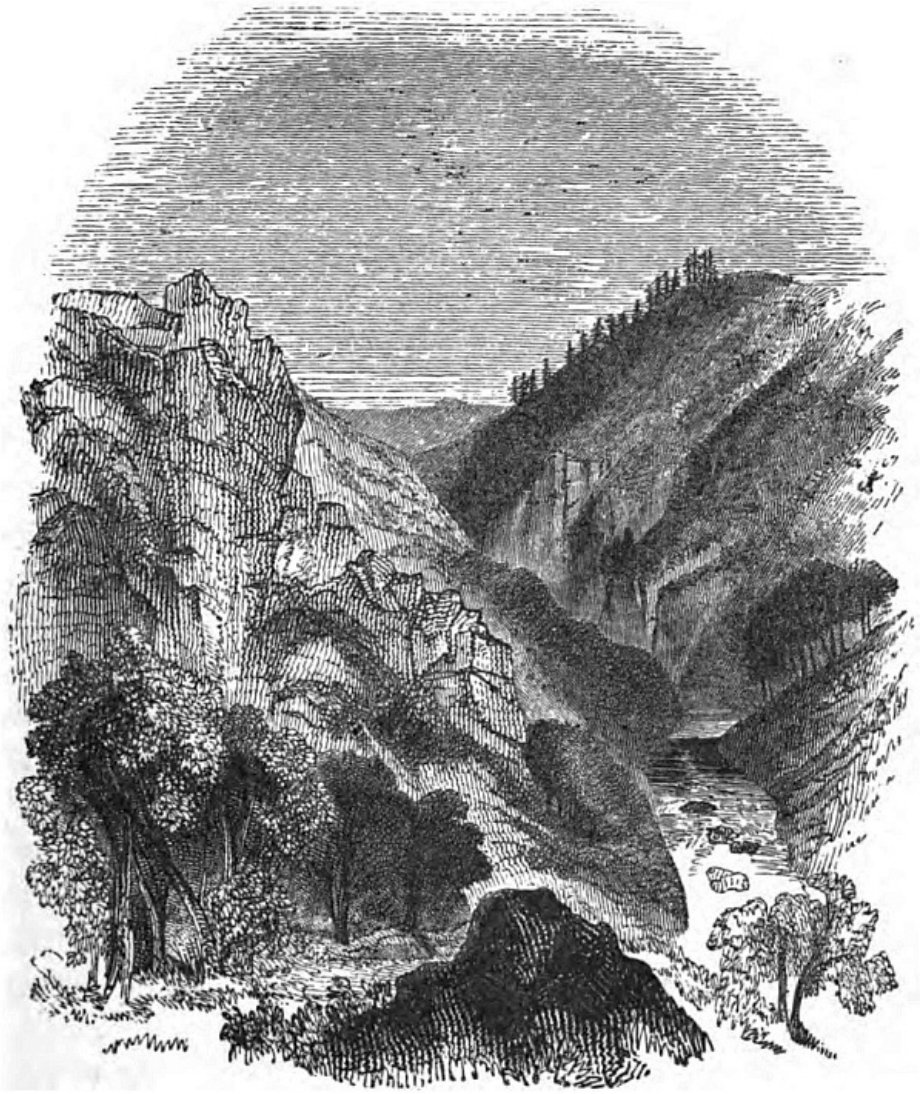
“Had we started with the golden cloud, or rather with the mass of air which that cloud represents, from the southern pole, we should have seen precisely the same effects produced,” said the Genius. “You now understand what mortals call the theory of the trade-winds. You read in the sacred word of God, which in his mercy and goodness he gave to men to guide them in their passage through life, that, ‘The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits’ (Eccles. i. 6). Now, boy, you have seen how true and beautiful is that account written by the wise king of Israel.” The boy listened attentively. “We will fly back to the equatorial calms,” said the Genius; “see what effect the direct rays of the sun have on the earth, or that portion of its surface. They affect the air likewise; heat expands it, and then makes it rise; and it also changes its specific gravity. Cold contracts it, and also changes its specific gravity. These two causes are unceasingly at work to produce the currents of air whose courses we have been observing. The heat of the sun at the equator expands the air, and thus it rises and flows north and south; having arrived once more at the tropics, owing to the counter current it meets, it descends, as we saw, and flowing along near the earth, receives from it a rotatory motion, which increases as it approaches the pole, where, contracted by the cold, it masses into a dense body, and ultimately is whirled upwards, forming an ascending column, when it once more commences its never-ceasing journey.”

As they flew towards the mountain whence they set out, the boy expressed his thanks to the Genius; if he did not comprehend all that she had shown him and told him, he knew more about the matter than he had before done. She saw by the expression of his countenance the gratification he had enjoyed. “’Tis well,” she continued; “as a drop of water is to the ocean which lies beneath us, so is the knowledge you may obtain in a lifetime to the wonders nature has to reveal. You desire to know more; gladly will I show you more. Whenever you climb up to this rocky height I will meet you, as I have done to-day, and each time unfold new wonders to your view. Ah, you think that I might descend to you, without making you toil up the mountain; but know that knowledge will not come to you; you must exert yourself, you must labour to attain it. You say that you will willingly climb the height. That is well. That is the spirit which ensures success. Return to your companions. They will not have missed you.”

Suddenly the boy found himself as he had been before, sitting a little apart from his friends. He was silent and thoughtful as he descended the mountain, resolving to return as soon as possible, to learn from the Genius more of the wondrous mysteries of nature.

Story 10--Chapter I.

STORY TEN—A Terrible Blanket.



Well, we were on the continent when I met with my terrible blanket. We were going up one of the passes on foot, and somehow I, as I usually do, lagged behind. I, of course, had an Alpine stock in my hand, and I went swinging it away, until at last it struck against a lump of rock overhanging a precipice, so deep that, sailor as I am, I trembled as I looked down. Well, the stick bounded from the granite against my shin, and so I made a vow that the lump of granite should take a run, or my name was not Theophilus.

But it was a tough job, for the stone was very big, and well set in the rock; but after a deal of straining and pushing, down it went with dull thuds, as it fell from rock to rock, and at last it splashed into the water, which seethed up as though trying to get at and drown me.

The job must have taken me longer than I thought for, for when I looked before me I could see no one, and as I looked I began to see that twilight was coming on.

Now, I don’t know whether you have been much among our own high hills in Scotland or Wales; but, if you have, you must know how rapidly night comes on. It is day one moment and night the next, so to speak.

Now I knew this, and made haste forward.

I do not think I had gone twenty yards when I knew, by the great wuthering sound about me, that a storm was brewing, and it was on me in no time; and as the snow came down a great curtain seemed to be drawn over the sky, it grew dark so quickly.

Well, I groped on, but I didn’t like it. If it had been a storm at sea now, I should not have cared much; if the mountains about me had only been of water, I should not have cared at all; but when I knew that a false step might send me toppling down as the rock had toppled before me, I don’t mind owning that I grew to like it all less and less.

I stooped down to look at the path, as well as I was able in the little remaining light, and I found I was in no path at all.

As the last rays of light died out, and as the snow whirled about me, I remember, as though it would be glad to make my winding-sheet, I turned cautiously towards a slope of rock, feeling with my stick before I took a step, for the snow will fill up a crevice in no time, and you may sink twenty feet before you know where you are; and at last I touched the rock.

There was still an atom of light left, and by it I just discerned a black part of the rock, which I took, and rightly, to be a cave. So I crept towards it, into it, and crouched down on the ground to leeward; and I can tell you the wind was getting up.

Well, I hadn't lain there three minutes when it was as dark as you could wish it. I don't know whether any of you have ever been in the dark when full of anxiety; but if you have, you will believe me when I say every precious minute seemed an hour.

Suddenly I thought of my fusee-box, and I believe shouted as I thought of it, for a second idea came into my head. Suppose I struck the fusees about one a minute, they would not only help me through the darkness, but, luck willing, they might answer the purpose of a revolving light, and guide those who were looking for me to my place of shelter, or the light might be seen at the convent, from which I knew by the guide we were not far when I stopped to upset the rock.

And I give you my honest word that not for one second did I feel any ill-will against my companions for leaving me behind; I somehow knew it was all right.

So out came the fusee-box, and the next moment I had struck a light. Why I looked round the cave I can't tell, but I did, and I caught my breath, as you may suppose, when away in the dark I saw two great yellowish-green balls of fire.

I don't think I moved for a moment, and then I began to question myself as to whether it was not all fancy.

So I thought I would strike another light; but the box had fallen amongst the snow, and when I felt for the matches they were all mixed up with the powder, which is about the only name you can give the snow in those places; it is very different from the clammy snow we see here.

Now, what was I to do? If I went out of the cavern I should be frozen to death, while to remain in the cave, and near those dreadful lights, was maddening.

Well, one way or the other, I determined not to go either backwards or forwards; so I curled myself up as small as possible, and lay shivering. I had only lain for what I now know to be a very short time, but which I took to be hours, when something soft came up against my knees and elbows.

You may believe I dashed out my fist, and felt it sink a foot deep in the soft snow, which I rightly guessed had drifted up against the opposite side of the cavern till it fell over and rolled up against me.

Good, so I was being snowed up, and I saw I must either go nearer those dreadful balls, which by this time I was sure were no fancy, and which I felt certain were looking towards me through the darkness, or I must stay where I was to be buried alive.

I don't know how I came to the decision; but I did at last decide to go further into the cavern, and so I shuffled out of the way of the snow.

And then I lay still again, waiting.

In a moment or so, surrounded by danger as I was, I began to find myself actually going quietly to sleep. I had no idea then that that sleep might have been the sleep of death.

Well, in another minute or so, I felt a warm air on my face; but I was too sleepy to move, and so I lay still.

And then, believe me I do not exaggerate, I felt four weights press, one after the other, upon my body, and then a soft, heavy weight sunk down upon me. I had no doubt it was an animal of some kind; I felt quite sure of this when a muzzle was placed as near my mouth as possible.

I dare say you will hardly believe it, but in a few moments all my fear had gone, and I found myself growing grateful to this creature, for he made me so good a blanket that the heat came back into my body, and I felt no longer that dull sleepiness of which I have spoken.

I do not at all know how long I had thus lain, when a bark was heard, which disturbed the regular breathings of my hairy friend, and I felt his big heart beat above me. Again there was a bark, the broad loud bark of a big dog, and it sounded much nearer than the first.

As my blanket heard it, he uttered a harsh sound, and leapt from off my back.

The barking and the start of the animal roused me from what drowsiness still remained in me, and the next moment I was plunging through the snow in the entrance to the cave. It was above my head. I was nearly snowed up; but then the wall of snow had served to keep the cold out. When I got through the snow, I found the whole mountains were light again with the stars and the rising moon, for the storm was over.

But a more blessed sight than all was that of a brave, big dog, who leapt upon me and placed a fore-paw upon each of my shoulders.

Not far off was one of the good monks, coming towards me graciously and smilingly.

It seemed, I learnt afterwards, that when my party discovered my loss, and affrightedly told the guide, he, being weatherwise, told of the coming storm, and said it would be impossible to turn back; they might think themselves fortunate if they reached the convent themselves, when the monks and their dogs would do their best for me.

They had reached the convent just as the storm began, and the monks, it seemed, had but little hope for me.

I shall pass over my arrival at the monastery. I was welcomed so kindly that I would not attempt to describe it, and as for my own party, you might, have supposed they had not seen me for a year.

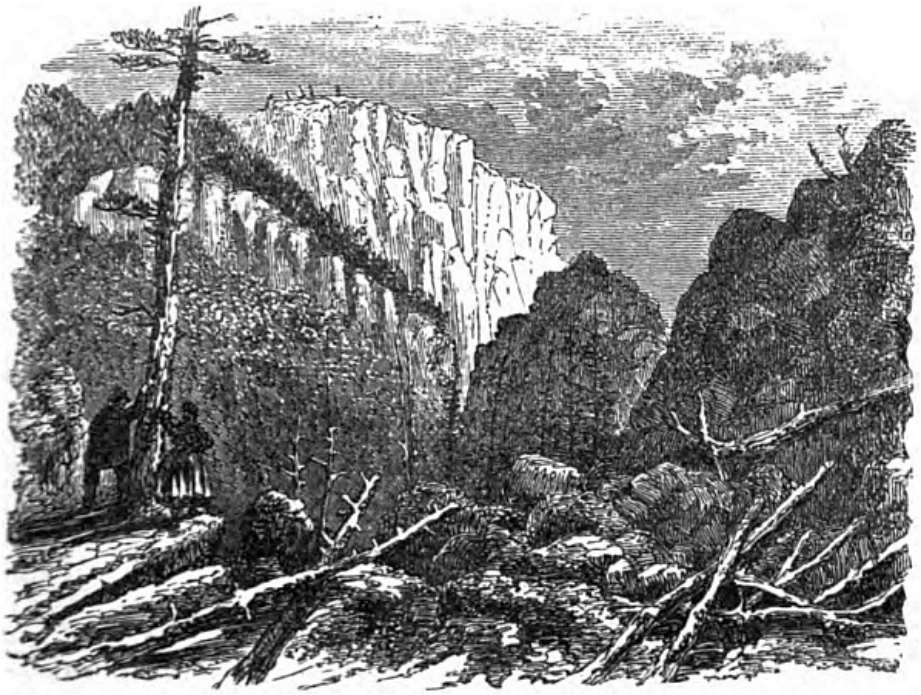
They were very willing to hear my adventures, but when I came to the two balls of fire, and the heavy animal who had made himself my blanket, they ventured to laugh out and say I was trying to impose a traveller's tale on them.

They were still laughing when my eyes fell on my great-coat, which was hanging on a chair, and I at once remarked a number of yellowish brown hairs clinging to it.

This was proof positive, and I was more of a hero than ever.

The next morning, when all of us travellers assembled for our simple breakfast, the young monk who had discovered me—and whom I still look up to, and I am glad he and his companions live high up in the mountains above us all—the young monk had a tale to tell. Out of curiosity he had gone down to the cave, which was a very little way from the convent, and in it he had found an immense wolf frozen and stark dead, for the cold of the night had been intense.

And I am not afraid to tell you that I felt very sorry the poor old wolf was dead, and I don't think you will think any the worse of me for being sorry.



I went down myself to see the poor old fellow, and I declare he looked as large as a calf; as for his fangs, I do think they would have gone through a deal board.

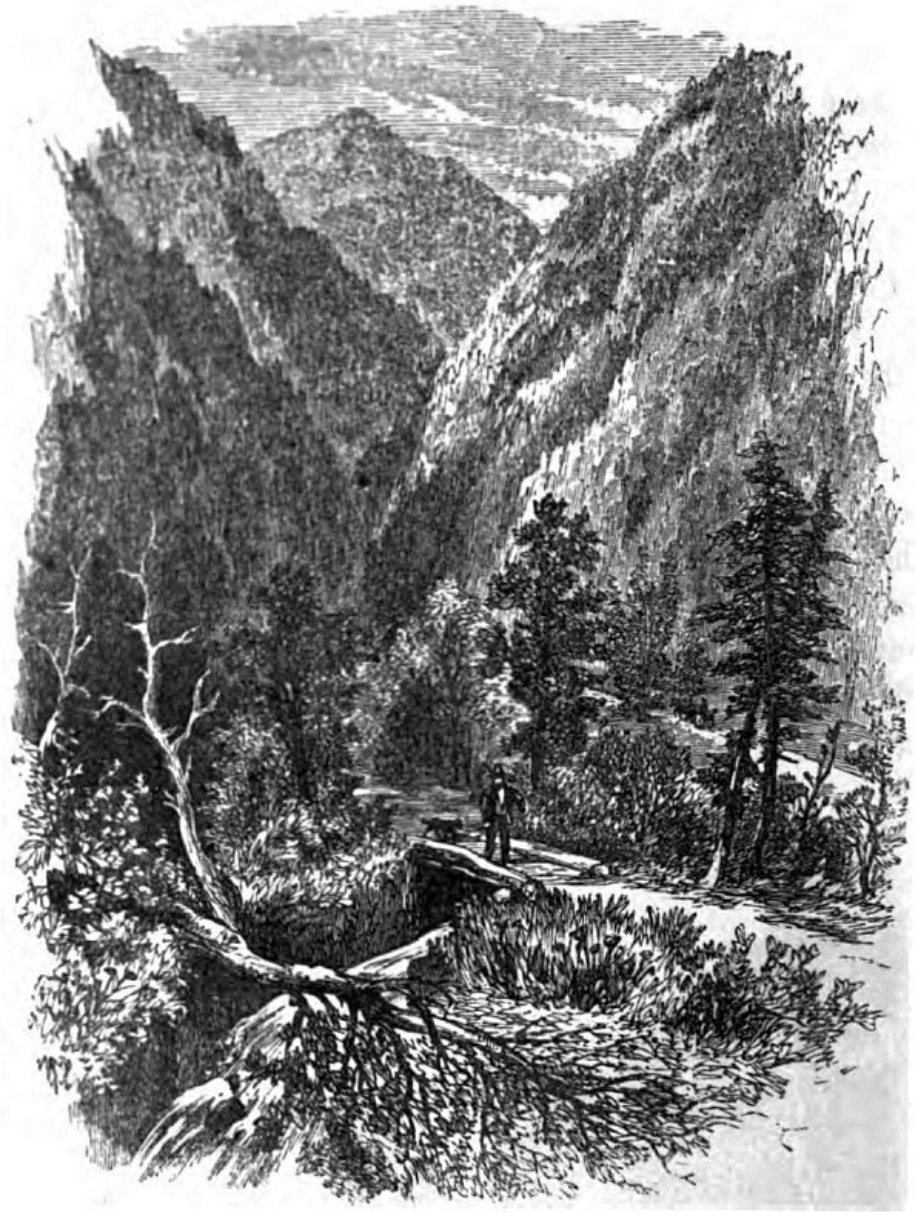
Well, and now how do you think I am going to end the story?

Why, I've got the old fellow now.

Oh no; he was really frozen to death, and didn't come to life again; but I begged his body of the monks, had him skinned there and then, brought the skin home and had it stuffed; and I can tell you when I come into the room where he has a berth, and the sun is shining on his glass eyes, I often find myself giving a start, as if he were still alive and able to eat me up.

Story 11--Chapter I.

STORY ELEVEN—Ninco Nanco, the Neapolitan Brigand.



Who has not heard of Ninco Nanco, the daring cut-purse, and sometimes cut-throat, of the Apennines, who, with his band of fifty chosen men, has long kept in awe the district of Basilicata in the once kingdom of Naples? Certainly, those who have travelled from the Adriatic to the Bay of Naples, across that mountainous region which in the map looks very like Italy's ankle-bone, will retain a vivid recollection of the curiosity with which they examined every dry stick projecting from a bush or rock, lest it should prove the barrel of one of his followers' rifles; and the respect which they felt for every shepherd they saw feeding his flocks on the mountain side, lest the said peaceable-avocation-following gentleman should suddenly jump down, joined by many more from among the rocks, who could salute them in the choicest Neapolitan with words, which may be freely translated, "Stand and deliver! Your money or your life!" Yes; Ninco Nanco is not a hero of romance, but a veritable living, unkempt, unwashed, brown-cloaked, leather-gaitered, breeches-wearing, high-peaked-hatted Italian robber. Yet Ninco Nanco had not always been a cut-throat; for it may shrewdly be supposed that he was not born a brigand—that he did not begin life by shooting folks with a small bow and arrow when they crossed the precincts of his nursery.

Ninco Nanco was once a Neapolitan gentleman of the *ancien régime*, who got into trouble by running his stiletto, through a slight misapprehension, into the ribs of the wrong man, which wrong man having powerful friends, poor Ninco Nanco, bitterly complaining of his misfortune, and of the cruelty of fate in making two men so much alike, was condemned to the galleys for life. Had he killed the right man, no notice, he affirmed, would have been taken of his peccadillo. While thus suffering under the frowns of fortune, he formed the acquaintance of several personages, like-minded with himself, who spent their spare time in grumbling against their hard fate at being placed in durance vile, and in concocting plans for revenging themselves upon those who had been instrumental in depriving them of their liberty. There is a tide in the affairs of all men—that in the affairs of Ninco Nanco turned, so he thought, in his favour. An opportunity occurred of making his escape—he availed himself of it, as did a few choice spirits of his own kidney. They were compelled, to be sure, to knock three or four of their gaolers on the head; but to liberal-minded men, like themselves, that was a trifle. They expected soon to be provided with ample funds to buy absolution for that act, or for any other of a similar character they might be compelled to commit. Once free from the precincts of their prison, they were among friends, and by them assisted, hastened off inland, nor pulled rein till they had placed many a mountain range and dark ravine between themselves and those who ought to have pursued them, but did not. There Ninco Nanco raised his standard, and prepared to set the laws of "meum and tuum" at defiance. He and his associates soon made themselves at home in a hut, which they erected among some rocks, high up on the side of a lofty mountain, where no one was likely to come and look for them. They only mustered nine or ten men, however, and it was agreed that their band must be greatly increased before they could undertake any enterprise of consequence. Each of the party had friends on whom he could rely, so he said, to join them, but as they were rather

out of the line of the penny postage, there was some difficulty in getting the letters conveyed to the persons with whom the band desired to communicate. Another difficulty existed in the fact that only Ninco Nanco and Giuseppe Greco, his lieutenant, could write. Their leader, for reasons best known to himself, declined putting his hand to paper; the task of inditing these epistles fell, therefore, on Giuseppe, while another of the band was commissioned to find messengers, by whom to despatch them to their several destinations.

Meantime, as gentlemen of the profession these worthies were about to adopt cannot live without food any more than those of a less enterprising character, they proposed making a little expedition along the high road, for the purpose of obtaining funds to supply their immediate necessities. The proposal, emanating from Ninco Nanco himself, was so much to the taste of all, that it was immediately put into execution. True, the band mustered but few men; but they were hungry. They posted themselves on either side of the before-mentioned high road, among some rocks and bushes, and waited quietly for what fortune might send them. The chief injunction Ninco Nanco laid on his followers was, not to fire across the road lest they should hit each other, and rather to aim at the men than the horses, as the horses might prove useful, while the men, objecting to be robbed, might possibly prove troublesome. Before long, a carriage was seen approaching. It had a small body with a hood, and was open in front, and had high wheels. In the centre sat a man, with a chest on either side of him, the butt ends of pistols projecting from the pockets of the carriage, and a rifle across his knees. Ninco Nanco's eyes brightened. "The Padrone has something worth defending," he muttered, raising his rifle. He fired, and the traveller fell dead. The rest of the band, not being good shots, missed. The postilion lashed on his horses; but the robbers (the brigands, their pardon is asked), jumping out, stopped them, pulled him from his saddle, and commenced a hurried examination of the contents of the chest, the keys of which they found in their victim's pocket. The dead man had been steward of the Prince Montefalcone, and was returning to Naples after collecting the rents on his employer's estates. At the sound of the firing, a horseman who was following the calèche turned to fly; but his steed fell, and he was thrown. He was immediately seized on, and bound back to back with the postillion, while his horse was likewise caught. The brigands were rapid in their proceedings. The carriage was smashed to pieces, and its materials, with the body of the murdered man, being packed on the three horses and the two prisoners, the robbers themselves carrying what could not be thus transported, the whole party struck off up the mountain, their leader stopping behind for a moment to assure himself that no traces of the encounter remained. Having picked up a couple of balls and some splinters, and stamped over some drops of blood, he sprang after his comrades. They had reached a dark and secluded glen, with rocks and trees overhanging, when the chief called a halt. After a little consultation, two graves were dug under the moss. In one the body of the steward was deposited.

"Now, friends," said the chief, in his mild, bland way, addressing his prisoners, "we require recruits; are either of you inclined to join us?"

"Not I, indeed!" exclaimed the steward's servant. "You've murdered my good master, and I hope to see you all hung —especially you, Signor Ninco Nanco; I remember you in the Bagnio of Castellamare—rogue that you are!"

"Very well, friend, take your way," said Ninco Nanco, blandly, as before. "And you, Signor Postiglione, what do you say?"

"That I am unprejudiced; but it depends on the offer you can make me, most worthy signori," answered the postillion.

"You see that grave; one of you two will fill it before ten minutes are over," said the bandit, with terrible calmness.

"Oh, oh! then I will join you or do anything you wish, most worthy and honourable gentlemen," exclaimed the poor fellow, trembling in every limb.

"You have selected wisely, friend," said the bandit, with an unpleasant smile; "but you will understand that we require proof of your sincerity; vows are, like strings of macaroni, easily broken. You will have the goodness to take this pistol, and shoot yonder contumacious slave of the steward of the Prince Montefalcone. I wish that I could have given you the satisfaction of shooting the Prince himself."

The postillion took the pistol which the brigand handed to him, but hesitated to lift it towards the head of the victim.

"Come, come! we are transacting business," cried the brigand, with a terrible frown. "If you are in earnest, fire; if not, we will give him his choice of shooting you."

The servant, who had not seemed till this moment to understand the cruel fate prepared for him, turned an imploring glance at the brigands surrounding him; but no expression of commiseration could he discover in the countenances of any of them. He was in the act of lifting up his hands towards the blue sky above his head, when the report of a pistol was heard, and he fell flat on his face to the ground.

Instantly the outer clothing was stripped off, the pockets rifled, and the yet warm corpse was thrown into the grave and covered up.

"Put on this," said the brigand, handing the murdered man's jacket to the postillion; "you've made a good beginning, and, as your life is now not worth a half carline if you were to appear in Naples, when you have taken the oath you may consider yourself one of us; but you'll remember, that if you ever turn traitor, though you were to fly to the centre of the Vatican, or to cling to the altar of Saint Peter's, you would not be safe from our vengeance. Now, onward, comrades!"

After climbing some way the band reached their huts, where, the remains of the carriage being piled in a heap, a fire was lighted, and they set to work to cook the remainder of their provisions, with the pleasant knowledge that they had now the means amply to replenish their supply. Having eaten and drunk their fill of salt fish, oil, garlic, macaroni, and sour wine, they stretched themselves, wrapped up in their cloaks, at their lengths inside the hut, while one stood sentry at a spot whence he could watch the only approach to this rocky domain. Such was the everyday life of these

gentlemen. It would require a curious twist of the imagination to conceive Ninco Nanco a hero, or his followers otherwise than unmitigated villains.

Poor Pietro, the postillion, soon discovered that he was to be a mere hewer of wood to the band.

While awaiting a reply to their letters, Greco and a companion were sent occasionally into the neighbouring village to procure provisions and necessaries, for which they honestly paid, the traders not finding it convenient to give credit to gentlemen of their profession. Only two recruits joined them, invited by Greco, old hands at the trade. No answers were returned to the rest of their epistles.

“We must take other means of recruiting our forces,” exclaimed Ninco Nanco, pulling his moustachios in a way which meant mischief.

Story 11--Chapter II.

A long, low cottage, with broad verandahs, over which luxuriant vines had been taught to creep, stood on the side of one of the numerous ridges of the Apennines, some way to the east of Naples, in the province of Basilicata. It belonged to old Marco Maffei, a contadino, or small farmer, who had nothing very peculiar about him except that he was an honest man, and that he had a very pretty daughter, an only child, born when he was already advanced in life, and now the joy and comfort of his declining years. It was no fault of the pretty Chiarina that she had admirers, especially as she did her best to keep them at a respectful distance. Her heart, however, was not altogether made of stone; and therefore, by degrees, the young, good-looking, and gallant Lorenzo Tadino had somehow or other contrived to make an impression on it, deeper, perhaps, than Chiarina would have been willing to acknowledge, even to herself. From the house could be seen, some way below, the high road already spoken of, which stretches from the Adriatic to the western waters of the Mediterranean. Lorenzo, or ’Renzo, as he was more familiarly called, was standing just outside the entrance-gate of the farm, while Chiarina, distaff in hand, sat within, under the shade of the wide-spreading vines which, supported by trellis-work, formed an arch overhead. Her father had gone to market some miles off, leaving her in charge with an old man, who had been with him for many years, and her serving-maiden as her attendant. In the absence of her father, her sense of propriety would not allow her to admit ’Renzo within the gate; nor did he complain, for Chiarina had confessed that if she ever did such a foolish thing as to fall in love, she should in all probability select him as the object of her affections, provided always that her father approved of her choice. ’Renzo had just gone inside the arbour to thank her, it is possible, for her judicious selection, when their attention was drawn towards the road by the sound of horses’ feet galloping furiously along it. There were three horsemen, wild-looking fellows, each with a carbine or rifle in his hand. As they were passing directly under the house one of the steeds fell, and the rider was thrown with violence to the ground. His companions pulled rein, and dismounted to assist him. He must have been severely hurt; for, after they had tied their horses to a tree, they were seen bearing him up the steep path leading to the cottage.

“You will have the goodness to take care of this cavalier, and to see that no injury befalls him,” said one of them to Chiarina, as they reached the arbour.

’Renzo frowned, but to little purpose, at their impudent manner. It would have been against Chiarina’s gentle nature to refuse to take care of the injured man. There was not another house along the high road for nearly half-a-league, and he would die before he could be carried there.

The men turned their glances uneasily up the road. Some object was seen approaching. They immediately placed their burden on the ground, and were about to make off down the hill at full speed, when Chiarina exclaimed that it was her father.

Old Marco, though he did not look over well pleased at seeing the strangers, after exchanging a few words with them, at once consented to take charge of their wounded comrade. Calling ’Renzo to his aid, he lifted the man from the ground to bear him towards the house.

“Remember, if harm befalls him!—” exclaimed one of the men, lifting up his finger, as he turned to hurry down the hill.

“If harm befalls him it will be no fault of mine,” answered Marco.

The stranger was carried in and placed on Marco’s own bed, and his injuries carefully looked to; while his comrades, having caught his horse, galloped off with it along the road at the same headlong speed as that at which they were before going.

After some time the stranger opened his eyes and looked about him with a very troubled expression, till they fell on Marco. He then seemed more satisfied.

“What has happened?” he asked.

Marco told him.

“I can trust you, old friend?” he whispered.

“Yes, yes, no fear,” said Marco, turning away; “I would, though, that your shadow had never darkened my doorway.”

Chiarina longed to know who the stranger could he; yet she did not like to ask her father. ’Renzo, left equally in ignorance, at length was compelled to take his departure, not at all satisfied in his mind that all would go well.

Story 11--Chapter III.

Had the stranger been a son, Marco could not have tended him with greater care than he did, aided by Chiarina, who, however, never got over the mistrust she had felt of him from the first. ’Renzo came whenever he could, and never before had he been so sensible of making rapid progress in her affections. The truth is, she felt that she required some one on whom she could rely for protection and support. Her father never gave a hint as to who the stranger was, and all she knew was that he looked at her in a way she did not like, and that he spoke in a bold, self-confident tone, which grated harshly on her ears. He had now almost entirely recovered his strength, but, except when the shades of evening came on, he did not go out of doors. The only reason he gave for this was, that the light of day was disagreeable to his eyes. It was evident that Marco wished that he would take his departure. In the first place, Marco could not go to market; in the second, the stranger was making love, in a rough way, to his daughter; in the third, he was eating up his provisions; and, in the fourth place—but that reason, probably stronger than any of the others, he kept to himself. ’Renzo would gladly have volunteered to turn him out crop and heel, but that would not have suited Marco’s notions of hospitality; nor was it likely that such proceeding would have passed by unnoticed in some disagreeable manner by the stranger’s friends.

One day, at noon, as Marco was working in his fields, and had just been joined by Chiarina, who came to tell him that his dinner was ready, they saw in the distance a cloud of dust, out of which shortly emerged a troop of dragoons. Chiarina remarked her father’s agitation as he hurried towards the house. Their guest, on hearing who was approaching, instantly retired to his room, telling Marco to say, if any inquiries were made, that there was a sick man up-stairs with an infectious fever. “Invite the officer to come in and prescribe for me,” he added, laughing.

The body of cavalry halted under the house, but only an officer dismounted and came up the hill. He entered the house, and asking carelessly for a jug of wine, inquired of Marco whether he had been annoyed by the brigands.

“Ah, signore! I am, happily, too small game for them to fly at,” he answered; “yet I love them not, nor wish to have any dealings with them.”

The officer looked satisfied, and Marco hoped that he would ask no further questions.

“Have you other inmates besides yourself and daughter?” asked the officer.

“Assuredly, yes—a sick man up-stairs, who has been earnestly begging that any gentleman who has a knowledge of the healing art, passing this way, would come and see him,” answered Marco, with all the calmness he could command. “His fever, he says, may be infectious; and, at all events, I wish to have as little to do with him as possible. Perhaps, if you have a surgeon with your troop, you could send him up; or, if you have any skill, signore, you would see him.”

“I! My skill is to kill, not to cure,” said the officer, laughing at his own wit, and completely deceived.

It was with no small satisfaction that Marco saw him again moving on at the head of his men.

The stranger soon after appeared.

“I owe you a good turn, Marco Maffei,” he said, with more cordiality than he generally exhibited. “The day may come when I can repay it. I shall not much longer trouble you with my society.”

Marco did not say what he thought—that the sooner he was gone the better.

Day after day, however, passed by, the guest employing his time in making love, as before, to Chiarina, to her evident annoyance, though at this he seemed in no way disconcerted.

At length, one evening after dark, a loud knock was heard at the door, and, when Marco opened it, an unshorn countenance was thrust in.

“Come, signore, we have been watched, and shall have no little difficulty in rejoining our comrades if there is any delay,” said a gruff voice from out of the hair-covered mouth. “You have been here too long as it is.”

The stranger, without demanding any explanation of the last remark, jumped up, shook Marco warmly by the hand, and, endeavouring to bestow a kiss on Chiarina’s cheek, which she narrowly escaped, disappeared through the doorway.

“A good riddance of bad rubbish!” thought Marco, as he muttered something between a blessing and a curse between his teeth.

Chiarina was thankful that the stranger was gone, yet she was not happy; for ’Renzo had not been to the cottage for three days, and she could not tell what had become of him. She no longer concealed from herself that she loved him very dearly.

Story 11--Chapter IV.

’Renzo was one day on his way over the mountains to visit Chiarina, when before him appeared the barrels of three or four rifles, and a voice in an authoritative tone ordered him to stop. As he knew that rifle bullets were apt to travel faster than he could run, he obeyed, and presently, found himself in the hands of a party of especially savage-looking bandits.

After proceeding for a couple of leagues or more, ’Renzo found himself in a wild rugged part of the mountains, into which, though so near his home, he had never penetrated. Here a large band of ragamuffins were collected, all armed; to the teeth, some of them being peasants whom he knew by sight. He was welcomed by name as a future comrade.

“Your comrade, indeed! I will be the comrade only of honest men,” he answered boldly.

At this reply there was a laugh.

“We’ll see what persuasions our brave chief, Giuseppe Greco, can employ,” exclaimed one of the band.

“He our chief? What do you mean, Oca? Our chief is Ninco Nanco, and no one else,” cried another.

“Then he should show himself,—he may be dead, or captured, for what we know,” said a third.

“We want a clever leader, like Greco, who can at will increase the number of the band, and lay the whole country under contribution.”

“Who will bring traitors among us, and make enemies on every side,” muttered an old brigand, who had followed the craft from his earliest days.

From all he heard ’Renzo knew that there was a division in the camp of the brigands, and soon ascertained that Greco was plotting to depose his absent chief. This was satisfactory, as he hoped it might be the means of breaking up the confederacy. It did not make him the less anxious to effect his escape. In vain he watched for an opportunity all night.

The next day the band moved some leagues farther to the east. He found himself strictly guarded, but not otherwise ill-treated; while his companions used every means to impress him with the pleasures and advantages of the life they led.

“I confess I do not perceive them,” he answered. “You have to live up in the mountains; often like wild beasts, hunted from spot to spot. Your fare is coarse, and often scanty. Every day you run a chance of being shot. If taken, you will be hung, or sent to the galleys for life; and, without scruple, you kill your fellow-creatures, if they attempt to defend their property.”

“Make the fellow hold his tongue,” cried a voice near them; it was that of Greco, who had approached unperceived. “We must induce you to change your mind, friend ’Renzo,” he remarked. “I want a sturdy fellow like you as a lieutenant.”

Greco was doing his utmost to increase the number of the band, hoping thus to overpower the adherents of Ninco Nanco. Small parties were constantly sent out, therefore, who returned either with prisoners, or recruits as they were called, or some booty and provisions. What was poor ’Renzo’s grief and horror when, one day, he saw Marco Maffei, the father of his dear Chiarina, brought in a prisoner, mounted on his mule! He looked pale and alarmed. Greco seemed highly satisfied at seeing him.

“Ah! ah!” he exclaimed, “you refused me your daughter in honourable marriage three years ago. I have waited ever since then to be revenged on you, and now I have the opportunity.”

The band was at this time collected in a hollow, with rocks and trees around, effectually concealing its members from the world beyond. The only approach was by the pathway up which Marco had been led.

“Now, friend ’Renzo, the moment has arrived to decide whether you will become one of us!” exclaimed Greco, in a harsh tone. “I want yonder old man put out of the world—to you I award the task.”

’Renzo’s heart sank within him. He resolved, however, to make every effort to save the life of his old friend. He pleaded and argued. He might as well have talked to the surrounding rocks.

“Give him a rifle,” at length exclaimed Greco, losing patience. “See that you use it as I direct.”

’Renzo took the weapon, and ascertained that it was loaded properly. The old man had been allowed to sit on his mule. ’Renzo approached him.

“Friend, forgive me for the deed I am compelled to commit,” he said aloud; then he hurriedly whispered, “I will draw off the attention of the villains, and, as I do so, dash down the mountain. Your beast is trusty, and will not fall.”

Once more he retired nearer to Greco, and again pleaded earnestly for the old man’s life.

“Fire!” cried Greco, stamping on the ground.

“Ay, I will!” exclaimed ’Renzo, swinging himself round so as to cover the would-be chief of the band.

At that moment a report from another quarter was beard—a bullet whistled through the air, and Greco fell, shot through the head.

“Fly, father, fly!” cried ’Renzo, springing towards Marco, and urging on his mule.

The unexpected appearance of Ninco Nanco himself, who leaped down from the rocks among them with three well-armed followers, drew off the attention of the brigands from ’Renzo’s proceedings. Those who had openly sided with Greco grasped their weapons, expecting to have to fight for their lives.

“Nonsense! No fighting among friends,” said Ninco Nanco. “I heard of all that fellow was doing, and have settled scores with him pretty sharply. In future you’ll all follow my orders.”

Loud vivas greeted this address, and it was not for some minutes that the brigands discovered that their prisoners had fled. Some proposed following them.

“No, no! To the old man I owe a debt; it were an ill way of paying it if I slew him,” exclaimed Ninco Nanco. “Though I love not the other, I can afford to be generous, and so let him go also. I can trust them. They dare not betray us.”

This act of the chiefs was looked upon as the very acme of heroic generosity; and certainly nothing more worthy of praise has been recorded of Ninco Nanco, the Brigand.

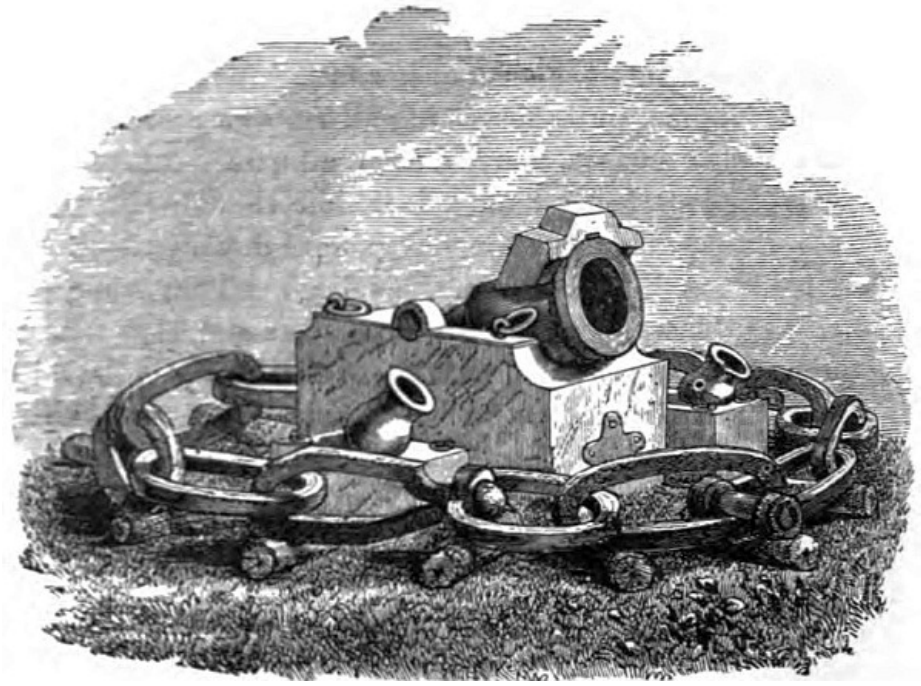
Having inspired the inhabitants of the surrounding districts with a wholesome terror of his name, Ninco Nanco soon discovered that the easiest way of collecting his revenue was to write a letter to any wealthy proprietor he might fix on, demanding the sum required, or horses, or provisions, as the case might be; and he seldom, fails to obtain what he demands.

Marco and ’Renzo reached home safely, when Chiarina, who had been almost heart-broken at their absence, in the exuberance of her joy at their return, threw herself into the arms of her father, and then into those of ’Renzo, quite forgetting all rules of propriety.

The young couple married soon afterwards; and, if they are not perfectly happy, it is that they dread lest Ninco Nanco should some day pounce down on them, and insist on ’Renzo joining his band. They, therefore, very reasonably hope to hear some day that that gentleman has been shot, or hung, or sent to the galleys, or has been induced to accept a situation under the Government, or been disposed of in some no less satisfactory manner.

Story 12--Chapter I.

STORY TWELVE—The Story of the Defence of Kars.



However averse we may be to war, we must acknowledge that it is often a stern and cruel necessity: that it is calculated to draw out many of the nobler qualities which exist in the human heart and mind, and that it shows more than most other callings a man in his true colours. There were many gallant deeds performed during the late war with Russia; but, taking all things into consideration, none surpass the defence of Kars, or more completely prove what can be done by courage, energy and perseverance, devotedness and unanimity, when directed by wisdom and science. All these qualities were displayed in a remarkable degree by the British officers who undertook the defence of Kars against the well-disciplined troops of Russia, with materials which ordinary men would have considered utterly useless. I feel particular pleasure in writing a short account of that heroic undertaking, from having soon afterwards met some of the British officers engaged in it in Russia itself. There, no longer enemies, but as honoured visitors, they were received by the Russians with that respect which their gallantry had won. They were visiting, as I was, the gallery in Saint Petersburg of that talented artist and persevering Siberian traveller, the late Mr Atkinson. While exhibiting his magnificent pictures, Mr Atkinson gave us a deeply interesting account of his own adventures when he was engaged in making the sketches from which he had painted them, and altogether I look back to that morning as one of the most agreeable spent during a short visit I made, soon after the war, to Russia.

But to our story about Kars. While the British, French, and Sardinian troops were before Sebastopol, the Russians hoped, by sending a powerful army by way of the Caucasus, to attack the Turkish dominions in Asia on the east, and to compel the Allies to despatch some of their forces to the assistance of the Sultan. The English Government had foreseen that the Russians would do this, and had accordingly sent out General Williams, then holding the rank of Colonel, and other officers, to put the frontier Turkish fortresses in a state of defence. On the confines of the Turkish dominions in Armenia, and to the south-east of the Black Sea, stands the town of Kars. It is situated under a precipitous and rocky range of hills, running east and west, and in most parts impassable for artillery. This range of hills is bisected by a deep gorge, through which flows the river Karschai, over which are thrown four or five bridges. On the south side of Kars a fine level plain stretches away for many miles till it meets a range of easy-sloping heights. Kars has a picturesque old feudal-looking castle, built on the summit of a craggy rock, rising out of the gully, with the brawling river at its base, and commanding the whole of the city. The streets of the town are narrow and dirty, and there are very few even tolerably good houses, while the appearance of the population is sordid in the extreme. Besides the castle, there were no fortifications of any consideration. This was the place which, early in 1855, General Williams, Colonel Lake, Major Teesdale, Captain Thompson, and other English officers were sent to defend, with a disorganised Turkish force under them, against a well-equipped Russian army, commanded by General Mouravieff. General Williams had received the rank of Ferik or Lieutenant-General in the Turkish army, with the title of Williams Pasha. He and the gallant men with him had numberless difficulties to contend with. The Turkish officers were generally utterly worthless—the neighbouring tribes of Kurdistan broke into revolt—the troops were ill clothed, and ill fed, and unpaid, and the whole *morale* of the army was at the lowest state, while the town itself was to be placed in a defensible condition, to withstand the assaults of the powerful army advancing towards it. The soldiers were upwards of two years in arrears of pay—their shoes were worn out, their uniforms were in tatters, and a large number were suffering from scurvy, caused by unwholesome food and their long confinement in the ill-ventilated huts of Kars. General Williams and his companions were first engaged in fortifying the town of Erzeroum, which will be found on the map some distance to the west or rear of Kars, and from thence they proceeded to the defence of the latter place itself. The Russians were at that time assembling an army at Gumri, and were evidently meditating a speedy attack on Kars. As no time was to be lost in preparing for it, the English officers set manfully to work to overcome all obstacles, and to put the place in a proper state of defence. All vied with each other in zeal. In all weathers, at all times of the day and night, in the saddle or on foot, they were to be found labouring with head and hand, sometimes in the trenches with spade or mattock, sometimes drilling troops, receiving chiefs, settling disputes, encouraging the wavering, and organising various departments of the service. Here is a description of General Williams when the enemy had arrived before the town:—“We are all in the saddle at half-past three a.m., and ride round the works; the troops are certainly full of enthusiasm, and Williams Pasha or Ingleez Pasha is already a great favourite. They see him everywhere; he is with the sentries at the menaced point ere the morning has dawned, anon he is tasting the soldiers’ soup, or examining the bread, and, if anything is wrong here, his wrath is terrible. His eyes are everywhere, and he himself is ubiquitous. Each soldier feels that he is something more than a neglected part of a rusty machine:

he knows that he is cared for, and he is encouraged, and confident of being well led." To Colonel Lake, however, belongs the credit of having formed the chief fortifications round Kars, as he was there while General Williams was still at Erzeroum. They were of considerable extent. The chief battery was on the summit of a semicircular range of hills, to the west and north-west, and at the distance of two miles or more from the town. This was Major Teesdale's position, and here General Kmety had his camp. To the north again was a line of fortifications known as the English Redoubts, where Colonel Lake commanded. The river flowed between the town and the above-mentioned batteries. To the east, at a distance of a mile from the town, was Captain Thompson's position—the Karsdagh Battery, and from thence a line of batteries circled round to the south, till they joined the river on the west. Thompson's and Lake's positions were connected by a bridge thrown across the river by the latter. The strongest position was a closed work, constructed by Colonel Lake, on a height overlooking the city to the west, and known as Veli Pasha Tabia, or Fort Lake. It was armed with four heavy and several lighter guns, and was the key of the whole northern position. Day and night, officers and men were employed in strengthening this extensive line of fortifications, the whole northern part being on a succession of rugged heights, commanding the surrounding country. No one worked harder or was more enthusiastic than the gallant Teesdale, and there also was the brave Thompson with Dr Sandwith, the chief of the medical staff, who gives a most graphic account of the first attack of the Russians. It was the 16th of June, the Feast of the Bairam, when the Turks generally deliver themselves up to idleness and rejoicing, and all duty is neglected. But the vicinity of danger kept the garrison of Kars on the alert, and early in the morning news was brought that the enemy were advancing on the town. The alarm was quickly raised, and all the citizens rushed to the batteries. Every one was in gayest apparel—the gallant Karslis slung on their scimitars, buckled on their cartridge-pouches, and shouldered their rifles, and in groups by the dozen, with hearts beating high and glistening eyes, scaled the rocky heights above the city. Here is a picture:—"The women crowd the house-tops, and cry to each passing warrior, 'God sharpen your swords! Remember us—we are praying for you—go, fight the infidels—God speed you!' In a short time each man is at his post, where, by those looking down from the batteries, were to be seen the dark masses of the enemy steadily advancing over the broad plain of rich meadow land, covered with brilliant yellow flowers. As they advance, a beautiful living panorama is before the spectators—the enemy throw out their Cossacks and Georgian skirmishers of irregular cavalry; these are met by the Bashi-Bazouks, and a series of tournaments occur in the enamelled grassy space intervening between the stern masses of advancing troops and the breastworks of Kars. Two or three regiments of cavalry now advance from the Russian lines, and, after a trot of a mile or two, charge the retreating squadrons of Turkish cavalry. The rout of the latter is complete, but the Bashi-Bazouks, under a gallant native chief from Damascus, Ali Bey, fight well while retreating. Suddenly puffs of dense white smoke issue from the Karsdagh and Hafiz Pasha batteries, and the screaming balls are seen to plough through the dense Russian masses. The enemy's artillery is now brought up, but their balls glance harmlessly from the dense earthworks. The horsemen from both sides are mingled, and rush for the entrance; but the Cossacks fall under the deadly fire of the batteries, while those on whom our guns cannot play are singled out by the Turkish riflemen, who line the rocky sides of Karsdagh. The attempt to rush into the works has failed; after less than an hour's cannonading the enemy retires, while this repulse raises the spirits of the garrison to the height of enthusiasm. The Turkish loss has been trifling, perhaps twenty, while that of the enemy must have been considerably more." So the fighting went on: sometimes the enemy approached the entrenchments and retired without making an attack—at other times they attempted to storm the place, but were were driven back with slaughter. The British officers did not cease to strengthen their position; but they had soon to contend with a more terrible enemy than the Russians within their own entrenchments.

All their supplies had been cut off—their provisions fell short, and fierce famine made its appearance. Discontent among the troops—the irregulars chiefly—naturally followed; the town was closely beset by Cossack horsemen on every side. Still the war was carried on in a civilised manner, and, from the first, the Russian General Mouravieff showed himself a truly chivalric and humane man. It was felt that, should Erzeroum be taken, a vast number of siege-guns would be brought against Kars, and its doom be sealed.

Another attack was made by the Russians on the 7th of August, but they were driven back with considerable slaughter. But it is with the English officers we have to do:—"No sign of despondency clouded the honest face of General Williams. His 'Good morning' salutation was as cheerful as on the morrow of the first little victory. He was thin—he could not well be thinner: no wonder, for he never seemed to sleep. Long ere daylight he was with the sentries of Major Teesdale's battery, the point nearest the Russians, and his glass learned every movement; anon he was encouraging the Bashi-Bazouks and settling their differences, or arranging some plan for feeding the townspeople; and in his confidential conversation with his officers on the state of affairs, he would impress on them the duty of maintaining a bright and hopeful bearing, since all the garrison looked up to them for encouragement, Thompson lived altogether on the Karsdagh, and his glass ranged the horizon from early morning until night; nor did he then go to a quiet couch; for, though he turned in, yet, after an hour's light slumber, he would visit each sentry round the whole works, and no part of the position was as well guarded as that where this Argus had taken up his quarters. Teesdale lived with the gallant Hungarian, Kmety, and acted as chief of his staff. Besides his graver duties, he was constantly harassing the Cossacks with parties of riflemen, or menacing and attacking the Russian cavalry with a company of rifles and a couple of guns." Thus day after day skirmishing went on, but provisions became more and more scarce; scurvy, the cholera, and fever broke out; numbers died, but the courage of the brave leaders never flagged. There was no longer provender for the horses, and some of the cavalry, with a fearful loss, cut their way through the enemy and escaped.

But the day of battle was not longer to be delayed—that day which was to win the renown a soldier covets for the gallant strangers who led the Turkish forces. On the 29th of September, before daybreak, one of the advanced sentries of the chief battery, nearest to the enemy, heard a sound in the distance, something like the rumbling of wheels and the tramp of infantry. Kmety was soon on the spot. He applied his ear to the ground, and recognised the rumble of artillery-wheels; while still the measured tread of infantry was heard advancing nearer and nearer up the valley. The night was moonless, and very dark. Again all was silent. The Zebek riflemen look well to their percussion caps; the word is passed to the artillery-men, "*peshref*" (grape); the advanced posts creep into the lines with the ominous words "*Ghiaour gueliur*" (The infidels are coming). A dark mass, faintly seen through the gloom, is observed. It is moving; it is a column of men! A gun is pointed in the direction, the match is applied, and a hissing shower of

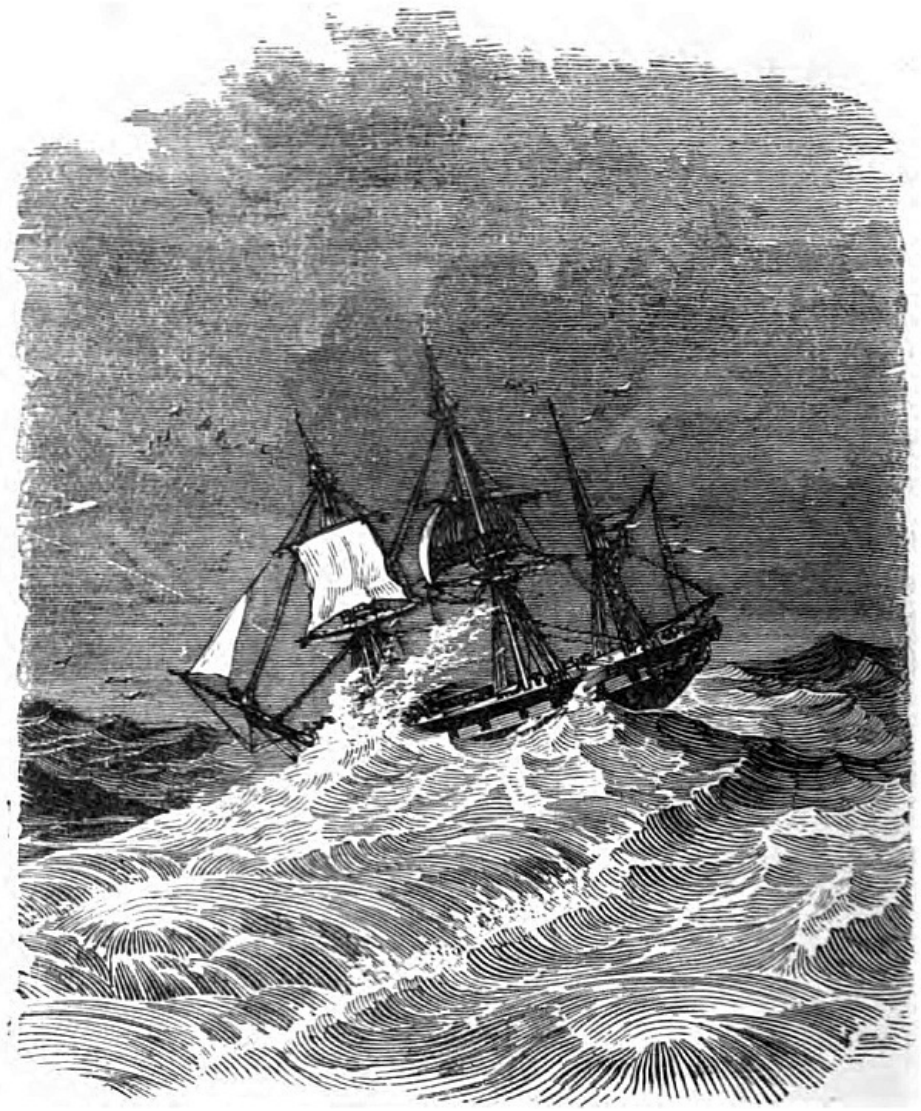
grape flies into the mass. An unearthly scream of agony from mangled human frames follows the thunder of the gun, when both are drowned by a loud hurrah which rises on all sides, and soon the whole line of breastworks is assailed in front and flank. All surprise is at an end. The Russians advance in close column on the breastworks and redoubts, while some Russian batteries, well placed on a commanding eminence opposite, pour shot, shell, and grape into the redoubts. Steadily each column advances, while grape, round-shot, and musketry are pelted into them. They still rush on; their officers, with wondrous self-devotion, charge in front, and, single-handed, leap into the redoubts only to fall pierced with bayonets. Their columns, rent and torn, retire to reform. Meantime, on the left flank and rear of the position, the breastworks are carried; a number of tents are occupied by Russian troops, while their officers, ignorant that the redoubts are closed, flatter themselves that the position is won. Kmety now, however, hastily gathers together a formidable body of his best troops; Teesdale turns some guns towards the rear and works them vigorously; Kmety's riflemen pour into these partially victorious Russians a continued and well-directed fire, which holds them in check, and woefully thins their ranks. Meantime, the son has risen, and shows each position of the enemy. A sulphurous cloud envelops the scenes of fiercest conflict, while reserves in formidable numbers crown the distant slopes. Fresh columns of the enemy charge again and again the front line of breastworks and batteries, from which they are at first driven back: they are received with a deadly and withering fire; and thus the fight continues. But this is not the only struggle going on. The line of breastworks and forts protecting the heights on the north of the town are attacked simultaneously by overpowering numbers, and being defended only by a weak force, mainly of Laz irregulars, are carried and occupied by Russian troops, who pile arms and wait for further orders; while the Russian artillery-men employ their time in busily shelling the town, which they now command. Meantime, General Williams from the centre of the camp is watching events. He despatches a body under Kherim Pasha, which appears suddenly on the flank of a large body of Russians now gaining ground in the rear of the Turks on the chief battery. A loud yell arises of triumph and vengeance. Baba Kherim waves his sword; his troops pour a volley into the enemy; Kmety and his men, hitherto overpowered, raise a responsive cheer: they rush on, crying, "*Sungu*! *sungu*!" (The bayonet! the bayonet!) Teesdale pours fresh grape into the staggering masses; the Russians waver—they give way—the havoc slacks not. The Turkish artillery hurl round-shots into these columns of brave and devoted men. Captain Thompson, on the extreme east, is with might and main working a heavy gun, and keeping the enemy in check. Once, and once only, there is a slight sign of giving way, but General Williams despatching reinforcements, changes the backward into a forward movement. The loud hurrahs of the Russian hosts are mingled with the yells of the Turks, who tight like tigers, charging repeatedly with the bayonet. White-turbaned citizens are seen plunging into the fight, hewing with their scimitars; athletic and savage Lazistan mountaineers fight with the clubbed rifle, or hurl stones at the advancing foe, while the latter, ever obedient to a stern discipline, advance again and again to the deadly batteries, and are blown from the very mouths of the guns. Strong proof is there of the excellence of Colonel Lake's batteries. For seven and a half hours the furious contest rages; when about mid-day the Russian columns are seen running down the hill, their cavalry and artillery steadily protecting their retreat. A confused mass of citizens follows them with the utmost temerity, firing into their retreating ranks. But where was the Turkish cavalry? Two thousand horsemen would have destroyed the Russian army, but none remain. The enemy reform, and march off unmolested.

The victory was complete, and the brave garrison looked forward with hope to relief, but relief did not come—cholera did, and famine. The provisions decreased, and many soldiers died of starvation, of cholera, sometimes fifty in a night. News, however, came that Selim Pasha had landed at Trebizond, and was advancing to their succour, and so our brave countrymen resolved not to yield. Still the relief did not come. Famine, disease, and death stalked round the camp. Human endurance could last no longer. The 25th of November arrived, and General Williams and his aide-de-camp, Teesdale, rode over, under a flag of truce, to the Russian camp, to propose a capitulation. They were well received by the humane Mouravieff. Terms most honourable to the brave garrison were speedily arranged; private property was to be respected; the troops were to march out with colours and music, and surrender themselves prisoners; "and write," said the Russian General to his secretary, "that in admiration of the noble and devoted courage displayed by the army of Kars, the officers shall be allowed to retain their swords, as a mark of honour and respect."

Thus was Kars defended chiefly by the wisdom, courage, and perseverance of a few Englishmen, gallantly supported by the Turkish troops; and thus it fell, not before the arms of Russia, but in consequence of the mismanagement, roguery, and pusillanimity of Turkish generals and officials. It would be difficult to point out to young soldiers an example more worthy of imitation than that set by the gallant officers who have been mentioned in these pages.

Story 13--Chapter I.

STORY THIRTEEN—The Doomed Ship.



“You see me now an old and careworn man, with my few scanty locks white as the driven snow; my eyes dim, my cheeks hollow, my shrunk and tottering limbs scarce able to support my bent and emaciated body; my blood languid, and flowing slowly round my heart; my voice weak and tremulous as a child’s; all my faculties deranged but memory, and that alone survives to tell me who I am. Memory, mysterious, inscrutable power,—gladly would I have escaped its painful influence! Alas! it cannot be. Thought alone, while every other faculty has departed, will pursue me to the grave.

“I was not always thus, young man. Ah! once my blood coursed freely through my veins as yours, my limbs were stout and strongly knit, my muscles were firmly strung, my figure was tall and graceful, and with my arm few dared to compete. No one ever cared a second time to tempt my anger; my eye was bright and piercing as an eagle’s, and my voice was clear and powerful, so that it might be heard amid the raging of the fiercest storm. My heart never beat with fear; aloft, no one was more active, or would so readily spring to the weather earing, when, in the strongest tempest, the last reef was to be taken in the topsails. Ah! young man, you look incredulous. I have stood securely on the main truck when landsmen could scarcely keep their feet on deck. I have hung by one hand suspended to a single rope, tossing to and fro in mid air. I have swum for miles on the foaming bosom of the ocean. I have contended with the wild beast of the desert. I have stood amid showers of bell and grape when my shipmates have been falling thickly around. I have with a few daring comrades fought hand to hand against overpowering numbers on an enemy’s deck. I have faced death in a hundred shapes, and I never trembled; yet now I bend even before the summer’s breeze. Worthless and miserable as I am, I have loved, truly and devotedly, ay, and have been loved too in return. The eye of beauty has sparkled, her lip has smiled sweetly on me, her heart has beat with tender emotions; when I drew near, those lips have uttered words of tenderest endearment for my ear alone. I have been young, strong, handsome, and bold;—I am now old and broken, loathsome and nerveless. Learn a moral, young man. To this all must come whose span of life is lengthened out like mine; then do the work to which you have been called while you have strength. Remember that this life, whether passed in sunshine and in calm, or amid cloud and storm, is like a voyage, speedily over, and that while it lasts every man on board is bound to do his duty, nor like a coward skulk idly below. Vain and bitter are the regrets of age, and if all men did but feel the importance of acting their parts faithfully towards their Maker and their fellow-men, what an amount of misery and anguish would be saved them in their latter days! how different would he the world they are sent to inhabit!

“But I asked you to sit down on this stone by my side, while we watch the shipping in the harbour below, and the deep blue sea sparkling in the rays of the setting sun, to listen to a tale of my younger days, and instead of that, I have been moralising, prating, you will say perhaps, of things which do not interest you. Well, well, follow my counsel; it is all I ask; and so to my tale.

“It is now more than half a century ago that I got the berth of second mate on board a fine ship belonging to the port of Liverpool. Liverpool was a very different town in those days from what it is now. There were no fine docks and

spacious quays, no broad streets and magnificent buildings, but yet it was a place of much bustle and trade; and trade is the true mother of all the improvements. Our ship was called the *Chameleon*. She was bran new, and had never yet made a voyage; she measured four hundred and fifty tons burthen, was ship-rigged, and was well found and fitted in every respect. Her master was as thorough a sailor as ever stepped, and, take them all in all, I suppose a stouter ship, a better crew, or a more able master, never sailed from the port of Liverpool. But I have now more particularly to speak of the master. His name was Derick—Captain Ashby Derick. He was a young man, about seven or eight-and-twenty, I suppose, and was very well connected and educated. He was very good-looking—the women called him remarkably handsome—he was tall, with a firm, well-made figure and broad chest; his complexion was naturally fair, though now bronzed by the sun, with an abundance of light curly hair, and full whiskers; his eyes were large and grey; his lips firm, and his nose fine, though somewhat hooked, which prevented his face from having any approach to effeminacy. He had from boyhood been rather wild; indeed, his principles were none of the best, and it was for that reason that his father, who was a very strict man, had sent him to sea, that he might not set a bad example to his brothers. The world looked on him as a rollicking, careless blade, with more animal spirits than wisdom to guide him; but his employers knew him to be a first-rate seaman, and one liked by his crew, and that was all they had to inquire about. Now for my part, I believe that had he been well guided at first, and properly instructed in his duty to God and man, he would not have turned out a bad man; but he had not his fair play; he was cast like a waif on the waters, without rudder or compass, to find his way as he best could over the troubled sea of life, and how could those who sent him expect him to escape shipwreck? His fate has been the fate of many. He grew up with numerous fine manly qualities. He was brave and bold as man can be; he was generous to his friends, kind-hearted to any in distress, and full of life and animation, but his temper was hot and hasty. He had no religion, though he did not scoff at it in others; but he did not know what it meant; and he had no morality; indeed, no one could trust to his principles. With women he had very winning ways, and was a great favourite with them.

“After his return from his last voyage he went to stay with some friends living in Lancashire, not many miles from Liverpool. At the distance of a mile or two from the house where he was staying, there lived on the borders of a wild heath or common, in an almost ruined cottage, an old woman. The old woman’s name was Kirby—Mother Kirby she was called—and she was reported to be a witch by the common people, who told all sorts of stories about her. It is certain that she was of a sour bad temper, that she was very old and very ugly, and could use her tongue most fluently. But it is not about her I am going to speak at present. She had a granddaughter who lived in the hut with her, but was as unlike her in every respect as light from darkness. Amy Kirby was one of the most beautiful girls you ever saw—she was slight and graceful, with a well-rounded form, and tall rather than short; her hair was black as jet; her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; and her cheeks bore all the bloom of health and youth; her complexion was clear, but it just showed that there was a slight touch of gipsy blood in her veins; her step, as she walked along, was as elastic as a young fawn’s; and her voice was like the skylark’s as it mounts into the blue sky at early dawn.

“It was surprising to see how the old woman loved a being so unlike herself, how carefully she tended her, how well she had brought her up. She had taught her many things which girls in her rank of life never learn; she even got all sorts of books for her to read. Amy was always neatly dressed, and while the rest of the cottage was almost in ruins, her room was as good as any in a well-to-do house. No one knew how the old woman got the money for these purposes, but whenever any was wanted for Amy it was always forthcoming. One thing, alas! she had not taught her—that was religion; and neither the old woman nor her grandchild was ever seen to enter a church.

“Amy was about seventeen when Ashby Derick first saw her. He met her on the common near her grandmother’s cottage, and as he was a stranger there he stopped to ask his way, and from one question another was asked, and a few words led to many. His heart in a moment was struck by her beauty, and he felt that he had never seen any one he admired so much. She, too, was pleased with his look and fine manly bearing, but she would not tell him who she was, nor where she came from. She laughingly said that she was the spirit of the heath, that she dwelt in the air, and that her carriage was the storm, and that whenever he would seek her he must come there to find her. This excited his curiosity, and if she had told him that she lived in the ruined cottage hard by, from her dress and language he would not have believed her. Every day he visited the heath, and each time he found her there on the same spot, and hour after hour he spent with her, more and more captivated by her charms. What was extraordinary was, that he could never find out her name, nor anything about her, or he might perhaps have not gone so far as he did. The strangeness of the affair pleased him, for he was of a romantic turn, and I believe fancied her some well-born lady in disguise who had fallen in love with him. She must have been, from what I heard, full of life and wit, and of course showed out more to him than she had ever done to others. Indeed, her mind was of no ordinary character, and had it been well guided she would have been equal to any lady in the land. At last he offered her marriage. She laughed, and told him that he would be marrying a spirit, and that he must come to her home, for that she would never go to his. He had better think over it, for that no good could come of it. This only made him more vehement, and he vowed and swore that he would marry her and her alone. The belief is that she was of the gipsy religion as well as of the gipsy race, and gipsies look upon an oath as binding as any other form of marriage, and therefore after that she considered Ashby Derick as her husband. I cannot say if what she told him about her being the spirit of the heath had anything of truth in it, as some people believed, but her heart and soul were his, and she loved him with all the passionate ardour of a child of a race which comes from the lands of the burning sun of Egypt. The consequence was, that she went to reside with him at his house near Liverpool.

“Her grandmother had never come to see her, but at last the old woman could no longer resist the strong wish she had of visiting her. Derick came in and saw the witch-like creature sitting by the side of the beautiful girl he professed to love so much. He did not like the look of her, and in an angry tone he asked her what she did there.

”‘I’ve as much right to be here as you have,’ answered the old woman. ‘I’ve come to see my grandchild, and I should like to know what fault you can find with that!’

”‘You come to see your grandchild!—you Amy’s grandmother! I don’t believe it,’ he exclaimed, starting back from her with a look of horror. ‘You, you wizen-faced, shrivelled old hag!’

”‘What! you dare to call me names!’ screamed the old woman; ‘you’ll repent it—that you will, my master.’

“On this, Derick turned to Amy and asked if the old woman spoke the truth. Amy confessed that she was her grandmother, and then burst into tears, which so enraged the dame that she went away muttering curses between her teeth, which Derick could not understand. They had a great effect upon him, and from that time his love for the beautiful gipsy began to cool. I ought to have said that before Derick had fallen in with the poor girl he had been paying his addresses to a young lady of family and fortune who had been captivated by his handsome face and figure. While the above affair had been going on he had neglected his former attentions to this lady, but he now began to resume them. He never told her the reason of his absence, and he made so much play to recover his lost ground, that he was soon reinstated in her good graces. She was not only rich, but handsome and clever, and she so quickly enslaved the heart of Derick, that he neglected poor Amy altogether. He next proposed marriage to her; he was accepted, and the day of the wedding was fixed.

“Poor Amy had heard nothing about it, whatever she might have suspected, and she had grown accustomed to his long absences, though her heart was breaking at his coldness. Well, Captain Derick and his beautiful bride went to church to be married, and a very grand wedding it was, and numbers of relations and friends attended. Just as the service began, a alight female figure, wrapped close in a cloak with a hood, was seen to steal into the church, and to hide itself behind one of the pillars which supported the roof. Derick observed the circumstance and changed colour, and his hand trembled as he put the ring on his wife’s finger. Just at that moment a piercing scream was heard ringing through the aisles and vaulted roof of the church, and filling the hearts of everybody present with dismay. They searched the church throughout for the stranger in the hooded cloak, they looked around in every direction, but she was nowhere to be found, and no one had seen her quit the church, nor had any one observed her in the neighbourhood. That night there was a fierce storm of thunder and lightning, wind and rain, and on the following morning the young and once beautiful Amy Kirby was found a blackened corpse on the very spot where Ashby Derick had first met her. Some said that she had been killed by lightning, but it was generally supposed that she had died by poison, which she had taken in her despair.

“The old grandmother was the first person to tell Derick of what had happened, though he was a hundred miles or so from the spot on his wedding tour. She came into the room where he and his young wife were sitting, without any one announcing her, and nearly frightened the bride to death by the way she swore and cursed Derick, so that at last he became so enraged that he called up the servants and turned her out of the house by main force. She went away threatening that she would shortly wreak a bitter vengeance on him for his murder of the only being she loved on earth. The same evening she was back again in her now desolate hut near Liverpool. If she had with some reason been before suspected of being a witch, she was thought to be one now to a certainty from her strange look and ways of going on, and she took delight in making everybody believe her one. The sudden appearance of the old woman so frightened the young bride that she fell ill, and the doctors all agreed that the best thing to restore her shattered nerves would be for her to take a long voyage to a southern climate. Derick was not sorry to hear of this advice, for though he loved his wife, so he did his profession, and had no intention of giving that up, especially when he could take her with him. At first her friends did not like the idea of her going, but he soon persuaded them, and she, poor young thing! was delighted at the thought of accompanying him, and of visiting foreign countries. She had been nurtured in every sort of luxury, and had never been to sea before, so she little knew what she had to undergo. However, he had a cabin fitted up for her very elegantly, so that she might be as comfortable as possible. The cargo was stowed, the ship was cleared at the custom-house, the lady and all her things were on board, our owners and different friends had gone on shore, and Captain Derick was standing close to the taffrail and waving his hat, as the ship, all her fastenings being cast off, moved away from the quay, when on a sudden there appeared at the end of a jetty, close to which we had to pass, the old hag, Dame Kirby.

“I have not yet described her. She had in her youth been very tall, but she was now bent nearly double, though she contrived to raise herself at times of great excitement to nearly her former height. She was thin and wizened, with large prominent features, and eyes once large, now sunk so deep in her head that they would have been scarcely perceptible, except from their extraordinary lustre. In her hand she carried a long twisted staff to support herself, and she wore a red cloak and a queer little hat, from under which her long grey locks straggled in the wind. Her gown, such as it was, all rags and tatters, was looped up in front to enable her to walk, and as she raised herself up, her long bony leg, which was advanced forward, looked so like that of a skeleton that it was impossible to believe that it belonged to a living being. Her arms, which were also quite bare, appeared composed of nothing but bone and sinew, and the skin which covered them, like that of her face, was as yellow as parchment. They, as well as her hands and fingers, were of great length, and as she walked along in her usual way, she almost touched the ground with them. When the captain first saw her standing directly in front of him, with her hideous features scowling malignantly on him, appearing, as she did, the prominent figure, while his friends faded in the distance, he started back and trembled violently. He quickly, however, recovered himself, especially when he found his wife, who had come upon deck, close to his side. Her presence seemed to enrage the old woman greatly. She slowly raised up her bent body till she seemed taller than any woman I ever saw, and stretching out her staff, waved it round and round in the direction of the ship.

”‘Curses attend you, and follow all who sail with you,’ she shrieked out, in a loud shrill voice, which pierced through our ears, and made the oldest seaman on board turn pale with apprehension. ‘False-hearted, perjured murderer, betrayer of innocence, deceiver of a faithful heart, destroyer of one who would have clung to you through weal and through woe, through good report and evil report, through life unto death! Now take the consequence. As you valued not the treasure of her love, you shall rue the bitterness of my hate. You are proud of your knowledge, you are proud of your hardy crew, you are proud of your stout ship, but your knowledge shall not avail you in the fierce tempest I will raise; the waters shall drown your hardy crew, and the hard rocks shall batter in pieces your stout ship! Wherever you go I will follow you; in the furthermost parts of the wide ocean you shall find me, in the howling of the raging storm you shall hear me, in the flashes of the vivid lightning you shall see me. My vengeance will not sleep, my hate will not abate. Your bold heart shall quail and sink like a woman’s, your cheek shall blanch, when you feel that I am nigh, and hiss into your ears the name of her you murdered, and you see borne before your eyes on the whirlwind the writhing form of her who was once so lovely, dying in agony on the wild heath alone and hopeless. Blasted shall be the beauty of which you are proud, withered shall be your form, frozen your heart, and she who now stands in

youth and loveliness by your side shall learn to repent she knew you, and shall share your fate. Sail onward on your course, but never shall your eyes again behold your native land, or hear the greeting of the friends you leave behind. But me you shall hear, and me you shall see, when you would give all the wealth of India not to see me or to hear me, and wish that I never existed. Go now—sail—sail—sail away over the wide sea! Curses hover over you where'er you go! Curses attend your hardy crew! Curses follow after the stout ship which hears you!'

"While uttering these dreadful imprecations, she whirled her staff still more violently in the air, and uttered shrieks louder than ever, until she almost drove the captain and everybody on board mad with horror; and while we were all wondering what she would do next, a sudden squall took the ship aback, and it was of such violence that we were as nearly as possible driven stern on to the pier. Everybody had to run to the braces, tacks, and sheets, and sharp work we had to slew the yards round in time; and when we looked again for the old woman, she was nowhere to be seen. I never before or since have met in the Mersey a squall so sudden, or so violent, and in a minute it was over, and the wind blew as it had done before. What was also strange was, that not one of the other ships in the river had felt it. The old pilot who was taking us clear of the sands shook his head and said he did not at all like the look of things, that no good ever came of such strange doings; but Captain Derick, who was himself again the moment Dame Kirby had disappeared, laughed, and asked him what harm could possibly happen from the ravings of an old mad woman.

"The young bride also did not at all like it, for she could not help recognising her as the old hag who had come and frightened her on the day of their marriage; and though Derick did his best to persuade her that there was nothing of truth in what she said, she could not bring herself to believe him. Those dreadful shrieks and curses had pierced her young heart, and struck her soul with dread.

"'Why, my love,' he said, 'what power to do us harm can a wretched old creature like that have? She is some unfortunate maniac who has escaped from her keepers, and has got this story about a grandchild she has lost, and whom, perhaps, some man has neglected, into her head, and has fixed it upon me. Poor old hag! she is more to be pitied than feared. It would have been a mercy to have sent a bullet through her head, and put her out of her misery, when she was howling at us leaving the quay, and I confess I felt not a little inclined to do so. I don't mean to say that it would have been right to hurt her—of course, I would not, poor thing. So now let us laugh at the foolish fears of the crew, and think no more about the matter.'

"Even while he was speaking, I saw his lip tremble, and his eye belied his words. His wife, who by this time knew him pretty well, was aware all the time that he was not speaking his real feelings, though perhaps he was trying to deceive himself, as well as her and others.

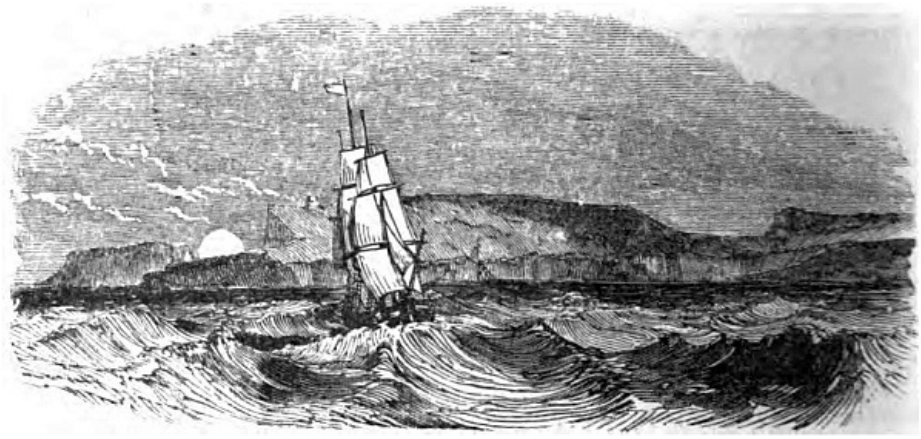
"Mrs Derick was certainly a very handsome woman, and she did not want wit or sense. She was dotingly fond of her husband, though she had found out that he had a good number of faults to weigh in the scale against his good looks, which is what many a woman is apt to discover when she marries a man for his handsome face, instead of for his sense and goodness. Though the captain appeared in high spirits, and laughed and talked as gaily as need be, the crew could not get the thought of the old hag out of their heads; and when the pilot left us, he looked very grave, and said that his heart would not be light again till he saw the ship safe back in the Mersey once more. I believe that at that time one-half of the men would have left the ship if they could have done so. Indeed, some attempted to follow the pilot, but Derick rushed on deck with his pistols in his hands, and swore that he would blow out the brains of the first man who should attempt such a trick.

"'You confounded idiots!' he exclaimed. 'I thought I had shipped a crew of men, who would face the devil if I led them; instead of that, I've got a number of sucking babies on board. Pity I did not ship some casks of pap to feed you on! But now I've got you, I intend to keep you, and to try if I can't make men of you; so I don't mean to part company just now, and shall keep my powder dry for ready use.'

"This speech had the effect of shaming the men into their duty, and for some time we heard no more of the old witch. I ought to have said that we were bound for Chili and the western coast of South America, and were to visit some of the islands in the Pacific before we returned home, so that we thus expected to be away the best part of two years. We had a fair wind after leaving the Mersey, and enjoyed a fine run clear of the Channel, and until we got into the latitude of Gibraltar, so that the men entirely recovered their spirits and good humour, and, with the carelessness of seamen, even began to laugh at their former fears. Mrs Derick took a great liking to the sea, and told her husband that she should always be ready to go with him. Poor thing! she had only yet seen the bright face of it. Those who know the ocean can say, that, like many a beautiful woman, it wears two very different aspects at different times. We all began to like the lady very much, which officers and crew do not always do the skipper's wife; but she was like a gleam of sunshine on a cloudy day, and stood between us and the somewhat dark temper which the captain now often showed. Thus things went on very well on board the *Chameleon*, and there appeared to be every prospect of a pleasant voyage.

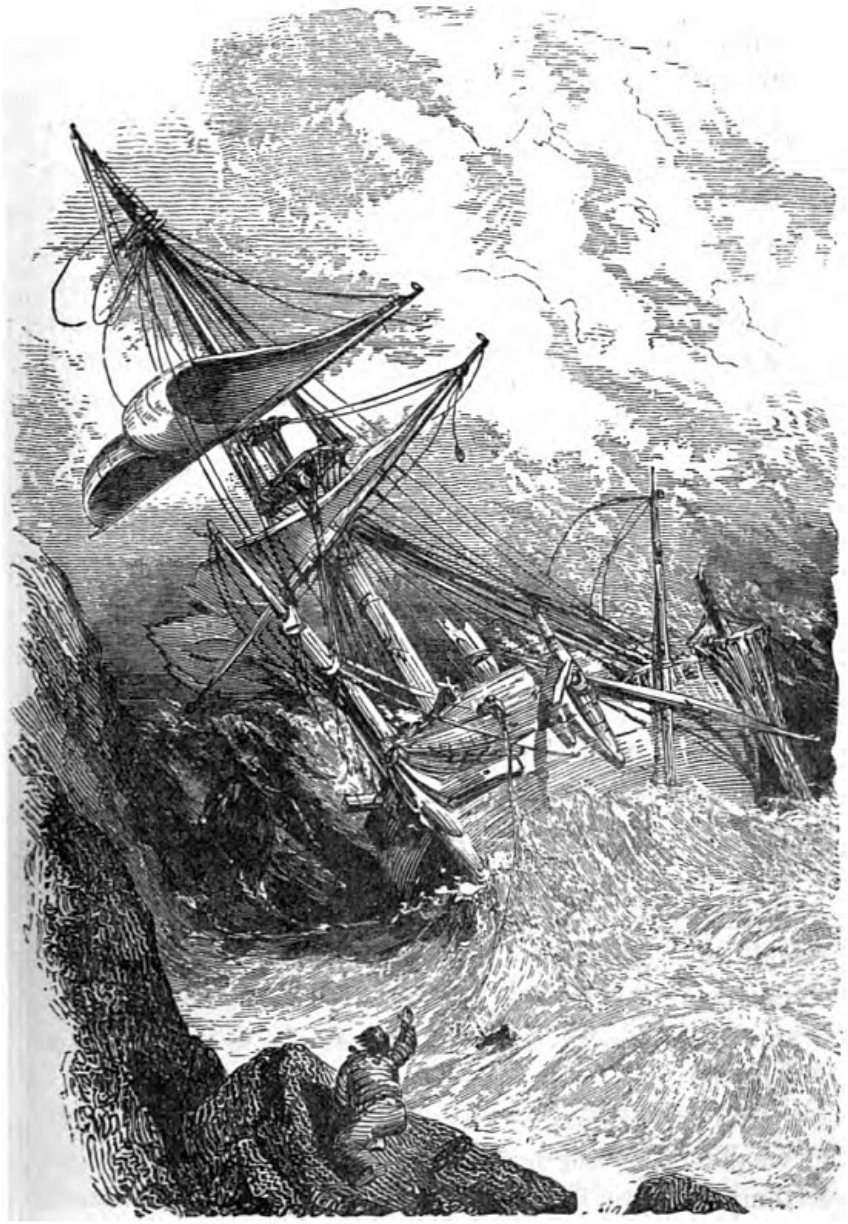
"I said that we were bound for Chili and the western coast of South America. In those days the jealous and narrow-minded commercial policy of Spain prohibited the ships of any other nation than their own trading with her colonies. The consequence was, that those provinces, notwithstanding their internal sources of wealth, remained poor and insignificant, and their inhabitants ignorant and bigoted, while in North America a state was springing up which not only surpassed their whole united provinces in power and influence, but soon became in a condition to bid defiance to the rest of the world. We, therefore, did not hope to carry on a regular trade with these degenerate Spaniards, but our intention was to call off different parts of the coast, and to sell our goods wherever we found people ready to buy them, without troubling ourselves by entering at any custom-house. There was some risk, it is true, in this species of traffic, but there was also some adventure, and it required considerable sagacity and courage, and this exactly suited Derick's taste. I forgot to say that we carried four guns on a side, and were well supplied with muskets, pistols, and boarding-pikes, both to defend ourselves against the Spanish custom-house officers, and also against any piratical rovers, who, in that day, were known at times to frequent those seas, to rob any unarmed merchantmen they might fall in with.

“The plan, in dealing with the Spaniards, when I had been in that part of the world before, was to call off the coast two or three leagues away from a town, and to send on shore, by some fishing-boat, to the merchants, to say what goods we had, and that we were ready to deal with them. They would then send back word when they would come, probably on that or the following night. If the weather were fine we used to anchor close in shore, always keeping a bright look out in case of treachery. As soon as it was dark, the merchant”, or their agents, would come off in their boats, and take the goods on shore, and pay us good prices in hard dollars. So much for restrictive duties. Scarcely a ship entered at the custom-house at any of those ports, and the Government got no revenue, while, on account of the difficulties and risks, the people had to pay just as much as they would have done for the goods had moderate dues been levied, and the trade been regular and above board. But I am running away from the subject of my story. Well, as I was saying, we made very fine weather of it, though the wind was seldom fair, till we reached about twenty-seven degrees north latitude, when we got into the north-east trade-winds, which carried us along at a spanking pace, with studding sails alow and aloft on either side, till we were nearly in the latitude of Rio do Janeiro. It was enough to make a man vain of his ship, of himself, and of the art which formed her, to see her thus walking along the water, with her wide spread of snowy canvas proudly sweeping the blue vault of heaven. Captain Derick rubbed his hands, and smiled with satisfaction, as he walked the deck and looked up at the well-set sails, and then over the side, to watch the sparkling foam as it quickly flew past and formed a long wake astern. He amused his young wife and himself in teaching her the names of the ropes and sails, and she fully shared his pleasure and satisfaction. I remember them as if it were yesterday; she was sitting on the bench, on the after-part of the deck, with one arm resting on his shoulder, and her face looking up at his, while he was explaining some point she could not at first understand. They certainly were a handsome couple. The sea was smooth, the sky was blue, and the air was pure and warm. That evening was the last we saw of fine weather. It seemed sent us on purpose to show how pleasant the world could be, and to make us wish the more to remain in it. On the morning following the one I have described, a dark mass of clouds was seen gathering in the south-west, rising out of the sea, and every instant growing denser and broader, as recruits from all quarters arrived; then, like some mighty host, which has been waiting the arrival of its various divisions, onward it began its march towards us. As the dark body advanced, its movement became more rapid, and at last, as if urged on by some irresistible impulse, it rushed forward in an impetuous charge, covering the whole sky with its overwhelming masses. The captain had been called on deck the moment the sky had assumed this threatening aspect, and he immediately ordered all the lighter sails to be handed, the courses to be brailed up, and the ship to be kept on the starboard tack, under her topsails. As yet there had been a perfect calm, and the sails flapped idly against the masts, though the ship rolled heavily in the smooth ominous billows, which had been rising for some hours past. Suddenly, the wind burst forth from the dark clouds, accompanied with rain and hail, and struck the ship on her broadside, while the forked lightning played round her on every side, as if eager to make her feel its power. Like a reed bent before the wind, the stout ship yielded to the fierce blast. It howled in triumph over her. In an instant, her gunwale was under water, and the waves washed up her decks and threatened to fill her hold. She was in as bad a position as a ship can be placed in, and it seemed that every moment would he her last. Derick now showed that he was a good seaman, cool and fearless in danger.



”‘Furl the mizzen-topsail,’ he shouted out. ‘Up with her helm—brail up the main-topsail—furl it—she’ll not steer without it.’ The mizzen-topsail and main-topsail were furled, the fore-topsail was backed against the mast, the fore-staysail and jib were set, but to no purpose. Still she lay like a log upon the waters with her broadside to the sea.”

Story 13--Chapter II.



“I ought to have said that all this time Mrs Derick, who had refused to stay below, was on deck seated aft under the weather bulwarks, and looking on less frightened perhaps than awe-struck at the wild scene before her. On finding that the ship still refused to wear, the captain summoned the mates with some of the best hands aft, and gave them the order to cut away the mizzen mast. With gleaming axes in our hands we set to work, the shrouds were severed, and after a few sharp strokes the mast tottered and fell with a crash into the boiling sea. The looked-for effect was not produced—still the ship would not wear. Another mast must be sacrificed; no other remedy remained. Again we gave the fatal strokes which must reduce our ship to a wreck upon the waters; over fell the tall mast with its spars and rigging, and a few more cuts served to sever it from the labouring hull. The effect was instantly perceptible—the ship righted, the helm was kept up, and away she flew before the howling tempest.

“Scarcely was she before the wind than the storm increased with tenfold fury, the wind blew more fiercely, the thunder rolled more loudly, the rain and hail came down in thicker torrents, the lightning flashed more vividly, while the waves rose on every side in black mountainous ridges covered with curling crests of foam, which the wind sent in showers on our decks even when the water itself did not break over us.

“The foremast had hitherto stood secure, though weakened by the loss of the mainmast, but now as the tempest came down stronger on us, that too tottered, and went by the board, carrying the bowsprit with it. As this last accident happened, the captain’s wife shrieked with terror; it was answered by a shout of shrill laughter, so loud, so piercing, and so unnatural, that it made the heart of every one on board tremble. It might well do so, for as we looked over the side of the driving ship, what should we see right abreast of us, in a small skiff, gliding over the frothy summits of the waves, but the very old woman who had uttered such dreadful curses at us as we were quitting Liverpool—Dame Kirby! There she sat in the stern sheets of the boat, steering by an oar with one hand, while the left bony arm was stretched out pointing derisively at us, and her countenance, as full of malignant revenge as is possible for any being possessing human features, was turned full upon us. A large sail was hoisted on the single mast, enough, one would have supposed, to lift the light skiff right out of the water; but she sat as composedly as if she were floating on a lake on a summer’s evening; her boat did not seem to ship a drop of water, nor ever to sink into the trough of the sea, but it somehow or other went along on the summit of every wave.

“Every one on board saw the old woman, and knew her to be Dame Kirby. So did poor Mrs Derick; and after gazing at her wildly for some time, she could bear the dreadful sight no longer, and fell back in a swoon. Her husband ran to raise her, and as he supported her in his arms, he shouted out to the old woman to begone, and to be content with the mischief she had already caused. Indeed, there was not a soul on board who did not believe that she had done all

the damage we had suffered. The hag only laughed and jeered at him the more he stormed, and so madly enraged did he become at her mockery, that I do believe had he not been holding his wife in his arms, he would in his passion have flung himself overboard to get hold of her.

“It must not be supposed that the officers and crew were idle all this time, for as soon as the foremast went we set to work to get up a jury mast on the stump of the foremast, to prevent the ship from broaching to; this, three men at the wheel had meantime the greatest difficulty in preventing her doing. At length, after much labour, we got up a spare topgallant mast, and set a topgallant sail on it, and all present danger was over. No sooner had we done this, than the witch uttered a loud ‘Ha, ha, ha,’ which sounded like what one might suppose to be the croak of a frog in a merry mood, only a hundred times louder and shriller than any frog ever croaked; and about she put her skiff, and away she went right in the wind’s eye, accompanied by a storm of lightning and rain, at the rate of not less than twenty knots an hour. When she had disappeared, the poor lady began to come to herself again, and her husband tried to persuade her that what she had seen was all fancy, and laughed heartily at the idea of an old woman in a red cloak coming out into the middle of the Atlantic in a skiff, which could not live a moment in such a sea as there was running.

“But she knew well enough all the time what she had seen, and nothing he could say to the contrary could persuade her that some dreadful disaster would not happen to them. I will do him the justice to say that, with all his faults, he was as brave a fellow as ever stepped, or he would not have borne up as he did. Any one to look at him, or to hear him, would suppose that he had no more seen the old woman than if she had never existed, while all the time it was on his account especially that she thus haunted us.

“Where we should have got to, I don’t know, at the rate we were driving, but the next day the wind shifted right round again to the north-east, and sent us back as fast as we came till we were off the city of Rio de Janeiro, in the Brazils.

“We managed to steer into that magnificent harbour, and as we were in evident distress we were allowed to remain and refit; but the Portuguese in those days were not a bit wiser than their Spanish neighbours, and would allow no foreign trader to come into their ports.

“The harbour of Rio is a magnificent expanse of water, and the country would be the finest in the world in the hands of any of the northern nations of Europe; but the Portuguese did not know how to take advantage of the blessings given them by Heaven, either at home or in the colonies, and except in the neighbourhood of Rio itself, the greater portion of the Brazils was uncultivated. It is, however, a very pleasant place to visit, and our captain, leaving the ship in charge of the first mate, took his wife on shore, where, among the delightful orange groves and gardens, she soon recovered from the shock her spirits had received from the events I have described.

“We remained here for several weeks refitting the ship, for the Portuguese carpenters and riggers, though they did their work well, got through it very slowly, and though our owners suffered by the delay, we had no reason to complain. At last the ship was all ataunto and ready for sea. As Captain Derick with his pretty wife on his arm came down on the quay before going on board, he stopped to admire the appearance of the *Chameleon*. He pointed out her beauties with satisfaction as she lay in all her pride a short distance from the shore, looking as if nothing had ever hurt her.

”‘There she is, my love, as stout and brave a ship as ever sailed the salt ocean,’ he exclaimed. ‘We may bid defiance to the old woman, if she ever thinks fit to come near us again. Not that I believe one was really seen—it was fancy, my love, fancy, the work of the imagination, that often plays strange freaks. I was wrong to allude to the subject.’ He spoke hurriedly, and afterwards broke into a laugh, for fear his wife should suspect he and the rest of us really had seen the witch. They came on board, the anchor was run up cheerily to the bows, the sails were loosened, and with a fine northerly breeze we stood out of the harbour, and kept away once more on our course. We had beautiful weather for some days, and as our spirits rose in the pure fresh air, we forgot all our former fears, and fully believed that we were going to have a prosperous cruise.

“An event, however, soon occurred, to make us think differently. We were within sight of land, with the sky overhead bright and blue, and the sea calm as a millpond, when on a sudden a tremendous squall struck the ship, carrying away our topgallant masts, sails, and yards, and throwing her on her beam ends. The topsails were clewed up, and the men were sent on the yards to furl them. I was at the weather earing, on the main-topsail-yard, when just as she was righting, a second squall struck and hove her down again so suddenly that three of our best hands were shaken from their hold and hurled into the hissing waters under our lee. Their loud shrieks reached our ears, but when we looked for them they were nowhere to be seen. At that moment, I, as well as every man on board, beheld as clearly as I do you, right to windward of us, the old witch, in her skiff, skimming over the frothy waters, and pointing jeeringly at us with her bony hand.

“There was not much sea on, and as soon as we could we hove the ship to, and Captain Derick ordered a boat to be lowered to look for the men. Now I believe our crew were as brave men as any fellows of their class, but when they prepared to lower the boat, instead of flying as usual on such occasions, to try and be the first in her, they all hung back, and not one of them would go. They did not like the look of the old woman, even when they were comparatively safe on the deck of the vessel, but the idea of finding her close to them in the boat, perhaps of feeling the touch of her staff or the gripe of her bony fingers, was too dreadful to be thought of.

”‘What, you cowards, are you afraid of?’ shouted the captain, in a furious rage. ‘Your shipmates will be drowned while you’re skulking there—lower away the boat, or I’ll shoot some of you.’

“These words had the desired effect. Three hands sprang into the boat to be lowered in her, the third mate and another were following, when through the fright and carelessness of some of the people, one of the falls was let run too soon, the boat was swamped alongside, and the three hands were washed out of her before they could get hold

of anything to save themselves. A loud cackling peal of laughter was heard as this second catastrophe occurred, and the witch was seen whirling her staff round on the other side of the ship.

“I thought most of the crew would have jumped overboard in their fright as they saw what she was about. The captain all the time was as cool as if nothing out of the way had happened, though his wife, who was unfortunately on deck at the time, and saw it all, had fallen down again in a swoon from terror. He scarcely heeded her; he was intent on something else.

”‘Lower the starboard quarter-boat,’ he sang out. ‘I shall go in her; who’ll follow me?’

“I and three hands declared our readiness, and this time more caution being used, the boat was got safely into the water with us in her.

”‘Take care of my wife, Mr Tanner,’ cried the captain to the first mate, as he sprang over the side; ‘see if you can bring her to.’

“We got clear of the ship, and with very misdoubting hearts pulled away in the direction where we hoped to find any of our shipmates who might still have kept themselves afloat. By this time there was a good deal of sea running, stirred up by the violence of the squall, though not so much as there would have been had we not been under the lee of the land. As the boat rose to the top of a wave we fancied that we could see one of the poor fellows who had been cast off the yard struggling in the distance, but when we got up to the spot he had disappeared. A cry from a drowning man was heard in another direction, and away we pulled towards it, but before we could clutch the poor fellow he had sunk beneath the waves.

“A third man was seen at a distance still striking out boldly—now he rose to the top of a wave, now he sank into the trough of the sea. We made sure that we at least should save him. Every nerve was strained as we bent to our oars to reach the swimmer. He saw us coming—he felt certain of being saved; but a power greater than his or ours was his enemy, and when we were within twenty yards of him we saw him throw up his arms in despair, his eyeballs started from his head, and with a shriek of agony he sank beneath the foaming waves. He was the last—the others had disappeared, and no trace of them was to be seen.

“Our search had been fruitless. Intent upon our object, we had not observed where we were going. Now, as we looked up to search around for our other shipmates, we saw directly before us the ill-looking witch in her skiff, turning her countenance, with a malignant scowl, over her shoulder to look at us. The hideous sight seemed to drive the captain mad.

”‘Give way my men, give way,’ he shouted, in a voice trembling with earnestness; ‘give way; we’ll overtake the cursed hag, and I’ll punish her for haunting us in this way.’

“With a strange species of infatuation we bent to our oars as ordered, in the hopes of catching her. We might as well have attempted to overtake the whirlwind. The more we strained at our oars, the louder and more insulting became her cackling shrieks of derisive laughter.

”‘You hell-born hag, stay and speak, and tell me whence you come and where you are going!’ shouted Derick, but the witch did nothing but grin more maliciously, and jeer and laugh the louder. Still we continued the pursuit, but we never got an inch nearer to her, though she was going away with her sail set, right in the wind’s eye. The harder we pulled the faster she went, and at last disappeared in a squall of thick rain, which drove down upon us. This was fortunate for us, for so mad had the captain become, that I believe he would have followed her till we all dropped down from fatigue, and he was not the man, in his present mood, the boldest of us dared disobey. We now looked round for the ship. She was nowhere to be seen.

“I cannot describe to you the feelings which took possession of our hearts. It was the blankest despair: Derick alone seemed indifferent to our fate, and only felt enraged at not having been able to overtake the witch. I believe we were capable of jumping overboard, or of rushing at each other with our knives and fighting till we had stabbed each other to death, when, as I was standing upon the thwarts to look around, I saw the ship dead to leeward. I pointed her out to the captain and men.

”‘We’ll return on board then,’ he answered, coolly, as if nothing had happened. ‘And mind, let none of you talk about our chase after that accursed old hag—we shall have the people fancying next, I suppose, that the ship is doomed.’

”‘Ay, ay, sir,’ we answered; but though I said nothing about it, I believe the men did not hold their tongues a moment after, they got down into the fore-peak. As the sea went down after this we had little difficulty in getting on board again. When we did so, we found that for some time they had given us up as lost.

“Fortunately, poor Mrs Derick did not return to consciousness till just as her husband got on board, so that she was spared the misery of believing him lost. He had her taken below, and sat up watching her most tenderly till she recovered. In two days she was better, and on deck again, but I observed a great change in her. She looked pale and anxious, and all her life and spirits were gone. I fear she began to suspect that there was good reason for the old witch to haunt us. The loss of six of our best hands was very serious, especially as we had no prospect of supplying their places in any port at which we were likely to touch. On, however, we must go, and make the best of it. The wind now came ahead, and we were obliged to make tack and tack, scarcely ever getting a fair slant till we reached the latitude of Cape Horn.

“One would have supposed that we had had enough of storms and accidents for one voyage, but we had soon to learn that we had something more to go through. Mrs Derick had by this time become something like herself again, and as for the captain, though he felt more than any one, he never changed. He sang and joked as much as ever, and even sneered at the old woman and her jolly-boat, as he called it. I cannot describe what happened every day of the

voyage, so I must merely mention the most remarkable events. It was in the afternoon watch, when, as I was sweeping the horizon with my glass, I observed an unusual dark appearance on the water. Some said that it was a sand-bank, others an island, some a shoal fish, but I saw that it was a heavy squall driving furiously over the hitherto smooth unruffled sea. I was not mistaken. I called Captain Derick on deck, and the hands were sent aloft to lower topgallant yards and to furl every sail, except the fore-topsail, which was closely reefed. The men sprang to their duty, for they saw that not a moment was to be lost. The ship was put before the wind just in time. Down came the squall upon us, roaring, and tearing, and hissing along the ocean. Away we flew before it like a sea-bird on the wing. Our only danger was lest we should not be far enough to the south to clear the land of the Patagonians—the renowned Cape Horn.

“Every moment the fury of the gale increased, the waves rose higher, and the wind roared louder. Everything on deck was secured, and preventer braces were put on the fore and fore-topsail yards to assist in securing them. As night approached the terrific contest increased. The sea, which ran on either beam in high mountainous surges, broke with an awful roar; the stern of the ship now lifted on the summit of a wave, and the next instant her bow was plunging madly into the dark trough which yearned apparently to engulf her. The thunder rattled loudly through the heavy sky, the vivid lightning played threateningly round the masts, and the wind howled and whistled through the rigging. Those who had never before felt fear in a storm, now trembled with alarm. On we drove with impetuous violence, the hands at the wheel scarcely able to keep the ship before the boiling seas, which, as they curled up astern, seemed ready to rush down on our decks and overwhelm us.

“It was in the middle watch, and the captain had just joined me on deck, when one of the look-outs shouted, ‘Land on the starboard bow.’ The startling cry was echoed through the ship, and every man sprang on deck. We were clearly in dangerous proximity to the coast, and with the foreboding of mischief on the minds of all, many thought that our time had arrived. All eyes were directed anxiously towards the coast, which every instant was growing more distinct. The wheel was kept a few spokes more to starboard, but we could not venture to haul the ship more up lest she should broach to, and as no land appeared ahead, we hoped to be able, if it were Cape Horn we saw, to scrape round it; at all events a short time would decide our fate.

“The captain went into the cabin with me to consult the chart, and we had every reason to hope that the land we saw was the southernmost part of Cape Horn. When we returned on deck we had drawn awfully near the coast, but it was broad on our starboard beam.

”‘We shall be round the Cape in another half hour,’ exclaimed the captain in a cheerful tone, ‘and then, my lads, we shall be clear of the accursed witch and her devilish tricks.’

“I do not know what madness induced him to remind the people of the old hag; it showed what his own mind was running on, notwithstanding all his pretended indifference and disbelief. At all events he had better have let the subject alone; for at that instant, as if to refute his assertion, a roll of thunder, louder than was ever heard before, sounded in our ears, and in a blaze of forked lightning which flashed continually from the skies, the old woman herself was seen, increased into gigantic proportions, standing on a lofty rock at the very southernmost point of the Cape, exactly as she had appeared on the pier at Liverpool, and waving round in the air her long twisted staff, about which the most vivid flashes played in fiery circles. Her face full of malignant fury, lighted up as now, was of a livid hue, her garments and her grey looks streamed in the wind, and as she pointed towards the western ocean she seemed by her gestures to threaten us with further mishaps. Her lips moved and gibbered, but if she spoke, not a sound reached us.

“We had two of the guns mounted, and on beholding the terrific figure, Derick ordered one of them to be loaded and run out.

”‘I’ll see what impression a cannon ball can make on her,’ he exclaimed, in a voice of mingled excitement, rage, and horror. ‘Bring a lighted match here, one of you.’

“While the match was being brought, he stood eyeing the witch with a look of defiance. He seized the light eagerly from the hand of a seaman, and though, as you may suppose, in the tremendous way the ship was rolling and pitching, it was impossible to take an aim, he fired. The gun went off with an explosion louder than I ever heard before, and a flash far more vivid. The noise was answered by a shriek of mocking laughter, and the flash only served to show still more clearly the hideous figure of the witch, jeering at us and threatening us with her staff.

“Onward we rushed, and while the lightning lasted there she was seen as clearly, I tell you, as we had seen her at home. When the lightning ceased, the darkness of the night shut her out from our sight, but some even then affirmed that they saw the dim outline of her form against the northern sky.

“Not a man on board turned in again that night, you may be sure, but all the watch who should have been below shrunk together in knots uttering their forebodings to each other, and earnestly wishing for the return of day. The longest night must have an end, and so had this, and, as the morning broke, the wind settled down into a moderate gale, which sent as forward on our course at the rate of twelve knots an hour.

“The land was no longer in sight, the glorious sun came out bright and warm, and cheered our hearts, and we almost forgot the terrors of the night. I said that Mrs Derick had not witnessed the sight we had, but from her husband’s manner, when he went below, she discovered that there was something wrong, and she would not rest till he had told her. He, as usual, tried to laugh it off, and to declare that there was nothing in it, but I saw that she was not satisfied, and that the circumstance was preying sadly on her mind.

“In two days, by an observation made, we found that we were well to the westward of the south coast of America, and the wind veering round to the south, we kept away on a northerly course. Every day, as we got into more temperate latitudes, the weather became finer and warmer, and the spirits of the seamen rose proportionably,

though they were not the men they would have been in the natural course of things. They had plenty of work to do, which kept their minds employed, in preparing for our visit to the Spanish coast; we got up the remainder of the guns from the hold and shipped them on their carriages, we sent up topgallant masts and yards, got out the flying jib-boom, and repaired the damages we had received in the gale. The carpenters also set to work to build a boat to supply the place of the one we had lost; while the captain and supercargo made arrangements for their transactions on the coast.

“I am not giving you extracts from my log, so that I need only tell you that about a month was consumed in successful trading with the Spaniards, in spite of the men-of-war on the look out for us at sea, and the custom-house officers and soldiers sent to intercept us in shore. We touched, I remember, at Conception, Coquimbo, Huasco, Point Negra, and other places on the coast of Chili.

“At last the vigilance of the Spanish authorities being completely aroused, it was thought better to keep away from the shore for a short time, to throw them off their guard. Captain Derick accordingly determined to visit a group of islands some distance to the westward, to lay in a stock of turtle, with which those islands abound. I think they were the Gallipagos, but as we never reached them, I am not certain. The Pacific is very properly so called, but when the wind does take it into its head to blow, then it makes up for its general idleness. The weather had long continued calm and beautiful, and everything went well on board. Captain Derick once more laughed and joked, and his wife looked happy and contented. Not satisfied, however, to let things alone, he must bring up the subject of the old witch again, and declared that the whole story, from first to last, was trumped up by the crew, and that neither he nor any one else on board had ever set eyes on her since the day we left Liverpool. How he could venture on such assertions I don’t know, but he wanted to persuade others of what he wished to believe himself.

“The evening was beautifully calm and serene: it put me in mind of the one we had before the night on which we had lost our masts off the coast of Brazil, only this was calmer and warmer. Not a breath of air was felt, the sails hung listlessly down against the masts, the sea was smooth as a polished mirror, and the sky of the purest blue; the atmosphere, notwithstanding the warmth, was pleasant, and every one on board was in good spirits. As the night drew on, however, the air became more stagnant, the heat increased, and as there was not even a swell moving the bosom of the Pacific, the dead silence which prevailed became absolutely oppressive.

“The captain and his wife were sitting aft and leaning against the taffrail with their hands clasped in each other’s, for they were as fond now as when they were bride and bridegroom; the work of the day was over, and the crew were lying listlessly about the decks, not even amusing themselves with talking as usual. I do not believe a person on board had uttered a word for a quarter of an hour. I never felt so complete a silence; when on a sudden it was broken by a loud, piercing, derisive cackle, sounding close under our quarter. Every one knew the voice, and as we sprang up and looked over the bulwarks, we saw, as we expected, the old witch, gliding along the smooth sea, and taking a course directly ahead of us, while she howled and jeered, and pointed with her staff just as she had done before.

“The captain saw her too. ‘Damn her!’ he exclaimed, fiercely; ‘what does she want here?’

“The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when an answer was given back which fully accounted for her presence. Right astern there appeared, where a moment before the sky had been of beautiful blue, a cloud black as ink, spreading across the whole eastern horizon. We all saw what was coming—the men instinctively sprang to the brails.

”‘Clew up, haul down, let fly everything!’ shouted the captain.

“It was too late: before a tack could be let go, or a brail hauled on, the fierce hurricane struck us. In a moment, ere we could look round, the stout ship heeled over, and trembled in every timber. Crash upon crash was heard, mingled with the shrieks of the seamen, and she was left without a mast standing, a mere hull upon the water. Derick was the most undaunted, though he must have felt on whose account all these disasters were happening. He sprang up with an axe in his hand, and summoning the crew, set to work to cut away the shrouds to clear the shattered spars from the ship. It was done, and the ship drove furiously on before the howling blast.

”‘We shall ride it out and disappoint the accursed old hag; so never mind, my boys!’ he shouted, as he worked away.

”‘Land right ahead,’ sang out a man forward.

”‘Land on the starboard bow,’ cried another.

”‘Land on the larboard bow,’ exclaimed a third.

”‘Then we are lost!’ shrieked out many voices, in an agony of despair.

“Onward we drove before the hurricane. ‘Breakers on the starboard and larboard bows,’ cried the first mate, who had rushed forward to look out for any passage among the reefs through which to steer the ship, while I, with the third mate and another hand, went to the helm.

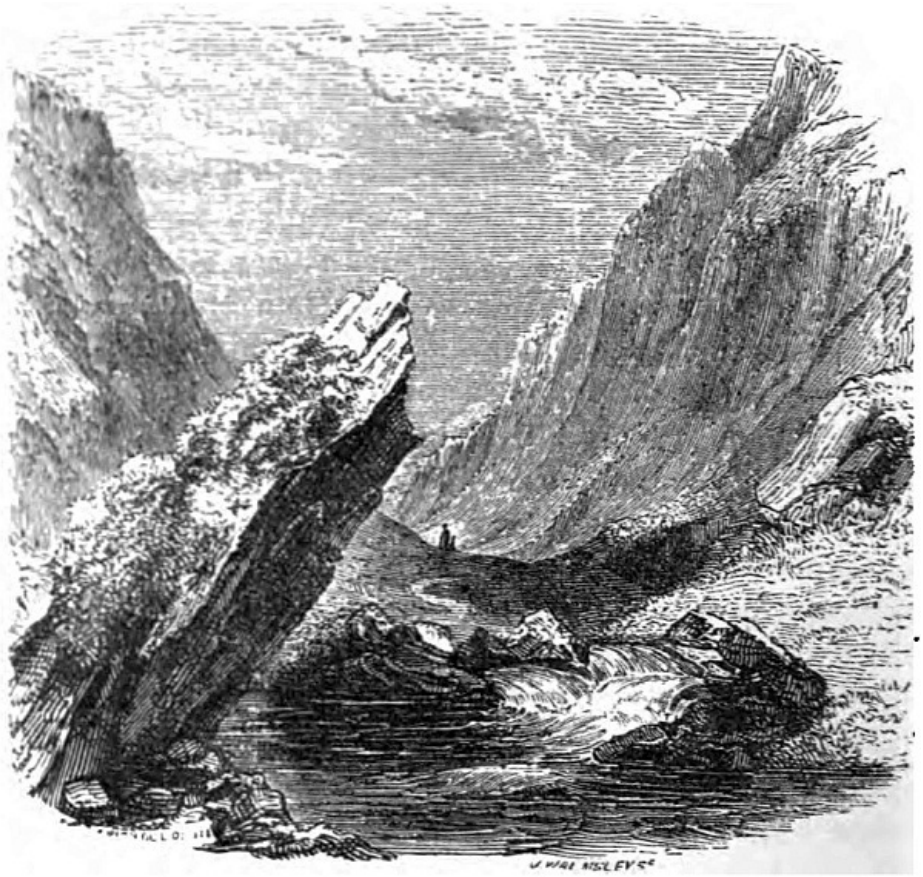
“The darkness of the night came down, and added to the horrors of the scene. ‘Breakers right ahead!’ he shouted; ‘all’s lost!’ He had scarcely uttered the words when the ship struck with tremendous violence on some rocks; the sea lifted her, but it was to let her fall with still greater force, amid a foaming caldron of waters. The surges fiercely broke over us, and washed man after man from his hold. Shrieks and cries rose on every side from the manly bosoms which had never before felt fear.

“The captain stood firm, clasping his wife in his arms, for she had from the first refused to go below. His countenance, as the lightning flashed brightly round him, looked deadly pale; she had fainted, and was happily senseless. A third time the ship lifted, and down she came with a tremendous crash, every timber in her parting at the instant. Two things I saw at that awful moment: the despairing countenance of the captain as the foaming waves whirled him and

her he loved away in their wild embrace, his starting eyeballs to the last fixed on the malignant features of the fearful witch, whom I beheld sailing round us in her skiff, unharmed, among the breakers, her loud shrieks of triumphant laughter sounding high above the roaring of the tempest.

“Notwithstanding the horrors of the scene, the principle of self-preservation prompted me to seize a plank, and supported by it, I found myself, I scarcely know how, carried by the waves on to a sandy beach. A rock was near. I climbed to its summit, and from thence I beheld, amid successive flashes of lightning, the old witch whirling her staff in triumph over her head, while her skiff scudded at lightning speed in the direction of Cape Horn. I was on an uninhabited island. I searched anxiously on every side to see if any of my shipmates had escaped, but alas! none appeared, and I discovered with sorrow that I was the sole survivor of the *Chameleon’s* gallant crew.

“After living some months on the island, I was taken off, and in two years found my way back to Liverpool. I had the curiosity to make inquiries for old Dame Kirby, and learned that she had been for months absent from home, and that nobody knew what had become of her, but that at length she returned, and was heard to boast that she had been doing a deed much to her satisfaction, but would tell no one what it was. I inquired the date of her return; it was exactly five days after our shipwreck, so that although she must have made a quick passage, there could be no longer any doubt on the mind of a reasonable man that she had been the cause of all the disasters which had happened to us, and of the destruction of the Doomed Ship.”



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