"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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VERY HARD CASH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ALFRED thus encouraged told his story with forced calmness, and without a word too much. Indeed, so clear and telling was the narrative, and the logic so close, that incoherent patients one or two stole up and listened with wonder and a certain dreamy complacency; the bulk, however, held aloof apathetic; being inextricably wrapped in fictitious Autobiography.

His story told, Alfred offered the Dodds in evidence that the fourteen thousand pounds was no illusion; and referred to his sister and several friends as witnesses to his sanity, and said the letters he wrote were all stopped in the asylum; and why? That no honest man or woman might know where he was.

He ended by convincing Mr. Vane he was a sane and injured man, and his father a dark designing person.

Mr. Vane asked him whether he had any other revelations to make. Alfred replied, "Not on my own account, but for the sake of those afflicted persons who are here for life. Well, the beds want repaving; the vermin thinning; the instruments of torture want abolishing, instead of hiding for an hour or two when you happen to come: what do the patients gain by that? The madmen dare not complain to you, sir; because the last time one did complain to the justices (it was Mr. Petworth), they had no sooner passed through the iron gate, than Cooper made an example of him; felled him with his fist, and walked up and down him on his knees, crying, 'I'll teach you to complain to the justices.' But one or two gentlemanly madmen, who soon found out that I am not one of *them*, have complained to *me* that the attendants wash them too much like Hansom cabs, strip them naked, and mop them on the flagstones, then fling on their clothes without drying them. They say, too, that the meat is tough and often putrid, the bread stale, the butter rancid, the vegetables stinted, since they can't be adulterated; and as for sleep it is hardly known; for the beds are so short your feet stick out; insects, without a name to ears polite, but highly odoriferous and profoundly carnivorous, bite you all night; and dogs howl eternally outside; and, when exhausted nature defies even these enemies of rest, then the doctor, who seems to be in the pay of Insanity, claps you on a blister by brute force, and so drives away sleep, Insanity's cure, or hocuses you by brute force as he did me, and so steals your sleep, and tries to steal your reason, with his opium, henbane, morphia, and other tremendous brain-stealers. With such a potion, sir, administered by violence, he gave me in one night a burning fever, headache, loss of sight, and bleeding at the nose; as Mrs. Archbold will tell you. Oh, look into these things, sir, in pity to those whom God has afflicted: to me they are but strokes with a feather; I am a sane man torn from love and happiness, and confined among the mad; discomfort is nothing to me; comfort is nothing; you can do nothing for me, but restore me to my dignity as a man, my liberty as a Briton, and the rights as a citizen I have been swindled out of by a fraudulent bankrupt and his tools two venal doctors, who never saw me but for one five minutes, but came to me ready bribed at a guinea apiece, and so signed away my wits behind my back."

"Now, Mr. Baker," said Vane, "what do you say to all this?"

Baker smiled with admirable composure, and replied with crafty moderation, "He is a gentleman, and believes every word he says; but it is all his delusions. Why, to begin, sir, his father has nothing to do with putting him in here; nothing on earth. (Alfred started; then smiled incredulous.) And, in the next place, there are no instruments of restraint here, but two pair of handcuffs and two strait-jackets, and these never hardly used; we trust to the padded rooms, you know. And, sir," said he, getting warm, which instantly affected his pronunciation, "if there's a hinsect in the ouse, I'll heat im."

Delusion is a big word, especially in a madhouse; it overpowers a visitor's understanding. Mr. Vane was staggered. Alfred, whose eager eyes were never off his face, saw this with dismay, and feeling that, if he failed in the simpler matter, he should be sure to fail in establishing his sanity, he said with inward anxiety, though with outward calmness, "Suppose we test these delusions?"

"With all my heart," said Vane.

Baker's countenance fell.

"Begin with the instruments of restraint. Find me them."

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Baker's countenance brightened up; he had no fear of their being found.

"I will," said Alfred; "please to follow me."

Baker grinned with anticipated triumph.

Alfred led the way to a bedroom near his own; and asked Mr. Baker to unlock it. Baker had not the key; no more had Cooper; the latter was sent for it; he returned, saying the key was mislaid.

"That I expected," said Alfred. "Send for the kitchen poker, sir; I'll soon unlock it."

"Fetch the kitchen poker," said Vane.

"Good gracious! sir," said Cooper; "he only wants that to knock all our brains out. You have no idea of his strength and ferocity."

"Well lied, Cooper," said Alfred, ironically.

"Fetch *me* the poker," said Vane.

Cooper went for it; and came back with the key instead.

The door was opened, and they all entered. Alfred looked under the bed. The rest stood round it.

There was nothing to be seen but a year's dust.

Alfred was dumb-foundered, and a cold perspiration began to gather on his brow. He saw at once a false move would be fatal to him.

"Well, sir," said Vane, grimly. "Where are they?"

Alfred caught sight of a small cupboard; he searched it; it was empty. Baker and Cooper grinned at his delusion, quietly, but so that Vane might see that formula. Alfred returned to the bed and shook it. Cooper and Baker left off grinning; Alfred's quick eye caught this, and he shook the bed violently, furiously.

"Ah!" said Mr. Vane, "I hear a chink."

"It is an iron bedstead, and old," suggested Baker.

Alfred tore off the bed-clothes, and then the mattress. Below the latter was a framework, and below the framework a receptacle about six inches deep, five feet long, and three broad, filled with chains, iron belts, wrist locks, muffles, and screw-locked hobbles, &c.; a regular Inquisition.

If Baker had descended from the Kemble family, instead of rising from nothing, he could not have acted better. "Good Heavens!" cried he, "where do these come from? They must have been left here by the last proprietor."

Vane replied only by a look of contempt, and ordered Cooper to go and ask Mr. Tollett to come to him.

Alfred improved the interval. "Sir," said he, "all my delusions, fairly tested, will turn out like this."

"They *shall* be tested, sir; I give you my word."

Mr. Tollett came, and the two justices commenced a genuine scrutiny; their first. They went now upon the true method, in which all these dark places ought to be inspected. They did not believe a word; they suspected everything; they examined patients apart, detected cruelty filth and vermin under philanthropic phrases and clean linen; and the upshot was they reprimanded Baker and the attendants severely, and told him his license should never be renewed, unless at their next visit the whole asylum was reformed. They ordered all the iron body-belts, chains, leg-locks, wrist-locks, and muffs, to be put into Mr. Tollett's carriage, and concluded a long inspection by inquiring into Alfred's sanity: at this inquiry they did not allow Baker to be even present, but only Dr. Bailey.

First they read the order; and found it really was not Alfred's father who had put him into the asylum. Then they read the certificates, especially Wycherley's; it accused Alfred of headache, insomnia, nightly visions, a rooted delusion (pecuniary), a sudden aversion to an affectionate father; and at the doctor's last visit, a wild look (formula), great excitement, and threats of violence without any provocation to justify them. This overpowered the worthy squires' understandings, to begin. But they proceeded to examine the three books an asylum has to keep by law; the visitors' book, the case book, and the medical journal. All these were kept with the utmost looseness in Silverton House; as indeed they are in the very best of these places. However, by combining the scanty notices in the several books, they arrived at this total.

"Admitted April 11. Had a very wild look, and was much excited. Attempted suicide by throwing himself into a tank. Attacked the keepers, for rescuing him, with prodigious strength and violence. Refused food."

And some days after came an entry with his initials instead of his name, which was contrary to law. "A. H. Much excited. Threats. Ordered composing draught."

And a day or two after: "A. H. Excited. Blasphemous. Ordered blister."

The first entry, however, was enough. The doctor had but seen real facts through his green spectacles, and lo! "suicide," "homicide," and "refusal of food," three cardinal points of true mania.

Mr. Vane asked Dr. Bailey whether he was better since he came.

"Oh, infinitely better," said Dr. Bailey. "We hope to cure him in a month or two."

They then sent for Mrs. Archbold, and had a long talk with her, recommending Alfred to her especial care: and, having acted on his judgment and information in the teeth of those who called him insane, turned tail at a doctor's certificate; distrusted their eyesight at an unsworn affidavit.

Alfred was packing up his things to go away; bright as a lark. Mrs. Archbold came to him, and told him she had orders to give him every comfort; and the justices hoped to liberate him at their next visit.

The poor wretch turned pale. "At their next visit!" he cried. "What, not to-day? When is their next visit?"

Mrs. Archbold hesitated: but at last she said, "Why you know; I told you; they come four times every year."

The disappointment was too bitter. The con-

temptible result of all his patience, self-command, and success, was too heartbreaking. He groaned aloud. "And you can come with a smile and tell me that; you cruel woman." Then he broke down altogether and burst out crying. "You were born without a heart," he sobbed.

Mrs. Archbold quivered at that. "I wish I had been," said she, in a strange, soft, moving voice; then, casting an eloquent look of reproach on him, she went away in visible agitation, and left him sobbing. Once out of his sight she rushed into another room, and there, taking no more notice of a gentle madwoman its occupant than of the bed or the table, she sank into a chair, and, throwing her head back with womanly abandon, laid her hand upon her bosom that heaved tempestuously.

And soon the tears trickled out of her imperious eyes, and ran unrestrained.

The mind of Edith Archbold corresponded with her powerful frame, and bushy brows. Inside this woman all was vigour; strong passions, strong good sense to check or hide them; strong will to carry them out. And between these mental forces a powerful struggle was raging. She was almost impenetrable to mere personal beauty, and inclined to despise early youth in the other sex; and six months spent with Alfred in a quiet country house would probably have left her reasonably indifferent to him. But the first day she saw him in Silverton House he broke through her guard, and pierced at once to her depths; first he terrified her by darting through the window to escape: and terror is a passion. So is pity; and never in her life had she overflowed with it as when she saw him drawn out of the tank and laid on the grass. If, after all, he was as sane as he looked, that brave high-spirited young creature, who preferred death to the touch of coarse confining hands!

No sooner had he filled her with dismay and pity, than he bounded from the ground before her eyes and fled: she screamed, and hoped he would escape; she could not help it. Next she saw him fighting alone against seven or eight, and with unheard-of prowess almost beating them. She sat at the window panting, with clenched teeth and hands, and wished him to beat, and admired him, wondered at him. He yielded, but not to them: to her. All the compliments she had ever received were tame compared with this one. It thrilled her vanity. He was like the men she had read of, and never seen; the young knights of chivalry. She glowed all over at him, and detecting herself in time was frightened. Her strong good sense warned her to beware of this youth, who was nine years her junior yet had stirred her to all her depths in an hour; and not to see him nor think of him too much. Accordingly she kept clear of him altogether at first. Pity soon put an end to that; and she protected and advised him, but with a cold and lofty demeanour put on express. What with her kind acts and her cold manner he did not know what to make of her; and often turned puzzled earnest eyes upon her, as much as to say are you really my friend or not? Once she forgot herself and smiled so tenderly in answer to these imploring eyes, that his hopes rose very high indeed. He flattered himself she would let him out of the asylum before long. That was all Julia's true lover thought of.

A feeling hidden, and not suppressed, often grows fast in a vigorous nature. Mrs. Archbold's fancy for Alfred was subjected to this dangerous treatment; and it smouldered, and smouldered, till from a penchant it warmed to a fancy, from a fancy to a passion. But penchant, fancy, or passion, she hid it with such cunning and resolution, that neither Alfred nor even those of her own sex saw it; nor did a creature even suspect it, except Nurse Hannah; but her eyes were sharpened by jealousy, for that muscular young virgin was beginning to sigh for him herself, with a gentle timidity that contrasted prettily with her biceps muscle and prowess against her own sex.

Mrs. Archbold had more passion than tenderness, but what woman is not to be surprised and softened? When her young favourite, the greatest fighter she had ever seen, broke down at the end of his gallant effort and began to cry like a girl, her bowels of compassion yearned within her, and she longed to cry with him. She only saved herself from some imprudence by flight, and had her cry alone. After a flow of tears such a woman is invincible; she treated Alfred at tea-time with remarkable coldness and reserve. This piece of acting led to unlooked-for consequences: it emboldened Cooper, who was raging against Alfred for telling the justices, but had forborne from violence, for fear of getting the house into a fresh scrape. He now went to the doctor, and asked for a powerful drastic; Bailey gave him two pills, or rather boluses, containing croton-oil—inter alia; for Bailey was one of the farraginous fools of the unscientific science. Armed with this weapon of destruction, Cooper entered Alfred's bedroom at night, and ordered him to take them: he refused. Cooper whistled, and four attendants came. Alfred knew he should soon be powerless; he lost no time, sprang at Cooper, and with his long arm landed a blow that knocked him against the wall, and in this position, where his body could not give, struck him again with his whole soul, and cut his cheek right open. The next minute he was pinned, handcuffed, and in a strait-jacket, after crippling one assailant with a kick on the knee.

Cooper, half stunned, and bleeding like a pig, recovered himself now, and burned for revenge. He uttered a frightful oath, and jumped on Alfred as he lay bound and powerless, and gave him a lesson he never forgot.

Every art has its secrets: the attendants in such madhouses as this have been for years possessed of one they are too modest to reveal to justices, commissioners, or the public: the art of breaking a man's ribs, or breast-bone, or both, without bruising him externally. The convicts at Toulon arrive at a similar result by another

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branch of the art; they stuff the skin of a conger eel with powdered stone; then give the obnoxious person a sly crack with it; and a rib or backbone is broken with no contusion to mark the external violence used. But Mr. Cooper and his fellows do their work with the knee-joint: it is round, and leaves no bruise. They subdue the patient by walking up and down him on their knees. If they don't jump on him, as well as promenade him, the man's spirit is often the only thing broken; if they do, the man is apt to be broken bodily as well as mentally. Thus died Mr. Sizer in 1854, and two others quite recently. And how many more God only knows; we can't count the stones at the bottom of a well.

Cooper then sprang furiously on Alfred, and went kneeling up and down him. Cooper was a heavy man, and his weight crushed and hurt the victim's legs; but that was a trifle; as often as he kneeled on Alfred's chest, the crushed one's whole framework seemed giving way, and he could scarcely breathe. Cooper warmed to his work, and kneeled hard on Alfred's face. Then Cooper jumped knees downwards on his face. Then Cooper drew back and jumped savagely on his chest. Then Alfred felt his last hour was come: he writhed aside, and Cooper missed him this time and overbalanced himself; the two faces came together for a moment, and Alfred, fighting for his life, caught Cooper with his teeth by the middle of the nose, and bit clean through the cartilage with a shrill snarl. Then Cooper shrieked, and writhed, and whirled his great arms like a windmill, punching at Alfred's head. Now man is an animal at bottom, and a wild animal at the very bottom. Alfred ground his teeth together in bull-dog silence till they quite met, and with his young strong neck and his despair shook that great hulking fellow as a terrier shakes a cat, still grinding his teeth together in bull-dog silence. The men struck him, shook him, in vain. At last they got hold of his throat and choked him, and so parted the furious creatures: but not before Mrs. Archbold and nurses Jane and Hannah had rushed into the room, drawn by Cooper's cries. The first thing the new comers did was to scream in unison at the sight that met them. On the bed lay Alfred all but insensible, his linen and his pale face spotted with his persecutor's blood. Upon him kneeled the gory ruffian swearing oaths to set the hair on end.

"I'll stop your biting for ever," said he, and raised a ponderous fist: and in one moment more Alfred would have been disfigured for life, but Brown caught Cooper's arm, and Mrs. Archbold said sharply to the nurses "Handcuffs!" and the three women pinned him simultaneously, and, taking him half by surprise, handcuffed him in a moment with a strength, sharpness, skill, and determination not to be found in women out of a madhouse—luckily for the newspaper husbands.

The other keepers looked astounded at this masterstroke; but, as no servant had ever affronted Mrs. Archbold without being dismissed directly, they took their cue and said, "We advised him, ma'am, but he would not listen to us."

"Cooper," said Mrs. Archbold as soon as she recovered her breath, "you are not fit for your place. To-morrow you go, or I go."

Cooper, cowed in a moment by the handcuffs, began to whine and say that it was all Alfred's fault. "Look at my nose."

But Mrs. Archbold was now carried away by two passions instead of one, and they were together too much for prudence; she took a handful of glossy locks out of her bosom and shook them in Cooper's face:

"You monster!" said she; "you should go, for *that*, if you were my own brother."

The two young nurses assented loudly, and turned and cackled at Cooper for cutting off such lovely hair.

He shrugged his shoulders at them, and said sulkily to Mrs. Archbold, "Oh, I didn't know. Of course, if you have fallen in love with him, my cake is burnt. 'Tisn't the first lunatic you have taken for your fancy man."

At this brutal speech, all the more intolerable for not being quite false, Mrs. Archbold turned ashy pale and looked round for a weapon to strike him dead; but found none so handy and so deadly as her tongue.

"It's not the first you have tried to MURDER," said she. "I know all about that death in Calton Retreat: you kept it dark before the coroner, but it is not too late, I'll open the world's eyes; I was only going to dismiss you, sir: but you have insulted me. I'll hang you in reply."

Cooper turned very pale and was silent; his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

But a feeble, unexpected, voice issued from the bed and murmured cheerfully, though with some difficulty, a single word:

"Justice!"

At an expression so out of place they all started with surprise.

Alfred went on: "You are putting the saddle on the wrong horse. The fault lies with those villains Baker and Bailey. Cooper is only a servant, you know, and obeys orders."

"What business had the wretch to cut your hair off?" said Mrs. Archbold, turning on Alfred with flashing eyes. Her blood once up, she was ready to quarrel even with him for taking part against himself.

"Because he was ordered to put on a blister, and hair must come off before a blister can go on," replied Alfred soberly.

"That is no excuse for him beating you and trying to break your front teeth."

She didn't mind so much about his side ribs.

"No," replied Alfred. "But I hit him first. And then I bit him, like an Irish savage: look at the bloke's face! Dear Mrs. Archbold, you are my best friend in this horrid place, and you have beautiful eyes, and, talk of teeth, look at yours! but you haven't much sense of justice: forgive me for saying so. Put the proposition into signs;

there's nothing like that for clearing away prejudice. B. and C. have a scrimmage: B. begins it, C. gets the worst of it; in comes A. and turns away—C. Is that justice? It is me you ought to turn away; and I wish to Heaven you would: dear Mrs. Archbold, do pray turn me away, and keep the other blackguard."

At this extraordinary and, if I may be allowed the expression, Alfredian speech, the men first stared, and then laughed; the women smiled, and then were nearer crying than laughing.

And so it was, that justice handcuffed, straitjacketed, blistered, and impartial, sent from its bed of torture a beam through Cooper's tough hide to his inner heart. He hung his head and stepped towards Alfred: "You're what I call a man," he said. "I don't care a curse whether I stay or go, after what she has said to me. But, come what may, you're a gentleman, and one as can put hisself in a poor man's place. Why, sir, I wasn't always so rough; but I have been twenty years at it; and mad folk they'd wear the patience out of Jove, and the milk of human kindness out of saints and opossums. However, if I was to stay here all my life, instead of going to-morrow, I'd never lift hand to trouble you again, for you taking my part again yourself like that."

"I'll put that to the test," said Mrs. Archbold sharply. "Stay—on your probation. Hannah!"

And Baby-face biceps at a look took off his handcuffs; which she had been prominent in putting on.

This extraordinary scene ended in the men being dismissed, and the women remaining and going to work after their kind.

"The bed is too short for one thing," said Hannah. "Look at his poor feet sticking out, and cold as a stone: just feel of them, Jane."

"No, no; murder!" cried Alfred; "that tickles."

Hannah ran for a chair, Jane for another pillow. Mrs. Archbold took off his handcuffs, and, passing her hand softly and caressingly over his head, lamented the loss of his poor hair. Amongst them they relieved him of his straitjacket, set up his head, covered his feet, and he slept like a top for want of drastics and opiates, and in spite of some brilliant charges by the Lilliputian cavalry.

After this the attendants never molested Alfred again; nor did the doctor; for Mrs. Archbold got his boluses, and sent them up to a famous analysing chemist in London, and told him she had; and said, "I'll thank you not to prescribe at random for *that* patient any more." He took the lady's prescription, coming as it did in a voice quietly grim, and with a momentary but wicked glance shot from under her black brows.

Alfred was all the more miserable at his confinement: his melancholy deepened now there was no fighting to excite him. A handsome bright young face clouded with sadness is very pitiable, and I need not say that both the women who had fallen in love with him had their eyes, or at least the tails of their eyes, for ever on his face. The result varied with the characters of the watchers. That young face, ever sad, made Mrs. Archbold sigh, and long to make him happy under her wing. How it wrought on the purer and more womanly Hannah will be revealed by the incident I have to relate. Alfred was sitting on a bench in the corridor, bowed down by grief, and the Archbold lurking in a room hard by, feasting her eyes on him through an aperture in the door caused by the inspection plate being under repair—when an erotic maniac was driven past. She had obtained access—with marvellous cunning—to the men's side; but was now coming back with a flea in her ear, and faster than she went; being handcuffed and propelled by Baby-face biceps. On passing the disconsolate Alfred the latter eyed him coyly, gave her stray sheep a coarse push—as one pushes a *thing*—and laid a timid hand, gentle as falling down, upon the rougher sex. Contrast sudden and funny.

"Don't be so sad, sir," she murmured, cooing like the gentlest of doves. "I can't bear to see you look like that."

Alfred looked up, and met her full with his mournful honest eyes. "Ah, Hannah, how can I be anything but sad, imprisoned here, sane amongst the mad?"

"Well, and so am I, sir: so is Mrs. Archbold herself."

"Ay, but you have not been entrapped, imprisoned, on your wedding-day. I cannot even get a word sent to my Julia, my wife that ought to be. Only think of the affront they have made me put on her I love better, ten times better, than myself. Why, she must have been waiting for me; humiliated perhaps by my absence. What will she think of me? The rogues will tell her a thousand lies: she is very high spirited, Hannah, impetuous like myself, only so gentle and so good; oh, my angel; my angel; I shall lose you for ever."

Hannah clasped her hands, with tears in her eyes: "No, no," she cried; "it is a burning shame to part true lovers like you and her. Hush! speak low. Brown told me you are as well as he is."

"God bless him for it, then."

"You have got money, they say: try it on with Brown."

"I will. Oh you darling. What is the matter?"

For Baby-face was beginning to whimper.

"Oh, nothing, sir; only you are so glad to go; and we shall be sorry to part with you: but you won't care for that—oh! oh! oh!"

"What, do you think I shall forget you and your kindness? Never: I'll square accounts with friends and foes; not one shall be forgotten."

"Don't offer me any of your money," sobbed Hannah, "for I wouldn't touch it. Good-by," said she: "I shan't have as much as a kiss for it, I'll be bound: good-by," said she again, and never moved.

"Oh, won't you, though," cried Alfred gaily. "What is that? and that? and that? Now, what on earth are you crying about? Dry your

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tears, you dear good-hearted girl: no, I'll dry them for you."

He took out a white handkerchief and dried her cheeks gently for her, and gave her a parting kiss; but the Archbold's patience was exhausted; a door opened nearly opposite, and there she stood yellow with jealousy and sombre as night with her ebon brows. At sight of this lowering figure Hannah uttered a squawk, and fled with cheeks red as fire. Alfred, not aware of Mrs. Archbold's smouldering passion, and little dreaming that jealous anguish and rage stood incarnate before him, burst out laughing like a mischievous boy; on this she swept upon him, and took him by both shoulders, and awed him with her lowering brows close to his. "You ungrateful wretch," she said violently, and panted.

His colour rose. "Ungrateful? That I am not, madam. Why do you call me so?"

"You are; you are. What have I done to you that you run from me to the very servants? However, she shall be packed off this very night, and you to thank for it."

This was the way to wound the generous youth. "Now it is you that are ungenerous," he said. "What harm has the poor girl done? She had a virtuous movement, and pitied me for the heartless fraud I suffer by; that is all. Pray do you never pity me?"

"Was it this virtuous movement set her kissing you?" said the Archbold, clenching her teeth as if the word stung her, like the sight.

"She didn't, now," said Alfred; "it was I kissed her."

"And yet you pretend to love your Julia so truly?"

"This is no place for that sacred name, madam. But be sure I have no secrets from her, and kiss nobody she would not kiss herself."

"She must be a very accommodating young lady."

At this insult Alfred rose pale with anger, and was about to defy his monitor mortally; but the quickwitted woman saw and disarmed him; in one moment, before ever he could speak, she was a transformed creature, a penitent; she put her hands together supplicatingly, and murmured,

"I didn't mean it; I respect *her;* and your love for her: forgive me, Alfred: I am so unhappy, oh forgive me."

And behold she held his hand between her soft, burning palms, and her proud head sank languidly on his shoulder, and the inevitable tears ran gently.

Morals apart, it was glorious love-making.

"Bother the woman," thought Alfred.

"Promise me not to do it again," she murmured, "and the girl shall stay."

"Oh, lord, yes, I promise; though I can't see what it matters to you."

"Not much, cruel boy, alas! But it matters to her; for——" She kissed Alfred's hand gently and rose to her feet and moved away, but at the second step turned her head sudden as a bird and finished her sentence—"if you kiss her before me, I shall kill her before you."

Here was a fresh complication! The men had left off blistering, torturing, and bullying him; but his guardian angels, the women, were turning up their sleeves to pull caps over him, and plenty of the random scratches would fall on him. If anything could have made him pine more to be out of the horrid place, this voluptuous prospect would. He hunted everywhere for Brown. But he was away the day with a patient. At night he lay awake for a long time, thinking how he should open the negotiation: he shrank from it. He felt a delicacy about bribing Beelzebub's servant to betray him.

As Hannah had originated the idea, he thought he might very well ask her to do the dirty work of bribing Brown, and he would pay her for it; only in money, not kisses. With this resolution he sank to sleep; and his spirit broke prison: he stood with Julia before the altar, and the priest made them one. Then the church and the company and daylight disappeared, and her own sweet low moving voice came thrilling, "My own, own, own," she murmured, "I love you ten times more for all you have endured for me;" and with this her sweet lips settled on his like the dew.

Impartial sleep flies at the steps of the scaffold and the gate of Elysium: so Alfred awoke at the above. But doubted whether he was quite awake; for two lips were touching his. He stirred, and somebody was gone like the wind, with a rustle of flying petticoats, and his door shut in a moment; it closed with a catch-lock; his dastardly assailant had opened it with her key, and left it open to make good her retreat if he should awake while she was stealing what she came after. Alfred sat up in bed indignant, and somewhat fluttered. "Confound her impudence," said he. But there was no help for it; he grinned and bore it, as he had the blisters, and boluses, &c., rolled the clothes round his shoulders, and off to the sleep of the just again. Not so the passionate hypocrite, who, maddened by a paroxysm of jealousy, had taken this cowardly advantage of a prisoner. She had sucked fresh poison from those honest lips, and filled her veins with molten fire. She tossed and turned the livelong night in a high fever of passion, nor were the cold chills wanting of shame and fear at what she had done.

In the morning, Alfred remembered this substantial vision, and determined to find out which of those two it was. "I shall know by her looks," said he; "she won't be able to meet my eye." Well, the first he saw was Mrs. Archbold. She met his eye full with a mild and pensive dignity. "Come, it is not you," thought Alfred. Presently he fell in with Hannah. She wore a serene, infantine face, the picture of unobtrusive modesty. Alfred was dumb-foundered. "It's not this one, either," said he. "But, then, it must. Confound her impudence for looking so modest." However, he did not speak to her; he was looking out for a face that interested him far more: the weather-beaten countenance of Giles Brown. He saw him once or twice, but could not get

him alone till the afternoon. He invited him into his room: and when he got him there, lost no time. "Just look me in the face, Brown," said he quietly. Brown looked him in the face.

"Now, sir, am I mad or sane?"

Brown turned his head away. Alfred laughed. "No, no, none of your tricks, old fellow: look me in the face while you answer."

The man coloured. "I can't look a gentleman like you in the face, and tell him he is mad."

"I should think not. Well, now; what shall I give you to help me escape?"

"Hush! don't mention that, sir; it's as much as my place is worth even to listen to you."

"Good! then I must give you as much as your place is worth. Please to calculate that, and name the figure."

"My place! I wouldn't lose it for a hundred pounds."

"Exactly. Then I'll give you a hundred guineas."

"And how am I to get my money, sir?"

"The first time you are out, come to Albion Villa, in Barkington, and I'll have it all ready for you."

"And suppose you were to say, 'No: you didn't ought ever to have been confined?'"

"I must trouble you to look in my face again, Mr. Brown. Now, do you see treason, bad faith, avarice, ingratitude, rascality in it?"

"Not a grain of 'em," said Brown, with an accent of conviction. "Well, now, I'll tell you the truth; I can read a gent. by this time: and I'm no more afeard for the money than if I had it in my hand. But ye see my stomach won't let me do it."

This was a sad disappointment: so sudden, too. "Your stomach?" said he, ruefully. "What do you mean?"

"Ay, my stomach. Wouldn't *your* stomach rise against serving a man that had done you the worst turn one man can do another—been and robbed you of your sweetheart."

Alfred stared with amazement.

Brown continued, and now with some emotion: "Hannah Blake and I were very good friends till you came, and I was thinking of asking her to name the day; but now she won't look at me. 'Don't come teasing me,' says she, 'I am meat for your master.' It's you that have turned the girl's head, sir."

"Bother the women!" said Alfred cordially. "Oh, what plagues they are! And how unjust *you* are, to spite me for the fault of another. Can I help the fools from spooning upon me?" He reflected a moment, then burst out: "Brown, you are a duffer—a regular duffer. What, don't you see your game is to get me out of the place? If you do, in forty-eight hours I shall be married to my Julia, and that dumpling-faced girl will be cured. But if you keep me here, by Gee, sir, I'll make hot love to your Hannah, boiling hot, hotter than ever was—out of the isles of Greece. Oh! do help me out, and I'll give you the hundred pounds, and I'll give Hannah another hundred pounds, on condition she marries you; and, if she won't marry you, she shan't have a farthing, only a good hiding."

Brown was overpowered by his maniac's logic. "You have a head," said he; "there's my hand; I'll go in, if I die for it."

They now put their heads together over the means. Brown's plan was to wait, and wait, for an opportunity. Alfred's was to make one this very night.

"But how can I?" said Brown. "I shan't have the key of your room. I am not on watch in your part to-night."

"Borrow Hannah's."

"Hannah's? She has got no key of the male patients' rooms."

"Oh yes she has; of mine, at all events."

"What makes you think that, sir?" said Brown suspiciously.

Alfred didn't know what to say: he could not tell him why he felt sure she had a key.

"Just go quietly and ask her for it," said he: "don't tell her I sent you, now."

Brown obeyed, and returned in half an hour with the key of the vacant bedroom, where the hobbles and chains were hidden on arrival of the justices.

"She tells me this is the only key she has of any room in this corridor. But dear heart," said Brown, "how quicksighted the women are. She said, says she, 'if it is to bring sorrowful true lovers together again, Giles, or the like of that, I'll try and get the key you want off Mrs. Archbold's bunch, though I get the sack for it,' says she. 'I know she leaves them in the parlour at night,' says Hannah. She is a trump, you must allow."

Alfred coloured up. He suspected he had been unjust.

"She is a good, kind, single-hearted girl," said he; "and neither of you shall find me ungrateful."

It was evident by the alacrity Brown now showed, that he had got his orders from Hannah.

It was agreed that Alfred should lie down at night in his clothes, ready to seize the right moment; that Hannah should get the key, and watch the coast clear, and let him out into the corridor; and Brown get him down by a back stairs, and out on the lawn. There he would find a ladder close by the wall, and his own arms and legs must do the rest.

And now Alfred was a changed creature: his eye sparkled; he walked on air, and already sniffed the air of liberty.

After tea Brown brought in some newspapers, and made Alfred a signal, previously agreed on, that the ladder was under the east wall. He went to bed early, put on his tweed shooting-jacket and trousers, and lay listening to the clock with beating heart.

At first feet passed to and fro from time to time. These became less frequent as the night wore on.

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Presently a light foot passed, stopped at the door, and made a sharp scratch on it with some metal instrument.

It was the key. The time was not ripe to use it, but good Hannah had taken this way to let him know she had got it.

This little scratch outside his door, oh it made his heart leap and thrill. One great difficulty was overcome. He waited, and waited, but with glowing, hopeful heart; and at last a foot came swiftly, the key turned, and Hannah opened the door. She had a bull's-eye lantern.

"Take your shoes in your hand," she whispered, "and follow me."

He followed her. She led him in and out, to the door of the public room belonging to the second class patients. Then she drew her whistle, and breathed very softly. Brown answered as softly from the other end. He was waiting at the opposite door.

"All right," said she; "the dangerous part is over." She put a key into the door, and said very softly, "Good-by."

"God bless you, Hannah," said Alfred, with deep emotion. "God in heaven bless you for this."

"He will, he does," said the single-hearted girl, and put her other hand to her breast with a great gulp. She opened the door slowly. "Good-by, dear. I shall never see you again."

And so these two parted; for Hannah could not bear the sight of Giles at that moment. He was welcome to Alfred though, most welcome, and conducted him by devious ways to the kitchen, lantern in hand.

He opened the kitchen door softly, and saw two burly strangers seated at a table, eating with all their souls, and Mrs. Archbold standing before the fire, but looking towards him: for she had heard his footsteps ever so far off.

The men looked up, and saw Alfred. They rose to their feet, and said, "This will be the gentleman, madam?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Archbold.

"Your servant, sir," said the men very civilly. "If you are ready, we are."

BARDS IN RAILWAY TIMES.

Surely, never was any place of assemblage much less bardic in its aspect than Swansea—a busy, grim, ill-built town—to be approached through clouds of copper-smoke, which make the traveller feel as if he was digesting essence of new pence.—Save for a scrap of an old castle—and above the town a background of soft and rather wild hills, here and there studded with charming villas, overlooking a sea-view, with a headland and a lighthouse—Swansea is as unbardic to see as Leeds, or Oldham, or any modern Lancashire or Yorkshire town, knee-deep in its cinder-heaps, and cut into quarters with tramroads and viaducts.—Neither are the descendants of the Druidesses as plenteous as they were in South Wales. Time was, and in the memory of not very old men, when the market-place of Swansea was like a poppy-bed of three colours, scarlet, white, and black, flaunted in petticoat, cap, and hat, by the Winifreds and Peggys who sold their commodities to the men of Glamorgan, or to foreign sailors thrown on shore by bad weather (and I remember a wrecked Breton crew, who then, by aid of a language which was equivalent to bad or good Welsh, managed to buy what they sold with the uttermost clearness).

The local journals remind us how Eisteddfods, with all the glory of their bardic ceremonies, not many years ago held session at the Lamb and Flag, up the Swansea valley—or at the Cadwallader Arms somewhere else—with a tipsy Reverend Monkbarns in the chair. Of later years light has forced its way in, even among the sepulchres of the Druids, and with light some discrimination of that which is true from that which is false.

The Bards, nevertheless, still congregate in Wales, north and south. There was a rival Eisteddfod held not many weeks ago at Rhyl. The other day (as the Star of Gwent reported) a Druidical pic-nic was held on a Sunday at Garth Maelwg, a medicinal spring on a mountain near Llantrissent. The Welsh people obviously cling to this old festival of theirs; and seeing that there is reality in their love, let me tell something of what was to be seen and heard at the late successful Swansea festival—which was the orthodox Eisteddfod of the year.

Hark to the tune with which these stately gatherings is opened:

"The Truth against the World.—In the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-three, the sun approaching the Autumnal Equinox, in the forenoon of the First day of September, after due proclamation and notice of one year and a day, this Gorsedd is opened within the Borough of Swansea, in the province of Gwent, with invitation to all who may assemble here, where no weapon is unsheathed, and where judgment will be pronounced upon all compositions and works of merit submitted for adjudication, in the face of the sun and the eye of light."—The Truth against the World.

Inimical Saxon eyes can liken the above proclamation of Welsh truth against a wicked world everywhere else, to nothing so much as one of the Chinese proclamations opening the Feast of Lanterns, or declaring that the sons and daughters of the Celestial Empire may now go out and gather Pekoe to sell to the barbarians.

To this prelude succeeded, at Swansea as elsewhere, a thrilling and mystical ceremony transacted at an altar, from which radiated stones, canonically arranged in a dirty meadow—and where, undisturbed by the clanging of boiler-makers, and the screech of the steam-whistle, as the train rushed in from Oystermouth, Bards took their degrees, and guests, who clung to the old tradition, were elected Ovates—female, as well as male.

There have been such phenomena as great ladies who have trifled with antiquarianism, and who have unpronounceable honorary titles,

sounding to Saxon ears like Tankard, or Crucible, or Sick-Dahlia, or other such distinctive and characteristic nouns, who still offer prizes to the best harpers, and would willingly take not the wall (but the law) of other great ladies, who have rival minstrels in fee and favour whom they would enjoy to see invested with badge and medal. There are still painstaking schoolmasters and tranquil curates, all immense improvements on the last generation, whose time hangs heavily on their hands during the winter, and who innocently set themselves to express and to display that learning is better than ignorance,—that loyalty does not mean rebellion, and that from the time of Caradoc and Llywarch Hen downwards, the men of Wales have taken the lead in arms and arts,—in theology, science, and poetry.—I think —considering the predominance of the tone of Fluelen in essays as well as addresses to be heard—Shakespeare, who has been proved to be everything to all men, must some day have been demonstrated to have been Welsh by birth.

The Bards, Ovates, and untitled public, are positive cormorants, in the quantity of addresses they will swallow—and ostriches in the tough and dry fare they will digest, English and Welsh. And they particularly delight in the popular oratory addressed to prejudice—by the pleasant local man, who knows this squire by sight, and calls the other harper by some other title added to Tankard, which proves mighty consolatory to the harpist—a speaker proved to be a Bard, no doubt, by the figures of his admiring speech, as, for instance, when eulogising the concerts, he delights in "the gradations, the people, the gaslight, and the general brilliancy of the assembly"—a Bard confessed by his meteoric hair, which, however, does not stream after the fashion of Gray's Bard, but falls regularly back from his forehead in the new fashion of genius brought in by Dr. Liszt.—We fancy that this speaker can only have felt the pulse of the illiterate among his congregation, when he declares that, having tolerated England as a country of which Wales is the nucleus, he is not to be expected to care a whit for any country or continent over the sea—on the contrary, that if the dwellers in such small tracts of land cut one another's throats like the Kilkenny cats (why not the cats of Caerphilly?), it is all one to him so far as his great patriotic and philanthropic heart can care.—But they enjoy most the funny Cambrian speechifier (suppose we call him Foneddigion a Boneddigesau), great in winks to his audience, greater still in the flapping of his wings, and in personalities which may hit or miss.—I hope all do not habitually scream in a treble voice as loudly as did the Swansea one, who in his black suit and clerical cravat, and in the gesticulating vehemence of his outcries, reminded me of a Methodist revivalist under whom I suffered at a field-preaching many a year ago, being pointed out by the earnest man as the sinful Dives, who was to be held up as a terror and warning to his congregation. They enjoy, in short, any and every variety of the washed-out talker—quite as fresh, quite as glib, quite as long-winded, as the same specimens, which, alas! (though Saxons, let us be honest) may be found in our chambers of legislature, or at any worshipful public dinner in the county of Middlesex.

But there was more than all this at the Swansea meeting, otherwise I should not have harped on it, with all its sense and nonsense, as a curious characteristic festival. Missing the first morning, I heard, to return to the speeches, on the third an excellent practical address by the Mayor of Swansea—and on the fourth a discourse by the Bishop of St. David's, which was admirable in justice, in illustration, and in counsel, and thus I fear was but in seeming relished by some of the small local people, who are nothing when not blowing up the fire of their own and their admirers' narrow vanity.—It was droll to see the historian of Greece laid hold of on the spot and made a Druid of almost ere he had sat down.

Throughout the week it was obvious that every one's heart was in it.—A flaming advertisement of a Circus promised, among other intellectual and anti-bardic temptations, that a celebrated pugilist should display his testimonials, including a goblet, value five hundred pounds, presented to him by a patron of manly sports (engine-driving among them), of whom England has heard enough and to spare—and that two female Blondins should perform the "sensation feat" of going round a ring of rope fifty feet from the ground, on the outside of the faëry tent, and, on their meeting, that the one should vault over the other;—but I am happy to say that I have not heard one whisper among the humblest of the audiences of six thousand people by which it could be gathered that one single man had seen the goblet of glorious origin—or that one single woman had been terrified into screams and fainting-fits by the magnificent show of female grace and intrepidity.—(Perhaps the drenching rain threw cold water on the latter part of the show!)—On the other hand, the best shops in Merthyr Tydvil were one day closed by common consent, in order to give the people a chance of enjoying either this bardic contest or a great rifle display at Dowlais—or the opening of Nanndu Church.—Everywhere the people were talking of essays and prizes and choirs and tunes—some of writing letters to the papers, while holding forth under inn portico or railway bridge, to protest against injustice in award of the prizes, or to tell how some genius, to whose bardic title I cannot approach nearer than Kettle-in-a-Dell, had basely flaunted, like the jackdaw, in plumes which literally belonged to Tally-ar-hyd-y-nos—meaning the speaker.—I am afraid it runs in the blood of the Bards to enjoy playing "a hand of litigation" now and then.

It is time, however, to take a look at the Pavilion where the solemnities took place.

On the outside, the Pavilion looked ragged and miserable enough, built on a rough piece of ground hard by the docks, which the myriad tramping feet under a storm of rain easily converted into mud. It was not hard to believe that the temporary building of deals had been hired cheap: less easy to conceive it large enough

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to hold six or seven thousand persons. Then, as is too common in England, the doors were almost too narrow to admit a single file of guests: and the huge neat-whiskered policeman, with belt and badge (bardic again), who took the tickets of singers, players, and patrons, blocked this rude and straight portal so substantially, as to make all entrance thither somewhat of a heroic event.—But within, the good proportions of the hall, flanked with galleries, decorated with flags, balconied with white, pink, and blue panels, decked with laurel-wreaths and garlands, lit with horizontal lines of gas, and liberally filled with a public, every face among which was beaming with enjoyment, put one into a festive humour.—There was far less of beadledom, far less of gold chain and 'scutcheon work than I had expected; though still, by fits and starts, more than a Saxon could take religious delight in. Generally the preparations on the platform were simple to untidiness; and though there was, of course, a President, and a state chair, and a table, and a grand pianoforte, and a row of busts of Welsh celebrities, and a huge head of a goat also sculptured, which was turned upside down, with Saxon want of respect for its beard,—I am ashamed to say, that seeing preparations for music and state, my mind wandered with a sort of melancholy feeling far away to the notion, that we get up better Druid work in London, at Covent Garden, when "Norma" is the opera.

But with all this disorderliness, there was not the slightest show of licence. The chorus, gathered from many miles round, numbering on the first night four hundred persons, was made up of iron-forgers from Merthyr Tydvil and Dowlais, of the copper miners who so largely contribute to the smell of new coinage perceptible in the town, of workers from the small farms on the soft wild hill-sides of the Neath and Swansea valleys.—Yet not an instance of rudeness, or bad manners, or drunkenness, did I see; and I think only one discontented artist, a man of Dowlais, with a bamboo-coloured beard, and who was too much vexed at being squeezed by his fellow choristers not to bestow his vexation on us as he passed, seeing that there was no one else in the way. "Iss and inteed," he complained, "there was no room to sing." He was pacified by a little neighbourly inquiry;—favoured us with some particulars about the competition on the following morning (we arrived, did I say? on the eve of the first day's concert), and also with the fact that *he* sung *beace*.—It was pleasant not long after to see him shoulder to shoulder with a rosy-cheeked little girl, in one of those saucer-shaped straw hats which look very shabby to persons who recollect the probably much more uncomfortable flower-pot of beaver, which was the height of fashion in the good days ere Bards came in to sing at Swansea by railway, from Baglan, and the Mumbles, and Cwmllynfell.—Nothing, again, could be conceived better than the relations of gentle with simple. On the one side there was no parade, on the other no sycophancy.

The singing of the chorus was a great pleasure and astonishment. Nothing of the kind was in existence when I first knew this thriving town. Then if one wandered up among the hills, where the wild tunes grow, and the tinkling of the triple harp used to be heard, as well as the clinking of the pot of ale, in every public-house,—there might be heard pretty voices, as fresh as the briar-rose on the cheeks of the girls who owned them, and perhaps Pennillion singing,—nothing wonderful, a thing hardly deserving the name of improvisation, which any three singing persons or more having an aptitude for rhyme, some courage, and no fear of common-place, could master with a week's practice.—But the union of many voices in those days was enough to sour the sweetest temper. It may have been to drown all consciousness of the psalmody, that so many of the small clergy there belonged to the Trulliber party in the Establishment, and became so unequal to the performance of the afternoon service.

Now, much as Shenkin of the noble race, who believes that Eve belonged to Merionethshire, would like to stand still,—Nature and the times have been too strong for him. The enormous stride which choral music has made in England during the last thirty years, has compelled the principality to follow.—The power and the pleasure of co-operation have got hold of the men, who come up from the mines, or ride home from the forge on a grimy waggon along a tramway, in the midst of scoria and cinders, or work at trade in town, or at husbandry in country.—The folk of Cornwall and Northumberland, so far as I know, are far less tuneful; and I do not fancy that the farm labourers of Kent or Warwickshire would trudge so far, or work so heartily, to get to a singing practice. The spirit of melody lies deep in the hearts of the Welsh.—Their women have, as a race, very sweet, if not very strong voices; and recollecting as I do the far more experienced trebles of Bradford, Manchester, Norwich, and those we hear in London, I can credit these maids and matrons of Glamorganshire with admirable and prepossessing natural gifts. The type of the Welsh female voice has been most advantageously shown and thoroughly appreciated in England, by the delicious national singing of Miss Edith Wynne.—It is impossible to recal anything much more real and attractive than the sweet zealous concord of the chorus in the charming old tunes, which have been so well harmonised by Mr. John Thomas. One could swallow a column of titles as fantastic and foppish as anything in the book of Della Cruscan folly—one could let pass display after display of unnatural and puerile pretension—for the sake of anything so real and so peculiar. Never could melodies, never chorus, have been more heartily relished.—It was curious and pleasant to see how one bass singer, who could not constrain his delight, made a running accompaniment to the tune while it rose or fell, up and down the back seam of his neighbour's coat, as if the same had been the keys of a pianoforte.

The firmness of touch owned by the capital Glamorgan folk was brought home to my shoulders by an enthusiastic treble, who came forward from her seat behind me, rapt in pleasure and excitement, and beat very good time as on a timbrel, just below my collar, while three bards were singing Pennillion.—A North Welsh nightingale was well received; but she was welcomed as a mere wren, compared with a South Welsh linnet belonging to the shire, for whose advancement and education many a mite of money had been laid together by the hands of homely working-folks, and many a mile had been walked, in order that their own old neighbour and playfellow might not want a chorus.—This apportionment of admiration was not fair in an artistic point of view—not untinctured with local vanity; yet there was so much of honest, cordial, affection in it, that it was good to see.

Another truly pleasant exhibition could have been seen nowhere else than at one of these meetings: the competition of single female voices. They had to sing for a prize, without accompaniment, "The Blackbird," as lovely and symmetrical a melody as exists, from the collection of old melodies noted down by a lady, in her day the most exquisite amateur singer I have ever heard—Miss Jane Williams, of Aberpergwm. In turn, called to present themselves by all manner of unpronounceable names, such as would befit the sprites that hop round a witches' caldron in the opening of a pantomime, but which, when translated, might possibly express a lark, a linnet, a missel-thrush, and a soul's delight, there stepped forward four candidates, one after the other—Linnet, Missel, Thrush, and Soul's Delight, irresistibly recalling the wives of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, as they appeared with quaint hats, rosy cheeks, and petticoats calculated to stand much wear and tear in the Noah's ark of our infant days.—I never saw the vocal female who thought so much of her music, so little of herself—so little of the "eyes to be made" from under those straw saucers,—or of the shrinkings which so touchingly bespeak indulgence,—as every one of these four sweetly-voiced South Welsh singers.—The face of a fifth girl, on the second day, who was excluded from a like competition because she had not given due warning of her ambition, I shall not soon forget—as she crept back to her seat, after a vain appeal for remission of rule—it was so sad, yet not in the least jealous.

The men, as a body, having bright intelligent faces, some very finely featured, though generally sallow, seemed more conscious,—not, therefore, more ill at ease,—than the women. When the competitions of the choirs took place, it might be perceived, from more than one wielder of the bâton, that the airs and graces of a conductor do not depend on an embroidered shirt, neither on a coat without a wrinkle. I noted one handsome fellow, who, without meaning it, was as whimsical to see as the diligently prepared original "Bones" of the first black band, that let in the enchantment of pseudo-negro melodies upon the public of England.

The controversy, again, for the prize triple harp (price fifteen pounds), which also included a year's instruction on that bardic instrument, was curious, though among the less estimable passages of the festival.—Why the perpetuation of an inferior instrument, because it was the one beloved by the Ap Festiniogs and Pwyll Rhuddlans, who had nothing better to discourse upon, should be encouraged, brings us back to the weakness of nationality, which is the weak side of these exhibitions. Why not keep in an Eisteddfod all that is real and permanent? Why encumber it with anachronisms such as these, which, if they contain any education at all, only contain the education of prejudice? An excellent artist, in every sense honourable to Wales, who, I verily believe, would "die on the breach" rather than see its old customs wear out,—whose heart and soul have been in this festival,—received the first great modern commission, given under the new dispensation of common sense—to write a national Cantata for Swansea. This has been accomplished most creditably by him: only the Welsh words have been translated into English before having been set—and there is far more of Bellini in the body and soul of his melodies and their treatment than of "Daffyd y Garryg-wen," or "Nos Galan."

One more scene,—and I have done with these desultory notes on what I saw and heard during four as curious and amusing days as I have ever spent.—The crowd was tremendous on the evening of the third concert, many hundreds having forced their way in more than the Pavilion could hold.—A beam in one of the galleries gave way; splinters began to fall from another, and this in a building rocking with a crowd, and so frail, so flaring with line upon line of gas-jets, and so scantily provided with adequate outlets, that the panic which grew and spread, and the screams (if ever screams are excusable), were justified by what was really imminent as a matter of peril. The women, though a few did scream, were more valiant than the men, I fancy;—since I hear of one brute of a fellow (no Bard, I hope) leaping over the gallery on the heads of the women,—and I have since enjoyed in print the thanksgiving for safety of a clergyman who was so overcome by terror, he declares, as to have fallen into drowsiness, and who rejoiced greatly when he could rid himself of the "fatal grasp" of two merciless ladies who had clung to him for protection.—Per contra, however, a most remarkable example of the manner in which a man should behave under such circumstances was shown by the Mayor, to whose instant coolness, courage, and admirable decision—in calling out, not the military, but the music—the saving of hundreds of lives may have been owing. He commanded instant attention by a trumpet-call; he quieted the fast-growing agitation by suddenly bidding the choir strike up our National Hymn, and when the chorus, supported by all the people, died away, he then insisted on the hall being cleared till its security could be ensured for the subsequent performances.—No one less resolute could have got this done, so unwilling

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were the majority of women recovering from their affright, and struggling men, to be cheated out of a single bar of the musical rights—whether to be enjoyed in English or Welsh—belonging to their portion of the Eisteddfod. I recollect nothing like that ten minutes of confusion—that sudden power of Music to still the waters of terror —that struggle of enthusiasm against common sense and safety—so admirably overruled by the despotic will of one in authority. For a less exercise of ready wit and real power has many a Celt been dubbed a Bard,—and many a Saxon Forcible Feeble received the easily-won honours of knighthood!

CAN YOU RIDE?

The yard of Mr. Mason, the eminent horse-dealer, is a delicious scene. It is designed by some great colourist—probably of the Dutch school—a great artist who knows where to draw the line—a delicately plaited line too—with regard to his arrangements of straw-colour; where to throw in a bit of red brick; and where to ease that off again with some subdued and pearly whitewash. This mighty genius, again, is accomplished in the art of sprinkling sand; he is also the man to deal with such pieces of still life as a pail and a besom, while as to his eye for throwing in a stable cat in exactly the right place —to an inch, mind you—who can approach him?

It is perhaps the passing through this beautiful region that causes the residence of the Mechanical Horse, which is at the back of the premises, to appear, to the observant eye, more unspeakably blank and terrible than it really is. For the convenience of his works, which are—like some people's minds—too large for his body, and are placed in a room underneath him, this terrible beast resides in a loft—a loft with sloping roof, and only just light enough to tumble off discreditably by. In ascending to that loft you have a feeling as if you were going to succour a family in distress, as if you were going to stand by the death-bed of a malefactor, as if you were ascending to the boxes of a booth-theatre at a fair.

The Mechanical Horse is a black horse, with an expression of eye which encourages approach, with an engaging and innocent tuft of mane on his forehead, with a practicable neck and tail, and with an *im*practicable set of legs, which are doubled up tight as in the act of clearing "timber." His appearance is on the whole natural, but he has a steel bar growing out of his stomach and descending through the floor of the room into the abysses beneath, which we do not often observe in the real subject, and he is entirely surrounded on all sides by mattresses, which is also not the case with the living animal —more's the pity. On probing the animal's body with our thumb, we found, to our unspeakable relief, that it was soft, and at the same time firm and elastic.

On the walls of the loft are one or two small notices entreating "gentlemen not to hold on by the animal's neck, *when in difficulties*"—words of sinister and terrible augury—while exactly in front of the monster's nose is a very small mirror, about six inches square, the presence of which is as inexplicable as that of what looks like a very large corn-bin, on which the eye of the Mechanical Horse may be observed to rest thoughtfully in his passive moments.

Altogether, it may freely be acknowledged that the scene is the reverse of cheerful. The padded floor suggests the idea of the torture-chamber, and this terrific monster rising out of the mattresses, presiding over all, with an expression about his neck as of a knight at chess who has just won a game against all mankind, seems to carry out the torture idea in some mysterious way. What this must be on a moonlight night one dares not think—and yet—that looking-glass on the wall—that corn-bin, haply a bed by night, a bin by day—does some one sleep in this place? It may be so. There is a certain German young man whose business it is to shout to the men in the regions below, conveying to them in a foreign language directions as to the movements of the M. H., telling them when the animal is to rear, or jump, or kick, or twist, or fall as upon ice. It is, moreover, the function of this same individual to help in the execution of these manœuvres by tugging at a cord attached to the body of the M. H., in order to give additional impetus to its movements. Now the question is, does this personage sleep in the room with the Mechanical Horse? His appearance seems to suggest that he does. He is intensely melancholy, and given to the heaving of great heart-breaking sighs during pauses in the performance. He has it, moreover, distinctly inscribed on his countenance, and proclaimed in his whole bearing, that he disbelieves in the M. H., and moreover hates him with a detestation that knows no bounds. How he must long for a change in the quadruped's appearance. One almost wonders that he does not whitewash the brute covertly in the watches of the night.

The "stable companion" of this depressed gentleman has a much better time of it. His business is to ride the horse for the benefit of spectators. He is never thrown now, being up to all the moves of the monster, but he is in this respect alone in his glory, as according to his own statement there is absolutely no one unaccustomed to the M. H. who has gone through all the exercises in the list without coming off sooner or later—generally sooner.

The Mechanical Horse is not without a biographer. A small pamphlet is to be had on the premises, which repays perusal. On the very fly-leaf of this work we are informed that "the art of horsemanship consists in the rider's knowledge to manage under all circumstances his point of gravitation, and that of his horse, with ease and grace," a statement put forth by the author of the pamphlet, Colonel von Hamel, with the greater confidence, because it seems that he was from "his very boyhood destined for the equestrian career," whatever that may be. One thing, however, is certain, namely, that ten years of that career have been devoted

by the colonel to the construction of this piece of mechanism, for which he claims, however, an amount of honour and glory which we shall hardly be disposed to concede to him, when he affirms "that it is a matter beyond doubt that it remains unparalleled among inventions."

The writer of this work then goes on to tell us that by practising sufficiently upon this unparalleled invention you may be "taught to counteract any series of movements the most vicious horse may practise;" that through it "the different theories of horsemanship advocated by our modern schools may be put to a practical test;" that the Mechanical Horse stretches—horrible to relate—"all the muscles, sinews, and tendons;" "teaches the rider always to keep his balance while on horseback, or in case of need to disentangle himself from *it*, safely landing upon his legs." We are further told that the inexpensive diet of our friend the M. H. consists of a few tablespoonfuls of oil now and then, in the course of the day, and the same quantity of tallow per week, and we are cautioned that it should be always fitted up in a room "at least twenty-six feet square, because the horse, if rapidly turned, may fling its rider a distance of three or four yards."

These inviting preliminaries disposed of, Colonel von Hamel gives us a list of the different exercises which are to be practised by the student who would master this fiery quadruped. These exercises are no less than thirty-two in number, and are in some cases rather remarkable. Take, for instance, No. 1. "To mount (without spurs), from the left side (the horse being quiet), in the horizontal position, rearing, kicking, and leaning position." Now, passing over the mysterious caution about spurs, which in a sane community one would hardly think could be needful, one may venture to inquire,—did any one ever see a horse remain "quiet" when in a rearing, kicking, or leaning position? As to this last, by-the-by, we are free to confess that a horse in a leaning position, unless with something to lean against, is altogether an equestrian novelty to us, nor do we believe that any man in his senses would wish to be on the back of an animal which had so far lost itself as to have contracted this slothful habit. As to the two other positions mentioned, it is true that a man might, under some circumstances—may they ever remain practically unknown to us—want to mount a rearing or kicking horse, but then surely the animal would all the time be in violent motion, and having mastered the art of mounting a beast which remained quite *stationary*, with his hind-legs or his fore-legs high in air, would prove of but little use when you come to have dealings with an *un*-mechanical horse in a state of violent activity.

Exercise No. 9. "Riding up and down hill, with sudden turning, the hill being low or very steep," has an alarming sound, but what is it to No. 11, "The side jump and twist—as also the falling on right or left side, *as upon ice*"? What a complication of horrors is suggested by this exercise. Having the ill-luck to possess a horse with a pernicious habit of jumping and twisting, your occasions require that you should invariably take your ride upon the ice; to get yourself in training for this sort of fun, away you go to the M. H., and learn how to conduct yourself under the circumstances.

In Exercise 12, "The horse turns round to the left, while rearing, kicking, buck-jumping, or jumping to the side or twist;" and in 13 the same takes place "to the right;" while in No. 27 "the rider stands in the left stirrup, and the horse rears, kicks, jumps, or twists;" though why he should stand in one stirrup while undergoing so terrible an ordeal, instead of sitting close with *both* feet well dug into *both* stirrups, it would be hard to say.

One or two specimens of these exercises must suffice, but having duly practised the whole thirty-two a sufficient number of times, the pupil is promised by Colonel von Hamel: "1, a great suppleness of the body, and a firm seat; 2, an elegant and unconstrained deportment; 3, a firm hand; 4, the presence of mind requisite to govern himself and horse; 5, he will be acquainted with all tricks and vicious habits of the horse; 6, all danger being past, he will have got rid of that timidity so injurious to persons who have never been on horseback; 7, he will be under no embarrassment in jumping ditches or fences; 8, in any position he will be able to keep his balance without any over-exertion."

Whether all these advantages are attainable by means of practising on the Mechanical Horse or not is a matter of question; whether the man who can get at last to be able to sit the M. H. will be an accomplished rider on the living animal, is uncertain; but for one thing we can most certainly vouch by personal observation, and this is, that a man may be a practised and expert horseman as far as the real living quadruped is concerned, and be entirely unable to keep his seat on the back of the Mechanical Horse.

On the occasion of a certain visit which we paid to this exhibition, there were present all sorts of persons who were devoted to what Colonel von Hamel calls the "equestrian career." There were both amateurs and professionals, rough-riders, grooms, and even a farrier of the Life Guards. This last individual was so entirely convinced by what he saw that if he got on he should infallibly soon find himself sprawling on the mattresses, that nothing—no, not all the persuasions which were lavished upon him by everybody present, would induce him to try his luck. Perhaps he felt that he was too big to let down his dignity, perhaps he thought that his rolling on the tick would seriously compromise the service. At any rate, he refrained from exhibiting himself. And he did well.

Other and more enterprising spirits were not wanting. They saw the showman keep on, and saw no reason why they should not keep on too. But they forgot one very important element in his success. It has been mentioned that while one of the professionals employed to exhibit the Mechanical Horse was mounted on his back, the other, by pulling a cord, directed and gave addi-

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tional force to the horse's movements, first of all shouting to those who worked below what those movements were to be. Now his directions were given in a language which the rough-riders and grooms who mounted the M. H. could not comprehend, but which the German confederate on the horse's back *could*. He, therefore, knew what was coming. The others did not, which made all the difference.

Many persons present, but chiefly those who had newly arrived and had not witnessed the discomfiture of others, mounted into the saddle with considerable confidence of demeanour. The first movements, the alternate rising of the head and then of the quarters, partook somewhat of the nature of the frisks of that domestic animal the rocking-horse, and were easily endured, but as soon as more violence was given to the exercises they invariably made acquaintance with the mattresses. And it was a curious thing to observe how the company assembled in the loft enjoyed every fresh casualty, and even thirsted for more; while, perhaps, even more remarkable was the conduct of the victims themselves, who, so far from wishing to deter others from following their example, would urge and stimulate the other members of the company—and more especially the Horse Guard—to lose no time in saving the credit of the British nation, and "witch the world with noble horsemanship."

But the best chance was invariably with new comers, who did not know the nature of the beast, and who, in this respect, belonged to that class which rushes in where angels fear to tread.

Now it was impossible not to observe that the little horsey men who had been so ignominiously defeated were all inclined to get together afterwards in corners, eyeing their conqueror, as he stood triumphant in the middle of the apartment, with malignant glances, conspiring and plotting against him, and occasionally wishing that some especial champion in whom they had confidence would just happen to look in and "throw his leg over—that was all." These gentry would also from time to time disparage the invention of Colonel von Hamel, and insinuate that it "weren't no good—really." One of the unhorsed ones even gave a name to his hero, and remarked that "he wished Mark Gripper would show his 'ed up that their staircase." This he said with a defiant glance at the two Germans, and a look of appeal to the rest of the company, who, though they had never heard of Mark in their lives, would have been glad enough to see him at the moment, or, indeed, anybody else who would oblige them by getting on to the Mechanical Horse and rolling off again with ignominy. It was quite curious to observe how the public lingered and lingered on at this exhibition, sustained by a secret hope that some fresh victim would soon arrive. As to the unenterprising Life Guardsman, he really seemed unable to tear himself away at all.

The noise of footsteps ascending the wooden stair which led to the abode of the Mechanical Horse was at all times exciting to the persons assembled in Mr. Mason's loft, but, just at the moment with which we at present have to do, this promising sound held the whole assembly entranced with expectation and hope. What, then, was the delight of the company when there gradually emerged through the floor first one gentleman in a stable-hat, a stable-jacket, a stable-waistcoat, and drab stable-legs, and then another individual similarly accoutred. The external appearance of both these persons was quite enough to convince the least initiated of the company that they were devoted to the "equestrian career," while to those who were themselves behind the equestrian scenes the new arrivals were at once recognised as two well-known members of the horse-breaking fraternity; indeed, one of them, the tallest and thinnest, was no other than the renowned Mark Gripper himself, whose advent had just before been so ardently desired by the Mechanical Horse's latest victim.

Those gentlemen present who had the good fortune to be personally acquainted with the new arrivals, hastened to accost and welcome them, whilst those who were less happy contented themselves with a running criticism on the respective merits of these two illustrious personages. The general public hung upon the words of the initiated, of course, and lost their dignity in so doing.

"Ah, Mark 'll stick on to him, mind you," says a man with a blue bird's-eye pattern scarf, and a pin wrought into the semblance of a hunting-whip, with the thong twisted round the crop. "That's what Mark 'll do," he added, looking round him with the air of a man who doubts his own prophecy.

"No he won't," replies another of the initiated; a very little man, who had just before grovelled on the mattresses, and whose nose had been very red ever since.

"And why won't he?" retorts the other. "I've seen that man afore now on the back of a hanimal as went through such a variety of games as this here humbug of a thing has never even thought of in his sleep—a animal as 'ud catch hold of you with his teeth when you was a going to mount him, or ram your leg up again the stable wall the first moment as ever you got upon his back. Talk about mechanical horses after that!"

"Well, that don't prove nothing," puts in the little man with the reddened nose—"nothin' at all."

"Don't it, and why not, pray?"

"Why, because," continued red-nose, "the hanimal you speak of *was* a hanimal, and made of flesh and blood, and gave you some notice by the mere haspect of him, and by the roll of his eye, and the plant of his ear, what he was going in for. But this here piece of goods—which I won't call it a horse at all—with a eye like a angel and a ear that don't tell you nothink at all, and with a boiler and what not inside him, for aught I know—why you might as well try to sit a steam-engine when she's got off the line and her boiler's a bustin'."

Red-nose had it all his own way after this ex-

position, which seemed to find immense favour in the eyes of all the gentlemen who had recently been unhandsomely dealt with by the M. H.

"Who's the other one?" inquired the man with the bird's-eye neckcloth, not unwilling to start a new subject. "Him with the gaiters."

"That man's one of the best 'orsemen in this country," replied the other. "He's Mr. Grantham's rough-rider."

"What's that Bill Stunt?" inquired an equestrian hero-worshipper.

"Yes, that's Bill Stunt, young man, and it's a pity there ain't more like him."

"Is he a better rider than Mark?" asked the neophyte, eagerly.

The little man with the angry nose made no reply to this question for some time, and then he said, "No, he ain't," but in a manner to forbid any more remarks.

And now, after a little conversation with the two showmen, and after a good deal of pressing, such as modest performers require before they will undertake to favour the company with a song, the renowned Mr. Mark Gripper advances with a confident smile towards the invention of Colonel von Hamel, and putting his left foot into the stirrup is presently on horseback.

The word of command to start the machinery is now transmitted without delay to the mechanical department below, and Mr. Gripper, still smiling, is rocked gently backwards and forwards two or three times, in a sort of preliminary exercise. That done, the M. H. seems to think it time to declare his intentions a little, and accordingly he raises himself into an erect position, and Mr. Gripper has to practise all he knows in order not to slip off ignominiously over the animal's tail. This danger overcome, the M. H. tries our friend the other way, and gets his hind-legs so well up into the air, that the back of Mr. Gripper's head—Mr. G. still smiling—almost touches his horse's quarters. This exercise is now repeated several times with increased rapidity, but still our friend keeps his seat, and murmurs of triumph circulate among the initiated.

These straightforward up and down movements on the part of the M. H. turning out a failure, this noisome beast goes to work with those side jumps and twists which are set forth in exercises Nos. 11 and 12 of Colonel von Hamel's list. These are evidently found to be more trying to the seat of our rough-rider, and Mr. Gripper is observed on more than one occasion to forget his accustomed smile for a moment or two. Still he keeps on, in so creditable a manner that the gentleman with the bird's-eye cravat evidently thinks that he will yet triumph over him of the glowing nose, while the unhorsed ones believe that they are about to be avenged at last.

But now the machinery seems to work something quicker than it did at first; the different exercises, instead of succeeding each other with some approach to an interval between each, appear to be disordered, and, as it were, jumbled together. The Mechanical Horse is evidently becoming desperate, and his plunges and side jumps are so violent and incessant that Mr. Gripper loses his smile altogether, and begins to wear a harassed appearance, and to show what are called in sporting language unmistakable symptoms of "distress." It is painful to relate, moreover, when we reflect upon this gentleman's reputation, that sometimes when the M. H., after rushing violently to the right, suddenly turns round and goes off to the left, there seems for a moment every probability of his rider's not accompanying him back, and it is a fact that at such times a considerable amount of daylight is to be seen between Mr. Gripper's "point of gravitation" and his saddle. At length Mr. Gripper gets more and more heated, and more and more distressed, the space between himself and the saddle gets more and more alarming for the security of the point of gravitation, and finally, after one particular swerve to the right on the part of the M. H., which swerve is characterised by an especial virulence and malignity, Mr. Gripper's "point of gravitation" goes altogether, the mattresses receive another victim, and the Mechanical Horse achieves a new triumph.

The rough-rider gets up, having regained his smile now that it is all over, and acknowledges himself beaten in a manner that defies criticism. But the sensation among the initiated ones is profound in the extreme, and exhibits itself in a more marked disparagement of the Mechanical Horse as a test of equestrian prowess than has hitherto been elicited. As to the little man with the red nose, the triumph of his powers of prophecy is so complete, that he feels it unnecessary to put it into words, but he turns round to the discomfited one with the sporting neckcloth, and favours him with a look far more eloquent than speech.

As to the glee of the Life Guardsman, it is so great that he is obliged to unbutton his jacket and take out what one had thought was chest, in order to wipe the dew of rejoicing from his brow. That done, he rises to the full extent of the capabilities of the loft, looks triumphantly down the stripe on the outside of each of his legs, and marches out with a great jingling of spurs. He is, upon the whole, looked upon as having achieved a success.

The defeat of the eminent Mr. Gripper did not daunt his companion, whom we have heard described as rough-rider to Mr. Grantham. This hardy adventurer took his turn at the new invention with a sanguine countenance and every appearance of hopefulness. It soon became apparent, however, that this one's point of gravitation was by no means more secure than his friend's had been. His efforts to maintain it were indeed noble and heroic in the extreme, but it was not to be, and in due time he shared the fate of all the rest. There never was a more undaunted rider, for he was up again and again on the horse's back in no time. His courage was not rewarded. The famous "side jump and twist" were resorted to with the usual deadly result, and after a second tumble this excellent and courageous man seemed to think that he had had enough of it, and retired.

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There was, after all though, just one person among the competitors for distinction that day who was not thrown, but he escaped by means so contemptible that few would wish to follow his example. He was a young man and an amateur, and the Mechanical Horse seemed inclined to deal very leniently with him. The movements of the M. H. were much more slow and gradual now than they had been previously. But as the time approached when, as we all knew, another kind of behaviour might be expected from this treacherous animal, and just as the "quick movement" was beginning, and we were all settling in our places to the full enjoyment of the anticipated crisis, this shameless young man then and there, with the eye of the Public upon him, was heard to utter a request that the machinery should be stopped, after which he said that "he thought he would get off," and actually did so.

After this there was nothing to be done but to depart with all speed from the scene of so disgraceful a proceeding. And it must be owned that it was a pleasant thing to pass from that dismal loft into that Dutch picture already described, with the straw, and the sand, and the red bricks, and the stable-cats.

And now just one word as to the usefulness of the Mechanical Horse.

It appears that there are really two or three of these pieces of machinery in use in different parts of Germany, and that riding is actually taught by means of them. Colonel von Hamel contends that they are of especial value in a cavalry barrack, and that you may "teach by means of one Mechanical Horse, which will last at least forty years, as many men as on ten living horses." Of course the strong point with the partisans of this invention is this: they argue that since men who can ride perfectly well the living animal cannot keep upon the back of the Mechanical Horse, that, therefore, it must be more difficult to ride the latter than the former, and that having learnt to master the more difficult thing, the easier thing will come quite naturally. This is, however, hardly fair. The natural horse which these men can ride is not an animal which behaves—even if a vicious horse—in the frantic manner in which the Mechanical Horse conducts itself. If it did—if a real horse went on as this sham horse does, plunging, kicking, flinging itself from side to side, or even down on the ground, and all this continuously and without cessation, it is not too much to say that it would be twice as formidable a monster as this one in Piccadilly, and would dispose of its riders at least twice as quickly. The beast would be a phenomenon in nature, and would make us think Cruiser a lamb. And then the action of the Mechanical Horse is not natural. In plunging, in rearing, in shying, and swerving round, the real horse generally changes his ground, that is to say, that with these actions is generally combined a certain amount of progression, retro-gression, or—if the expression may be allowed—latero-gression. With the Mechanical Horse this is quite out of the question. The iron support by which he is moved remains always in one spot in the middle of the room.

These things duly weighed, it may yet be found that the Mechanical Horse has a right to a place in the manège. Great advantages belong to him, no doubt. He is a light feeder, and he is not liable to all those spavins, splints, sand-cracks, and other afflictions which beset the living animal. Certain it is that it is a very difficult thing to keep upon his back, and all the more so because, as one of our horsey friends intimated but now, he gives you no notice of what he is going to do next.

ROOKS AND HERONS.

Ravens, crows, and rooks, form a natural group. They have much in common. They give themselves the same names by their cries —"krow, kraw, and kr-ā-ă." All are rooks or hoarse-voices (French rauque, pronounced rokh); and if raven comes from the Saxon refan, whence riving and reiver, they are all ravens. This vagueness in their popular names shows that they were all named from their cries and habits before they were distinguished as species. And, indeed, the crow, corby or hoody, is but a lesser raven, and the rook differs from the ravens in little except the instinct for breeding in societies instead of solitary pairs. Ravens, crows, and rooks, have all grey-green eggs, spotted and blotched with smoky brown. The ravens build their nests in tops of trees and cracks, or nooks of rocks, or cliffs, lining a framework of sticks with wool or hair. The nest of the crow is built on the tops of trees, and consists of a fabric of sticks plastered together with mud, and lined with sheep's wool or horsehair. The hoodies build their nests on rocks, or cliffs, or trees, of sticks, heather, and wool. Rooks build their nests on the tops of tall trees, of large sticks, hay, straw, sheep's wool, and horsehair. There being nothing specific in the mere size of eggs, no one can distinguish the egg of a raven, a crow, a hoody, or a rook, by any important peculiarity of colouring. As for applying the word carrion to one species more than another, it is entirely unwarranted, for they are all devourers of carrion. The colouring of the plumage of the ravens, crows, and rooks, is no more distinguishable than the colouring of their eggs, for it is a lustrous bluish-black on the back and wings, with dusky hues beneath. The hoody, however, differs from the others in the colouring of the plumage, the back, breast, belly, and upper part of the neck being ash colour, with the rest of it bluish-black. The crow, rook, and hoody, can scarcely be said to differ in size, being about twenty inches long; whilst the raven is from four to six inches longer. The crow, rook, and hoody, weigh about twenty ounces, and the raven three pounds.

All the Curvbeaks were invested with superstitious awe by the piety of our ancestors, but especially the raven. I have been one of a pack of noisy schoolboys who have been awed into

silent deliberation by seeing three magpies upon the roof of a thatched cottage, one of the elder boys, with pale face and white lips, assuring the others that there would soon be a death in that house. A wild lad having soon afterwards died in the next house, some two hundred yards off, we were seriously assured that the magpies had only perched on the cottage where we saw them because they had been driven away from the abode on which they first alighted and rested as messengers of death. Among the prodigies which Shakespeare makes King Henry say accompanied the birth of the Duke of Gloucester, are the cries of owls, dogs, crows, ravens, and pies:

> The owl shrieked at thy birth, an evil sign;
> The night crow cried, aboding luckless time;
> Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempests shook down trees;
> The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,
> And chattering pies in dismal discords sung.

But the raven appears to have been pre-eminently the ominous bird of our forefathers, and of their melodious echoes the poets. Lady Macbeth uses a popular illustration when she exclaims:

> The raven is hoarse that croaks
> The fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements.

Woden, the Scandinavian Jupiter, is called the god of the ravens. "Three ravens," says the prose Edda, "sit on Odin's shoulders and whisper in his ear the tidings and events they have heard and witnessed." They are called Hugin and Munin (Mind and Memory). He sends them at dawn to fly over the whole world, and they return at eve towards meat-time. Hence it is that Odin knows so many things, and is called the Raven's God (Krafnagud).

Old fables have often some truth connected with them, and when the Arabs say Mahomet turned the crow from white to black for croaking "ghar, ghar, ghar" (cave, cave, cave), in order to direct his pursuing enemies to the cave in which he was hiding, the fable probably points to a period when Albinism prevailed among the Arabian crows. The English word croak is the Syrian name of the raven; and it is not to be supposed that a crow could not cry "ghar," for they have more variety in their notes, even when untrained by man, than they get credit for: sixty different notes having been counted. White ravens often occur. Ravens with white patches are described by several ornithologists; and white crows, white rooks, and white ravens, have been seen occasionally.

Rooks can imitate the note of the jackdaw or the bark of the dog. During the early hours of winter mornings rooks haunt a field under my bedroom window, and I can, as I lie awake, distinguish the notes of the cocks, hens, and young. Macgillivray, visiting a rookery at night, was greatly surprised at the variety of notes emitted by the rooks, instead of their monotonous kr-ā-ă. When still some distance from the rookery, he stopped to listen, and was surprised to hear several rooks uttering a variety of soft, clear, modulated notes, plainly expressive of the affection and desire to please, of the fondling and coaxing going on between the newly-hatched young and their mothers. As he advanced, all became still, and when a loud warning croak was heard several times, first the males and then the females flew up, wheeling above the trees, and all the shrill voices of the young became mute. As he left, he heard the rooks settling on their nests. Croaks of anger, pantings of fear, dissatisfied grunts, and flappings of wings, contrasted with the soft low notes he had heard by surprise.

Montaigne says beasts have language; we, it is true, understand nothing of it; but whose fault is that? They may deem us stupid (bestes), as we think them. But Dupont de Nemours would not confess this stupidity, for one imagining he understood it. And to teach, if possible, to others somewhat of this language, he published translations of the songs of the nightingale (Chansons du Rossignol), and the Crows' Dictionary (Dictionnaire des Corbeaux). Mr. A. E. Knox says the disturbed raven cries "Oh!"

Captain M'Clure, the Arctic voyager, says the raven may be seen, when the winter is so cold that wine is frozen within a yard of the fire, winging his way through the air as vigorously as if he were breathing the soft and warm atmosphere of an English spring. Two ravens once established themselves as friends of the family in Mercer Bay for the sake of the scraps of food thrown to them by the men. But the ship's dog resenting this infringement of his vested rights, used to fly at them, trying to catch them with his mouth. Observing this, they were wont, just when the mess-tins were being cleared out on the dust-heap, to throw themselves intentionally in his way, and when he sprang at them fly only a few yards off; and when the dog made another run they made another flight, until they had lured, tempted, and provoked him to the shore a considerable distance. They then flew swiftly to the ship and the dust-heap, and had generally picked out the best scraps, and made no small way in devouring the whole, before the return of the outwitted and mortified-looking dog.

Instead of regarding ravens, crows, or rooks, as birds silly enough to be bamboozled by a fox, the tendency of serious narratives and authentic observations is to give us very high ideas of their intelligence. They have a very intense and a very intelligent hatred to foxes. Mr. Waterton says of the crow (C. corone), "Many an hour of delight do I experience, when, having mounted up to the top of a favourite oak which grows on the border of a swamp, I see him chasing the heron and the windhover through the liquid void until they are lost in the distance. Then again how eager is his pursuit!—how loud his croaking!—how inveterate his hostility!—when he has espied a fox stealing away from the hounds under the covert of some friendly hedge."

Rooks are said to be so very sagacious that

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they will not build their nests upon trees from which the bark has been peeled to mark them to be felled. But the explanation is very simple. Decaying trees become less and less elastic and more and more brittle, their topmost branches afford the birds less and less security for the safety of their nests. When choosing twigs to build their nests with they reject dead and brittle ones, and select the freshest and supplest they can tear off from vigorous trees. The insecurity of the brittle and rotten branches when proved by the winds, is to the rooks an intelligible enough notice to quit, or to avoid, without its being at all necessary to suppose that they can read a sign so arbitrary as the felling mark of the woodman.

The boldness and the wildness of this group of birds seem dependent chiefly on the treatment they experience from man, making them either familiar or wary. The hooded crow of Ceylon (C. splendens), for example, is described as equally audacious and fearful; audacious, because the natives rarely disturb him; and fearful, because he has seen his kindred murdered by the white man's gun. British rooks building near churches, mansions, or in cities, being but rarely fired at, I have pretended to fire at them with my stick, without in the least disturbing them, either in their rookeries or in the fields. The Ceylon hoodies, like the British rooks, build near public buildings. Near the Government House there is a rookery or hoodery in some hibiscus trees, a species of mallow, yielding useful fibres, such as sunhemp. These crows are rarely or never seen far from town; and in town they are most audacious. Mr. E. L. Layard says, if you leave your breakfast-table with the window open but for a single moment, on returning to it the rustle of his wings as he is flying off, the marks of his feet upon your white tablecloth, and the gashes of his beak in your pat of butter, prove the rapacity and the nimbleness of the marauder. As for the poor woman who bakes and sells cakes, called hopper or oppah, this crow is the plague of her life. He patiently watches her proceedings until the cake is cooked and laid in her open basket ready to be sold, or stolen. And then, if she chances but to look aside, a crow may be seen dropping softly down from the roof of her hut, and snatching the cake out of her basket. And woe befals her if she gives chase. For a flock of hoodies may then seize the opportunity of ransacking her cottage, robbing her dried fish, scattering her rice, upsetting her chilli, and smashing her glass and crockery. Mr. Layard has seen his boy's hand bleeding from the bite of a crow, which tried to snatch his buttered bread out of it; and yet if but a stick is pointed at one of these bold thieves, away it flies for two or three hundred yards, screeching the alarm to the whole rookery.

"What a brave soldier the raven is!" said an old Highlander once to Mr. Macgillivray; "he fights the eagle, who is four times his size." "But let us consider the matter," says this zealous ornithologist. "There goes the white-tailed eagle! Launched from the rock of Linir she advances along the cliffs on her way to the inland hills, where she expects to find a supply of food for her young. Now she is opposite the promontory of Ui, whence, croaking in fierce anger, rush two ravens. The eagle seems not to heed them; but they rapidly gain upon her, and separating as they come up in her wake, one ascends and the other glides beneath, menacing her and attempting to peck her. While she regards the one below, that above plunges towards her, the other in the mean time threatening vengeance below." But there seems to be more pestering than fighting in the attack.

The truth is, that several species of birds besides the skuas are garotters; and garotting is always, among birds as among men, a cowardly and rascally business. The white-headed eagle, the representative of the United States of America, was objected to by Benjamin Franklin because he is what is now called a garotter. Franklin wished some nobler bird to be selected than this bird of bad character, which does not get his living honestly, and is, besides, a rank coward, whom the little king-bird, not bigger than a sparrow, attacks boldly, and drives out of the district. Alexander Wilson has graphically described how the white-headed eagle garottes the fish-hawk, a kind of osprey. From some gigantic tree he surveys the shore and ocean, and seems calmly contemplating the snow-white gulls slowly winnowing the air; the busy sandpipers (tringæ) coursing along the sands; trains of ducks streaming over the surface; silent and watchful cranes intent and wading; and clamorous crows. High over all these hovers the fish-hawk, whose wide curvature of wing and sudden suspension in the air, shows that he is settling over some devoted victim of the deep. His eye kindles at the sight, and balancing himself with half-opened wing, the eagle watches the result. Down darts the osprey, the roar of his wings reaching the ear as he disappears and makes the foam surge around. When the fish-hawk emerges struggling with his prey and mounts into the air with screams of exultation, the American eagle gives chase, and soon gains on the fish-hawk. Each strains his utmost to mount above the other, displaying the most elegant and sublime evolutions, until the unencumbered eagle is just on the point of reaching his opponent, when, with a sudden scream, probably of despair and honest execration, the latter drops his fish; the eagle, poising himself for a moment as if to take more certain aim, descends like a whirlwind, snatches it in his grasp ere it reaches the water, and bears his ill-gotten booty silently away to the woods.

The white-headed eagle thus garottes the osprey as the skua garottes the gull, and Mr. Thomas Edward, of Banff, once saw a corby and two hoodies garotting a heron. Early in the summer of 1845 he was loitering in the hills of Boyndie, when he saw a heron laden with provisions for his family flying heavily homewards from the sea, pursued by three crows and a brace of magpies. Mr. Edward concealed him-

self beneath a furze-bush to witness the fight. The heron had gained an open space between two woods, and there the three garotters were determined he should stop and deliver. The chattering of the magpies, the cawing of the crows, and the screaming of the heron, added exciting sounds to the animation of the scene. The magpies descended quickly upon the ground and hopped about there, out of reach of the cuffs and pecks of battle; yet, as will be seen, they had a keen interest in sharing the spoils of war. The crows attacked the heron from three opposite points: one from above darted down on his head; a second assailed him in front, or sideways; and the third, from behind, seized the outstretched feet of the heron, and turned him topsy-turvy. Every somersault was hailed by all the black assailants with gesticulations and cries full of exultation, mirth, and glee. The heron, no doubt, looked ridiculous, as the robbed passengers of the coach looked to the highwaymen, and the rifled citizen looked to the garotters. During one of these somersaults the heron dropped something unperceived by the crows, which, however, was greedily snatched up by the magpies. Another somersault made him let fall a small fish, after which one of the crows flew. The odds being reduced to two to one, the heron made a vigorous attempt to get away; but, being baffled, he was compelled to drop an eel. Down flew both the crows after the eel, beginning to fight with each other as they descended. Meanwhile, the eel, reaching the ground, was pounced upon by the magpies. The crows, perceiving their folly, quickly dispossessed the magpies of the eel, which they tore asunder, and then each with a portion flew away towards the trees. The heron, winging his way with unusual rapidity, was already far in the distance, and little the worse, apparently, for the fray.

If the heron had descended on the ground he would have beaten the crows, and shown why the Greeks called him Spear-head. Mr. Edward was one day passing along the Green banks at Banff, when he heard a loud clamour from the opposite side of the river. A heron, with a live flounder in his beak, was surrounded by a crowd of blacknebs, hoodies, rooks, and jackdaws. The Scottish name for the heron is the craigie, a name descriptive of his long thin neck. But this flounder was far too large even for the swallowing capacity of this craigie's gullet. He was, therefore, compelled to lay it down upon the grass, putting one of his feet upon it, and watching his foes with a keen and wary glance. All the blacknebs preserved a respectful distance from the Spear-head. At length the heron took to flight with the plaice in his bill, followed by only two of the hoodies. Trying to snatch the fish from him, they harassed and pestered him so much that he was obliged to alight upon an embankment higher up the river, the hoodies alighting also a few yards from him. Dropping the flounder upon the grass, the heron stood erect, defying his pursuers. None of them approaching him, he managed to swallow the fish, and then once more took to flight; and the hoodies went after him, and were pecking him furiously, when a gamekeeper shot one of them, and the other sneaked off.

Mr. Edward on another occasion saw a heron give a hoodie a blow with his bill which sent him into the sea. It was at the mouth of the stream or burn of Boyndie. The report of a shot having raised a flock of sanderlings, hoodies, and a heron, three of the hoodies gave chase to the heron. Something attracting the attention of two of the hoodies, there was soon only one in pursuit, and he was descending trying to catch something, when the heron dealt him such a blow on the back as sent him souse into the sea. He had time to utter but one "caw," and then he was over head and ears. His feathers were so wet that he could not raise himself. Luckily for him, although the sea was smooth, there was a rough jabble in-shore, and the breeze and the tide bore him to some rocks, where he scrambled up and dried himself in the sun.

Ravens and crows are far more bellicose than rooks. Mr. W. H. Slaney, of Hatton Hall, relates how four corbies drove nearly two hundred rooks from nests which they had occupied for about fifteen years. This rookery was set up in an ash coppice, growing out of a pit at the corner of a meadow near Hatton Hall, and was a colony from a large one on the opposite side of the valley, which had been there time out of mind. Finding that they were annually decimated in the ash coppice, a few of them betook themselves to some large elm and fir trees overhanging Hatton Hall. Early in March, 1854, four or five nests had been completed, and many more begun, in the coppice, when it was observed that all the rooks were abandoning it and building their nests in the trees overhanging the Hall, and in the ancient rookery across the valley. And the explanation of this migration was found to be the invasion of the ash coppice by a couple of corby crows. Whenever a courageous rook or an inquisitive jackdaw went near the coppice, one or other of the corbies was sure to drive it away with fierce croakings. But corbies are very ill-famed in agricultural districts for their attacks upon game and lambs, and therefore orders were issued from the Hall to the gamekeeper to destroy the invaders. But it was easier said than done. In vain did the gamekeeper wait hid in the pit under the ash-trees early every morning and late every evening, for the corbies kept just beyond his reach. At last, getting a shot at one corby, he declared he had hit it, because it flew straight up into the clouds and he never saw anything more of it. Never, for several days more, could he get a chance, and corbies were seen driving away rooks just as before. Not to be outwitted by crows, the keeper tied a cat to a peg in the ground, and concealed himself in a convenient ambush. The crow, suspecting the cat of evil designs on her nest, began hovering and cawing over it. The cat, by plaintive mewings, protested innocence, and the corby, indignant at

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hypocrisy added to iniquity, grew more and more angry; and then, while making a near swoop, was shot. But the trick which was successful once was not successful twice, when tried with the companion crow. Another device was thought of. Eight large rats having been caught in the rabbit-traps, were placed within sight of the corby, and a large ferret was pinned down in the cat's place. Attracted by the chattering of the ferret unable to get at the rats, the corby flew within range and was shot. A steel trap baited with egg-shells, and put upon the top of a cropped hedge close by, killed a third corby. And thus the ash coppice was cleared of the invading corbies; and a few days afterwards the rooks began to return to it, only, however, to build there four or five nests where fifty or sixty had been.

Invasions and garottings, thefts and murders, taking place both among birds and men, I am happy to be able to say for rooks, crows, and ravens, and for herons alike of the cinerous and purple species, that, upon the whole, they earn their living honestly. Even the skuas, I may mention by the way, are not always garotters. The Rev. R. N. Dennis, rector of East Blatchington, Sussex, assures me that he has shot both Pomarine and Richardson's skuas upon floods, which were feeding on earthworms. Floods upon pastures during storms drown vast numbers of earthworms, which come up to the surface, and the skuas feed upon them. Like gulls, skuas throw up when wounded. Lord Clermont confirms this observation strikingly. On the sixth of June last, Lestris parasiticus, the Arctic skua, was shot while following a plough in a field five miles from Newry and three from the coast. The skua was picking up the worms laid bare by the plough. Remembering that the skuas usually get their living by garotting honest divers, it is pleasant to know that they sometimes try what an honest life is like.

The purple heron, the squacco heron, and the egrets, shade off from the herons to the bitterns. And here I may mention, that herons have been supposed to have an odour in their legs which attracts fish within reach of their beaks. Anglers used to mix their fat in the pastes which they used for baits. "And some affirm," says an old writer, "that any bait anointed with the marrow of the thigh-bone of a heron, is a great temptation to any fish. The scent from his legs was considered to be attracting to them when he waded in the water." What the common heron is said to do by appealing to the sense of smell, the Canadian blue heron does by working on the sense of sight. On the breast of this heron, covered by the long plumage of the neck, is a tuft of soft tumid feathers, which, when the long neck feathers are raised, and the tuft exposed, in the dark emits a phosphorescent light. The fishermen aver that when wading knee-deep in the water at night, the heron brings the fish within his reach by showing his light, just as the Indian does by placing his torch of pitch-pine in the prow of his canoe. On this principle, common to the Indian fisherman, the salmon spearers of Scotland, the Canadian blue heron, and many other fishers, the French have recently invented a new method of fishing. Kindling an electric light in the sea, the curious fish in crowds surround it, and whilst they are satisfying their scientific curiosity the French fishermen extinguish the light, and in the sudden darkness enclose them in their nets.

There is a consideration of which I submit ravens and crows ought to have the benefit. Mr. A. E. Knox has, in his Ornithological Rambles in Sussex, described a raven during long-continued frost looking the very picture of despair, as in pensive attitude and with muffled plumage his dusky figure may be noticed perched on some withered bough. Then, indeed,

Othello's occupation's gone,

and in his hour of need he migrates to the sea-coast, where he feeds on dead fish. Mr. Wolf has designed an illustration of this description, and certainly Othello, with his claws embedded in the snow and icicles, does look, from the standpoint of a comfortable fireside, not a little miserable. But Arctic voyagers tell us that the raven finds a hard frost, which even those of us who retain the keenest recollections of the Christmas-eve of 1860 cannot imagine, to be something enlivening and jolly. Sportsmen who have shot ravens, crows, or rooks in hard winters, have been astonished to find them in full flesh, fat and plump. The Rev. Leonard Jenyns, feeling some desire to know how rooks support themselves during severe frost, had one of them shot and brought to him. It was, he was surprised to find, in most excellent condition. The stomach and its accessories were covered with layers of fat. All this group of birds are omnivorous. A rook has been seen taking a fish out of the lake in Kensington Gardens, and devouring it upon the bank. But their special food consists of animal remains, and this food is most abundant in hard frosts. Cold is the caterer of death; and death is the caterer of the devourers of the dead. During severe weather, innumerable animals of all kinds benumbed with cold fall asleep, and sleep the sleep from which there is no waking. Birds are then found frozen to the branches of trees, stiff and dead. I once lived for three years with a clump of trees in a garden just before my bedroom window, which commanded a view enclosed only by distant hills. During the sleepless nights of a long illness, I learned to distinguish the notes of between thirty and forty different species of birds, and their different hours for beginning their chatterings, whistlings, and warblings. In the winter of 1853-4, when the news from the camps in the Crimea added miserable thoughts to the sufferings of every suffering British household, word came to my bedside one morning, through the pale lips of awe-stricken children and servants, that at least a dozen birds were to be seen upon the trees of the clump frozen and dead. On the Christmas-eve of 1860, a cat was frozen to death, and found next morning standing erect

on all fours in the snow. Most observers in fields and forests have wondered what comes of all the dead animals who die every winter. And the explanation is, that there exist groups of animals with constitutions to resist very intense cold, who instinctively prefer animal remains. The hard frost spreads their banquet; and in return they diminish the noxious gases which spread pestilence; whilst even in the instinct which prompts them to shorten the pain of dying birds and mammals there is beneficence.

MAKING FREE WITH A CHIEF.

It was almost all over with the Chariot of Fame, A 1 at Lloyd's for thirteen years, and two thousand tons burthen. Captain Barclay said so. Sam Johnson, the first mate, said so. All the crew agreed with Captain Barclay and Sam Johnson.

Only Heaven knew where we were; save that we knew too well that we were off a nasty coast on a dirty night.

A brazen sunset had brought on a three days' hurricane, and there we were, the pumps clogged, the crew worn out with working at the pumps, the hold full of water, the bulwarks washed away, labouring in the trough of a yeasty sea, and every plank creaking and groaning as if its heart were breaking. It was a pitch-dark September night, and we could not see even the bare poles against the sky; and even with the night-glass we could make out no coast, though we all of us pretty well knew that we should be on a lee shore in a few hours, if the wind did not go down, and the vessel answer her helm a little better.

It was about three bells, as near as may be, when Captain Barclay, a respectable God-fearing man as ever came out between the dock gates, called me down into his cabin.

"Martingale," says he, "you being supercargo, are not called upon to work at the pumps, no more than you are called upon to dip your hands in the tar bucket; but you have done it," says he, "and you're a brave honest fellow" (those were his very words), "and I thank you for it in the name of our employers; your life's a valuable one to the ship, and I insist on your turning into my berth—the sea breaks into yours—and sleeping till I call you when the dog watch comes on. No words, Martingale; turn in, and I'll tell the steward to bring you a stiff nor'-wester."

I could not very well refuse, for I was wet through and worn out, so I thanked him, and turned in.

He gave one look at a portrait of his wife that hung over the sofa in his cabin, took down his speaking-trumpet from the brackets over his desk, wished me good night, and went on deck again.

Three minutes afterwards, the steward's boy came in with the cold grog; the constant seas that the vessel shipped having put out the galley fire.

"Where is Mr. Johnson, William?" I said to the boy.

"He is at the pumps, sir, and he says he won't leave them till daybreak."

I drank the grog and lay down. The wind was so tremendous that it drowned all other noises; but in a moment I was dreaming of the old orchard at home in Lanark, and fancying myself listening to the burr of the old thrashing machine. The sea might roll mountains, the wind might threaten us with death, the Chariot of Fame might plunge and struggle; but I was asleep and at rest.

I suppose I must have slept six hours, for when I awoke the wind had gone down, and there was a dead calm and a silence so intense that I think it must have been that which awoke me. It was just daybreak, and the pale sunlight fell softly and cheerfully on the cabin wall, lighting up the picture of the captain's wife. Vexed at having slept so long, I leaped up, dressed as I was, and listened.

Not a sound, no noise of deck-cleaning, no patter of bare feet, no hearty cries, no pacing, no words of command, no running up and down the cabin stairs, no clattering of plates in the cabin.

I washed my face and was out of my berth in a moment. The fore-cabin was an inch deep in water, and the stairs were strewn with tangled ropes. I was up in three strides.

Gracious Heaven! till the last day I have to live, I shall never forget how my heart beat at the moment that I set foot on deck and saw that I was there, *alone*.

Yes, alone. There was not a soul left on board. A straw hat and a telescope lay by the wheel, but the wheel itself was broken and useless. By the galley door hung a tarpaulin coat and an axe, beside a shattered spar, a cask, and a pile of torn canvas.

As I fell on my knees in the utter despair of that moment, I heard a stout hearty voice cry from high above:

"Harry Martingale, belay there! I'm up aloft, overhauling the top hamper."

I looked, and to my intense delight saw the well-known face of Sam Johnson beaming down on me from the cross-trees. In a moment he was on deck at my side.

"This is a bad business," I said; "but they are not all gone, Sam?"

"Every man Jack, Harry," said he. "We were all at work cutting away spars an hour ago, when there came a great washing sea and broke over us; it licked 'em all up, and carried over every soul on 'em, Harry—captain, doctor, down even to the very steward's boy. Gone before you could say Jack Robinson; but there! It is no use crying for spilt milk. He was a good captain, and they were good messmates; but they're gone, and I thank God for sparing us. Where were you at that time? I thought you'd gone with the rest. Well, I am glad to see you, old boy; but come, we must bear a hand, for I tell you the old craft is going down by the head as fast as she can settle."

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It didn't do to waste time in talking at moments like that, so we set to, got a good bag of biscuit each, a revolver, some bullets, powder and caps, filled a flask with brandy, and then prepared to go ashore. For there lay the shore on the starboard bow: a long low line of sand-bank, with a few scrubby trees here and there in the hollows, but no cliffs or trees to mention.

It was not two hundred yards off, yet in my delight at finding Sam Johnson alive, I had never before turned my eyes that way.

"I am sure there are natives," said Sam, "for from the cross-trees I could see smoke rising over the scrub to the west."

How to get on shore was the point. At last Sam and I decided to lash a rope crossways round a likely cask which lay near the mast, and probably contained salt pork; and then, tying ourselves to it, to guide it with two rough paddles that I had cut out of the oars of the captain's gig. There was a strong ground swell rolling in green and bright, and the surf soon washed us in high and dry, cask and all.

When we turned and looked round, be hanged if the old Chariot of Fame hadn't gone down! All that was left of her was two or three big spars that wandered about in a helpless sort of inquiring way, and finally floated out of sight round the next headland.

"There goes a nice mouthful for the underwriters!" said Sam.

The first thing Sam did was to wring out his hair, and put his shoes to dry on a rock with a bit of stick in them to keep them from shrinking; he then in the handiest way possible took up a big stone to beat in the head of our pork cask, for, says he:

"We shall want a snack, Harry, about noon, and this junk and some fresh shell-fish, with a sip of brandy, will be a tidy meal enough."

So we pounded away, and at last got the head of the cask off, and when we got the head off, how our jaws dropped to find it was not pork but rosin! Now, a man can't live on rosin, and, as for myself, I felt ready to sit down and blubber.

"I'll be hanged," says Sam, after kicking the cask about in a rage, like a football, for ten minutes, "if I don't go and overhaul that village! You come with me, Harry. We can't spend all our lives on a sea-shore, eating rosin and mussels; besides, the mussels in these outlandish places ain't like the Liverpool mussels."

Off we went, and sure enough, in about a mile, we saw some huts in a clump of gum-trees, and beyond them a forest stretching as far as you could see, here and there opening out into green places like parks, then closing up again into woods.

Well, on we went, Sam first, for he was a better walker than I was, and when we reached the first hut he ran forward and looked through the chinks.

He came back on tiptoe, motioning me to be quiet, making faces like a clown, and stopping his mouth to prevent laughing.

"By the living jingo!" said he, "Harry, I don't know what sort of niggers we've got amongst; but, whatever they are, here's their dancing crib."

I stole on tiptoe to look. Sure enough there were some sixty niggers, men and women, with nothing particular on them except their great mops of oily black hair, and belts of strips of matting, rigged out for a regular dance.

The master of the ceremonies, who had his back turned to us, was dressed in the costume of 1830—long cinnamon-coloured swallow-tailed coat, frilled shirt, pumps, and claret-coloured pantaloons. Over this, he wore a sort of 'possum skin cloak, and he carried a sort of long white wand in his hand.

"Take your places, gentlemen, for a cotillon, La Mignonette Française; now all at ze once."

Here the fiddle struck up, and the sixty niggers began to dance and jabber, every other word sounding like "Golly, golly;" which is the name, therefore, which they went by henceforth with Sam Johnson. All the time the man with the violin went on dancing like a madman in among them, and shouting, "Ladies, moulinet to the right. Each couple allemande to the left. Now La Grande Chaine. La Promenade. Chassé. Balancé. Retour du Char. Tail of ze cat. Rigadoon. Poussette. Now ze great Round. Ver well."

Presently up runs a nigger from the shore and brought out the dancing-master, who very soon passed close to us, followed by all the niggers. We could see him now quite well; he was a tall lean old nankeen-coloured Frenchman, with thin long legs and cat-like face, remarkable for his hollow lantern cheeks, sunken eyes, and prominent cheek-bones, all crowned by a full curly Brutus wig, very dusty, and almost worn out.

We followed them at a distance, and hid behind a tree, from a spot where we could see all he did. As soon as the nigger who had brought the news led him to the cask, and he had stooped down and examined it, he gave a sort of shriek, took out a lump of the rosin, scraped his fiddle bow, and began dancing.

"Ladies, chain!" he cried, and away they went dancing round the cask as if they were all gone mad.

"They are as mad as March hares," said I. "Sam, I can't stand it any longer. I *must* speak, for there is no doubt about one thing, and that is, that the lubber is a civilised Christian, for he knows how to dance."

So out we stepped and walked straight up to the lubber, and told him about our vessel and how we were cast away. But the man didn't answer a word at first, he was so surprised.

"There, he doesn't know your lingo after all, Sam," said I; "do it by deaf and dumb signs." Then I tried him with the deaf and dumb alphabet, and went through a sort of ballet to show that we had been cast on shore, were hungry, and wanted a night's shelter.

"What for you make zose faces, gentlemen matelots," he said, breaking out all at once; "you are welcome to what I have of mine, what for you play ze fool? Come, I will tell you of my news at ze village."

In less than half an hour Sam and I were quite at home in the village, telling him of our shipwreck, and listening to our entertainer's own story over three stiff glasses of brandy-and-water, to which both our flasks contributed.

Our host, by name M. Hyacinthe Isidore Gallini, was, it appeared, a French dancing-master, who had been wrecked on the coast twenty years ago, about 1830; my story dates 1850. Gradually he had learnt their lingo, and ingratiated himself into their favour.

"I taught zem," he said, "gentlemen, to Balance and Rigadoon, Allemande, Moulinet. I taught zem Le Moulinet, Le Bouquet, La Rose, La Fantasie Liegeoise,—all ze fashionable cotillons that would civilise and amuse zem. I taught zem all ze words of my own language that related to my favourite art. I taught zem ze quadrille to perfection. They loved and honoured me for this; zey called me ze great Topinambow, which is their word for ze priest. They made me zeir king, and gave me zeir great mystery, ze petrified chief, to guard. I rule zem. I teach zem ze dances, which have become part of zeir religion, and the words and the directions in ze French and English. They look upon me as dropped from Heaven to teach zem cotillons. If I had not dance they would have kill me long ago. Ma foi, how I have taught zem to poussette; ma foi, how zey moulinet! Come, mes enfants, I will now show you ze petrified chief that this nigger people worship."

"Belay there! A *petrified nigger*," whispered Sam to me, as we followed Gallini; "wouldn't that please them at home, messmate?"

"Quiet, Sam," said I, observing something queer about his face as he spoke to me; and on we went, following Gallini to the place.

We soon came to the spot; it was a cave in a sandstone rock, so deep and dark that we had to enter it with lighted torches. The walls were covered with fantastic figures of men fighting, uncouth monsters, winged dragons, and all those sort of things you may see on signboards and state coaches.

At the extreme end of the cave lay the petrified chief, his face painted with vermilion, and his hair as like oakum as could be. There was a boomerang in his right hand, and a carved wooden club in his left; a pair of sailor's trousers was tied in a knot round his neck, and the rest of his body was wrapped in 'possum skins.

"It's as like our carpenter as one marlingspike's like another," said Sam to me, with a covetous look about his eyes.

Whether we did not admire the chief enough, I don't know, but from that time Gallini seemed always jealous of us, and tried to set the niggers against us: while we did on the other hand all we could to show them that we were worth as much as the old dancing-master.

Sam one day put out the glory of his cotillons for ever, by suddenly shouting out "Belay there!" and dashing into a hornpipe, such a one as even Wapping would have rejoiced at—a regular toe and heel, pulling and hauling hornpipe, with shivering trousers, hand in the side, shout, and everything complete.

The niggers were in raptures, and insisted on sacrificing a goat at the door of our tent in honour of Sam; upon which he rushed out, carried it off, and cooked it for his own dinner.

Gallini was going down as fast as mercury in rainy weather. We had all the songs and dancing now to ourselves, and we could not move without processions and sacrifices, which always ended well for Sam and me.

One day Sam and I cleaned up our revolvers and got our powder and bullets, and set to shooting at a calabash—just to frighten the niggers, and show them what fire-arms were. They leaped about like mad people when we hit the mark, as we took care to do every time, for I was behind the tree where the calabash hung, and if Sam missed I ran out and poked a hole in it before they could come up. They wanted to make us both kings, but Sam and I wouldn't have anything to do with it. You see, we had a different game on hand.

The night of the shooting, Gallini came and wanted to buy our pistols, but we wouldn't sell them; then he wanted to buy all our clothes to cut up into pantaloons and swallow-tailed coats; when we refused that too, he left in a rage, swearing at us in French.

Directly he left, Sam came up to me as if he wanted to whisper, and said, "Harry, that Frenchman don't mean us any good, and the sooner we cut it the better. But I tell you I'm not a going away without that petrified nigger. He'd make our fortune in the old country. Harry, are you game, for if so, the sooner we set to work the better."

"Never put off a good thing, Sam," said I; "here's my hand."

As soon as it was dark, off we went to the cave. Taking a horse to the entrance, we brought out the petrified nigger and tied him firm on it. Then we collected some grub in a bag, and struck off on the road leading to what we had been told was the nearest settlement on the Wullah-Nullah river. We calculated, that if we could make a thirty miles' march ahead, we should be pretty safe; we had tied up our hut so as to look as if we were asleep and did not want to be disturbed.

Off we started across a wild prairie half sandholes and half scrub. By the time the moon rose, we got safe under covert in a forest of gum-trees, through which we had ascertained our track lay.

There was just room for the horse along the native road between the trees, and there was no sound except now and then the scream of some bird far over our heads that our talking awoke, or the fall of some huge branches that now and then dropped with the noise of thunder, and seemed to shake all the forest:

"My eyes, Harry," said Sam, "if I think we shall ever get out again with our mummy! I only wish we'd got him passed clean through the Customs."

"They'll raise our hair if they catch us," said

TEXAS TECH LIBRARY

I. "I think, Sam, we'd better drop the stone nigger, both get on the horse, and push on as fast as we can for the nearest township."

"No, no," said Sam; "I'll never let go of this nigger. Only let me get him home to the Minories, and my fortun's made."

I wasn't going to quarrel with a messmate, so I gave in, and when the moon went down we halted till daybreak, slept by turns, took a meal, and reloaded the horse.

We had just got our traps tied on at daybreak, and all snug under hatches, when I found that that rascal Gallini, or some nigger he had employed, had stolen our pistols.

The second night we had just a mile or so to get clear of the timber, and were beginning to think we were quite safe, when the beast of a horse fell lame and gave in.

"He's shamming," said I.

"No," says Sam, looking at her from stem to stern in a hopeless way. "No, Harry," said he, "that craft's back's broken, and she's going down."

"Well," said I, "bear a hand then with the biscuit-bag, and leave the nigger to be his own tombstone."

Sam didn't answer for a moment; he was down on his knees, seeing if the red paint had at all rubbed off the mummy's face; then he rose up, and said in a awful deep voice to be sure, "No, Harry, no, not if I knows it. If you like to leave me on a lee shore, though I didn't expect it of you, do; but if I go, the stone nigger goes with me. Every one has his opportunity, as our ship carpenter used to say, and this is mine. The stone nigger and I keep together till we either get to Davy's locker, or the Lively Whaler in Ratcliffe Highway."

I was just going to tell him that we'd pull in the same boat whatever the weather was, when there came a cry from the wood behind us like the cry of a mad dog. Then, came two more cries, then three, then a dozen. Last of all, there came a sort of shaking howl that sounded like nothing but "Golly, golly, golly!" and grew louder every minute. It was the niggers after us. Presently, out they came across the prairie in a long black line like a pack of dogs, and ran straight at us with clubs and spears, knocking us both down with boomerangs, and stunning us.

When we came to, they were dancing cotillons round us, and chasséing and moulineting for joy at getting back their petrified chief. They had taken us back several miles to Gallini, and had lighted a fire to sleep round for the night. Presently, Gallini came to us, cursed us, pushed us about with his feet (for we were tied), danced round us, and then told us that we were to be sacrificed early in the morning, in atonement to the great stone chief—as the niggers called the mummy. I don't suppose we had to thank him for much, but one of the black fellows brought us some victuals and left us.

By-and-by, the thieves, worn out with the chase they'd had, fell asleep round their fire. As soon as they were all sound, Sam nudged me, and, slipping his hands out of the ropes, drew his clasp knife out of his pocket, cut off his remaining tackling, and then cut mine.

"It's dirty weather with us," I whispered to Sam, "and there's such a sea round us, Sam, as no boat can live in."

"Never you mind," said Sam. "You bear a hand with the stone nigger. I saw some smoke, Harry, over those trees to the left, three hours ago, and that's what I'm going to make for."

Well, we went up to where the stone nigger was, and hoisting him between us, set off as quietly as we could in the direction where Sam had seen the smoke. The stone nigger was a heavy load, but we staggered on with him for half a mile, till we saw a fire and some men sitting round it. When we approached, they started up and seized their guns.

"Friends or enemies?" cried one of them.

"Friends, ahoy!" said Sam, letting down his end of the stone mummy as tenderly as if it was alive. "Friends! and Great Britons! Just got out of the hands of the bloodthirsty niggers."

"You're welcome," cried all the men; "we're Englishmen too. Come to our fire. We've got rifles enough here, to stop five hundred niggers; but what have *you* got there?"

"Well, it's a long yarn," said Sam, "to tell you what we're laden with. It's no baccy nor any smuggled goods, but as beautiful a stone nigger as ever you set eyes on."

Nothing could have been kinder than the explorers were, and in a few minutes there was Sam and I sitting by the fire on the petrified man, drinking our horns of grog, and singing:

The heart of a true British sailor.

The explorers had pack-horses, and these bore the petrified man alternately. I and Sam made a good thing of exhibiting the chief in the settlement, and then we shipped him in the Happy Return for England, where we did still better. And those who want to see him, and hear our story fuller and better told, had better come and call on us at No. 14, Davis-street, New Cut, where the stone nigger is now exhibiting with great success at twopence a head.

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