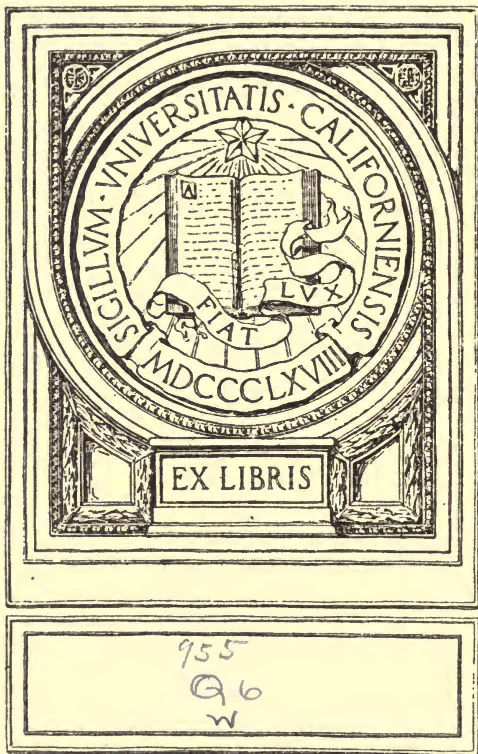

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Wandering Heath

Wandering Heath

Stories, Studies, and Sketches

by

Q

They call my plant the Wandering Heath;
It wanders only in the West:
So flower the purple thoughts beneath
The sailor's, miner's, mother's breast.
O hearts of exile!—still at home,
And ever turning while ye roam!

Fifth Thousand

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The stories in this volume made their first appearance in England as follows: "The Roll-Call of the Reef" in *The Idler;* "The Looe Die-hards" in *The Illustrated London News,* where it was entitled "The Power o' Music"; "Jetsom" and "The Bishop of Eucalyptus" in *The Pall Mall Magazine;* "Visitors at the Gunnel Rock" in *The Strand Magazine;* "Flowing Source" in *The Woman at Home;* and the rest, with one exception, in the friendly pages of *The Speaker.*

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WANDERING HEATH

PROLOGUE

"What is the use of it?" the Poet demanded peevishly—it was New Year's Day in the morning. "People don't read my poetry when I have gone to the trouble of writing it!"

"The more shame to them," said his wife.

"But, my dear, you know you never read it yourself."

"Oh, that is altogether different. Besides you *are* improving, are you not?" She asked it a trifle anxiously, but the question set him off at once.

"In twenty years' time——" he began eagerly.

"—the boy will be at college." She laid down her needle and embroidery and, gazing into the fire, let her hands lie idle in her lap

TO VIMU AMAGOLIAO

"You might think of me."

"I thought," she answered, "you were doing that."

"Of yourself, then."

"In twenty years' time——" She broke off with the faintest possible sigh.

The Poet jumped up and went to his writing-desk. "That reminds me," he said, and produced a folded scrap of paper. "I wrote it last night. It's a sort of a little New Year's present—you need not read it, you know."

"But I will": and she took the paper and read—

UPON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Now winds of winter glue
Their tears upon the thorn,
And earth has voices few,
And those forlorn.

And 'tis our solemn night
When maidens sand the porch,
And play at Jack's Alight
With burning torch,

Or cards, or Kiss i' the Ring—
While ashen faggots blaze,
And late wassailers sing
In miry ways.

Then, dear my wife, be blithe
To bid the New Year hail
And welcome—plough, drill, scythe,
And jolly flail.

For though the snows he'll shake
Of winter from his head,
To settle, flake by flake,
On ours instead;

Yet we be wreathèd green
Beyond his blight or chill,
Who kissed at seventeen
And worship still.

We know not what he'll bring:
But this we know to-night—
He doth prepare the Spring
For our delight.

With birds he'll comfort us,
With blossoms, balms, and bees
With brooks, and odorous
Wild breath o' the breeze.

Come then, O festal prime!
With sweets thy bosom fill,
And dance it, dripping thyme,
On Lantick hill.

West wind, awake! and comb
Our garden, blade from blade—
We, in our little home,
Sit unafraid.

—"Why, I quite like it!" said she.

THE ROLL-CALL OF THE REEF

"Yes, sir," said my host the quarryman, reaching down the relics from their hook in the wall over the chimney-piece; "they 've hung there all my time, and most of my father's. The women won't touch 'em; they 're afraid of the story. So here they 'll dangle, and gather dust and smoke, till another tenant comes and tosses 'em out o' doors for rubbish. Whew! 't is coarse weather."

He went to the door, opened it, and stood studying the gale that beat upon his cottage-front, straight from the Manacle Reef. The rain drove past him into the kitchen, aslant like threads of gold silk in the shine of the wreckwood fire. Meanwhile by the same firelight I examined the relics on my knee. The metal of each was tarnished out of knowledge. But the trumpet was evidently an old cavalry trumpet, and the threads of its parti-coloured sling, though frayed and dusty, still hung together. Around the side-

drum, beneath its cracked brown varnish, I could hardly trace a royal coat-of-arms, and a legend running—*Per Mare per Terram*—the motto of the Marines. Its parchment, though coloured and scented with wood-smoke, was limp and mildewed; and I began to tighten up the straps—under which the drumsticks had been loosely thrust—with the idle purpose of trying if some music might be got out of the old drum yet.

But as I turned it on my knee, I found the drum attached to the trumpet-sling by a curious barrel-shaped padlock, and paused to examine this. The body of the lock was composed of half a dozen brass rings, set accurately edge to edge; and, rubbing the brass with my thumb, I saw that each of the six had a series of letters engraved around it.

I knew the trick of it, I thought. Here was one of those word padlocks, once so common; only to be opened by getting the rings to spell a certain word, which the dealer confides to you.

My host shut and barred the door, and came back to the hearth.

"'T was just such a wind—east by south—that brought in what you 've got between your hands. Back in the year 'nine it was; my father has told me the tale a score o' times. You 're twisting rounds the rings, I see. But you 'll never guess the word. Parson Kendall, he made the word, and locked down a couple o' ghosts in their graves with it; and when his time came, he went to his own grave and took the word with him."

"Whose ghosts, Matthew?"

"You want the story, I see, sir. My father could tell it better than I can. He was a young man in the year 'nine, unmarried at the time, and living in this very cottage just as I be. That 's how he came to get mixed up with the tale."

He took a chair, lit a short pipe, and unfolded the story in a low musing voice, with his eyes fixed on the dancing violet flames.

"Yes, he 'd ha' been about thirty year old in January, of the year 'nine. The storm got up in the night o' the twenty-first o' that month. My father was dressed and out long before daylight;

he never was one to 'bide in bed, let be that the gale by this time was pretty near lifting the thatch over his head. Besides which, he'd fenced a small 'taty-patch that winter, down by Lowland Point, and he wanted to see if it stood the night's work. He took the path across Gunner's Meadow—where they buried most of the bodies afterwards. The wind was right in his teeth at the time, and once on the way (he's told me this often) a great strip of ore-weed came flying through the darkness and fetched him a slap on the cheek like a cold hand. But he made shift pretty well till he got to Lowland, and then had to drop upon his hands and knees and crawl, digging his fingers every now and then into the shingle to hold on, for he declared to me that the stones, some of them as big as a man's head, kept rolling and driving past till it seemed the whole foreshore was moving westward under him. The fence was gone, of course; not a stick left to show where it stood; so that, when first he came to the place, he thought he must have missed his bearings. My father, sir, was a very religious man; and if he reckoned

the end of the world was at hand—there in the great wind and night, among the moving stones —you may believe he was certain of it when he heard a gun fired, and, with the same, saw a flame shoot up out of the darkness to windward, making a sudden fierce light in all the place about. All he could find to think or say was, 'The Second Coming—The Second Coming! The Bridegroom cometh, and the wicked He will toss like a ball into a large country!' and being already upon his knees, he just bowed his head and 'bided, saying this over and over.

"But by'm-by, between two squalls, he made bold to lift his head and look, and then by the light—a bluish colour 't was—he saw all the coast clear away to Manacle Point, and off the Manacles, in the thick of the weather, a sloop-of-war with top-gallants housed, driving stern foremost towards the reef. It was she, of course, that was burning the flare. My father could see the white streak and the ports of her quite plain as she rose to it, a little outside the breakers, and he guessed easy enough that her captain had just managed to wear ship, and was

trying to force her nose to the sea with the help of her small bower anchor and the scrap or two of canvas that hadn't yet been blown out of her. But while he looked, she fell off, giving her broadside to it foot by foot, and drifting back on the breakers around Carn dû and the Varses. The rocks lie so thick thereabouts, that 't was a toss up which she struck first; at any rate, my father couldn't tell at the time, for just then the flare died down and went out.

"Well, sir, he turned then in the dark and started back for Coverack to cry the dismal tidings—though well knowing ship and crew to be past any hope; and as he turned, the wind lifted him and tossed him forward 'like a ball,' as he'd been saying, and homeward along the foreshore. As you know, 't is ugly work, even by daylight, picking your way among the stones there, and my father was prettily knocked about at first in the dark. But by this 't was nearer seven than six o'clock, and the day spreading. By the time he reached North Corner, a man could see to read print; hows'ever, he looked neither out to sea nor towards Coverack, but

headed straight for the first cottage—the same that stands above North Corner to-day. A man named Billy Ede lived there then, and when my father burst into the kitchen bawling, 'Wreck! wreck!' he saw Billy Ede's wife, Ann, standing there in her clogs, with a shawl over her head, and her clothes wringing wet.

"'Save the chap!' says Billy Ede's wife, Ann. 'What d' 'ee mean by crying stale fish at that rate?'

"'But 't is a wreck, I tell 'ee. I 've a-zeed 'n!'

"'Why, so 't is,' says she, 'and I 've a-zeed 'n too; and so has everyone with an eye in his head.'

"And with that she pointed straight over my father's shoulder, and he turned; and there, close under Dolor Point, at the end of Coverack town, he saw another wreck washing, and the point black with people, like emmets, running to and fro in the morning light. While we stood staring at her, he heard a trumpet sounded on board, the notes coming in little jerks, like a bird rising against the wind; but faintly, of course, because of the distance and

the gale blowing—though this had dropped a little.

"'She's a transport," said Billy Ede's wife, Ann, 'and full of horse soldiers, fine long men. When she struck they must ha' pitched the hosses over first to lighten the ship, for a score of dead hosses had washed in afore I left, half an hour back. An' three or four soldiers, too—fine long corpses in white breeches and jackets of blue and gold. I held the lantern to one. Such a straight young man.'

"My father asked her about the trumpeting.

"'That's the queerest bit of all. She was burnin' a light when me an' my man joined the crowd down there. All her masts had gone; whether they carried away, or were cut away to ease her, I don't rightly know. Anyway, there she lay 'pon the rocks with her decks bare. Her keelson was broke under her and her bottom sagged and stove, and she had just settled down like a sitting hen—just the leastest list to starboard; but a man could stand there easy. They had rigged up ropes across her.

from bulwark to bulwark, an' beside these the men were mustered, holding on like grim death whenever the sea made a clean breach over them, an' standing up like heroes as soon as it passed. The captain an' the officers were clinging to the rail of the quarter-deck, all in their golden uniforms, waiting for the end as if 't was King George they expected. There was no way to help, for she lay right beyond cast of line, though our folk tried it fifty times. And beside them clung a trumpeter, a whacking big man, an' between the heavy seas he would lift his trumpet with one hand, and blow a call; and every time he blew, the men gave a cheer. There (she says)—hark 'ee now—there he goes agen! But you won't hear no cheering any more, for few are left to cheer, and their voices weak. Bitter cold the wind is, and I reckon it numbs their grip o' the ropes, for they were dropping off fast with every sea when my man sent me home to get his breakfast. Another wreck, you say? Well, there 's no hope for the tender dears, if 't is the Manacles. You 'd better run down and help yonder; though 't is little

help that any man can give. Not one came in alive while I was there. The tide 's flowing, an' she won't hold together another hour, they say.'

"Well, sure enough, the end was coming fast when my father got down to the point. Six men had been cast up alive, or just breathing— a seaman and five troopers. The seaman was the only one that had breath to speak; and while they were carrying him into the town, the word went round that the ship's name was the *Despatch*, transport, homeward bound from Corunna, with a detachment of the 7th Hussars, that had been fighting out there with Sir John Moore. The seas had rolled her further over by this time, and given her decks a pretty sharp slope; but a dozen men still held on, seven by the ropes near the ship's waist, a couple near the break of the poop, and three on the quarter-deck. Of these three my father made out one to be the skipper; close by him clung an officer in full regimentals—his name, they heard after, was Captain Duncanfield; and last came the tall trumpeter; and if you 'll believe me, the

fellow was making shift there, at the very last, to blow '*God save the King*.' What's more, he got to '*Send us victorious*' before an extra big sea came bursting across and washed them off the deck—every man but one of the pair beneath the poop—and *he* dropped his hold before the next wave; being stunned, I reckon. The others went out of sight at once, but the trumpeter—being, as I said, a powerful man as well as a tough swimmer—rose like a duck, rode out a couple of breakers, and came in on the crest of the third. The folks looked to see him broke like an egg at their feet; but when the smother cleared, there he was, lying face downward on a ledge below them; and one of the men that happened to have a rope round him—I forget the fellow's name, if I ever heard it—jumped down and grabbed him by the ankle as he began to slip back. Before the next big sea, the pair were hauled high enough to be out of harm, and another heave brought them up to grass. Quick work; but master trumpeter wasn't quite dead; nothing worse than a cracked head and three staved ribs. In twenty

minutes or so they had him in bed, with the doctor to tend him.

"Now was the time—nothing being left alive upon the transport—for my father to tell of the sloop he'd seen driving upon the Manacles. And when he got a hearing, though the most were set upon salvage, and believed a wreck in the hand, so to say, to be worth half a dozen they couldn't see, a good few volunteered to start off with him and have a look. They crossed Lowland Point; no ship to be seen on the Manacles, nor anywhere upon the sea. One or two was for calling my father a liar. 'Wait till we come to Dean Point,' said he. Sure enough, on the far side of Dean Point, they found the sloop's mainmast washing about with half a dozen men lashed to it — men in red jackets — every mother's son drowned and staring; and a little farther on, just under the Dean, three or four bodies cast up on the shore, one of them a small drummer-boy, side-drum and all; and, near by, part of a ship's gig, with 'H.M.S. *Primrose*' cut on the stern-

board. From this point on, the shore was littered thick with wreckage and dead bodies — the most of them Marines in uniform; and in Godrevy Cove, in particular, a heap of furniture from the captain's cabin, and amongst it a water-tight box, not much damaged, and full of papers, by which, when it came to be examined next day, the wreck was easily made out to be the *Primrose*, of eighteen guns, outward bound from Portsmouth, with a fleet of transports for the Spanish War—thirty sail, I've heard, but I've never heard what became of them. Being handled by merchant skippers, no doubt they rode out the gale and reached the Tagus safe and sound. Not but what the captain of the *Primrose* (Mein was his name) did quite right to try and club-haul his vessel when he found himself under the land: only he never ought to have got there if he took proper soundings. But it 's easy talking.

"The *Primrose*, sir, was a handsome vessel —for her size, one of the handsomest in the King's service—and newly fitted out at Ply-

mouth Dock. So the boys had brave pickings from her in the way of brass-work, ship's instruments, and the like, let alone some barrels of stores not much spoiled. They loaded themselves with as much as they could carry, and started for home, meaning to make a second journey before the preventive men got wind of their doings and came to spoil the fun. But as my father was passing back under the Dean, he happened to take a look over his shoulder at the bodies there. 'Hullo,' says he, and dropped his gear, 'I do believe there's a leg moving!' And, running fore, he stooped over the small drummer-boy that I told you about. The poor little chap was lying there, with his face a mass of bruises and his eyes closed: but he had shifted one leg an inch or two, and was still breathing. So my father pulled out a knife and cut him free from his drum—that was lashed on to him with a double turn of Manilla rope—and took him up and carried him along here, to this very room that we're sitting in. He lost a good deal by this, for when he went back to fetch his bundle the

preventive men had got hold of it, and were thick as thieves along the foreshore; so that 't was only by paying one or two to look the other way that he picked up anything worth carrying off: which you 'll allow to be hard seeing that he was the first man to give news of the wreck.

"Well, the inquiry was held, of course, and my father gave evidence; and for the rest they had to trust to the sloop's papers, for not a soul was saved besides the drummer-boy, and he was raving in a fever, brought on by the cold and the fright. And the seamen and the five troopers gave evidence about the loss of the *Despatch*. The tall trumpeter, too, whose ribs were healing, came forward and kissed the Book; but somehow his head had been hurt in coming ashore, and he talked foolish-like, and 't was easy seen he would never be a proper man again. The others were taken up to Plymouth, and so went their ways; but the trumpeter stayed on in Coverack; and King George, finding he was fit for nothing, sent him down a trifle of a pension after a while—enough

to keep him in board and lodging, with a bit of tobacco over.

"Now the first time that this man—William Tallifer, he called himself—met with the drummer-boy, was about a fortnight after the little chap had bettered enough to be allowed a short walk out of doors, which he took, if you please, in full regimentals. There never was a soldier so proud of his dress. His own suit had shrunk a brave bit with the salt water; but into ordinary frock an' corduroys he declared he would not get—not if he had to go naked the rest of his life; so my father, being a good-natured man and handy with the needle, turned to and repaired damages with a piece or two of scarlet cloth cut from the jacket of one of the drowned Marines. Well, the poor little chap chanced to be standing, in this rig-out, down by the gate of Gunner's Meadow, where they had buried two score and over of his comrades. The morning was a fine one, early in March month; and along came the cracked trumpeter, likewise taking a stroll.

"'Hullo!' says he; 'good mornin'! And what might you be doin' here?'

"'I was a-wishin',' says the boy, 'I had a pair o' drum-sticks. Our lads were buried yonder without so much as a drum tapped or a musket fired; and that's not Christian burial for British soldiers.'

"'Phut!' says the trumpeter, and spat on the ground; 'a parcel of Marines!'

"The boy eyed him a second or so, and answered up: 'If I'd a tab of turf handy, I'd bung it at your mouth, you greasy cavalryman, and learn you to speak respectful of your betters. The Marines are the handiest body of men in the service.'

"The trumpeter looked down on him from the height of six foot two, and asked: 'Did they die well?'

"'They died very well. There was a lot of running to and fro at first, and some of the men began to cry, and a few to strip off their clothes. But when the ship fell off for the last time, Captain Mein turned and said something to Major Griffiths, the commanding officer on

board, and the Major called out to me to beat to quarters. It might have been for a wedding, he sang it out so cheerful. We'd had word already that 't was to be parade order, and the men fell in as trim and decent as if they were going to church. One or two even tried to shave at the last moment. The Major wore his medals. One of the seamen, seeing I had hard work to keep the drum steady—the sling being a bit loose for me and the wind what you remember—lashed it tight with a piece of rope; and that saved my life afterwards, a drum being as good as a cork until 't is stove. I kept beating away until every man was on deck; and then the Major formed them up and told them to die like British soldiers, and the chaplain read a prayer or two—the boys standin' all the while like rocks, each man's courage keeping up the other's. The chaplain was in the middle of a prayer when she struck. In ten minutes she was gone. That was how they died, cavalryman.'

"'And that was very well done, drummer of the Marines. What's your name?'

"'John Christian.'

"'Mine is William George Tallifer, trumpeter, of the 7th Light Dragoons—the Queen's Own. I played "*God Save the King*" while our men were drowning. Captain Duncanfield told me to sound a call or two, to put them in heart; but that matter of "*God Save the King*" was a notion of my own. I won't say anything to hurt the feelings of a Marine, even if he 's not much over five-foot tall; but the Queen's Own Hussars is a tearin' fine regiment. As between horse and foot, 't is a question o' which gets the chance. All the way from Sahagun to Corunna 't was we that took and gave the knocks—at Mayorga and Rueda, and Bennyventy.' (The reason, sir, I can speak the names so pat is that my father learnt 'em by heart afterwards from the trumpeter, who was always talking about Mayorga and Rueda and Bennyventy.) 'We made the rear-guard, under General Paget, and drove the French every time; and all the infantry did was to sit about in wine-shops till we whipped 'em out, an' steal an' straggle an' play the tom-fool in

general. And when it came to a stand-up fight at Corunna, 't was the horse, or the best part of it, that had to stay sea-sick aboard the transports, an' watch the infantry in the thick o' the caper. Very well they behaved, too; 'specially the 4th Regiment, an' the 42nd Highlanders an' the Dirty Half-Hundred. Oh, ay; they're decent regiments, all three. But the Queen's Own Hussars is a tearin' fine regiment. So you played on your drum when the ship was goin' down? Drummer John Christian, I 'll have to get you a new pair o' drum-sticks for that.'

"Well, sir, it appears that the very next day the trumpeter marched into Helston, and got a carpenter there to turn him a pair of box-wood drum-sticks for the boy. And this was the beginning of one of the most curious friendships you ever heard tell of. Nothing delighted the pair more than to borrow a boat off my father and pull out to the rocks where the *Primrose* and the *Despatch* had struck and sunk; and on still days 't was pretty to hear them out there off the Manacles, the drummer playing his

tattoo—for they always took their music with them—and the trumpeter practising calls, and making his trumpet speak like an angel. But if the weather turned roughish, they 'd be walking together and talking; leastwise, the youngster listened while the other discoursed about Sir John's campaign in Spain and Portugal, telling how each little skirmish befell; and of Sir John himself, and General Baird and General Paget, and Colonel Vivian, his own commanding officer, and what kind of men they were; and of the last bloody stand-up at Corunna, and so forth, as if neither could have enough.

"But all this had to come to an end in the late summer; for the boy, John Christian, being now well and strong again, must go up to Plymouth to report himself. 'T was his own wish (for I believe King George had forgotten all about him), but his friend wouldn't hold him back. As for the trumpeter, my father had made an arrangement to take him on as a lodger as soon as the boy left; and on the morning fixed for the start, he was up at the door here by five o'clock, with his trumpet

slung by his side, and all the rest of his kit in a small valise. A Monday morning it was, and after breakfast he had fixed to walk with the boy some way on the road towards Helston, where the coach started. My father left them at breakfast together, and went out to meat the pig, and do a few odd morning jobs of that sort. When he came back, the boy was still at table, and the trumpeter standing here by the chimney-place with the drum and trumpet in his hands, hitched together just as they be at this moment.

"'Look at this,' he says to my father, showing him the lock; 'I picked it up off a starving brass-worker in Lisbon, and it is not one of your common locks that one word of six letters will open at any time. There's *janius* in this lock; for you've only to make the rings spell any six-letter word you please, and snap down the lock upon that, and never a soul can open it—not the maker, even—until somebody comes along that knows the word you snapped it on. Now, Johnny here's goin', and he leaves his drum behind him; for, though he can make pretty music on it,

the parchment sags in wet weather, by reason of the sea-water getting at it; an' if he carries it to Plymouth, they 'll only condemn it and give him another. And, as for me, I shan't have the heart to put lip to the trumpet any more when Johnny's gone. So we've chosen a word together, and locked 'em together upon that; and, by your leave, I 'll hang 'em here together on the hook over your fireplace. Maybe Johnny 'll come back; maybe not. Maybe, if he comes, I 'll be dead an' gone, an' he 'll take 'em apart an' try their music for old sake's sake. But if he never comes, nobody can separate 'em; for nobody beside knows the word. And if you marry and have sons, you can tell 'em that here are tied together the souls of Johnny Christian, drummer of the Marines, and William George Tallifer, once trumpeter of the Queen's Own Hussars. Amen.'

"With that he hung the two instruments 'pon the hook there; and the boy stood up and thanked my father and shook hands; and the pair went forth of the door, towards Helston.

"Somewhere on the road they took leave of one another; but nobody saw the parting, nor heard what was said between them. About three in the afternoon the trumpeter came walking back over the hill; and by the time my father came home from the fishing, the cottage was tidied up and the tea ready, and the whole place shining like a new pin. From that time for five years he lodged here with my father, looking after the house and tilling the garden; and all the while he was steadily failing, the hurt in his head spreading, in a manner, to his limbs. My father watched the feebleness growing on him, but said nothing. And from first to last neither spake a word about the drummer, John Christian; nor did any letter reach them, nor word of his doings.

"The rest of the tale you 'm free to believe, sir, or not, as you please. It stands upon my father's words, and he always declared he was ready to kiss the Book upon it before judge and jury. He said, too, that he never had the wit to make up such a yarn; and he defied anyone

to explain about the lock, in particular, by any other tale. But you shall judge for yourself.

"My father said that about three o'clock in the morning, April fourteenth of the year 'fourteen, he and William Tallifer were sitting here, just as you and I, sir, are sitting now. My father had put on his clothes a few minutes before, and was mending his spiller by the light of the horn lantern, meaning to set off before daylight to haul the trammel. The trumpeter hadn't been to bed at all. Towards the last he mostly spent his nights (and his days, too) dozing in the elbow-chair where you sit at this minute. He was dozing then (my father said), with his chin dropped forward on his chest, when a knock sounded upon the door, and the door opened, and in walked an upright young man in scarlet regimentals.

"He had grown a brave bit, and his face was the colour of wood-ashes; but it was the drummer, John Christian. Only his uniform was different from the one he used to wear, and the figures '38' shone in brass upon his collar.

"The drummer walked past my father as if he never saw him, and stood by the elbow-chair and said:

"'Trumpeter, trumpeter, are you one with me?'

"And the trumpeter just lifted the lids of his eyes, and answered, 'How should I not be one with you, drummer Johnny—Johnny boy? The men are patient. 'Till you come, I count; while you march, I mark time; until the discharge comes.'

"'The discharge has come to-night,' said the drummer, 'and the word is Corunna no longer'; and stepping to the chimney-place, he unhooked the drum and trumpet, and began to twist the brass rings of the lock, spelling the word aloud, so—C-O-R-U-N-A. When he had fixed the last letter, the padlock opened in his hand.

"'Did you know, trumpeter, that when I came to Plymouth they put me into a line regiment?'

"'The 38th is a good regiment,' answered the old Hussar, still in his dull voice. "I went back with them from Sahagun to

Corunna. At Corunna they stood in General Fraser's division, on the right. They behaved well.'

"'But I 'd fain see the Marines again,' says the drummer, handing him the trumpet; 'and you—you shall call once more for the Queen's Own. Matthew,' he says, suddenly, turning on my father—and when he turned, my father saw for the first time that his scarlet jacket had a round hole by the breast-bone, and that the blood was welling there—'Matthew, we shall want your boat.'

"Then my father rose on his legs like a man in a dream, while they two slung on, the one his drum, and t' other his trumpet. He took the lantern, and went quaking before them down to the shore, and they breathed heavily behind him; and they stepped into his boat, and my father pushed off.

"'Row you first for Dolor Point,' says the drummer. So my father rowed them out past the white houses of Coverack to Dolor Point, and there, at a word, lay on his oars. And the trumpeter, William Tallifer, put his trumpet to

his mouth and sounded the *Revelly*. The music of it was like rivers running.

"'They will follow,' said the drummer. 'Matthew, pull you now for the Manacles.'

"So my father pulled for the Manacles, and came to an easy close outside Carn dû. And the drummer took his sticks and beat a tattoo, there by the edge of the reef; and the music of it was like a rolling chariot.

"'That will do,' says he, breaking off; 'they will follow. Pull now for the shore under Gunner's Meadow.'

"Then my father pulled for the shore, and ran his boat in under Gunner's Meadow. And they stepped out, all three, and walked up to the meadow. By the gate the drummer halted and began his tattoo again, looking out towards the darkness over the sea.

"And while the drum beat, and my father held his breath, there came up out of the sea and the darkness a troop of many men, horse and foot, and formed up among the graves; and others rose out of the graves and formed up—drowned Marines with bleached faces, and pale

Hussars riding their horses, all lean and shadowy. There was no clatter of hoofs or accoutrements, my father said, but a soft sound all the while, like the beating of a bird's wing, and a black shadow lying like a pool about the feet of all. The drummer stood upon a little knoll just inside the gate, and beside him the tall trumpeter, with hand on hip, watching them gather; and behind them both my father, clinging to the gate. When no more came, the drummer stopped playing, and said, 'Call the roll.'

"Then the trumpeter stepped towards the end man of the rank and called, 'Troop-Sergeant-Major Thomas Irons!' and the man in a thin voice answered, 'Here!'

"'Troop-Sergeant-Major Thomas Irons, how is it with you?'

"The man answered, 'How should it be with me? When I was young, I betrayed a girl; and when I was grown, I betrayed a friend, and for these things I must pay. But I died as a man ought. God save the King!'

"The trumpeter called to the next man

'Trooper Henry Buckingham!' and the next man answered, 'Here!'

"'Trooper Henry Buckingham, how is it with you?'

"'How should it be with me? I was a drunkard, and I stole, and in Lugo, in a wine-shop, I knifed a man. But I died as a man should. God save the King!'

"So the trumpeter went down the line; and when he had finished, the drummer took it up, hailing the dead Marines in their order. Each man answered to his name, and each man ended with 'God save the King!' When all were hailed, the drummer stepped back to his mound and called:

"'It is well. You are content, and we are content to join you. Wait yet a little while.'

"With this he turned and ordered my father to pick up the lantern, and lead the way back. As my father picked it up, he heard the ranks of dead men cheer and call, 'God save the King!' all together, and saw them waver and fade back into the dark, like a breath fading off a pane.

"But when they came back here to the kitchen, and my father set the lantern down, it seemed they'd both forgot about him. For the drummer turned in the lantern-light—and my father could see the blood still welling out of the hole in his breast—and took the trumpet-sling from around the other's neck, and locked drum and trumpet together again, choosing the letters on the lock very carefully. While he did this he said:

"'The word is no more Corunna, but Bayonne. As you left out an "n" in Corunna, so must I leave out an "n" in Bayonne.' And before snapping the padlock, he spelt out the word slowly—'B-A-Y-O-N-E.' After that, he used no more speech; but turned and hung the two instruments back on the hook; and then took the trumpeter by the arm; and the pair walked out into the darkness, glancing neither to right nor left.

"My father was on the point of following, when he heard a sort of sigh behind him; and there, sitting in the elbow-chair, was the very trumpeter he had just seen walk out by the

door! If my father's heart jumped before, you may believe it jumped quicker now. But after a bit, he went up to the man asleep in the chair, and put a hand upon him. It was the trumpeter in flesh and blood that he touched; but though the flesh was warm, the trumpeter was dead.

"Well, sir, they buried him three days after; and at first my father was minded to say nothing about his dream (as he thought it). But the day after the funeral, he met Parson Kendall coming from Helston market: and the parson called out: 'Have 'ee heard the news the coach brought down this mornin'?' 'What news?' says my father. 'Why, that peace is agreed upon.' 'None too soon,' says my father. 'Not soon enough for our poor lads at Bayonne,' the parson answered. 'Bayonne!' cries my father, with a jump. 'Why, yes'; and the parson told him all about a great sally the French had made on the night of April 13th. 'Do you happen to know if the 38th Regiment was engaged?' my father asked. 'Come, now,' said Parson Kendall,

'I didn't know you was so well up in the campaign. But, as it happens, I *do* know that the 38th was engaged, for 't was they that held a cottage and stopped the French advance.'

"Still my father held his tongue; and when, a week later, he walked into Helston and bought a *Mercury* off the Sherborne rider, and got the landlord of the 'Angel' to spell out the list of killed and wounded, sure enough, there among the killed was Drummer John Christian, of the 38th Foot.

"After this, there was nothing for a religious man but to make a clean breast. So my father went up to Parson Kendall and told the whole story. The parson listened, and put a question or two, and then asked:

"'Have you tried to open the lock since that night?'

"'I han't dared to touch it,' says my father.

"'Then come along and try.' When the parson came to the cottage here, he took the things off the hook and tried the lock. 'Did he say "*Bayonne*"? The word has seven letters.'

"'Not if you spell it with one "n" as *he* did,' says my father.

"The parson spelt it out—B-A-Y-O-N-E. 'Whew!' says he, for the lock had fallen open in his hand.

"He stood considering it a moment, and then he says, 'I tell you what. I shouldn't blab this all round the parish, if I was you. You won't get no credit for truth-telling, and a miracle 's wasted on a set of fools. But if you like, I'll shut down the lock again upon a holy word that no one but me shall know, and neither drummer nor trumpeter, dead nor alive, shall frighten the secret out of me.'

"'I wish to gracious you would, parson,' said my father.

"The parson chose the holy word there and then, and shut the lock back upon it, and hung the drum and trumpet back in their place. He is gone long since, taking the word with him. And till the lock is broken by force, nobody will ever separate those twain."

THE LOOE DIE-HARDS

Captain Pond, of the East and West Looe Volunteer Artillery (familiarly known as the Looe Die-hards), put his air-cushion to his lips and blew. This gave his face a very choleric and martial expression.

Nevertheless, above his suffused and distended cheeks his eyes preserved a pensive melancholy as they dwelt upon his Die-hards gathered in the rain below him on the long-shore, or Church-end, wall. At this date (November 3, 1809) the company numbered seventy, besides Captain Pond and his two subalterns; and of this force four were out in the boat just now, mooring the practice-mark—a barrel with a small red flag stuck on top; one, the bugler, had been sent up the hill to the nine-pounder battery, to watch and sound a call as soon as the target was ready; a sixth, Sergeant Fugler, lay at home in bed, with the senior lieutenant (who happened also to be the local doctor) in

attendance. Captain Pond clapped a thumb over the orifice of his air-cushion, and heaved a sigh as he thought of Sergeant Fugler. The remaining sixty-four Die-hards, with their fire-locks under their greatcoats, and their collars turned up against the rain, lounged by the embrasures of the shore-wall, and gossiped dejectedly, or eyed in silence the blurred boat bobbing up and down in the grey blur of the sea.

"Such coarse weather I hardly remember to have met with for years," said Uncle Israel Spettigew, a cheerful sexagenarian who ranked as efficient on the strength of his remarkable eyesight, which was keener than most boys'. "The sweep from over to Polperro was cleanin' my chimbley this mornin', and he told me in his humorous way that with all this rain 't is so much as he can do to keep his face dirty—hee-hee!"

Nobody smiled. "If you let yourself give way to the enjoyment of little things like that," observed a younger gunner gloomily, "one o' these days you 'll find yourself in a better land

like the snuff of a candle. 'T is a year since the Company 's been allowed to move in double time, and all because you can't manage a step o' thirty-six inches 'ithout getting the palpitations."

"Well-a-well, 't is but for a brief while longer —a few fleeting weeks, an' us Die-hards shall be as though we had never been. So why not be cheerful? For my part, I mind back in 'seventy-nine, when the fleets o' France an' Spain assembled an' come up agen' us—sixty-six sail o' the line, my sonnies, besides frigates an' corvettes to the amount o' twenty-five or thirty, all as plain as the nose on your face: an' the alarm guns goin', up to Plymouth, an' the signals hoisted at Maker Tower—a bloody flag at the pole an' two blue 'uns at the outriggers. Four days they laid to, an' I mind the first time I seed mun, from this very place as it might be where we 'm standin' at this moment, I said 'Well, 't is all over with East Looe this time!' I said: 'an' when 't is over, 't is over, as Joan said by her weddin'.' An' then I spoke them verses by royal Solomon—Wisdom two, six to nine. 'Let

us fill oursel's wi' costly wine an' ointments,' I said: 'an' let no flower o' the spring pass by us. Let us crown oursel's wi' rosebuds, afore they be withered: let none of us go without his due part of our voluptuousness'——"

"Why, you old adage, that's what Solomon makes th' *ungodly* say!" interrupted young Gunner Oke, who had recently been appointed parish clerk, and happened to know.

"As it happens," Uncle Issy retorted, with sudden dignity—"as it happens, I *was* ungodly in them days. The time I'm talkin' about was August 'seventy-nine; an' if I don't mistake, your father an' mother, John Oke, were courtin' just then, an' 'most too shy to confide in each other about havin' a parish clerk for a son."

"Times hev' marvellously altered in the meanwhile, to be sure," put in Sergeant Pengelly of the Sloop Inn.

"Well, then," Uncle Issy continued, without pressing his triumph, "''T is all over with East Looe,' I said, 'an' this is a black day for King Gearge,' an' then I spoke them verses o' Solomon.

'Let none of us,' I said, 'go without his due part of our voluptuousness'; and with that I went home and dined on tatties an' bacon. It hardly seems a thing to be believed at this distance o' time, but I never relished tatties an' bacon better in my life than that day—an' yet not meanin' the laste disrespect to King Gearge. Disrespect? If his Majesty only knew it, he 've no better friend in the world than Israel Spettigew. God save the King!"

And with this Uncle Issy pulled off his cap and waved it round his head, thereby shedding a *moulinet* of raindrops full in the faces of his comrades around.

This was observed by Captain Pond, standing on the platform above, beside Thundering Meg, the big 24-pounder, which with four 18-pounders on the shore-wall formed the lower defences of the haven.

"Mr. Clogg," he called to his junior lieutenant, "tell Gunner Spettigew to put on his hat at once. Ask him what he means by taking his death and disgracing the company."

The junior lieutenant—a small farmer from

Talland parish—touched his cap, spread his hand suddenly over his face and sneezed.

"Hullo! You've got a cold."

"No, sir. I often sneezes like that, and no reason for it whatever."

"I've never noticed it before."

"No, sir. I keeps it under so well as I can. A great deal can be done sometimes by pressing your thumb on the upper lip."

"Ah, well! So long as it's not a cold——" returned the Captain, and broke off to arrange his air-cushion over the depressed muzzle of Thundering Meg. Hereupon he took his seat, spread the lappels of his great-coat over his knees, and gave way to gloomy reflection.

Sergeant Fugler was at the bottom of it. Sergeant Fugler, the best marksman in the Company, was a hard drinker, with a hobnailed liver. He lay now in bed with that hobnailed liver, and the Doctor said it was only a question of days. But why should this so extraordinarily discompose Captain Pond, who had no particular affection for Fugler, and knew, besides, that all men—and especially hard drinkers—are mortal?

The answer is that the East and West Looe Volunteer Artillery was no ordinary Company. When, on the 16th of May, 1803, King George told his faithful subjects, who had been expecting the announcement for some time, that the Treaty of Amiens was no better than waste paper, public feeling in the two Looes rose to a very painful pitch. The inhabitants used to assemble before the post-office, to hear the French bulletins read out; and though it was generally concluded that they held much falsehood, yet everybody felt misfortune in the air. Rumours flew about that a diversion would be made by sending an army into the Duchy to draw the troops thither while the invaders directed their main strength upon London. Quiet villagers, therefore, dwelt for the while in a constant apprehension, fearing to go to bed lest they should awake at the sound of the trumpet, or in the midst of the French troops; scarcely venturing beyond sight of home lest, returning, they should find the homestead smoking and desolate. Each man had laid down the plan he should pursue. Some were to drive off the cattle,

others to fire the corn. While the men worked in the fields, their womankind—young maids and grandmothers, and all that could be spared from domestic work—encamped above the cliffs, wearing red cloaks to scare the Frenchmen, and by night kept big bonfires burning continually. Amid this painful disquietude of the public mind "the great and united Spirit of the British People armed itself for the support of their ancient Glory and Independence against the unprincipled Ambition of the French Government." In other words, the Volunteer movement began. In the Duchy alone no less than 8,362 men enrolled themselves in thirty Companies of foot, horse, and artillery, as well out of enthusiasm as to escape the general levy that seemed probable—so mixed are all human actions.

Of these the Looe Company was neither the greatest nor the least. It had neither the numerical strength of the Royal Stannary Artillery (1,115 men and officers) nor the numerical eccentricity of the St. German's Cavalry, which consisted of forty troopers, all told, and eleven officers, and hunted the fox thrice a week during

the winter months under Lord Eliot, Captain and M.F.H. The Looe Volunteers, however, started well in the matter of dress, which consisted of a dark-blue coat and pantaloons, with red facings and yellow wings and tassels, and a white waistcoat. The officers' sword-hilts were adorned with prodigious red and blue tassels, and the blade of Captain Pond's, in particular, bore the inscription, "*My Life's Blood for the Two Looes!*"—a legend which we must admit to be touching, even while we reflect that the purpose of the weapon was not to draw its owner's life-blood.

As a matter of mere history, this devoted blade had drawn nobody's blood; since, in the six years that followed their enlistment, the Looe Die-hards had never been given an opportunity for a brush with their country's hereditary foes. How, then, did they acquire their proud title?

It was the Doctor's discovery; and perhaps, in the beginning, professional pride may have had something to do with it; but his enthusiasm was quickly caught up by Captain Pond and communicated to the entire Company.

"Has it ever occurred to you, Pond," the Doctor began, one evening in the late summer of 1808, as the two strolled homeward from parade, "to reflect on the rate of mortality in this Company of yours? Have you considered that in all these five years since their establishment not a single man has died?"

"Why the deuce should he?"

"But look here: I've worked it out on paper, and the mean age of your men is thirty-four years, or some five years more than the mean age of the entire population of East and West Looe. You see, on the one hand, you enlist no children, and on the other, you've enlisted several men of ripe age, because you're accustomed to them and know their ways—which is a great help in commanding a Company. But this makes the case still more remarkable. Take any collection of seventy souls the sum of whose ages, divided by seventy, shall be thirty-four, and by all the laws of probability three, at least, ought to die in the course of a year. I speak, for the moment, of civilians. In the military profession," the Doctor

continued, with perfect seriousness, "especially in time of war, the death-rate will be enormously heightened. But"—with a flourish of the hand —"I waive that. I waive even the real, if uncertainly estimated, risk of handling, twice or thrice a week and without timidity or particular caution, the combustibles and explosives supplied us by Government. And still I say that we might with equanimity have beheld our ranks thinned during these five years by the loss of fifteen men. And we have not lost a single one! It is wonderful!"

"War is a fearful thing," commented Captain Pond, whose mind moved less nimbly than the Doctor's.

"Dash it all, Pond! Can't you see that I'm putting the argument on a peace footing? I tell you that in five years of peace any ordinary Company of the same size would have lost at least fifteen men."

"Then all I can say is that peace is a fearful thing, too."

"But don't you see that at this moment you're commanding the most remarkable

Company in the Duchy, if not in the whole of England?"

"I do," answered Captain Pond, flushing. "It 's a responsibility, though. It makes a man feel proud; but, all the same, I almost wish you hadn't told me."

Indeed at first the weight of his responsibility counteracted the Captain's natural elation. It lifted, however, at the next Corporation dinner, when the Doctor made public announcement of his discovery in a glowing speech, supporting his rhetoric by extracts from a handful of statistics and calculations, and ending, "Gentlemen, we know the motto of the East and West Looe Volunteer Artillery to be '*Never Say Die!*' but seeing, after five years' trial of them, that they never *do* die, what man (I ask) will not rejoice to belong to such a Company? What man would not be proud *to command it?*"

After this, could Captain Pond lag behind? His health was drunk amid thunders of applause. He rose: he cast timidity to the winds: he spoke, and while he spoke, wondered at his own enthusiasm. Scarcely had he made an end

before his fellow-townsmen caught him off his feet and carried him shoulder high through the town by the light of torches. There were many aching heads in the two Looes next morning; but nobody died: and from that night Captain Pond's Company wore the name of "The Die-hards."

All went well at first; for the autumn closed mildly. But with November came a spell of north-easterly gales, breeding bronchial discomfort among the aged; and Black Care began to dog the Commander. He caught himself regretting the admission of so many gunners of riper years, although the majority of these had served in His Majesty's Navy, and were by consequence the best marksmen. They weathered the winter, however; and a slight epidemic of whooping-cough, which broke out in the early spring, affected none of the Die-hards except the small bugler, and he took it in the mildest form. The men, following the Doctor's lead, began to talk more boastfully than ever. Only the Captain shook his head, and his eyes wore a wistful look, as though he listened continually

for the footstep of Nemesis—as, indeed, he did. The strain was breaking him. And in August, when word came from headquarters that, all danger of invasion being now at an end, the Looe Volunteer Artillery would be disbanded at the close of the year, he tried in vain to grieve. A year ago he would have wept in secret over the news. Now he went about with a solemn face and a bounding heart. A few months more and then——

And then, almost within sight of goal, Sergeant Fugler had broken down. Everyone knew that Fugler drank prodigiously; but so had his father and grandfather, and each of them had reached eighty. The fellow had always carried his liquor well enough, too. Captain Pond looked upon it almost as a betrayal.

"I don't know what folks' constitutions are coming to in these days," he kept muttering, on this morning of November the 3rd, as he sat on the muzzle of Thundering Meg and dangled his legs.

And then, glancing up, he saw the Doctor coming from the town along the shore-wall, and

read evil news at once. For many of the Die-hards stopped the Doctor to question him, and stood gloomy as he passed on. It was popularly said in the two Looes, that "if the Doctor gave a man up, that man might as well curl up his toes then and there."

Catching sight of his Captain on the platform, the Doctor bent his steps thither, and they were slow and inelastic.

"Tell me the worst," said Captain Pond.

"The worst is that he 's no better; no, the worst of all is that he knows he 's no better. My friend, between ourselves, it 's only a question of a day or two."

Silence followed for half a minute, the two officers avoiding each other's eyes.

"He has a curious wish," the Doctor resumed, still with his face averted and his gaze directed on the dull outline of Looe Island, a mile away. "He says he knows he 's disgracing the Company, but he 's anxious, all the same, to have a military funeral: says if you can promise this, he 'll feel in a way that he 's forgiven."

"He shall have it, of course."

"Ah, but that's not all. You remember, a couple of years back, when they had us down to Pendennis Castle for a week's drill, there was a funeral of a Sergeant-Major in the Loyal Meneage; and how the band played a sort of burial tune ahead of the body? Well, Fugler asked me if you couldn't manage this Dead March, as he calls it, as well. He can whistle the tune if you want to know it. It seems it made a great impression on him."

"Then the man must be wandering! How the dickens can we manage a Dead March without a band?—and we haven't even a fife and drum."

"That's what I told him. I suppose we couldn't do anything with the church musicians."

"There's only one man in the Company who belongs to the gallery, and that's Uncle Issy Spettigew: and he plays the bass-viol. I doubt if you can play the Dead March on a bass-viol, and I'm morally certain you can't play it and walk with it too. I suppose we can't borrow a band from another Company?"

"What, and be the mock of the Duchy?—after all our pride! I fancy I see you going over to Troy and asking Browne for the loan of his band. 'Hullo!' he'd say, 'I thought you never had such a thing as a funeral over at Looe!' I can hear the fellow chuckle. But I wish something could be done, all the same. A trifle of pomp would draw folks' attention off our disappointment."

Captain Pond sighed and rose from the gun; for the bugle was sounding from the upper battery.

"Fall in, gentlemen, if you please!" he shouted. His politeness in addressing his Company might be envied even by the "Blues."

The Doctor formed them up and told them off along the sea-wall, as if for inspection. "Or-der arms!" "Fix bayonets!" "Shoul-der arms!" Then with a glance of inquiry at his Captain, who had fallen into a brown study. "Rear rank, take open order!"

"No, no," interposed the Captain, waking up and taking a guess at the sun's altitude in the

grey heavens. "We 're late this morning: better march 'em up to the battery at once."

Then, quickly re-forming them, he gave the word, "By the left! Quick march!" and the Die-hards swung steadily up the hill towards the platform where the four nine-pounders grinned defiance to the ships of France.

As a matter of fact, this battery stood out of reach of harm, with the compensating disadvantage of being able to inflict none. The reef below would infallibly wreck any ship that tried to approach within the point-blank range of some 270 yards, and its extreme range of ten times that distance was no protection to the haven, which lay round a sharp corner of the cliff. But the engineer's blunder was never a check upon the alacrity of the Die-hards, who cleaned, loaded, rammed home, primed, sighted, and blazed away with the precision of clockwork and the ardour of Britons, as though aware that the true strength of a nation lay not so much in the construction of her fortresses as in the spirit of her sons.

Captain Pond halted, re-formed his men

upon the platform, and, drawing a key from his pocket, ordered Lieutenant Clogg to the store-hut, with Uncle Issy in attendance, to serve out the ammunition, rammers, sponges, water-buckets, etc.

"But the door's unlocked, sir," announced the lieutenant, with something like dismay.

"Unlocked!" echoed the Doctor.

The Captain blushed.

"I could have sworn, Doctor, I turned the key in the lock before leaving last Thursday. I think my head must be going. I've been sleeping badly of late—it's this worry about Fugler. However, I don't suppose anybody——"

A yell interrupted him. It came from Uncle Issy, who had entered the store-hut, and now emerged from it as if projected from a gun.

"THE FRENCH! THE FRENCH!"

For two terrible seconds the Die-hards eyed one another. Then someone in the rear rank whispered, "An ambush!" The two ranks began to waver—to melt. Uncle Issy, with head down and shoulders arched, was already stumbling down the slope towards the town. In

another ten seconds the whole Company would be at his heels.

The Doctor saved their reputation. He was as pale as the rest; but a hasty remembrance of the cubic capacity of the store-hut told him that the number of Frenchmen in ambush there could hardly be more than half a dozen.

"Halt!" he shouted; and Captain Pond shouted "Halt!" too, adding, "There 'll be heaps of time to run when we find out what 's the matter."

The Die-hards hung, still wavering, upon the edge of the platform.

"For my part," the Doctor declared, "I don't believe there 's anybody inside."

"But there is, Doctor! for I saw him myself just as Uncle Issy called out," said the second lieutenant.

"Was it only *one* man that you saw?" demanded Captain Pond.

"That 's all. You see, it was this way: Uncle Issy stepped fore, with me a couple of paces behind him thinking of nothing so little as bloodshed and danger. If you 'll believe me,

these things was the very last in my thoughts. Uncle Issy rolls aside the powder-cask, and what do I behold but a man ducking down behind it! 'He's firing the powder,' thinks I, 'and here endeth William George Clogg!' So I shut my eyes, not willing to see my gay life whisked away in little portions; though I feared it must come. And then I felt Uncle Issy flee past me like the wind. But I kept my eyes tight till I heard the Doctor here saying there wasn't anybody inside. If you ask me what I think about the whole matter, I say, putting one thing with another, that 't is most likely some poor chap taking shelter from the rain."

Captain Pond unsheathed his sword and advanced to the door of the hut. "Whoever you be," he called aloud and firmly, "you 've got no business there; so come out of it, in the name of King George!"

At once there appeared in the doorway a little round-headed man in tattered and mud-soiled garments of blue cloth. His hair and beard were alike short, black, and stubbly; his eyes large and feverish, his features smeared

with powder and a trifle pinched and pale. In his left hand he carried a small bundle, wrapped in a knotted blue kerchief: his right he waved submissively towards Captain Pond.

"See now," he began, "I give up. I am taken. Look you."

"I think you must be a Frenchman," said Captain Pond.

"Right. It is war: you have taken a Frenchman. Yes?"

"A spy?" the Captain demanded more severely.

"An escaped prisoner, more like," suggested the Doctor; "broken out of Dartmoor, and hiding here for a chance to slip across."

"Monsieur le Lieutenant has guessed," the little man answered, turning affably to the Doctor. "A spy? No. It is not on purpose that I find me near your fortifications—oh, not a bit! A prisoner more like, as Monsieur says. It is three days that I was a prisoner, and now look here, a prisoner again. Alas! will Monsieur le Capitaine do me the honour to confide the name of his corps so gallant?"

"The Two Looes."

"*La Toulouse!* But it is singular that we also have a Toulouse——"

"Hey?" broke in Second Lieutenant Clogg.

"I assure Monsieur that I say the truth."

"Well, go on; only it don't sound natural,"

"Not that I have seen it"—("Ha!" commented Mr. Clogg)—"for it lies in the south, and I am from the north: Jean Alphonse Marie Trinquier, instructor of music, Rue de la Madeleine quatr'-vingt-neuf, Dieppe."

"Instructor of music?" echoed Captain Pond and the Doctor quickly and simultaneously, and their eyes met.

"And *Directeur des Fêtes Périodiques* to the Municipality of Dieppe. All the Sundays, you comprehend, upon the sands—*poum poum!* while the citizens *se promènent sur la plage.* But all is not gay in this world. Last winter a terrible misfortune befell me. I lost my wife—my adored Philomène. I was desolated, inconsolable. For two months I could not take up my *cornet-à-piston.* Always when I blew—pouf!—the tears came also. Ah, what memories!

Hippolyte, my—what you call it—my *beau-frère* came to me and said, 'Jean Alphonse, you must forget.' I say, 'Hippolyte, you ask that which is impossible.' 'I will teach you,' says Hippolyte: 'To-morrow night I sail for Jersey, and from Jersey I cross to Dartmouth, in England, and you shall come with me.' Hippolyte made his living by what you call the Free Trade. This was far down the coast for him, but he said the business with Rye and Deal was too dangerous for a time. Next night we sailed. It was his last voyage. With the morning the wind changed, and we drove into a fog. When we could see again, *peste!*—there was an English frigate. She sent down her cutter and took the rest of us; but not Hippolyte—poor Hippolyte was shot in the spine of his back. Him they cast into the sea, but the rest of us they take to Plymouth, and then the War Prison on the moor. This was in May, and there I rest until three days ago. Then I break out—*je me sauve.* How? It is my affair: for I foresee, Messieurs, I shall now have to do it over again. I am sot. I gain the coast here at night. I am weary, *je*

n'en puis plus. I find this *cassine* here: the door is open: I enter *pour faire un petit somme.* Before day I will creep down to the shore. A comrade in the prison said to me, 'Go to Looe. I know a good Cornishman there——'"

"And you overslept yourself," Captain Paul briskly interrupted, alert as ever to protect the credit of his Company. He was aware that several of the Die-hards, in extra-military hours, took an occasional trip across to Guernsey: and Guernsey is a good deal more than half-way to France.

"The point is," observed the Doctor, "that you play the cornet."

"It is certain that I do so, monsieur; but how that can be the point——"

"And instruct in music?"

"Decidedly!"

"Do you know the Dead March?"

M. Trinquier was unfeignedly bewildered.

Said Captain Pond: "Listen while I explain. You are my prisoner, and it becomes my duty to send you back to Dartmoor under escort. But you are exhausted; and notwithstanding my

detestation of that infernal tyrant, your master, I am a humane man. At all events, I 'm not going to expose two of my Die-hards to the risks of a tramp to Dartmoor just now—I wouldn't turn out a dog in such weather. It remains a question what I am to do with you in the meanwhile. I propose that you give me your parole that you will make no attempt to escape, let us say, for a month: and on receiving it I will at once escort you to my house, and see that you are suitably clothed, fed, and entertained."

"I give it willingly, M. le Capitaine. But how am I to thank you?"

"By playing the Dead March upon the *cornet-à-piston* and teaching others to do the same."

"That seems a singular way of showing one's gratitude. But why the Dead March, monsieur? And, excuse me, there is more than one Dead March. I myself, *par exemple*, composed one to the memory of my adored Philomène but a week before Hippolyte came with his so sad proposition."

"I doubt if that will do. You see," said

Captain Pond, lifting his voice for the benefit of the Die-hards, who by this time were quite as sorely puzzled as their prisoner, "we are about to bury one of our Company, Sergeant Fugler——"

"Ah! he is dead?"

"He is dying," Captain Pond pursued, the more quickly since he now guessed, not without reason, that Fugler was the "good Cornishman" to whose door M. Trinquier had been directed. "He is dying of a hobnailed liver. It is his wish to have the Dead March played at his burying."

"He whistled the tune over to me," said the Doctor; "but plague take me if I can whistle it to you. I 've no ear, but I 'd know it again if I heard it. Dismal isn't the word for it."

"It will be Handel. I am sure it will be Handel—the Dead March in his *Saul*."

"In his what?"

"In his oratorio of *Saul*. Listen—*poum, poum, prrr, poum*——"

"Be dashed, but you 've got it!" cried the Doctor, delighted; "though you do give it a sort

of foreign accent. But I daresay that won't be so noticeable on the key-bugle."

"But about this key-bugle, monsieur? And the other instruments?—not to mention the players."

"I 've been thinking of that," said Captain Pond. "There 's Butcher Tregaskis has a key-bugle. He plays 'Rule Britannia' upon it when he goes round with the suet. He 'll lend you that till we can get one down from Plymouth. A drum, too, you shall have. Hockaday's trader calls here to-morrow on her way to Plymouth; she shall bring both instruments back with her. Then we have the church musicians—Peter Tweedy, first fiddle; Matthew John Ede, second ditto; Thomas Tripconey, scorpion——"

"Serpent," the Doctor corrected.

"Well, it 's a filthy thing to look at, anyway. Israel Spettigew, bass-viol; William Henry Phippin, flute; and William Henry Phippin's eldest boy Archelaus to tap the triangle at the right moment. That boy, sir, will play the triangle almost as well as a man grown."

"Then, monsieur, take me to your house.

Give me a little food and drink, pen, ink, and paper, and in three hours you shall have *la partition.*"

Said the Doctor, "That 's all very well, Pond, but the church musicianers can't march with their music, as you told me just now."

"I 've thought of that, too. We 'll have Miller Penrose's covered three-horse waggon to march ahead of the coffin. Hang it in black and go slow, and all the musicianers can sit around inside and play away as merry as grigs."

"The cover 'll give the music a sort of muffly sound; but that," Lieutenant Clogg suggested, "will be all the more fitty for a funeral."

"So it will, Clogg, so it will. But we 're wasting time. I suppose you won't object, sir, to be marched down to my house by the Company? It 's the regular thing in case of taking a prisoner, and you 'll be left to yourself as soon as you get to my door."

"Not at all," said M. Trinquier amiably.

"Then, gentlemen, form in. The practice is put off. And when you get home, mind you

F 2

change your stockings, all of you. We 're in luck's way this morning, but that 's no reason for recklessness."

So M. Trinquier, sometime Director of Periodical Festivities to the Municipality of Dieppe, was marched down into East Looe, to the wonder and delight of the inhabitants, who had just recovered from the shock of Gunner Spettigew's false alarm, and were in a condition to be pleased with trifles. As the Company tramped along the street, Captain Pond pointed out the Town Hall to his prisoner.

"That will be the most convenient place to hold your practices. And that is Fugler's house, just opposite."

"But we cannot practise without making a noise."

"I hope not, indeed. Didn't I promise you a big drum?"

"But in that case the sick man will hear. It will disturb his last moments."

"Confound the fellow, he can't have everything! If he 'd asked for peace and quiet, he should have had it. But he didn't: he asked

for a Dead March. Don't you trouble about Fugler. He 's not an unreasonable man. The only question is, if the Doctor here can keep him going until you 're perfect with the tune."

And this was the question upon which the men of Looe, and especially the Die-hards, hung breathless for the next few days. M. Trinquier produced his score; the musicianers came forward eagerly; Miller Penrose promised his waggon; the big drum arrived from Plymouth in the trader *Good Intent*, and was discharged upon the quay amid enthusiasm. The same afternoon, at four o'clock, M. Trinquier opened his first practice in the Town Hall, by playing over the air of the "Dead Marching Soul"—(to this the popular mouth had converted the name)—upon his cornet, just to give his pupils a general notion of it.

The day had been a fine one, with just that suspicion of frost in the air which indicates winter on the warm south-western coast. While the musicians were assembling the Doctor stepped across the street to see how the invalid would take it. Fugler—a sharp-featured man of

about fifty, good-looking, with blue eyes and a tinge of red in his hair—lay on his bed with his mouth firmly set and his eyes resting, wistfully almost, on the last wintry sunbeam that floated in by the geraniums on the window-ledge. He had not heard the news. For five days now he expected nothing but the end, and lay and waited for it stoically and with calm good temper.

The Doctor took a seat by the bed-side, and put a question or two. They were answered by Mrs. Fugler, who moved about the small room quietly, removing, dusting and replacing the china ornaments on the chimneypiece. The sick man lay still, with his eyes upon the sunbeam.

And then very quietly and distinctly the notes of M. Trinquier's key-bugle rose outside on the frosty air.

The sick man started, and made as if to raise himself on his elbow, but quickly sank back again—perhaps from weakness, perhaps because he caught the Doctor's eye and the Doctor's reassuring nod. While he lay back and listened, a faint flush crept into his face, as though the

blood ran quicker in his weak limbs; and his blue eyes took a new light altogether.

"That's the tune, hey?" the Doctor asked.

"That's the tune."

"Dismal, ain't it?"

"Ay, it's that." His fingers were beating time on the counterpane.

"That's our new bandmaster. He's got to teach it to the rest, and you've got to hold out till they pick it up. Whew! I'd no idea music could be so dismal."

"Hush 'ee, Doctor, do! till he've a-done. 'T is like rain on blossom." The last notes fell. "Go you down, Doctor, and say my duty and will he please play it over once more, and Fugler 'll gi'e 'em a run for their money."

The Doctor went back to the Town Hall and delivered this *encore*, and M. Trinquier played his solo again; and in the middle of it Mr. Fugler dropped off into an easy sleep.

After this the musicians met every evening, Sundays and weekdays, and by the third evening the Doctor was able to predict with confidence that Fugler would last out. Indeed, the patient

was strong enough to be propped up into a sitting posture during the hour of practice, and not only listened with pleasure to the concerted piece, but beat time with his fingers while each separate instrument went over its part, delivering, at the close of each performance, his opinion of it to Mrs. Fugler or the Doctor: "Tripconey's breath 's failin'. He don't do no sort o' justice by that sarpint." Or: "There 's Uncle Issy agen! He always do come to grief juss there! I reckon a man of sixty-odd ought to give up the bass-viol. He ha'n't got the agility."

On the fifth evening Mrs. Fugler was sent across to the Town Hall to ask why the triangle had as yet no share in the performance, and to suggest that William Henry Phippin's eldest boy, Archelaus, played that instrument "to the life." M. Trinquier replied that it was unusual to seek the aid of the triangle in rendering the Dead March in *Saul*. Mr. Fugler sent back word that, "if you came to *that*, the whole thing was unusual, from start to finish." To this M. Trinquier discovered no answer; and the triangle was included, to the extreme delight of Archelaus

Phippin, whose young life had been clouded for a week past.

On the sixth evening, Mr. Fugler announced a sudden fancy to "touch pipe."

"Hey?" said the Doctor, opening his eyes.

"I'd like to tetch pipe. An' let me light the brimstone mysel'. I likes to see the little blue flame turn yellow, a-dancin' on the baccy."

"Get 'n his pipe and baccy, missis," the Doctor commanded. "He may kill himself clean-off now: the band'll be ready by the funeral, anyway."

On the three following evenings Mr. Fugler sat up and smoked during band practice, the Doctor observing him with a new interest. The tenth day, the Doctor was called away to attend a child-birth at Downderry. At the conclusion of the cornet solo, with which M. Trinquier regularly opened practice, the sick man said—

"Wife, get me out my clothes."

"WHAT!"

"Get me out my clothes."

"You 're mad! It 'll be your death."

"I don't care: the band 's ready. Uncle

Issy got his part perfect las' night, an' that 's more 'n I ever prayed to hear. Get me out my clothes an' help me downstairs."

The Doctor was far away. Mrs. Fugler was forced to give in. Weeping, and with shaking hands, she dressed him and helped him to the foot of the stairs, where she threw open the parlour door.

"No," he said, "I 'm not goin' in there. I 'll be steppin' across to the Town Hall. Gie me your arm."

Thomas Tripconey was rehearsing upon the serpent when the door of the Town Hall opened: and the music he made died away in a wail, as of a dog whose foot has been trodden on. William Henry Phippin's eldest son Archelaus cast his triangle down and shrieked "Ghosts, ghosts!" Uncle Issy cowered behind his bass-viol and put a hand over his eyes. M. Trinquier spun round to face the intruder, bâton in one hand, cornet in the other.

"Thank 'ee, friends," said Mr. Fugler, dropping into a seat by the door, and catching breath: "you 've got it very suent. 'T is a beautiful tune:

an' I 'm ha'f ashamed to tell 'ee that I bain't a-goin' to die, this time."

Nor did he.

The East and West Looe Volunteer Artillery was disbanded a few weeks later, on the last day of the year 1809. The Corporations of the Two Boroughs entertained the heroes that evening to a complimentary banquet in the East Looe Town Hall, and Sergeant Fugler had recovered sufficiently to attend, though not to partake. The Doctor made a speech over him, proving him by statistics to be the most wonderful member of the most wonderful corps in the world. The Doctor granted, however—at such a moment the Company could make concessions—that the Die-hards had been singularly fortunate in the one foeman whom they had been called upon to face. Had it not been for a gentleman of France the death-roll of the company had assuredly not stood at zero. He, their surgeon, readily admitted this, and gave them a toast, "The Power of Music," associating with this the name of Monsieur Jean Alphonse Marie Trinquier,

Director of Periodic Festivities to the Municipality of Dieppe. The toast was drunk with acclamation. M. Trinquier responded, expressing his confident belief that two so gallant nations as England and France could not long be restrained from flinging down their own arms and rushing into each other's. And then followed Captain Pond, who, having moved his audience to tears, pronounced the Looe Die-hards disbanded. Thereupon, with a gesture full of tragic inspiration, he cast his naked blade upon the board. As it clanged amid the dishes and glasses, M. Trinquier lifted his arms, and the band crashed out the "Dead Marching Soul," following it with "God save the King" as the clock announced midnight and the birth of the New Year.

"But hullo?" exclaimed Captain Pond, sinking back in his chair, and turning towards M. Trinquier. "I had clean forgot that you are our prisoner, and should be sent back to Dartmoor! And now the Company is disbanded, and I have no one to send as escort."

"Monsieur also forgets that my parole

expired a fortnight since, and that my service from that hour has been a service of love!"

M. Trinquier did not return to Dartmoor. For it happened, one dark night early in the following February, that Mr. Fugler (now restored to health) set sail for the island of Guernsey upon a matter of business. And on the morrow the music-master of Dieppe had become but a pleasing memory to the inhabitants of the Two Looes.

And now, should you take up Mr. Thomas Bond's "History of East and West Looe," and read of the Looe Volunteers that "not a single man of the Company died during the six years, which is certainly very remarkable," you will be not utterly incredulous; for you will know how it came about. Still, when one comes to reflect, it does seem an odd boast for a company of warriors.

MY GRANDFATHER, HENDRY WATTY

A DROLL

'T is the nicest miss in the world that I was born grandson of my own father's father, and not of another man altogether. Hendry Watty was the name of my grandfather that might have been; and he always maintained that to all intents and purposes he *was* my grandfather, and made me call him so—'t was such a narrow shave. I don't mind telling you about it. 'T is a curious tale, too.

My grandfather, Hendry Watty, bet four gallons of eggy-hot that he would row out to the Shivering Grounds, all in the dead waste of the night, and haul a trammel there. To find the Shivering Grounds by night, you get the Gull Rock in a line with Tregamenna and pull out till you open the light on St. Anthony's Point; but everybody gives the place a wide

berth because Archelaus Rowett's lugger foundered there, one time, with six hands on board; and they say that at night you can hear the drowned men hailing their names. But my grandfather was the boldest man in Port Loe, and said he didn't care. So one Christmas Eve by daylight he and his mates went out and tilled the trammel; and then they came back and spent the fore-part of the evening over the eggy-hot, down to Oliver's tiddly-wink,* to keep my grandfather's spirits up and also to show that the bet was made in earnest.

'T was past eleven o'clock when they left Oliver's and walked down to the cove to see my grandfather off. He has told me since that he didn't feel afraid at all, but very friendly in mind, especially towards William John Dunn, who was walking on his right hand. This puzzled him at the first, for as a rule he didn't think much of William John Dunn. But now he shook hands with him several times, and just as he was stepping into the boat he says, "You 'll take care of Mary Polly, while I'm

* Beer-house.

away." Mary Polly Polsue was my grandfather's sweetheart at that time. But why he should have spoken as if he was bound on a long voyage he never could tell; he used to set it down to fate.

"I will," said William John Dunn; and then they gave a cheer and pushed my grandfather off, and he lit his pipe and away he rowed all into the dead waste of the night. He rowed and rowed, all in the dead waste of the night; and he got the Gull Rock in a line with Tregamenna windows; and still he was rowing, when to his great surprise he heard a voice calling:

"*Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty!*"

I told you my grandfather was the boldest man in Port Loe. But he dropped his two oars now, and made the five signs of Penitence. For who could it be calling him out here in the dead waste and middle of the night?

"HENDRY WATTY! HENDRY WATTY! *drop me a line.*"

My grandfather kept his fishing-lines in a little skivet under the stern-sheets. But not a

trace of bait had he on board. If he had, he was too much a-tremble to bait a hook.

"HENDRY WATTY! HENDRY WATTY! *drop me a line, or I'll know why!*"

My poor grandfather by this had picked up his oars again, and was rowing like mad to get quit of the neighbourhood, when something or somebody gave three knocks—*thump, thump, thump!*—on the bottom of the boat, just as you would knock on a door. The third thump fetched Hendry Watty upright on his legs. He had no more heart for disobeying, but having bitten his pipe-stem in half by this time—his teeth chattered so—he baited his hook with the broken bit and flung it overboard, letting the line run out in the stern-notch. Not half-way had it run before he felt a long pull on it, like the sucking of a dog-fish.

"*Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty! pull me in.*"

Hendry Watty pulled in hand over fist; and in came the lead sinker over the notch, and still the line was heavy; he pulled and he pulled, and next, all out of the dead waste of the night,

came two white hands, like a washerwoman's, and gripped hold of the stern-board; and on the left of these two hands, on the little finger, was a silver ring, sunk very deep in the flesh. If this was bad, worse was the face that followed —a great white parboiled face, with the hair and whiskers all stuck with chips of wood and seaweed. And if this was bad for anybody, it was worse for my grandfather, who had known Archelaus Rowett before he was drowned out on the Shivering Grounds, six years before.

Archelaus Rowett climbed in over the stern, pulled the hook with the bit of pipe-stem out of his cheek, sat down in the stern-sheets, shook a small crayfish out of his whiskers, and said very coolly—

"If you should come across my wife——"

That was all my grandfather stayed to hear. At the sound of Archelaus's voice he fetched a yell, jumped clean over the side of the boat and swam for dear life. He swam and swam, till by the bit of the moon he saw the Gull Rock close ahead. There were lashin's of rats on the Gull Rock, as he knew: but he was a good deal

surprised at the way they were behaving: for they sat in a row at the water's edge and fished, with their tails let down into the sea for fishing-lines: and their eyes were like garnets burning as they looked at my grandfather over their shoulders.

"Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty! You can't land here—you 're disturbing the pollack."

"Bejimbers! I wouldn' do that for the world," says my grandfather: so off he pushes and swims for the mainland. This was a long job, and 't was as much as he could do to reach Kibberick beach, where he fell on his face and hands among the stones, and there lay, taking breath.

The breath was hardly back in his body, before he heard footsteps, and along the beach came a woman, and passed close by to him. He lay very quiet, and as she came near he saw 't was Sarah Rowett, that used to be Archelaus's wife, but had married another man since. She was knitting as she went by, and did not seem to notice my grandfather: but he heard her say to herself, "The hour is come, and the man is come."

He had scarcely begun to wonder over this, when he spied a ball of worsted yarn beside him that Sarah had dropped. 'T was the ball she was knitting from, and a line of worsted stretched after her along the beach. Hendry Watty picked up the ball and followed the thread on tiptoe. In less than a minute he came near enough to watch what she was doing: and what she did was worth watching. First she gathered wreckwood and straw, and struck flint over touchwood and teened a fire. Then she unravelled her knitting: twisted her end of the yarn between finger and thumb—like a cobbler twisting a wax-end—and cast the end up towards the sky. It made Hendry Watty stare when the thread, instead of falling back to the ground, remained hanging, just as if 't was fastened to something up above; but it made him stare more when Sarah Rowett began to climb up it, and away up till nothing could be seen of her but her ankles dangling out of the dead waste and middle of the night.

"HENDRY WATTY! HENDRY WATTY!"

It wasn't Sarah calling, but a voice far away out to sea.

"HENDRY WATTY! HENDRY WATTY! *send me a line.*"

My grandfather was wondering what to do, when Sarah speaks down very sharp to him, out of the dark:

"Hendry Watty! Where 's the rocket apparatus? Can 't you hear the poor fellow asking for a line?"

"I do," says my grandfather, who was beginning to lose his temper; "and do you think, ma'am, that I carry a Boxer's rocket in my trousers pocket?"

"I think you have a ball of worsted in your hand," says she. "Throw it as far as you can."

So my grandfather threw the ball out into the dead waste and middle of the night. He didn't see where it pitched, or how far it went.

"Right it is," says the woman aloft. "'T is easy seen you 're a hurler. But what shall us do for a cradle? Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty!"

"Ma'am to *you*," says my grandfather.

"If you 've the common feelings of a gentleman, I 'll ask you kindly to turn your back ; I 'm going to take off my stocking."

So my grandfather stared the other way very politely ; and when he was told he might look again, he saw she had tied the stocking to the line and was running it out like a cradle into the dead waste of the night.

"Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty! Look out below!"

Before he could answer, plump! a man's leg came tumbling past his ear and scattered the ashes right and left.

"Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty! Look out below!"

This time 't was a great white arm and hand, with a silver ring sunk tight in the flesh of the little finger.

"Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty! Warm them limbs!"

My grandfather picked them up and was warming them before the fire, when down came tumbling a great round head and bounced twice and lay in the firelight, staring up at

him. And whose head was it but Archelaus Rowett's, that he'd run away from once already, that night?

"Hendry Watty! Hendry Watty! Look out below!"

This time 't was another leg, and my grandfather was just about to lay hands on it, when the woman called down:

"Hendry Watty! catch it quick! It s my own leg I've thrown down by mistake!"

The leg struck the ground and bounced high, and Hendry Watty made a leap after it. . .

* * * * *

And I reckon it's asleep he must have been: for what he caught was not Mrs. Rowett's leg, but the jib-boom of a deep-laden brigantine that was running him down in the dark. And as he sprang for it, his boat was crushed by the brigantine's fore-foot and went down under his very boot-soles. At the same time he let out a yell, and two or three of the crew ran forward and hoisted him up to the bowsprit and in on deck, safe and sound.

But the brigantine happened to be outward-bound for the River Plate; so that, what with one thing and another, 't was eleven good months before my grandfather landed again at Port Loe. And who should be the first man he sees standing above the cove but William John Dunn?

"I'm very glad to see you," says William John Dunn.

"Thank you kindly," answers my grandfather; "and how's Mary Polly?"

"Why, as for that," he says, "she took so much looking after, that I couldn't feel I was keeping her properly under my eye till I married her, last June month."

"You was always one to over-do things," said my grandfather.

"But if you was alive an' well, why didn' you drop us a line?"

Now when it came to talk about "dropping a line" my grandfather fairly lost his temper. So he struck William John Dunn on the nose —a thing he had never been known to do before —and William John Dunn hit him back, and the neighbours had to separate them. And next

day, William John Dunn took out a summons against him.

Well, the case was tried before the magistrates: and my grandfather told his story from the beginning, quite straightforward, just as I 've told it to you. And the magistrates decided that, taking one thing with another, he 'd had a great deal of provocation, and fined him five shillings. And there the matter ended. But now you know the reason why I 'm William John Dunn's grandson instead of Hendry Watty's.

JETSOM

WHERE Gerennius' beacon stands
High above Pendower sands ;
Where, about the windy Nare,
Foxes breed and falcons pair ;
Where the gannet dries a wing
Wet with fishy harvesting,
And the cormorants resort,
Flapping slowly from their sport
With the fat Atlantic shoal,
Homeward to Tregeagle's Hole—
Walking there, the other day,
In a bight within a bay,
I espied amid the rocks,
Bruis'd and jamm'd, the daintiest box
That the waves had flung and left
High upon an ivied cleft.
Striped it was with white and red,
Satin-lined and carpeted,
Hung with bells, and shaped withal
Like the queer, fantastical

Chinese temples you'll have seen
Pictured upon white Nankin,
Where, assembled in effective
Head-dresses and odd perspective,
Tiny dames and mandarins
Expiate their egg-shell sins
By reclining on their drumsticks,
Waving fans and burning gum-sticks.
Land of poppy and pekoe!
Could thy sacred artists know—
Could they possibly conjecture
How we use their architecture,
Ousting the indignant Joss
For a pampered Flirt or Floss,
Poodle, Blenheim, Skye, Maltese,
Lapped in purple and proud ease—
They might read their god's reproof
Here on blister'd wall and roof;
Scaling lacquer, dinted bells,
Floor befouled of weed and shells,
Where, as erst the tabid Curse
Brooded over Pelops' hearse,
Squats the sea-cow, keeping house,
Sibylline, gelatinous.

Where is Carlo? Tell, O tell,
Echo, from this fluted shell,
In whose concave ear the tides
Murmur what the main confides
Of his compass'd treacheries!
What of Carlo? Did the breeze
Madden to a gale while he,
Curled and cushioned cosily
Mixed in dreams its angry breathings
With the tinkle of the tea-things
In his mistress' cabin laid?
—Nor dyspeptic, nor dismayed,
Drowning in a gentle snore
All the menace of the shore
Thundered from the surf a-lee,
Near and nearer horribly,—
Scamper of affrighted feet,
Voices cursing sail and sheet,
While the tall ship shook in irons—
All the peril that environs
Vessels 'twixt the wind and rock
Clawing—driving? Did the shock,
As the sunk reef split her back,
First arouse him? Did the crack

Widen swiftly and deposit
Him in homeless night?
Or was it,
Not when wave or wind assailed,
But in waters dumb and veiled,
That a looming shape uprist
Sudden from the Channel mist,
And with crashing, rending bows
Woke him, in his padded house,
To a world of altered features?
Were these panic-ridden creatures
They who, but an hour agone,
Ran with biscuit, ran with bone,
Ran with meats in lordly dishes,
To anticipate his wishes?
But an hour agone! And now how
Vain his once compelling bow-wow!
Little dogs are highly treasured,
Petted, patted, pampered, pleasured:
But when ships go down in fogs,
No one thinks of little dogs.

Ah, but how dost fare, I wonder,
Now thine Argo splits asunder,

Pouring on the wasteful sea
All her precious bales, and thee?
Little use is now to rave,
Calling god or saint to save;
Little use, if choked with salt, a
Prayer to holy John of Malta.
Patron John, he hears thee not.
Or, perchance, in dusky grot
Pale Persephone, repining
For the fields that still are shining,
Shining in her sleepless brain,
Calling "Back! come back again!"
Fain of playmate, fain of pet—
Any drug to slay regret,
Hath from hell upcast an eye
On thy fatal symmetry;
And beguiled her sooty lord
With his brother to accord
For this black betrayal. Else
Nereus in his car of shells
Long ago had cleft the waters
With his natatory daughters
To the rescue: or Poseidon
Sent a fish for thee to ride on—

Such a steed as erst Arion
Reached the mainland high and dry on.
Steed appeareth none, nor pilot!
Little dog, if it be thy lot
To essay the dismal track
Where Odysseus half hung back,
How wilt thou conciliate
That grim mastiff by the gate?
Sure, 't will puzzle thee to fawn
On his muzzles three that yawn
Antrous; or to find, poor dunce,
Grace in his six eyes at once—
Those red eyes of Cerberus.

Daughters of Oceanus
Save our darling from this hap!
Arethusa, spread thy lap,
Catch him, and with pinky hands
Bear him to the coral sands,
Where thy sisters sit in school
Carding the Milesian wool:—
Clio, Spio, Beroe,
Opis and Phyllodoce,—
Pass by these, and also pass

Yellow-haired Lycorias;
Pass Ligea, shrill of song—
All the dear surrounding throng;
Lay him at Cyrene's feet
There, where all the rivers meet:
In their waters crystalline
Bathe him clean of weed and brine,
Comb him, wipe his pretty eyes,
Then to Zeus who rules the skies
Call, assembling in a round
Every fish that can be found—
Whale and merman, lobster, cod,
Tittlebat and demigod:—
"Lord of all the Universe,
We, thy finny pensioners,
Sue thee for the little life
Hurried hence by Hades' wife.
Sooner than she call him her dog,
Change, O change him to a mer-dog!
Re-inspire the vital spark;
Bid him wag his tail and bark,
Bark for joy to wag a tail
Bright with many a flashing scale;
Bid his locks refulgent twine,

Hyacinthe, hyaline;
Bid him gambol, bid him follow
Blithely to the mermen's 'holloa!'
When they call the deep-sea calves
Home with wreathèd univalves.
Softly shall he sleep to-night,
Curled on couch of stalagmite,
Soft and sound, if slightly moister
Than the shell-protected oyster.
Grant us this, Omnipotent,
And to Hera shall be sent
One black pearl, but of a size
That shall turn her rivals' eyes
Greener than the greenest snake
Fed in meadow-grass, and make
All Olympus run agog—
Grant for this our darling dog!"

Musing thus, the other day,
In a bight within a bay,
I 'd a sudden thought that yet some
Purpose for this piece of jetsom
Might be found; and straight supplied it.
On the turf I knelt beside it,

Disengaged it from the boulders,
Hoisted it upon my shoulders,
Bore it home, and, with a few
Tin-tacks and a pot of glue,
Mended it, affixed a ledge;
Set it by the elder-hedge;
And in May, with horn and kettle
Coax'd a swarm of bees to settle.
Here around me now they hum;
And in autumn should you come
Westward to my Cornish home,
There 'll be honey in the comb—
Honey that, with clotted cream
(Though I win not your esteem
As a bard), will prove me wise,
In that, of the double prize
Sent by Hermes from the sea, I've
Sold the song and kept the bee-hive.

WRESTLERS

As Boutigo's Van (officially styled the "Vivid") slackened its already inconsiderable pace at the top of the street, to slide precipitately down into Troy upon a heated skid, the one outside passenger began to stare about him with the air of a man who compares present impressions with old memories. His eyes travelled down the inclined plane of slate roofs, glistening in a bright interval between two showers, to the masts which rocked slowly by the quays, and from thence to the silver bar of sea beyond the harbour's mouth, where the outline of Battery Point wavered unsteadily in the dazzle of sky and water. He sniffed the fragrance of pilchards cooking and the fumes of pitch blown from the ship-builders' yards; and scanned with some curiosity the men and women who drew aside into doorways to let the van pass.

He was a powerfully made man of about sixty-five, with a solemn, hard-set face. The

upper lip was clean-shaven and the chin decorated with a square, grizzled beard—a mode of wearing the hair that gave prominence to the ugly lines of the mouth. He wore a Sunday-best suit and a silk hat. He carried a blue band-box on his knees, and his enormous hands were spread over the cover. Boutigo, who held the reins beside him, seemed, in comparison with this mighty passenger, but a trivial accessory of his own vehicle.

"Where did you say William Dendle lives?" asked the big man, as the van swung round a sharp corner and came to a halt under the sign-board of "The Lugger."

"Straight on for maybe quarter of a mile—turn down a court to the right, facin' the toll-house. You'll see his sign, 'W. Dendle, Block and Pump Manufacturer.' There's a flight o' steps leadin' 'ee slap into his workshop."

The passenger set his band-box down on the cobbles between his ankles and counted out the fare.

"I'll be goin' back to-night. Is there any reduction on a return journey?"

"No, sir; 't isn' the rule, an' us can't begin to cheapen the fee wi' a man o' your inches."

The stranger apparently disliked levity. He stared at Boutigo, picked up his band-box, and strode down the street without more words.

By the red and yellow board opposite the toll-house he paused for a moment or two in the sunshine, as if to rehearse the speech with which he meant to open his business. A woman passed him with a child in her arms, and turned her head to stare. The stranger looked up and caught her eye.

"That 's Dendle's shop down the steps," she said, somewhat confused at being caught.

"Thank you: I know."

He turned in at the doorway and began to descend. The noise of persistent hammering echoed within the workshop at his feet. A workman came out into the yard, carrying a plank.

"Is William Dendle here?"

The man looked up and pointed at the quay-door, which stood open, with threads of light

wavering over its surface. Beyond it, against an oblong of green water, rocked a small yacht's mast.

"He 's down on the yacht there. Shall I say you want en?"

"No." The stranger stepped to the quay-door and looked down the ladder. On the deck below him stood a man about his own age and proportions, fitting a block. His flannel shirt hung loosely about a magnificent pair of shoulders, and was tucked up at the sleeves, about the bulge of his huge fore-arms. He wore no cap, and as he stooped the light wind puffed back his hair, which was grey and fine.

"Hi, there—William Dendle!"

"Hullo!" The man looked up quickly.

"Can you spare a word? Don't trouble to come up—I 'll climb down to you."

He went down the ladder carefully, hugging the band-box in his left arm.

"You disremember me, I dessay," he began, as he stood on the yacht's deck.

"Well, I do, to be sure. Oughtn't to, though, come to look on your size."

"Samuel Badgery's my name. You an' me had a hitch to wrestlin', once, over to Tregarrick feast."

"Why, o' course. I mind your features now, though 't is forty years since. We was standards there an' met i' the last round, an' I got the wust o't. Terrible hard you pitched me, to be sure: but your sweetheart was a-watchin' 'ee—hey?—wi' her blue eyes."

Samuel Badgery sat down on deck, with a leg on either side of the band-box.

"Iss: she was there, as you say. An' she married me that day month. How do you know her eyes were blue?"

"Oh, I dunno. Young men takes notice o' these trifles."

"She died last week."

"Indeed? Pore soul!"

"An' she left you this by her will. 'T was hers to leave, for I gave it to her, mysel', when that day's wrestlin' was over."

He removed the lid of the band-box and pulled out two parcels wrapped in a pile of tissue-paper. After removing sheet upon sheet

of this paper he held up two glittering objects in the sunshine. The one was a silver mug: the other a leather belt with an elaborate silver buckle.

William Dendle wore a puzzled and somewhat uneasy look.

"I reckon she saw how disapp'inted I was that day," he said. After a pause he added, "Women brood over such things, I b'lieve: for years, I'm told. 'T is their unsearchable natur'."

"William Dendle, I wish you 'd speak truth."

"What have I said that 's false?"

"Nuthin: an' you 've said nuthin' that 's true. I charge 'ee to tell me the facts about that hitch of our'n."

"You 're a hard man, Sam Badgery. I hope, though, you 've been soft to your wife. I mind —if you *must* have the tale—how you played very rough that day. There was a slim young chap—Nathan Oke, his name was—that stood up to you i' the second round. He wasn' ha'f your match: you might ha' pitched en flat-handed. An' yet you must needs give en the

'flyin' mare.' Your maid's face turned lily-white as he dropped. Two of his ribs went *cr-rk!*—*and* his collar-bone—You could hear it right across the ring. I looked at her—she was close beside me—an' saw the tears come: that's how I know the colour of her eyes. Then there was that small blacksmith—you dropped en slap on the tail of his spine. I wondered if you knew the mortal pain o' bein' flung that way, an' I swore to mysel' that if we met i' the last round, you should taste it.

"Well, we met, as you know. When I was stripped, an' the folks made way for me to step into the ring, I saw her face again. 'T was whiter than ever, an' her eyes went over me in a kind o' terror. I reckon it dawned on her that I might hurt you: but I didn' pay her much heed at the time, for I lusted after the prize, an' I got savage. You was standin' ready for me, wi' the sticklers about you, an' I looked you up an' down—a brave figure of a man. You'd longer arms than me, an' two inches to spare in height: prettier shoulders, too, I'd never clapp'd eyes on. But I guessed myself a

trifle the deeper, an' a trifle the cleaner i' the matter o' loins an' quarters: an' I promised that I 'd outlast 'ee.

"You got the sun an' the best hitch, an' after a rough an' tumble piece o' work, we went down togither, you remember—no fair back. The second hitch was just about equal; an' I gripped up the sackin' round your shoulders, an' creamed it into the back o' your neck, an' held you off, an' meant to keep you off till you was weak. Ten good minnits I laboured with 'ee by the stickler's watch, an' you heaved an' levered in vain, till I heard your breath alter its pace, an' felt the strength tricklin' out o' you, an' knew 'ee for a done man. 'Now,' thinks I, 'half a minnit more, an' you shall learn how the blacksmith felt.' I glanced up over your shoulder for a moment at the folks i' the ring: an' who should my eye light on but your girl?

"I hadn 't got a sweetheart then, an' I ve never had one since—never saw another woman who could ha' looked what she looked. I was condemned a single man there on the spot: an'

what 's more, I was condemned to lose the belt. There was that 'pon her face that no man is good enow to cause; an' there was suthin I wanted to see instead—just for a moment—that I could ha' given forty silver mugs to fetch up.

"An' I looked at her over your shoulders wi' a kind o' question i' my face, an' I *did* fetch it up. The next moment, you had your chance and cast me flat. When I came round—for you were always an ugly player, Sam Badgery—an' the folks was consolin' me, I gave a look in her direction: but she had no eyes for me at all. She was usin' all her dear deceit to make 'ee think you was a hero. So home I went, an' never set eyes 'pon her agen. That 's the tale; an' I didn't want to tell it. But we 'm old gaffers both by this time, an' I couldn' make this here belt meet round my middle, if I wanted to."

Sam Badgery straightened his upper lip.

"No. I got a call from the Lord a year after we was married, and gave up wrestlin'. My poor wife found grace about the same time,

an' since then we 've been preachers of the Word togither for nigh on forty years. If our work had lain in Cornwall, I 'd have sought you out an' wrestled with you again—not in the flesh, but in the spirit. Man, I 'd have shown you the Kingdom of Heaven!"

"Thank 'ee," answered Dendle; "but I got a glimpse o't once—from your wife."

The other stared, failing to understand this speech. What puzzled him always annoyed him. He set down the cup and belt on the yacht's deck, shook hands abruptly, and hurried back to the inn, where already Boutigo was harnessing for the return journey.

THE BISHOP OF EUCALYPTUS

A DOCTOR'S STORY

"*O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, travelling ye know not whither! Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hill-top, and but a little way further, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.*"—R. L. STEVENSON.

"EUCALYPTUS lies on the eastern slope of the Rockies. It will be fourteen years back this autumn that the coach dropped me there, somewhere about nine in the evening, and Hewson, who was waiting, took me straight to his red-pine house, high up among the foot-hills. The front of it hung over the edge of a waterfall, down which Hewson sent his logs with a pleasing certainty of their reaching Eucalyptus sooner or later; and right at the back the pines climbed away up to the snow-line. You remember the

story of Daniel O'Rourke; how an eagle carried him up to the moon, and how he found it as smooth as an egg-plum, with just a reaping-hook sticking out of its side to grip hold of? Hewson's verandah reminded me of that reaping-hook; and, as a matter of fact, the cliff was so deeply undercut that a plummet, if it could be let through between your heels, would drop clean into the basin below the fall.

"The house was none of Hewson's building. Hewson was a bachelor, and could have made shift with a two-roomed cabin for himself and his men. He had taken the place over from a New Englander, who had made his pile by running the lumbering business up here and a saw-mill down in the valley at the same time. The place seemed dog-cheap at the time; but after a while it began to dawn upon Hewson that the Yankee had the better of the deal, Eucalyptus had not come up to early promise. In fact, it was slipping back and down the hill with a run. Already five out of its seven big saw-mills were idle and rotting. Its original architect had sunk to a blue-faced and lachrymose

bar-loafer, and the roll of plans which he carried about with him—with their unrealised boulevards, churches, municipal buildings, and band-kiosks—had passed into a dismal standing joke. Hewson was even now deliberating whether to throw up the game or toss good money after bad by buying up a saw-mill and running it as his predecessor had done.

"'It's like a curse,' he explained to me at breakfast next morning. 'The place is afflicted like one of those unfortunate South Sea potentates, who flourish up to the age of fourteen and then cypher out, and not a soul to know why. First of all, there's the lumbering. Well, here's the timber all right; only Bellefont, farther down the valley, has cut us out. Then we had the cinnabar mines—you may see them along the slope to northward, right over the west end of the town. They went well for about sixteen months; and then came the stampede. A joker in the *Bellefont Sentinel* wrote that the miners up in Eucalyptus were complaining of the "insufficiency of exits"; and he wasn't far out. Last

there were the "Temperate Airs and Reinvigorating Pine-odours of America's Peerless Sanatorium. *Come and behold: Come and be healed!*" The promoters billed that last cursed jingle up and down the States till as far south as Mexico it became the pet formula for an invitation to drink. Well, for three years we averaged something like a couple of hundred invalids, and doctors in fair proportion; and I never heard that either did badly. It was an error of judgment, perhaps, to start our municipal works with a costly Necropolis, or rather the gateway of one; two marble pillars, if you please—the only stonework in Eucalyptus to this day—with "Campo" on one side and "Santo" on the other. No healthy-minded person would be scared by this. But the invalids complained that we'd made the feature too salient; and the architect has gone ever since by the name of "Huz and Buz," bestowed on him by some wag who meant "Jachin and Boaz," but hadn't Scripture enough to know it. Anyhow the temperate airs and pine-odours are a frost. There's nobody, I fancy, living at Euca-

lyptus just now for the benefit of his health, and I believe that at this moment you 're the only doctor within twenty miles of the place.'

"'Well,' said I, 'I 'll step down this morning anyway, and take a look.'

"'You can saddle the brown horse whenever you like. You were too sleepy to take note of it last night, but you came up here by a track fit for a lady's pony-carriage. My predecessor engineered it to connect his two places of business. In its way, it 's the most palatial thing in the Rockies— two long legs with a short tack between, gentle all the way—and it brings you out by the Necropolis gate. You can hitch the horse up there.'

"By ten o'clock I had saddled the brown horse, and was walking him down the track at an easy pace. Hewson had omitted to praise its beauty. Pine-needles lay underfoot as thick and soft as a Persian carpet; and what with the pine-tops arching and almost meeting overhead, and the red trunks raying out left and right into aisles as I went by, and the shafts

of light breaking the greenish gloom here and there with glimpses of aching white snowfields high above, 't was like walking in a big cathedral with bits of the real heaven shining through the roof. The river ran west for a while from Cornice House, and then tacked north-east with a sudden bend round the base of the foot-hills; and since my track formed a sort of rough hypotenuse to this angle, I heard the voice of the rapids die away and almost cease, and then begin again to whisper and murmur, until, as I came within a mile or so of Eucalyptus, they were loud at my feet, though still unseen. I am not a devout man, but I can take off my hat now and then; and all the way that morning a couple of sentences were ring-dinging in my head: 'Lift up your hearts! We lift them up unto the Lord!' You know where they come from, I dare say.

"By-and-by the track took a sharp and steep trend down hill, then a curve; the trees on my right seemed to drop away; and we found ourselves on the edge of a steep bluff overhanging the valley, the whole eastern slope of which

broke full into sight in that instant, from the river tumbling below—by sticking out a leg I could see it shining through my stirrup — to the rocky *arêtes* and smoothed-out snowfields around the peaks. It made a big spectacle, and I suppose I must have stared at it till my eyes were dazzled, for, on turning again to follow the track, which at once dived among the pines and into the dusk again, I did not observe, until quite close upon her, a woman coming towards me.

"And yet she was not rigged out to escape notice. She had on a scarlet Garibaldi, a striped red-and-white skirt, bunched up behind into an immense polonaise, and high-heeled shoes that tilted her far forward. She wore no hat, but carried a scarlet sunshade over her shoulder. Her hair, in a towsled chignon, was golden, or rather had been dyed to that colour; her face was painted; and she was glaringly drunk.

"This sudden apparition shook me down with a jerk; and I suppose the sight of me had something of the same effect on the woman, who staggered to the side of the

track, and, plumping down amid her flounces, beckoned me feebly with her sunshade. I pulled up, and asked what I could do for her?

"'You're the doctor?' she said slowly, with a tight hold on her pronunciation.

"'That's so.'

"'From Cornice House?'

"I nodded.

"She nodded back. 'That's so. Oh, dear, dear! *you* said that. I can't help it. I'm drunk, and it's no use pretending!'

"She fell to wringing her hands, and the tears began to run from her bistred eyes.

"'Now, see here, Mrs.—Miss——'

"'Floncemorency.'

"'Miss Florence Montmorency?' I hazarded as a translation.

"'That's so. Formerly of the Haughty Coal.'

"'I beg your pardon? Ah! . . . of the Haute École?'

"'That's so: '*questrienne*.'

"'Well, you'll take my advice, and return home at once and put yourself to bed.'

"'Don't you worry about me. It's the Bishop you've got to prescribe for. I allowed I'd reach Cornice House and fetch you down, if it took my last breath. Pete Stroebel at the drug store told me this morning that Mr. Hewson had a doctor come to stop with him, so I started right along.'

"'And how far did you calculate to reach in those shoes?'

"'I didn't calculate at all; I just started along. If the shoes hurt, I'd have kicked them off and gone without, or maybe crawled.'

"'Very good,' said I. 'Now, before we go any farther, will you kindly tell me who the Bishop is?'

"'He's a young man, and he boards with me. See, here, mister,' she went on, pulling herself together and speaking low and earnest, 'he's good; he's good right through: you've got to make up your mind to that. And he's powerful sick. But what you've got to lay hold of is that he's good. The house is No. 67, West Fifteenth Street, which is pretty easy to find, seeing it's the only street in Eucalyptus. The

rest haven't got beyond paper, and old Huz-and-Buz totes them round in his pocket, which isn't good for their growth.'

"'Won't you take me there?'

"'Not to-day. I guess I've got to sit here till I feel better. Another thing is, you'll be doing me a kindness if you don't let on to the Bishop that you found me in this—this state. He never saw me like this: he's good, I tell you. And he'd be sick and sorry if he knew. I'm just mad with myself, too; but I swear I never meant to be like this to-day. I just took a dose to fix me up for the journey; but ever since I've been holding off from the whiskey the least drop gets into my walk. You didn't happen to notice a spring anywhere hereabouts, did you? There used to be one that ran right across the track.'

"'I passed it about a hundred yards back.

"I dismounted and led her to the spring, where she knelt and bathed her face in the water, cold from the melting snowfields above. Then she pulled out a small handkerchief, edged with cheap lace, and fell to dabbing her eyes.

"'Hullo!' she cried, breaking off sharply.

"'Yes,' I answered, 'you had forgotten that. But another wash will take it all off, and, if you'll forgive my saying so, you won't look any the worse. After that you shall soak my handkerchief and bandage it round your forehead till you feel better. Here, let me help.'

"'Thank you,' she said, as I tied the knot. 'And now hurry along, please. Sixty-seven, West Fifteenth Street. I'll be waiting here with your handkerchief.'

"I mounted and rode on. At the end of half a mile the track began to dip more steeply, and finally emerged by a big clearing and the two marble pillars of which Hewson had spoken; and here I tethered the brown horse, and had a look around before walking down into Eucalyptus. Within the clearing a few groups of Norfolk pines had been left to stand, and between these were burial lots marked out and numbered, with here and there a painted wooden cross; but the inhabitants of this acre were few enough. Behind and above the 'Necropolis' the hill rose steeply; and

there, high up, were traces of the disused cinnabar mines—patches of orange-coloured earth thrusting out among the pines.

"The road below the cemetery ran abruptly down for a bit, then heaved itself over a green knoll and descended upon what I may call a very big and flat meadow beside the river. It was here that Eucalyptus stood; and from the knoll, which was really the beginning of the town, I had my first good view of it—one long street of low wooden houses running eastward to the river's brink, where a few decayed mills and wharves straggled to north and south—a T, or headless cross, will give you roughly the shape of the settlement. From the knoll you looked straight along the main street; with a field-gun you could have swept it clean from end to end, and, what's more, you wouldn't have hurt a soul. The place was dead empty—not so much as a cur to sit on the sidewalk—and the only hint of life was the laughing and banjo playing indoors. You could hear that plain enough. Every second house in the place was a saloon, and every saloon seemed to have a billiard-table and

a banjo player. I never heard anything like it. I should say, if you divided the population into four parts, that two of these were playing billiards, one tum-tumming 'Hey, Juliana' on the banjo, and the remaining fourth looking on and drinking whiskey, and occasionally taking part in the chorus. All the way down the side-walk I had these two sounds—the *click, click* of the balls and the *thrum, thrum, tinkle, tinkle* of 'Juliana'—ahead of me; and left silence in my wake, as the inhabitants dropped their occupations and sauntered out to stare at 'the Last Invalid,' which was the name promptly coined for me by the disheartened but still humorous promoters of America's Peerless Sanatorium.

"You don't know 'Juliana'—neither tune nor words? Nor did I when I set foot in Eucalyptus; but I lived on pretty close terms with it for the next two months, and it ended by clearing me out of the neighbourhood. It was a sort of nigger camp-meeting song, and a hybrid at that. It went something like this:

"'*O, de lost ell-an'-yard is a-huntin' fer de morn*'—

The lost ell-and-yard is Orion's sword and belt, I may tell you—

> "'*Hey, Juliana, Juli-he-hi-holy!*
> *An' my soul's done sicken fer de Hallelu-*
> *jah horn,*
> *Hey, Juliana, Juli-he-hi-ho!*
> *Was it weary there,*
> *In de wilderness?*
> *Was it weary-y-y, 'way down in Goshen?*
>
> "'*O, de children shibber by de Jordan's*
> *flow—*
> *Hey, Juliana, Juli-he-hi-holy!*
> *An' it's time fer Gaberl to shake hisself an'*
> *blow,*
> *Hey, Juliana, Juli-he-hi-ho!*
> *For it's weary here*
> *In de wilderness;*
> *Oh, it's weary-y-y, 'way down in Goshen!*'

That was the sort of stuff, and it had any number of verses. I never heard the end of them. Also there were variants—most of them unfit for publication. The tune had swept up

the valley like an epidemic disease: and, after a while, it astonished no dweller in Eucalyptus to find his waking thoughts and his whole daily converse jigging to it. But the new-comer was naturally a bit startled to hear the same strain put up from a score of houses as he walked down the street.

"I found the house, No. 67, easily; and knocked. It looked neat enough, with a fence in front and some pots of flowers in a little balcony over the porch, and clean muslin curtains to the windows. The fence and house-front were painted a bright blue, but not entirely; for here and there appeared patches of green daubed over the blue, much as if a child had been around experimenting with a paint-pot.

"'Open the door and come upstairs, please,' said an English voice right overhead. And looking up, I saw a slim young man in a minister's black suit standing among the flower-pots and smiling down at me. I saw, of course, that this must be my patient; and I knew his complaint too. Even at that distance anyone could see he was pretty far gone in consumption.

"As I climbed the stairs he came in from the porch and met me on the landing, at the door of Miss Montmorency's best parlour—a spick-and-span apartment containing a cottage piano, some gilded furniture of the Second Empire fashion, a gaudy lithograph or two, and a carpet that had to be seen to be believed.

"'I had better explain,' said I, 'that this is a professional visit. I met Miss Montmorency just outside the town, and have her orders to call. I am a medical man.'

"Still smiling pleasantly, he took my hand and shook it.

"'Miss Montmorency is so very thoughtful,' he said; then, touching his chest lightly, 'it's true I have some trouble here—constitutional, I'm afraid; but I have suffered from it, more or less, ever since I was fourteen, and it does n't frighten me. There is really no call for your kind offices; nothing beyond a general weakness, which has detained me here in Eucalyptus longer than I intended. But Miss Montmorency, seeing my impatience, has jumped to the belief

that I am seriously ill.' Here he smiled again. 'She is the soul of kindness,' he added.

"I looked into his prominent and rather nervous eyes. They were as innocent as a child's. Of course there was nothing unusual in his hopefulness, which is common enough in cases of phthisis—symptomatic, in fact; and, of course, I did not discourage him.

"'You have work waiting for you? Some definite post?' I asked.

"He answered with remarkable dignity; he looked a mere boy too.

"'I am a minister of the gospel, as you guess by my coat: to be precise, a Congregational minister. At least, I passed through a Congregational training college in England. But nice distinctions of doctrine will be of little moment in the work before me. No, I have no definite post awaiting me—that is, I have not received a call from any particular congregation, nor do I expect one. The harvest is over there, across the mountains; and the labourers are never too many.'

"It was singular in my experience; but this

young man contrived to speak like a book without being at all offensive.

"'I was sent out to America,' he went on, 'mainly for my health's sake; and the voyage did wonders for me. Of course I picked up a lot of information on the way and in New York. It was there I first heard of the awful wickedness of the Pacific Slope, the utter, abandoned godlessness of the mining camps throughout the golden and silver states. I had letters of introduction to one or two New England families—sober, religious people—and the stories they told of the Far West were simply appalling. It was then that my call came to me. It came one night—— But all this has nothing to do with my health.'

"'It interests me,' said I.

"'It does one good to talk, if you're sure you mean that,' he went on, with a happy laugh. Then, with sudden gravity: 'It came one night—the clear voice of God calling me. I was asleep; but it woke me, and I sat up in bed with the voice still ringing in my ears like a bugle calling. I knew from that moment that my

work lay out West. I saw that my very illness had been, in God's hands, a means to lead me nearer to it. As soon as ever I was strong enough, I started; and you may think me fanciful, sir, but I can tell you that, as sure as I sit here, every step of the way has been smoothed for me by the Divine hand. The people have been so kind all the way (for I am a poor man); and I have other signs—other assurances——'

"He broke off, hesitated, and resumed his sentence at the beginning:

"'The people have been so kind. I think the Americans must be the kindest people in the world; and good too. I cannot believe that all the wickedness they talk of out yonder can come from anything but ignorance of the Word. I am certain it cannot. And that encourages me mightily. Why, down in Bellefont they told me that Eucalyptus here was a little nest of iniquity; they spoke of it as of some City of the Plain. And what have I found? Well, the people are indeed as sheep without a shepherd; and who can wonder, seeing that there is not a

single House of Prayer kept open in the municipality? There is a great deal of coarse levity, and even profanity of speech, and, I fear, much immoderate drinking; but these are the effects of blindness rather than of wickedness. From the heavier sins—from what I may call actual, conscious vice—Eucalyptus is singularly free. Miss Montmorency, indeed, tells me that in her experience (which, of course, is that of a single lady, and therefore restricted) the moral tone of the town is surprisingly healthy. You understand that I give her judgment no more than its due weight. Still, Miss Montmorency has lived here three years; and for a single lady (and, I may add, the only lady in the place) to pass three years in it entirely unmolested——'

"This was too much; and I interrupted him almost at random—

"'You remind me of the purpose of my call. I hope, if only to satisfy Miss Montmorency, you won't mind my sounding your chest and putting a few questions to you.'

"Seeing that I had already pulled out my

stethoscope, he gave way, feebly protesting that it was not worth my trouble. The examination merely assured me of that which I knew already —that this young man's days were numbered, and the numbers growing small. I need not say I kept this to myself.

"'You must let me call again to-morrow,' said I. 'I've a small medicine chest up at the Cornice House, and you want a tonic badly.'

"Upon this he began, with a confused look and a slight stammer: 'Do you know—I'm afraid you will think it rude, but I did n't mean it for rudeness—really. Your visit has given me great pleasure——'

"It flashed on me that he had called himself 'a poor man.'

"'I wasn't proposing to doctor you,' I put in; and it was a shameless lie. 'You may take the tonic or not; it won't do much harm, anyway. But a gentle walk every day among the pines here—the very gentlest, nothing to overtax your strength—will do more for you than any drugs. But if you will let me call,

pretty often, and have a talk—I'm an Englishman, you know, and an English voice is good to hear——'

"His face lit up at once. 'Ah, if you would!' said he; and we shook hands.

"As I closed the front door and stepped out upon the sidewalk, a tall man lounged across to me from the doorway of a saloon across the road—a lumberer, by his dress. He wore a large soft hat, a striped flannel shirt open at the neck, a broad leathern belt, and muddy trousers tucked into muddy wading-boots. His appearance was picturesque enough without help from his dress. He had a mighty length of arm and breadth of shoulders; a handsome, but thin and almost delicately fair, face, with blue eyes, and a surprisingly well-kept beard. The colour of this beard and of his hair—which he wore pretty long—was a light auburn. Just now the folds of his raiment were full of moist sawdust; and as he came he brought the scent of the pine-woods with him.

'How's the Bishop?' asked this giant,

jerking his head towards the little balcony of No 67.

"Before I could hit on a discreet answer, he followed the question up with another:

"'What'll you take?'

"I saw that he had something to say, and allowed him to lead the way to a saloon a little way down the road. 'Simpson's Pioneers' Symposium' was the legend above the door. A small, pimply-faced man in seedy black—whom I guessed at once, and correctly, to be 'Huz-and-Buz'—lounged by the bar inside; and across the counter the bar-keeper had his banjo slung, and was gently strumming the accompaniment of 'Hey, Juliana!'

"'Put that down,' commanded my new acquaintance; and then, turning to Huz-and-Buz, 'Git!'

"The architect raised the brim of his hat to me, bowed servilely, and left.

"'Short or long?'

"I said I would take a short drink.

"'A brandy sour?'

"'A "brandy sour" will suit me.'

"He kept his eye for a moment on the bar-tender, who began to bustle around with the bottles and glasses; then turned upon me.

"'Now, then.'

"'About the Bishop, as you call him?'

"He nodded.

"'Well, you're not to tell him so; but he's going to die.'

"'Quick?'

"'I think so.'

"He nodded. 'I knew that,' he said, and was silent for a minute; then resumed, 'No; he won't be told. We take an interest in that young man.'

"'Meaning by "we"?'

"'The citizens of Eucalyptus as a body. My name's William Anderson: Captain Bill they call me. I was one of the first settlers in Eucalyptus. I've seen it high, and I've seen it low. And I'm going to be the last man to quit; that's the captain's place. And when I say this or that is public opinion in Eucalyptus, it's got to be. I drink to your health, Doctor.'

"'Thank you,' said I. 'Then I may count

on your silence? The poor chap is so powerfully set on crossing the Rockies and getting to close quarters with some real wickedness, that to tell him the truth might shorten the few days he has left.'

"Captain Bill smiled grimly.

"'Wickedness? Lord love you! *He* couldn't see any. He'd go through 'Frisco, and out at the far end, without so much as guessing the place had a seamy side to it. His innocence,' pursued the captain, 'is unusual. I guess that's why we're taking so much care of him. But I must say you've been spry.'

"'Upon my word, I can't at this moment make head or tail of the business. I met Miss Montmorency on the road——'

"'I guess she was looking like a Montmorency, too. Flyheel Flo is her name hereabouts; alluding to her former profession of circus-rider. Perhaps I'd better put the facts straight for you.'

"'I wish you would.'

"'Well, it'll be about two months back that the Bishop came to Eucalyptus. We were most

of us here in Simpson's bar when the coach drove up at nine o'clock—same time as it dropped you last night—and we loafed out to have a look. There was only one passenger got down; and he seemed of no account—a weedy-looking youngster with a small valise—looked like he might have come to be bar-tender to one of the small saloons. It was dark out there, you understand: nothing to see by but the lamps of the coach and the light of the doorway; besides which the fellow was pretty well muffled up in a big coat and wraps. Anyway he didn't seem worth a second look; so when the coach moved on we just sauntered back here, and I don't reckon there was a man in the room knew he'd followed us till he lifted up that reedy voice of his. "Gentlemen," he piped out, "would some one of you be kind enough to direct me to a nice, comfortable lodging?" Old Huz-and-Buz was drinking here with his back to the door. "Great Cæsar's ghost!" he called out, dropping his glass, "what 'n thunder's that?" "Gentlemen," pipes up the young man again, "I am a stranger, this moment

arrived by the coach; and it would be a real kindness to direct me to a comfortable lodging." By this time he 'd unwound the muffler about his neck and unbuttoned his outer wraps generally, and we saw he was rigged out in genuine sky-pilot's uniform. We hadn't seen one of that profession in Eucalyptus for more 'n two years. "I'm afraid, your reverence," says one of the boys, mimicking the poor lad's talk, "I'm afraid the accommodation of this camp will hardly reach up to your style. I guess what *you* want is a cosy little nook with a brass knocker and a nice motherly woman to look after you. You oughter have sent the municipality word you was coming." "Thank you," answers the poor boy, as serious as can be; "of course I shall be glad of such comforts, but I assure you they are not indispensable. I 'm an old campaigner," he says, drawing himself up to his poor little height and smiling proud-like. I tell you, that knocked the wind out of our sails. It was too big to laugh at. We just stuck for half a minute and looked at him, till the mischief put it into old Huz-and-Buz's head to cackle out,

"Better send him right along to Flyheel Flo!" This put up a laugh, and I saw in half a minute that the proposition had caught on. It struck me as sort of funny, too, at the time. So I steps forward and says, "I know a lady who'd likely take you in and fix you up comfortable. This kind of thing ain't exactly in her line; but no doubt she'll put herself out to oblige a minister, specially if you take her a letter of introduction from me. Miss Florence Montmorency's her name, and she lives at No. 67 along the street here. Here, pass along the ink-bottle and a pen," I says (for, barring Huz-and-Buz, I was about the only sinner present that hadn't forgotten how to spell); and inside of five minutes I'd fixed up the letter to Flo, and a dandy document it was! He took it and thanked me like as if it was a school prize; and I guess 't was then it began to break in on me that we'd been playing it pretty low on the innocent. However, Pete caught up his valise, and two or three of us saw him along to Flo's door, and waited out on the side-walk while he knocked. At the second knock Flo

came down and let him in. I saw him lift his hat, and heard him begin with "I believe I am addressing Miss Montmorency;" and what Flo was making ready to say in answer I'd give a dollar at this moment to know. But she looked over his shoulder, and with the tail of her eye glimpsed us outside, and wasn't going to show her hand before the boys. So quick as thought she pulls the youngster in, with his valise, and shuts the door.

"'Well, *sir*, we cooled our heels outside there for a spell, but nothing occurred. So at last we made tracks back here to the saloon, owning to ourselves that Flo didn't need to be taught how to receive a surprise party. "But," says I, "you'll have the minister back here before long; and I anticipate he'll ask questions." I'd hardly said the words before the door flung open behind me. It wasn't the youngster, though, but Flo herself; and a flaming rage she was in. "See here, boys," she begins, "this is a dirty game, and you'd better be ashamed of yourselves! I'm ashamed of you, Bill, anyway," she says, tossing me back my letter; and then, turning

short round on Huz-and-Buz, "If old Iniquity, here, started the racket, it 's nateral to him: he had a decent woman once for his wife, *and beat her*. But there 's others of you oughter know that your same reasons for thinking light of a woman are reasons against driving the joke too hard." "You 're right, Flo," says I, "and I beg your pardon." "I dunno that I 'll grant it," she says. "Lord knows," she says, "It ain't for any of us here to be heaving dirt at each other; but I will say you oughter be feeling mean, the way you 've served that young man. Why, boys,' she says, opening her eyes wide, like as if 't was a thing unheard of, "he 's *good!* And oh, boys, he 's sick, too!" "Is he so?" I says; "I feel cheap." "You oughter," says she. "What 's to be done?" says I. "Well, the first thing," she says, "that you 've got to do is to come right along and paint my fence;" then, seeing I looked a bit puzzled—"Some of you boys have taken the liberty to write up some pretty free compliments about my premises; and as the most of you was born before spelling-bees came in fashion, I don't want my new boarder to come down

to-morrow and form his own opinion about your education." Well, sir, we went off in a party and knocked up old Peter, and got a pot of paint, and titivated No. 67 by the light of a couple of lanterns; and the Bishop—as we came to call him—sleeping the sleep of the just upstairs all the time. *Un*fortunately, Peter had made a mistake and given us green paint instead of blue, and by that light none of us could tell the difference; so I guess the Bishop next morning allowed that Miss Montmorency had ideas of her own on "mural decoration," as Huz-and-Buz calls it. When we got the job fixed, Flo steps inside the gate, and says she, looking over it, "Boys, I 'm grateful. And now I 'm going to play a lone hand, and I look to you not to interfere. Good night." From that day to this, sir, she's kept straight, and held off the drink in a manner you would n't credit. The Bishop, he thinks her an angel on earth; and to see them promenading down the sidewalk arm-in-arm of an afternoon is as good as a dime exhibition. I 'm bound to own the boys act up. You wait till you see her pass, and the way the hats fly off.

Old Huz-and-Buz came pretty near to getting lynched the first week, for playing the smarty and drawling out as they went by, "Miss Montmorency, I believe?" to imitate the way in which the Bishop introduced himself. I guess he won't be humorous again for a considerable spell. And now, Doctor, I hope I 've put the facts straight for you?'

"'You have,' I answered, draining my glass; 'and they do several people credit.'

"'Wait a bit. You have n't heard what I 'm coming to. That young man is poor.'

"'So I gather.'

"'And I 'm speaking now in the name of the boys. There was a meeting held just now, while you was dropping your card on the Bishop; and I 'm to tell you, as deputy, that trouble ain't to be spared over him. It 's a hopeless case; but you hear—trouble ain't to be spared; and the municipality foots the——'

"'Hold hard, there,' I broke in; and told him how the land lay. When I 'd done he held out a huge but well-shaped hand, palm upwards.

"'Put it theer,' he said.

"We shook hands, and walked together (still to the strain of 'Juliana') as far as the Necropolis gate. I observed that several citizens appeared at the doors of the saloons along our route, and looked inquiringly at Captain Bill, who answered in each case with a wink.

"'That passes you,' he explained, 'for the freedom of Eucalyptus City, as you 'd say at home. When you want it, you 've only to come and fetch it—in a pail. You 're among friends.'

"He backed up this assurance by shaking my hand a second time, and with great fervour. And so we parted.

"As I neared the spring on my homeward road I saw Miss Montmorency standing beside the track, awaiting me. She looked decidedly better, and handed me back my handkerchief, almost dry and neatly folded.

"'And how did you find him?' she asked.

"I told her.

"'We allowed it was that—the boys and I. We allowed he would n't last out the fall. Did you meet any of the boys?'

"'I've been having a short drink and a long talk with Captain Bill.'

"She nodded her head, breaking off to clap both palms to her temples.

"'My! It does ache! I'm powerful glad you seen Bill. Now you know the worst o' me and we can start fair. I allowed, first along, that I play this hand alone; but now you've got to help. Now and then I catch myself weakening. It's dreadful choky, sitting by the hour and filling up that poor innocent with lies. And the eyes of him!' (she stamped her foot): 'I could whip his father and mother for having no more sense than to let him start. Doctor, you'll have to help.'

"I rode down to Eucalyptus again next morning and found the Bishop seated and talking with Miss Montmorency in the gaudy little parlour.

"'We were just going out for a walk together,' he explained, as we shook hands.

"'And now you'll just have to walk out with the Doctor instead; and serve you right for

talking foolishness.' She moved towards the door.

"'Doctor,' he said, 'I wish you would make her listen. I feel much better to-day—altogether a different man. If this improvement continues, I shall start in a week at the furthest. And I was trying to tell her—Doctor, you can have no notion of her goodness. "I was a stranger and she took me in"——'

"Miss Montmorency, with her hand on the door, turned sharply round at this, and shot a queer sort of look at me. I thought she was going to speak; but she did n't.

"'Excuse me,' I said to the Bishop, as the door closed, 'but that's your Bible, I take it, on the table yonder. May I have it for a moment?'

"I picked it up and followed Miss Montmorency, whom I found just outside on the landing.

"'What 's the meaning of it?' she demanded, very low and fierce.

"'I guessed that text had jerked you a bit. No, I have n't given you away. He was talking out of the Bible.' I found the place for her.

'You 'd better take it to your room and read the whole passage,' said I, and went back to the parlour.

"'I have lent your Bible to Miss Montmorency,' I said.

"The Bishop seemed lost in thought, but made no remark until we were outside the house and starting for our short walk. Then he laid a hand on my arm. 'Forgive me,' he said; 'I had no idea you were earnest in these matters.'

"I was for putting in a disclaimer, but he went on:

"'She has a soul to save—a very precious soul. Mark you, if works could save a soul, hers would be secure. And I have thought sometimes God cannot judge her harshly; for consider of how much value the life of one such woman must be in such a community as this! You should observe how the men respect her. And yet we have the divine assurance that works without grace are naught; and her carelessness on sacred matters is appalling. If, when I am gone'—and it struck me sharply that not only the western

mountains but the cemetery gate lay in the direction of his nod, and that the gate lay nearer —'if you could speak to her now and then—ah you can hardly guess how it would rejoice me some day when I return, bearing'—and his voice sank here—'bearing, please God, my sheaves with me!'

"'But why,' I urged, 'go farther, when work like this lies at your hand?'

"'I have thought of that; but only for a moment. It may sound presumptuous to you; I am very young; but there is bigger work for me ahead, and I am called. I cannot argue about this. I *know.* I have a sign. Look up at the mountain, yonder—high up, above the quicksilver mines. Do you see those bright lights flashing?'

"Sure enough, above the disused works a line of sparkling lights led the eye upwards to the snowfields, as if traced in diamonds. The phenomenon was certainly astonishing, and I could n't account for it.

"'You see it? Ah! but you did n't observe it till I spoke. Nobody does. Miss Mont-

morency, when I pointed it out, declared that in all the time she has lived here she never once noticed it. Yet the first night I came here I saw it. My window looks westward, and I pulled the curtain aside for a moment before getting into bed. It had been dark as pitch when the coach dropped me; but now the moon was up, over opposite; and the first thing my eyes lit on was this line of lights reaching up the mountain. When I woke, next morning, it was still there, flashing in the sun. I think it was at breakfast, when I asked Miss Montmorency about it, and found she'd never remarked it, that it first came into my head 'twas meant for me. Anyhow, the idea's fixed there now, and I can't get away from it. I've asked many people, and there's not one can explain it, or has ever remarked it till I pointed it out.'

"His hand trembled on his stick, and a fit of coughing shook him. While we stood still I heard a banjo in a saloon across the road tinkle its long descent into the chorus of 'Juliana'—

"Was it weary there
In the wilderness?
Was it weary-y-y, 'way down in Goshen?"

The chorus came roaring out and across the street; ceased; and the banjo slid into the next verse.

"'I wish they would n't,' said the Bishop, taking the handkerchief from his lips and speaking (as I thought) rather peevishly.

"'It 's a weariful tune.'

"'Is it? Now I don't know anything about music. It's the words that make me feel wisht.'

"'And now,' said I, 'you 've eased my soul of the curiosity that has been vexing it for twenty-four hours. Your voice told you were English; but there was something in it besides—something almost rubbed out, if I may say so, by your training for the ministry. I was wondering what part of England you hailed from, and I meant to find out without asking. You 'll observe that as yet I don 't even know your name. But Cornwall 's your birthplace.'

"'I suppose,' he answered, smiling, 'you 've

only heard me called "the Bishop." Yes, you're quite right. I come from the north of Cornwall—from Port Isaac; and my name's Penno—John Penno. I used to be laughed at for it at the Training College, and for my Cornish talk. They said it would be a hindrance to me in the ministry, so I worked hard to overcome it.'

"'I know Port Isaac. At least, I once spent a couple of days there.'

"'Ah?' He turned on me eagerly—with a sob, almost. 'You will have seen my folks, maybe? My father's a fisherman there—Hezekiah Penno—Old Ki, he's always called: everyone knows him.'

"I shook my head. 'The only fisherman I knew at all was called Tregay. He took me out after the pollack one day in his boat, the *Little Mercy*.'

"'That will be my mother's brother Israel. He named the boat after a sister of mine. She's grown up now and married, and settled at St. Columb. This is wonderful! And how was Israel wearing when you saw him?'

"'You have later news of him than I can give. I am speaking of ten years ago.'

"His face fell pathetically; but he contrived a rueful little laugh as he answered: 'and I must have been a boy of nine at the time, and playing about Portissick Street, no doubt! Never mind. It's good, anyway, to speak of home to you; for you've *seen* it, you know.'

"He said this with his eyes fixed on the flashing mountain; and, as he finished, he sighed.

"During the next three or four days—for a relapse followed his rally, and he had to give up all thought of departing immediately—I talked much with the Bishop; and I think that each talk added to my respect and wonder. In the first place, though I had read in a good many poetry books of maidens who walked through all manner of deadliness unhurt—Una and the lion, you know, and the rest of them—I had n't imagined that kind or amount of innocence in a young man. But what startled me even more was the size of his ambitions.

'Bishop'—*in partibus infidelium* with a vengeance—was too small a title for him. 'Twas a Peter the Hermit's part, or a Savonarola's, or Whitefield's at least, he was going to play all along the Pacific Slope; and his outfit no more than a small Bible and the strength of a mouse. And with all this the poor boy was just wearying for home, and every small fibre in his sick heart pulling him back while he fixed his eyes on the lights up the mountain and stiffened his back and talked about putting a hand to the plough and not turning back.

"'Hewson,' I said one morning, as we were breakfasting at the Cornice House, 'what's the cause of those curious lights up by the cinnabar mines, over Eucalyptus?'

"'Lights?' said he, 'what lights? I never heard of any.'

"'Well, it's something that flashes, anyway—a regular line of it.'

"'I'll tell you what it's *not*; and that's quicksilver,' Hewson answered.

"On my way down to Eucalyptus early that

morning, I hitched my horse up to the Necropolis gate and determined to explore the secret of the lights before visiting the Bishop. The track towards the cinnabar works was pretty easy to follow, first along; but when I had climbed some four or five hundred feet it grew fainter, and was lost at length under the pine-needles. Luckily some hand had notched a tree here and there, and these guided me to the dry bed of a torrent, on the far side of which the track reappeared, and continued pretty plain for the rest of the journey, though broken in several places by the rains. I had missed my way three times at the most; but it took me three-quarters of an hour to reach the lowest of the works, and another twenty minutes to get into anything like clear country. At length, on the edge of a steep depression that widened and shallowed as it neared the valley, I got a fair look up the slope. So far I had met nothing to account for the lights—nothing at all, in fact, but the broken spade-handles, old boots, empty meat-cans, and other refuse of the miners' camps; but every now and then

I would catch a glimpse of the hillside high overhead: and always those lights were flashing there, though in varying numbers. Now, having a clear view, I found to my dismay that they had shrunk to one. It was like a story in the Arabian Nights. I swore, though, that I would not be cheated of this last chance. The flashing object, whatever it was, lay some two hundred yards above me on the slope; and I approached cautiously, with my eyes fixed on it, much like a child hunting grasshoppers in a hayfield. I was less than ten paces from it when the light suddenly vanished, and five paces more knocked the bottom out of the mystery. The object was a battered and empty meat-can.

"I had passed a hundred such, at least, on my way. The camps had lain pretty close to the track, and the rains descending upon their refuse heaps had washed the labels off these cans, that now, as sun and moon rose and passed over the mountain side, flashed moving signals down to Eucalyptus in the valley—signals of failure and desolation. And these

had been the Bishop's pillar of fire in the wilderness.

> "'*Was it weary, then,*
> *In the wilderness?*' . . .

"I turned and went down the track.

"At the Necropolis gate I found Captain Bill standing, with a heavy and puzzled face, beside my horse.

"'I was stepping up to Cornice House; but found your nag here, and concluded to wait. I've been waiting the best part of an hour. What in thunder have you been doing with yourself?'

"'Prospecting,' said I. 'What's the news? Anything wrong with the Bishop?'

"'There's nothing wrong with him; and won't be, any more. He broke a bloodvessel in the night. Flo looked in early this morning, and found him sleeping, as she thought. An hour later she took him a cup of tea, and was putting it down on the table by the bed, when she saw blood on the pillow. She's powerful upset.'

"Two days later—the morning of the funeral—I met Captain Bill at the entrance of the town. He held the Bishop's small morocco-bound Bible in his hand; but for excellent reasons had made no change in his work-day attire.

"'You're attending, of course?' was his greeting. 'Say, would you like to conduct? It lay between me and Huz-'n-Buz, and he was for tossing up; but I allowed he was altogether too hoary a sinner. So we made him chief mourner instead, along with Flo—the more by token that he's the only citizen with a black coat to his back. As for Flo, she's got to attend in colours, having cut up her only black gown to nail on the casket for a covering. Foolishness, of course; but she was set on it. But see here, you've only to say the word, and I'll resign to you.'

"I declined, and suggested that for two reasons he was the man to conduct the service: first, as the most prominent inhabitant of Eucalyptus; and secondly, as having made himself in a way responsible for the Bishop from the first.

"'As you like,' said he. 'I told him, that first night, that I 'd see him through; and I will.'

"He eyed the Bible dubiously. 'It 's pretty small print,' he added. 'I suppose it 's all good, now?'

"If you mean that you 're going to open the book and read away from the first full-stop you happen to light on——'

"'That 's what I 'd planned. You don't suppose, do you, I 've had time since Tuesday to read all this through and skim off the cream?'

"'Then you 'd better let me pick out a chapter for you.'

"As I took the Bible something fluttered from it to the ground. Captain Bill stooped and picked it up.

"'That 's pretty, too,' he said, handing it to me.

"It was a little bookmarker, worked in silk, with one pink rose, the initials M. P. (for Mercy Penno, no doubt), and under these the favourite lines that small west-country children in England embroider on their samplers:

"'*Rose leaves smell*
When roses thrive:
Here's my work
When I'm alive.
Rose leaves smell
When shrunk and shred:
Here's my work
When I'm dead.'

I turned to the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians; showed the captain where to begin; and laid the bookmarker opposite the place.

"We walked a few paces together as far as the green knoll that I have described as overhanging Eucalyptus, and there I halted to wait for the funeral, while Captain Bill went on to the Necropolis to make sure that the grave was ready and all arrangements complete. The procession was not due to start for another quarter of an hour, so I found a comfortable boulder and sat down to smoke a pipe. Right under me stretched the deserted main street, and in the hush of the morning—it was just the middle of

the Indian summer, and the air all sunny and soft—I could hear the billiard balls click-click-clicking as usual, and the players voices breaking in at intervals, and the banjoes tinkling away down the street from saloon to saloon. These and the distant chatter of the river were all the sounds; and the river's chatter seemed hardly so persistent and monotonous as the voices of the saloons and the unceasing question—

"'*Was it weary there*
In the wilderness?
Was it weary-y-y, 'way down in Goshen?

"Suddenly, far down the street, there was a stir, and from the door of No. 67 half a dozen men came staggering out into the sunshine under a black coffin, which they carried shoulder high; and behind came two figures only—those of Miss Montmorency and the architect—arm in arm. The bearers wheeled round, got into step after one or two attempts, and the procession advanced.

"And I observed, as it advanced, that a hush came slowly with it, closing on the click of the

balls and the strumming of the banjoes, as from saloon after saloon the players stepped out and fell in at the tail of the procession. Gradually these noises were penned into the three or four saloons immediately beneath me; and then these, too, were silenced, and the mourners began to climb the hill.

"I did not attend the funeral after all. I rose and stood hat in hand as it climbed past—the coffin, the one woman, and the many men. It was grotesque enough. Flo had on the same outrageous costume she had worn at our first meeting; but a look at the black drapery of the coffin sanctified *that.* One mourner, in pure absence of mind, had brought along his billiard cue as a walking-stick; and every now and then would step out of the ranks and distribute whacks among the five or six dogs that frisked alongside the procession. But I read on every face the consciousness that Eucalyptus was doing its duty.

"So they climbed past and up to the Necropolis, and filed in between its two pillars. I could see among the pines a group or two

standing, with bent heads, and Captain Bill towering beside the grave; at times I heard his voice lifted, but could not catch the words. Down in the town for a while all was silent as death. Then in a saloon below some boy—left behind, no doubt, to look after the house—took up a banjo and began to pick out slowly and with one finger the tune of ''Way down upon the Suwanee River,' and as it went I fitted the words to it:

"'*All the world is sad and dreary*
Everywhere I roam,
Oh, brudders, how my heart grows weary.'"

"The tune ceased. The only sound now came from a robin, hunting about the turf and now and then breaking out into an impatient twitter.

"The silence was broken at length by the footsteps of the mourners returning. They went down the hill almost as decorously as they had gone up. Flo stepped aside and came towards me.

"'Let me stay beside you for a bit. I can't go back there—yet.'

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"This was all she said; and we stood there side by side for minutes. Soon the tinkle of a banjo came up to us, and a pair of billiard balls clicked; then a second banjo joined in; and gradually, as the stream of citizens trickled back and spread, so like a stream the sound of clicking billiard balls and tinkling banjoes trickled back and spread along the main street of Eucalyptus City.

> "'*Was it weary there,*
> *In de wilderness? . . .*'

"Flo looked at me and put out a hand; but drew it back before I could take it. And so, without another word, she went down the hill."

WIDDERSHINS

A DROLL

ONCE upon a time there was a small farmer living in Wendron parish, not far from the church-town. 'Thaniel Teague was his name. This Teague happened to walk into Helston on a Furry-day,* when the Mayor and townspeople dance through the streets to the Furry-tune. In the evening there was a grand ball given at the Angel Hotel, and the landlord very kindly allowed Teague—who had stopped too late as it was—to look in through the door and watch the gentry dance the Lancers.

Teague thought he had never seen anything so heavenly. What with one hindrance and another 'twas past midnight before he reached home, and then nothing would do for him but he must have his wife and six children out upon the floor in their night-clothes, practising the Grand Chain while he sang—

* Flora-day, May 8th.

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> *"Out of my stony griefs*
> *Bethel I'll raise!"*

The seventh child, the babby, they set down in the middle of the floor, like a nine-pin. And the worst of it was, the poor mite twisted his eyes so, trying to follow his mammy round and round, that he grew up with a cast from that hour.

'Tis of this child—Joby he was called—that I am going to tell you. Barring the cast, he grew up a very straight lad, and in due time began to think upon marrying. His father's house faced south, and as it came easier to him to look north-west than any other direction, he chose a wife from Gwinear parish. His elder brothers had gone off to sea for their living, and his sister had married a mine-captain: so when the old people died, Joby took over the farm and worked it, and did very well.

Joby's wife was very fond of him, though of course she didn't like that cast in his looks: and in many ways 'twas inconvenient too. If the

poor man ever put hand on plough to draw a straight furrow, round to the north 'twould work as sure as a compass-needle. She consulted the doctors about it, and they did no good. Then she thought about consulting a conjurer; but being a timorous woman as well as not over-wise, she put it off for a while.

Now, there was a little fellow living over to Penryn in those times, Tommy Warne by name, that gave out he knew how to conjure. Folks believed in him more than he did himself: for, to tell truth, he was a lazy shammick, who liked most ways of getting a living better than hard work. Still, he was generally made pretty welcome at the farm-houses round, for he could turn a hand to anything and always kept the maids laughing in the kitchen. One morning he dropped in on Farmer Joby and asked for a job to earn his dinner; and Joby gave him some straw to spin for thatching. By dinner-time Tom had spun two bundles of such very large size that the farmer rubbed his chin when he looked at them.

"Why," says he, "I always thought you a

liar—I did indeed. But now I believe you can conjure, sure enough."

As for Mrs. Joby, she was so much pleased that, though she felt certain the devil must have had a hand in it, she gave Tom an extra helping of pudding for dinner.

Some time after this, Farmer Joby missed a pair of pack-saddles. Search and ask as he might, he couldn't find out who had stolen them, or what had become of them.

"Tommy Warne's a clever fellow," he said at last. "I must see if he can tell me anything." So he walked over to Penryn on purpose.

Tommy was in his doorway smoking when Farmer Joby came down the street. "So you'm after they pack-saddles," said he.

"Why, how ever did you know?"

"That's my business. Will it do if you find 'em after harvest?"

"To be sure 'twill. I only want to know where they be."

"Very well, then; after harvest they'll be found."

Home the farmer went. Sure enough, after

harvest, he went to unwind Tommy's two big bundles of straw-rope for thatching the mow, and in the middle of each was one of his missing pack-saddles.

"Well, now," said Joby's wife, "that fellow must have a real gift of conjurin'! I wonder, my dear, you don't go and consult him about that there cross eye of yours."

"I will, then," said Joby; and he walked over to Penryn again the very next market-day.

"'Cure your eyes,' is it?" said Tommy Warne. "Why, to be sure I can. Why didn't you ax me afore? I thought you *liked* squintin'."

"I don't, then; I hate it."

"Very well; you shall see straight this very night if you do what I tell you. Go home and tell your wife to make your bed on the roof of the four-poster; and she must make it widdershins,* turnin' bed-tie and all against the sun, and puttin' the pillow where the feet come as a rule. That's all."

"Fancy my never thinkin' of anything so

* From S. to N., through E.

simple as that!" said Joby. He went home and told his wife. She made his bed on the roof of the four-poster, and widdershins, as he ordered; and they slept that night, the wife as usual, and Joby up close to the rafters.

But scarcely had Joby closed an eye before there came a rousing knock at the door, and in walked Joby's eldest brother, the sea-captain, that he hadn't seen for years.

"Get up, Joby, and come along with me if you want that eye of yours mended."

"Thank you, Sam, it's curin' very easy and nice, and I hope you won't disturb me."

"If 'tis Tommy Warne's cure you're trying, why then I'm part of it; so you'd best get up quickly."

"Aw, that's another matter, though you might have said so at first. I'd no notion you and Tommy was hand-'n-glove."

Joby rose up and followed his brother out of doors. He had nothing on but his night-shirt, but his brother seemed in a hurry, and he didn't like to object.

They set their faces to the road and they

walked and walked, neither saying a word, till they came to Penryn. There was a fair going on in the town; swing-boats and shooting-galleries and lillybanger standings, and naphtha lamps flaming, and in the middle of all, a great whirly-go-round, with striped horses and boats, and a steam-organ playing "Yankee Doodle." As soon as they started Joby saw that the whole thing was going around widdershins; and his brother stood up under the naphtha-lamp and pulled out a sextant and began to take observations.

"What's the latitude?" asked Joby. He felt that he ought to say something to his brother, after being parted all these years.

"Decimal nothing to speak of," answered Sam.

"Then we ought to be nearing the Line," said Joby. He hadn't noticed the change, but now he saw that the boat they sat in was floating on the sea, and that Sam had stuck his walking-stick out over the stern and was steering.

"What's the longitude?" asked Joby.

"That doesn't concern us."

"'Tis west o' Grinnidge, I suppose?" Joby knew very little about navigation, and wanted to make the most of it.

"West o' Penryn," said Sam, very sharp and short. "'Twasn' Grinnidge Fair we started from."

But presently he sings out "Here we are!" and Joby saw a white line, like a popping-crease, painted across the blue sea ahead of them. First he thought 'twas paint, and then he thought 'twas catgut, for when the keel of their boat scraped over it, it sang like a bird.

"That was the Equator," said Sam. "Now let's see if your eyes be any better."

But when Joby tried them, what was his disappointment to find the cast as bad as ever?—only now they were slewing right the other way, towards the South Pole.

"I never thought well of this cure from the first," declared Sam. "For my part, I'm sick and tired of the whole business!" And with that he bounced up from the thwart and hailed a passing shark and walked down its throat in a huff, leaving Joby all alone on the wide sea.

"There's nice brotherly behaviour for you!" said Joby to himself. "Lucky he left his walking-stick behind. The best thing I can do is to steer along close to the Equator, and then I know where I am."

So he steered along close to the Line, and by-and-by he saw something shining in the distance. When he came nearer, 'twas a great gilt fowl stuck there with its beak to the Line and its wings sprawled out. And when he came close, 'twas no other than the cock belonging to the tower of his own parish church of Wendron!

"Well!" said Joby, "one has to travel to find out how small the world is. And what might you be doin' here, naybour?"

"Is that you, Joby Teague? Then I'll thank you to do me a good turn. I came here in a witch-ship last night, and the crew put this spell upon me because I wouldn't pay my footing to cross the Line. A nice lot, to try and steal the gilt off a church weather-cock! 'Tis ridiculous," said he, "but I can't get loose for the life o' me!"

"Why, that's as easy as A B C," said Joby.

"You'll find it in any book of parlour amusements. You take a fowl, put its beak to the floor, and draw a chalk line away from it, right and left——"

Joby wetted his thumb, smudged out a bit of the Equator on each side of the cock's nose, and the bird stood up and shook himself.

"And now is there anything I can do for you, Joby Teague?"

"To be sure there is. I'm getting completely tired of this boat: and if you can give me a lift, I'll take it as a favour."

"No favour at all. Where shall we go visit?—the Antipodes?"

"No thank you," said Toby. "I've heard tell they get up an' do their business when we honest folks be in our beds: and that kind o' person I never could trust. Squint or no squint, Wendron's Wendron, and that's where I'm comfortable."

"Well, it's no use loitering here, or we may get into trouble for what we've done to the Equator. Climb on my back," said the bird, "and home we go!"

It seemed no more than a flap of the wings, and Joby found himself on his friend's back on one of the pinnacles of Wendron Church and looking down on his own farm.

"Thankin' you kindly, soce, and now I think I'll be goin'," said he.

"Not till I've cured your eyesight, Joby, said the polite bird.

Joby by this time was wishing his eyesight to botheration; but before he could say a word, a breeze came about the pinnacles, and he was spinning around on the cock's back—spinning around widdershins—clutching the bird's neck and holding his breath.

"And now," the cock said, as they came to a standstill again, "I think you can see a hole in a ladder as well as any man."

Just then the bells in the tower below them began to ring merrily.

Said Joby, "What's that for, I wonder?"

"It looks to me," said the cock, "as if your wife was gettin' married again."

Sure enough, while the bells rang, Joby saw the door of his own house open, and his own

wife come stepping towards the church, leaning on a man's arm. And who should that man be but Tommy Warne?

"And to think I've lived fifteen years with that woman, and never lifted my hand to her!"

Said the bird, "The wedding is fixed for eleven o'clock, and 'tis on the stroke now. If I was you, Joby, I'd climb down and put back the church clock."

"And so I would, if I knew how to get to it.'

"You've but to slide down my leg to the parapet: and from the parapet you can jump right on to the string-course under the clock."

Joby slid down the bird's leg, and jumped on to the ledge. He had never before noticed a clock in Wendron Church tower; but there one was, staring him in the face.

"Now," cried his friend, "catch hold of the minute-hand and turn!" Joby did so—"Widdershins!" screamed the bird: "faster! faster!" Joby whizzed back the minute-hand with all his might. . . . .

"Aië, ul—ul—oo! Lemme go! 'Tis my arm

you're pullin' off!" 'Twas his own wife's voice in his own four-poster. Joby had slid down the bed-post and caught hold of her arm, and was workin' it round like mad from right to left.

"I ax your pardon, my dear. I was thinkin' you was another man's bride."

"Indeed, I must say you wasn't behavin' like it," said she.

But when she got up and lit a candle, she was pleased enough: for Joby's eyes were as straight as yours or mine. And straight they have been ever since.

VISITORS AT THE GUNNEL ROCK

A LIGHTSHIP IDYLL

When first the Trinity Brothers put a light out yonder by the Gunnel Rocks, it was just a trifling makeshift affair for the time—none of your proper lightships with a crew of twelve or fourteen hands; and my father and I used to tend it, taking turn and turn with two other fellows from the Islands. I'm talking of old days. The rule then—they have altered it since—was two months afloat and two ashore; and all the time we tossed out there on duty, not a soul would we see to speak to except when the Trinity boat put off with stores for us and news of what was doing in the world. This would be about once a fortnight in fair weather; but through the winter time it was oftener a month, and provisions ran low enough, now and then, to make us anxious. "Was the life dreary?" Well, you couldn't call it gay; but, you see, it didn't kill me.

For the first week I thought the motion would drive me crazy—up and down, up and down, in that everlasting ground-swell—although I had been at the fishing all my life, and knew what it meant to lie-to in any ordinary sea. But after ten days or so I got not to mind it. And then there was the open air. It was different with the poor fellows on the Lighthouse, eighteen miles to seaward of us, to the south-west. They drew better pay than ours, by a trifle; but they were landsmen, to start with; and cooped in that narrow tower at night, with the shutters closed and the whole building rocking like a tree, it's no wonder their nerves wore out. Four or five days of it have been known to finish a man; and in those times a lighthouse-keeper had three months of duty straight away, and only a fortnight on shore. Now he gets only a fortnight out there, and six weeks to recover it. With all that, they're mostly fit to start at their own shadow when the boat takes them off.

But on the lightship we fared tolerably. To begin with, we had the lantern to attend to. You'd be surprised how much employment that

gives a man—cleaning, polishing, and trimming. And my father, though particular to a scratch on the reflector, or the smallest crust of salt on the glass, was a restful, cheerful sort of a man to bide with. Not talkative, you understand—no light-keeper in the world was ever talkative—but with a power of silence that was more comforting than speech. And out there, too, we found all sorts of little friendly things to watch and think over. Sometimes a school of porpoises; or a line of little murrs flying; or a sail far to the south, making for the Channel. And sometimes, towards evening, the fishing-boats would come out and drop anchor a mile and a half to south'ard, down sail, and hang out their riding lights; and we knew that they took their mark from us, and that gave a sociable feeling.

On clear afternoons, too, by swarming up the mast just beneath the cage, I could see the Islands away in the east, with the sun on their cliffs; and home wasn't so far off, after all. The town itself, which lay low down on the shore, we could never spy, but glimpsed the lights of it now

and then, after sunset. These always flickered a great deal, because of the waves, like little hills of water, bobbing between them and us. And always we had the Lighthouse for company. In daytime, through the glass, we could watch the keepers walking about in the iron gallery round the top: and all night through there it was beckoning to us with its three white flashes every minute. No, we weren't exactly gay out there, and sometimes we made wild weather of it. Yet we did pretty well; except for the fogs, when our arms ached with keeping the gong going.

But if we were comfortable then, you should have seen us at the end of our two months, when the boat came off with the relief, and took us on shore. John and Robert Pendlurian were the names of the relief; brothers they were, oldsters of about fifty-five and fifty; and John Pendlurian, the elder, a widow-man same as my father, but with a daughter at home. Living in the Islands, of course I 'd known Bathsheba ever since we 'd sat in infant-school; and what more natural than to ask after her health, along

with the other news? But Old John got to look sly and wink at my father when we came to this question, out of the hundred others. And the other two would take it up and wink back solemn as mummers. I never lost my temper with the old idiots: 't wasn't worth while.

But the treat of all was to set foot on the quay-steps, and the people crowding round and shaking your hand and chattering; and everything ashore going on just as you 'd left it, and you not wishing it other, and everybody glad to see you all the same; and the smell of the gardens and the stinking fish at the quay-corner—you might choose between them, but home was in both; and the nets drying; and to be out of oilskins and walking to meeting-house on the Sunday, and standing up there with the congregation, all singing in company, and the women taking stock of you till the newness wore off; and the tea-drinking, and Band of Hopes, and courants, and dances? We had all the luck of these; for the two Pendlurians, being up in years and easily satisfied so long as they were left quiet were willing to take their holidays in

the dull months, beginning with February and March. And so I had April and May, when a man can always be happy ashore; and August and September, which is the best of the fishing and all the harvest and harvest games; and again, December and January, with the courants and geesy-dancing, and carols and wassail-singing. Early one December, when he came to relieve us, Old John said to me in a hap-hazard way, "It 's all very well for me and Robert, my lad; for us two can take equal comfort in singin' '*Star o' Bethl'em*' ashore or afloat; but I reckon 't is somebody's place to see that Bathsheba don't miss any of the season's joy an' dancin' on our account."

Now, Bathsheba had an unmarried aunt—Aunt Hessy Pendlurian we called her—that used to take her to all the parties and courants when Old John was away at sea. So she wasn't likely to miss any of the fun, bein' able to foot it as clever as any girl in the Islands. She had the love of it, too—foot and waist and eyes all a-dancing, and body and blood all a-tingle as soon as ever the fiddle spoke. Maybe this same

speech of Old John's set me thinking. Or, maybe I'd been thinking already—what with their May-game hints and the loneliness out there. Anyway, I dangled pretty close on Bathsheba's heels all that Christmas. She was comely—you understand—very comely and tall, with dark blood, and eyes that put you in mind of a light shining steady upon dark water. And good as gold. She's dead and gone these twelve years—rest her soul. But (praise God for her!) I've never married another woman nor wanted to.

There, I've as good as told you already. When the time came and I asked her if she liked me, she said she liked no man half so well: and that being as it should be, the next thing was to put up the banns. There wasn't time that holiday: like a fool, I had been dilly-dallying too long, though I believe now I might have asked her a month before. So the wedding was held in the April following, my father going out to the Gunnel for a couple of days, so that Old John might be ashore to give his daughter away. The most I mind of the wedding was the wonder

of beholding the old chap there in a long-tailed coat, having never seen him for years but in his oilskins.

Well, the rest of that year seemed pretty much like all the others, except that coming home was better than ever. But when Christmas went by, and February came and our turn to be out again on the Gunnel, I went with a dismal feeling I hadn't known before. For Bathsheba was drawing near her time, and the sorrow was that she must go through it without me. She had walked down to the quay with us, to see us off; and all the way she chatted and laughed with my father as cheerful as cheerful —but never letting her eyes rest on me, I noticed, and I saw what that meant; and when it came to good-bye, there was more in the tightening of her arms about me than I 'd ever read in it before.

The old man, I reckon, had a wisht time with me, the next two or three weeks; but, by the mercy of God, the weather behaved furious all the while, leaving a man no time to mope. 'T was busy all, and busy enough, to keep a clear

light inside the lantern, and warm souls inside our bodies. All through February it blew hard and cold from the north and north-west, and though we lay in the very mouth of the Gulf Stream, for ten days together there wasn't a halliard we could touch with the naked hand, nor a cloth nor handful of cotton-waste but had to be thawed at the stove before using. Then, with the beginning of March, the wind tacked round to south-west, and stuck there, blowing big guns, and raising a swell that was something cruel. It was one of these gales that tore away the bell from the lighthouse, though hung just over a hundred feet above water-level. As for us, I wonder now how the little boat held by its two-ton anchors, even with three hundred fathom of chain cable to bear the strain and jerk of it; but with the spindrift whipping our faces, and the hail cutting them, we didn't seem to have time to think of *that.* Bathsheba thought of it, though, in her bed at home—as I 've heard since—and lay awake more than one night thinking of it.

But the third week in March the weather

moderated; and soon the sun came out and I began to think. On the second afternoon of the fair weather I climbed up under the cage and saw the Islands for the first time; and coming down, I said to my father:—

"Suppose that Bathsheba is dead!"

We hadn't said more than a word or two to each other for a week; indeed, till yesterday we had to shout in each other's ear to be heard at all. My father filled a pipe and said, "Don't be a fool."

"I see your hand shaking," said I.

Said he, "That's with the cold. At my age the cold takes a while to leave a man's extremities."

"But," I went on in an obstinate way, "suppose she is dead?"

My father answered, "She is a well-built woman. The Lord is good."

Not another word than this could I get from him. That evening—the wind now coming easy from the south, and the swell gone down in a wonderful way—as I was boiling water for the tea, we saw a dozen fishing-boats standing out

from the Islands. They ran down to within two miles of us and then hove-to. The nets went out, and the sails came down, and by-and-by through the glass I could spy the smoke coming up from their cuddy-stoves.

"They might have brought news," I cried out, "even if 't is sorrow!"

"Maybe there was no news to bring."

"'T would have been neighbourly, then, to run down and say so."

"And run into the current here, I suppose? With a chance of the wind falling light at any moment?"

I don't know if this satisfied my father: but I know that he meant it to satisfy me, which it was pretty far from doing. Before daylight the boats hoisted sail again, and were well under the Islands and out of sight by breakfast-time.

After this, for a whole long week I reckon I did little more than pace the ship to and fro; a fisherman's walk, as they say—three steps and overboard. I took the three steps and wished I was overboard. My father watched me queerly

all the while; but we said no word to each other, not even at meals.

It was the eighth day after the fishing-boats left us, and about four in the afternoon, that we saw a brown sail standing towards us from the Islands, and my father set down the glass, resting it on the gunwale, and said:—

"That's Old John's boat."

I took the glass from him, and was putting it to my eye; but had to set it down and turn my back. I couldn't wait there with my eye on the boat; so I crossed to the other side of the ship and stood staring at the Lighthouse away on the sky-line, and whispered: "Come quickly!" But the wind had moved a couple of points to the west and then fallen very light, and the boat must creep towards us close-hauled. After a long while my father spoke again:—

"That will be Old John steerin' her. I reckoned so: he've got her jib shakin'—that's it: sail her close till she strikes the tide-race, and that'll fetch her down, wind or no wind. Halloa!—— Lad, lad! 't is all right! See there, that bit o' red ensign run up to the gaff!"

"Why should that mean aught?" asked I.

"Would he trouble to hoist bunting if he had no news? Would it be there, close under the peak, if the news was bad?—and she his own daughter, his only flesh!"

It may have been twenty minutes later that Old John felt the Gunnel current, and, staying the cutter round, came down fast on us with the wind behind his beam. My father hailed to him once and twice, and the second time he must have heard. But, without answering, he ran forward and took in his foresail. And then I saw an arm and a little hand reached up to take hold of the tiller; and my heart gave a great jump.

It was she, my wife Bathsheba, laid there by the stern-sheets on a spare-sail, with a bundle of oilskins to cushion her. With one hand she steered the boat up into the wind as Old John lowered sail and they fell alongside: and with the other she held a small bundle close against her breast.

"Such a whackin' boy I never see in my life!"—these were Old John's first words, and he

shouted them. "Born only yestiddy week, an' she ought to be abed: an' so I've been tellin' her ever since she dragged me out 'pon this wildygo errand!"

But Bathsheba, as I lifted her over the light-ship's side, said no more than "O, Tom!"—and let me hold her, with her forehead pressed close against me. And the others kept very quiet, and everything was quiet about us, until she jumped back on a sudden and found all her speech in a flood.

"Tom," she said, "you 're crushin' him, you great, awkward man!" And she turned back the shawl and snatched the handkerchief off the baby's face—a queer-looking face it was, too, "Be all babies as queer as that?" thought I. Lucky I didn't say it, though. "There, my blessed, my handsome! Look, my tender! Eh, Tom, but he kicks my side all to bruises; my merryun, my giant! Look up at your father, and you his very image!" That was pretty stiff. "I declare," she says, "he 's lookin' about an' takin' stock of everything"—and that was pretty stiff, too. "So like a man; all for the sea

and the boats! Tom, dear, father will tell you that all the way on the water he was as good as gold; and, on shore before that, kicking and fisting—all for the sea and the boats; the man of him! Hold him, dear, but be careful! A Sunday's child, too—

'*Sunday's child is full of grace. . . .*'

and—the awkward you are! Here, give him back to me: but feel how far down in his clothes the feet of him reach. Extraordinar'! Aun' Hessy mounted a chair and climbed 'pon the chest o' drawers with him, before takin' him downstairs; so that he'll go up in the world, an' not down."

"If he wants to try both," said I, "he'd best follow his father and grandfathers, and live 'pon a lightship."

"So this is how you live, Tom; and you, father; and you, father-in-law!" She moved about examining everything—the lantern, the fog-signals and life-buoys, the cooking-stove, bunks and store-cupboards. "To think that here you live, all the menkind belongin' to me, and I

never to have seen it! All the menkind did I say, my rogue! And was I forgettin' you—you—you?" Kisses here, of course: and then she held the youngster up to look at his face in the light. "Ah, heart of me, will you grow up too to live in a lightship and leave a poor woman at home to weary for you in her trouble? Rogue, rogue, what poor woman have I done this to, bringing you into the world to be her torture and her joy?"

"Dear," says I, "you 're weak yet. Sit down by me and rest awhile before the time comes to go back."

"But I 'm not going back yet awhile. Your son, sir, and I are goin' to spend the night aboard."

"Halloa!" I said, and looked towards Old John, who had made fast astern of us and run a line out to one of the anchor-buoys.

"'T isn't allowed, o' course," he muttered, looking in turn and rather sheepishly towards my father. "But once in a way—'t is all Bathsheba's notion, and you mustn' ask *me*," he wound up.

"'Once in a way!'" cried Bathsheba. "And is it twice in a way that a woman comes to a man and lays his first child in his arms?"

My father had been studying the sunset and the sky to windward; and now he answered Old John:—

"'Tis once in a way, sure enough, that a boat can lay alongside the Gunnel. But the wind's falling, and the night'll be warm. I reckon if you stay in the boat, Old John, she'll ride pretty comfortable; and I'll give the word to cast off at the leastest sign."

"Once in a way"—ah, sirs, it isn't twice in a way there comes such a night as that was! We lit the light at sunset, and hoisted it, and made tea, talking like children all the while; and my father the biggest child of all. Old John had his share passed out to him, and ate it alone out there in the boat; and, there being a lack of cups, Bathsheba and I drank out of the same, and scalded our lips, and must kiss to make them well. Foolishness? Dear, dear, I suppose so. And the jokes we had, calling out to Old John as the darkness fell, and wishing him

"Good-night!" "Ou, aye; I hear 'ee," was all he answered. After we'd eaten our tea and washed up, I showed Bathsheba how to crawl into her bunk, and passed in the baby and laid it in her arms, and so left her, telling her to rest and sleep. But by-and-by, as I was keeping watch, she came out, declaring the place stifled her. So I pulled out a mattress and blankets and strewed a bed for her out under the sky, and sat down beside her, watching while she suckled the child. She had him wrapped up so that the two dark eyes of him only could be seen, staring up from the breast to the great bright lantern above him. The moon was in her last quarter, and would not rise till close upon dawn; and the night pitchy dark around us, with a very few stars. In less than a minute Bathsheba gave a start and laid a hand on my arm.

"Oh, Tom, what was that?"

"Look up," said I. "'T is the birds flying about the light."

For, of course, our light always drew the sea-birds, especially on dull nights, and 't was

long since we had grown used to the sound of their beating and flapping, and took no notice of it. A moment after I spoke one came dashing against the rigging, and we heard him tumble into the sea; and then one broke his neck against the cage overhead and tumbled dead at our feet. Bathsheba shivered as I tossed him overboard.

"Is it always like this?" she whispered. "I thought 't was only at the cost of a silly woman's fears that you saved men's lives out here."

"Well," said I, "this is something more than usual, to be sure."

For, looking up into the circle of light, we could see now at least a hundred birds flying round and round, and in half an hour's time there must have been many hundreds. Their white breasts were like a snowstorm; and soon they began to fall thick upon deck. They were not all sea-birds, either.

"Halloa!" said I, "what 's the day of the month?"

"The nineteenth of March.'

"Here 's a wheat-ear, then," I said. "In a couple of weeks we shall have the swallows; and, a couple of weeks after, a cuckoo, maybe. So you see that even out here by the Gunnel we know when spring comes along."

And I began to hum the old song that children sang in the Islands:—

> "*The cuckoo is a pretty bird,*
> *He sings as he flies:*
> *He brings us good tidings,*
> *He tells us no lies:*
> *He sucks the sweet flowers*
> *To make his voice clear,*
> *And when he says 'Cuckoo!'*
> *The summer is near.*"

Bathsheba's eyes were wet for the poor birds, but she took up the song, crooning it soft-like, and persuading the child to sleep:—

> "*O, meeting is a pleasure,*
> *But parting is grief,*
> *An inconstant lover*
> *Is worse than a thief;*

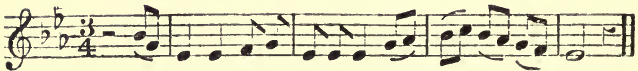
For a thief at the worst
Will take all that I have;
But an inconstant lover
Sends me to my grave."

Her hand stole into mine as the boy's eyes closed, and clasped my fingers, entreating me in silence to look and admire him. Our own eyes met over him, and I saw by the lantern-light the happy blush rise and spread over neck and chin and forehead. The flapping of the birds overhead had almost died away, and we lay still, watching the lighthouse flash, far down in the empty darkness.

By-and-by the clasp of her hand slackened. A star shot down the sky, and I turned. Her eyelids, too, had drooped, and her breath came and went as softly and regularly as the Atlantic swell around us. And my child slept in her arms.

Day was breaking before the first cry awoke her. My father had the breakfast ready, and Old John sang out to hurry. A fair wind went with them to the Islands—a light south-wester.

As the boat dropped out of sight, I turned and drew a deep breath of it. It was full of the taste of flowers, and I knew that spring was already at hand, and coming up that way.



LETTERS FROM TROY

Addressed to Rasselas, Prince

of Abyssinia

I.—THE FIRST PARISH MEETING

Troy Town,

December 5th, 1894.

My Dear Prince,—I feel sure that you, as a sympathetic student of western politics and manners, must be impatient to hear about our first Parish Meeting in Troy; and so I am catching the earliest post to inform you that from a convivial point of view the whole proceedings were in the highest degree successful. And if Self-Government by the People can provide a success of the kind in that dull season when people as a rule are saving up for Christmas, I hardly think our Chairman stretched a point last night when he said, "This evening will leave its mark on the history of England." Indeed, some inkling of this must have guided us when we met, a few days before, and agreed to postpone our usual Tuesday evening Carol-practice in order to give the New Era a fair start. And I am told this morning that the

near approach of the sacred season had a sensibly pacific influence upon the counsels of our neighbours at Treneglos. The parishioners there are mostly dairy-farmers, and party feeling runs high. But while eggs fetch 2d. apiece (as they do, towards Christmas) there will always be a disposition to give even the most unmarketable specimens the benefit of any doubt.

We were at first a good deal annoyed on finding that the Act allowed Troy but eleven Parish Councillors. We have never had less than sixty-five on our Regatta Committee, and we had believed Local Self-Government to be at least as important as a Regatta. We argued this out at some length last night, and the Chairman—Lawyer Thoms—admitted that we had reason on our side. But his instructions were definite, and he could not (as he vivaciously put it) fly in the face of the Queen and two Houses of Parliament. We saw that his regret was sincere, and so contented ourselves with handing in seventy-two nomination papers for the eleven places, just to mark our sense of the iniquity of the thing.

In another matter we worked round the intention of the Act more successfully. We have never been able to understand why the Liberal party in the House of Commons should object to Local Self-Government taking place in public-houses. The objection implies a distrust of the people. And it so happens that down here we always take a glass of grog before inaugurating an era; we would as soon think of prætermitting this as of launching a ship without cracking a bottle on her stem. So we asked the Chairman, and finding there was no law to prevent us, we ordered in half-a-dozen trays from the "King of Prussia," across the way. The Vicar, who is a particular man about his food and drink, pulled out a pocket vesuvius and a bottle of methylated spirit, and boiled his kettle in the ante-room.

Well, there we were sitting in the Town Hall as merry as grigs, each man with his pipe and glass, and ready for any amount of Self-Government. And the Chairman stood up and briefly explained the business of the meeting. He said the Parish Councils Act was the logical result of

Magna Charta, and would have the effect of making us all citizens of our own parish; and that as the expense of this would come upon the rates, we should endeavour to use our hardly-won enfranchisement with moderation. "We had met to choose eleven good men and true to administer the parish business for the coming year, or to nominate as many good men and true as we pleased. If more than eleven were nominated"—this was foolishness, for he could see there was hardly a man in the room that hadn't a nomination paper in his hand—"he would ask for a show of hands, and any candidate defeated upon this might demand a poll. He hoped we would vote in no spirit of sectarian or partisan bitterness, but as impartial citizens jealous only for the common weal; at the same time he was not in favour of letting down the Squire, Sir Felix Felix-Williams, too easily."

So we handed up our nomination papers, and while the Chairman and overseers were checking them off by the register, Old Pilot James got upon his legs.

He said that as long as he could remember—

man and boy—he had always practised carols in that very Town Hall upon the first Tuesday in December. The Vicar—as soon as he had done boiling the kettle in the next room—would come in and confirm his words. The practices were held on the first Tuesday in December, and on each successive Tuesday until St. Thomas's Day, when they had one extra. If St. Thomas's Day fell on a Tuesday, then the extra practice would be on Wednesday. He had received no notice of the change.

Thomas Rabling rose and explained that at a meeting held last Saturday, the singers had agreed to postpone the first practice in view of Local Self-Government. Mr. James had been present and had not objected.

George William Oke—a blockmaker, who had never sung a carol or attended a practice in his life—stood up and said, rather unnecessarily, that this was the first *he'd* heard of it.

Old Pilot James, answering Mr. Rabling, admitted that he might have been present at the meeting on Saturday. But he was deaf, as everybody knew—and Mr. Rabling no less than

the rest—and hadn't heard a word of what was said. If he had, he should have objected. But, deaf or not deaf, he still took a delight in singing; and, if only as a matter of principle, he was going to sing, "*God rest you, merry gentlemen,*" then and there. He was an old man, and they might turn him out if they liked; but he warned them it would be brutal, and might lead to a summons.

Well, the Chairman was making a long business of the nomination papers, so just to pass the time we let the old man sing. It seemed churlish, too, not to join in the chorus; and by-and-by the whole meeting was singing with a will. We sang "*Tidings of Comfort and Joy,*" and "*I saw Three Ships,*" and the *Cherry-tree Carol,* and "*Dives and Lazarus.*" We had come to that verse where Dives is carried off to sit on the serpent's knee, when the Chairman rose and said that only five of the nomination papers were spoilt, and he declared sixty-seven ladies and gentlemen to be duly nominated.

We all pricked up our ears at the word "ladies." However, there turned out to be one

lady only; and when the Chairman read out her name, her husband—a naval pensioner, William Carclew—stood up and explained that he had only meant it for a joke upon the old woman, just to give her a start, and he hoped it would go no further. This seemed fair and natural enough; but the Chairman said if Mrs. Carclew wished to withdraw her name she had better do so at once by word of mouth. So Carclew had to run home and fetch her. While he was gone we finished "*Dives and Lazarus.*"

In five minutes' time back came Carclew, followed by Mrs. Carclew, who announced—in a rich brogue—that since her man had conspired to put this fool's trick upon her, why now she would stand, begob! "Arrah now, people, people, and a gay man he'll look houlding the babby, while I'm afther superinthendin' the Parush!" So the Chairman declared her duly nominated. It will surprise me if she does not head the poll on the 17th.

The Chairman now invited us to interrogate the candidates, if we wished. By this time we were getting pretty well into the way of self-

government, and all enjoying it amazingly. Of course our lady candidate, Mrs. Carclew, had the first few questions; but these were mostly jocular and domestic, and I am bound to say the lady gave as good as was brought. The only sensible question came from Old Pilot James, who asked if she believed in the ballot. For his part he had never given a vote for anybody since Forster brought in the ballot in 'seventy-one. He favoured peace and quiet; and he liked to walk up to the hustings and give his vote, and hear 'em say, "Well done!" or "You —— old scoundrel!" as the case might be. He didn't mind being called "a —— old scoundrel," provided it was said to him by a gentleman who weighed his words. Since Forster brought in ballot he had always gone to the poll regular. He always took his paper and wrote opposite the names: "*Shan't say a word. Got my living to get. Yours obediently, Matthias James*"—and would advise everybody else to do the same.

After him, Renatus Hansombody, carpenter, rose at the back of the hall and announced that he had a question to put to the Doctor. The

Doctor, by the way, is one of the most popular of the candidates.

"I should like," said Mr. Hansombody, "to ask the Doctor if he will kindly explain to the company Clauses 5, 6, and 13 of the new Act?"

The Chairman protested that this would occupy more time than the meeting had to spare.

"In that case," said Mr. Hansombody, "I will confine myself to a test question. The Act provides that the Chairman of a Parish Meeting is to be elected by the Meeting. Now suppose the votes for two gentlemen are equal. In such a case what would the Doctor advise? For until you have a Chairman elected, there is no Chairman to give a casting vote."

The Doctor thought that, since we had long ago elected a Chairman by acclamation, the question was superfluous.

"And you call him a straightforward man!" Mr. Hansombody exclaimed, turning round on the Meeting. "What I say is, are we to have pusillanimity in our first Parish Council? What

I say is, that a gentleman who gives a working man such an answer to such a question——"

At this point the door opened and a shrill voice asked, "Is Hansombody here?"

"I am here," said Hansombody, "to expose impostors!"

"Because if so, he must please come home at once. Mrs. Hansombody's cryin'-out!"

"I always said," remarked Old Pilot James, "that this cussed Act would scare half the women in the Parish before their time."

"Beggin' your pard'n, Doctor," began his denouncer lamely.

"Not at all, not at all," said the Doctor. "We must keep these matters altogether outside the sphere of party politics." (*Loud cheering.*)

"Then I'll have to ask you to step along with me."

The two political opponents picked up their hats, and left the room together.

The Chairman rose as the door closed behind them. "I think," he said, "this should be a lesson to us to accept the Act in the spirit in which it was given. If nobody else wishes to

ask a question, I will now take a show of hands: but I warn you all it'll be a dreary business."

At this, the first hint of tedium, the company rose, drained their glasses, and made for the door, leaving the sixty-six remaining candidates to vote for themselves.

"Well," Mr. Rabling said to me, as we stood in the street; "so far, this here Parish Meeting might be like any other Parish Meeting in the Kingdom!"

I doubted, but did not contradict him.

"There's one thing," he added; "Ironmonger Loveday has laid in a whole stock of sixpenny fire-balloons for to-night: and there isn't a breath of wind. His boy's very clever with the scissors and paste: and he've a-stuck a tissue-paper text on each—'Success to the Charter of our Liberties,' and 'Rule Britannia' and 'God Speed the Plough'; and nothing more than the sixpence charged."

Simple, egregious, delectable town! As I leaned out last night, watching the young moon

and smoking the last pipe before bed-time, a dozen of these gay balloons rose from the water-side and drifted on the faint north wind, seaward, past my window. Another dozen followed, and another, until from one point and another of the dark shore a hundred balloons soared over the water, challenging the stars.

II.—THE SIMPLE SHEPHERD

Troy Town,

Jan. 29*th*, 1895.

"And then, as he set the bowl of goat's milk on the board, that simple Tyrolean turned to me with a magnificent sweep of the hand, and exclaimed——"

Ah, my dear Prince, if you could only tell me what he exclaimed, you would restore a whole parish to its natural slumbers. For indeed he is playing the deuce with our nights, here in Troy, that guileless Tyrolean.

How trivial are the immediate causes of great events! On New Year's Day our excellent Vicar, having bought himself a Whitaker's Almanack for 1895, presented his last year's copy to the Working Men's Reading Room. In itself you would have thought this action of the Vicar's signified no more than a generous desire to keep his parishioners abreast of the times. In effect it inaugurated the Great Temperance Movement

in Troy—a social revolution of which we are only now, after four long weeks, beginning to see the end.

You must not, of course, suppose that we had never heard of temperance before. No, Prince, we do not live so far from Abyssinia as all *that.* In a general way we understood it to be a good thing, and upon that ground (optimists that we are) believed its ultimate success to be but a question of time. But I think I may say we never regarded it as a pressing question—such as the reform of the House of Lords, for instance. The general impression (I call it no more) was that we should all be temperate sooner or later; possibly as the next step after espousing our Deceased Wife's Sister.

Well, our Vicar laid his copy of the 1894 almanack on the reading-room table at 11.30 a.m., or thereabouts, looked over the local papers for a few minutes, and left the building at ten minutes to noon. I get this information from Matthias James, our respected pilot, who happened to be in the room, reading the *Shipping Gazette.* It is confirmed by Mr. Hansombody and

four or five other members. At noon precisely, Mr. Rabling (our gasman and an earnest Methodist) came in. His eye, as it wandered round in search of an unoccupied newspaper, was arrested by the scarlet and green binding of Whitaker. He picked the book up, opened it casually, and read—

"The proof gallons of spirits distilled during the year ending March 31st, 1893, were 10,691,576 in England, 20,107,077 in Scotland, and 13,615,668 in Ireland. . . ."

He tells me he was on the point of closing the book as a voluptuous work of fiction, when a a second and even more dazzling paragraph took his eye.

"The beer charged with duty in the United Kingdom was 32,104,320 barrels, 532,047 barrels of which were exported on drawback, leaving 31,572,283 barrels for home consumption. There were also 38,580 barrels of beer, and 1,653 barrels of spruce imported from abroad."

And again:—

"The spirits 'retained for home consumption' in the year were:—rum, 4,268,438 gallons;

brandy, 2,668,499 gallons; 'other sorts,' 824,078 gallons. The home consumption of tobacco in the year reached the total of 63,765,053 lbs. Though the tobacco duty was reduced by 4d. a lb. in 1887-8, the annual yield averages £1,336,240 more than it was ten years ago. Smuggling still continues. . . ."

Mr. Rabling was declaiming aloud by this time, and when he read out about the smuggling, one or two of his audience gazed up at the ceiling and agreed that the fellow had some of his facts right. Old Pilot James added that the book could hardly be a work of fiction, since the Vicar had left it on the table, and the Vicar was not one to scatter lies except upon due deliberation.

Mr. Rabling left the room and walked straight up to the Vicarage, and the Vicar assured him that the Customs Returns were almost as accurate as if they had been prepared under a Conservative Government. You must excuse these details, Prince. They are really essential to the story.

At 12.55 Mr. Rabling (after a hasty dinner)

handed across the counter of the post-office a telegram addressed to his religious superintendent at Plymouth. The message ran—

"*Here anual consumption of beer over three milion barls. Greatly distresd, Rabling.*'

The telegraph clerk kindly corrected all the errors of spelling in the above, save one, which escaped him. By "here" Mr. Rabling had intended "hear" (*scilicet* "I hear," or "we hear)." The answer arrived from Plymouth within an hour.

"*Am sending missionary next train.*"

Thus our temperance movement began. The missionary arrived before set of sun, borrowed a chair from Mr. Rabling, carried it down to the town quay and mounted it. A number of children at once gathered round, in the belief that the stranger intended a tumbling performance. The missionary eyed them and began, "Ah, if I can once get hold of you tender little ones——" an infelicitous opening, which scattered them yelling, convinced that the Bogeyman had come for them at last. Upon this he changed his tone and called "O Gomorrah!"

aloud several times in a rich baritone voice, which fetched quite a little crowd of elders around him from the reading-room, the fish market, the "King of Prussia" inn, and other purlieus of the quay.

Then the missionary gave us a most eloquent and inspiriting address, in the course of which he mentioned that if all the beer annually consumed in England were placed in bottles, and the bottles piled on one another, it would reach within five hundred miles of the moon. He asked us if this were not an intolerable state of things and a disgrace to our boasted civilisation? Of course, there could be no two questions about it. We are not unreasonable, down in Troy. We only want a truth to be brought home to us. The missionary said that if only a man would deny himself his morning glass, in eight months he could buy himself a harmonium, besides being better in mind and body. And he wound up by inviting us to attend a meeting in the Town Hall that evening.

Well, at the evening performance he made

us all feel so uncomfortable that, as soon as it was over, we held an informal gathering in the bar of the "King of Prussia," and decided that temperance must be given a fair trial. The missionary had laid particular stress on the necessity of taking the rising generation and taking them early. So we decided to try it first upon the children, and see how it worked.

The missionary was delighted with our zeal. (Our zeal has often surprised and delighted strangers.) And he helped with a will. Early next morning he organised what he called a "Little Drops of Water League," and a juvenile branch of the Independent Order of Good Templars, entitled the "Deeds not Words Lodge of Tiny Knights of Abstinence." Each of these had its insignia. He sent us down the patterns as soon as he returned to Plymouth, and within a week the drapers' shops were full of little scarves and ribbons—white and gold for the girls, pink and silver for the boys. By this time there wasn't a child under fourteen but had taken the pledge; and as for narrow blue ribbon, it could not be supplied fast enough. I heard

talk, too, of a juvenile fife-and-drum band; and the mothers had already begun stitching banners for the processions. I tell you it was pleasant, over a pipe and glass, to watch all these preparations, and think how much better the world would be when the rising generation came to take our places.

But, of course, no popular movement ever took root in our town without a "tea-drink" or some such public function. And you may judge of our delight when, on applying to the Vicar, we heard that he had been talking to the Squire, Sir Felix Felix-Williams, and Sir Felix would gladly preside. Sir Felix suggested the following programme—(1) A Public Lecture in the Town Hall, with a Magic Lantern to exhibit the results of excessive drinking. The missionary would lecture, and Sir Felix would take the chair. (2) The lecture over, the children were to form outside in procession and march up behind the Town Band to Sir Felix's great covered tennis-court, where tea would be spread.

I have mentioned the Magic Lantern and the Town Band, and must say a word here on each.

When the late Government set aside a sum of money for Technical Instruction throughout the country, Sir Felix, who, as our chief landlord, may be supposed to know best what we need, decided that we needed to learn drawing. His idea was, by means of a magic lantern, to throw the model upon a screen for the class to copy; and in the heat of his enthusiasm he purchased two magic lanterns at £25 apiece before consulting the drawing-master, who pointed out that a drawing-lesson, to be thorough, must be conducted in a certain amount of light, whereas a magic lantern is only effective in a dark room. So Sir Felix was left with two very handsome lanterns on his hands, and burned for an opportunity of turning them to account: hence his alacrity in suggesting a lecture.

As for the Town Band, it was started last autumn with a view to rendering our little town more attractive than ever to summer visitors. The bandsmen have practised sedulously through the winter, and are making great strides; but—if fault must be found—I am sorry that our bandmaster, Mr. Patrick Sullivan

(an Irishman), left the purchase and selection of the music to his brother, who lives in London and plays the piccolo at one of the music-halls. The result—but you shall hear.

Punctually at 3.30 p.m. last Wednesday, Sir Felix drove down to the Town Hall in his brougham. The body of the Hall was already packed, and the missionary busy on the platform with his lanterns and white sheet. Mr. Rabling and an assistant stood ready to close the shutters and turn up the gas at the proper moment. The band waited outside; and as Sir Felix alighted, mounted the steps and entered the hall, bowing to right and left with the air of a real patriarch, the musicians crashed out the tune of—

> "*They all take after me,*
> *Take whiskey in their tea. . . .*"

Fortunately no one associated the tune with its words. Sir Felix mounted the platform; and after sipping a little water (such was our thoroughness that a glassful stood ready for each speaker), began to introduce the lecturer, whose name he mispronounced. The missionary

was called Stubbs; and by what mnemonic process Sir Felix turned this into Westmacott I have never been able to guess. However, for purposes of introduction that afternoon Westmacott he was and Westmacott he remained. Now Sir Felix, though not a very old man, has a rambling habit of speech, and tends in public discourse to forget alike the thread of his argument and the lapse of time. Conceive then our delight on his announcing that he would confine himself to a brief anecdote.

"The beauty of temperance," said Sir Felix, "was once brought home to me very forcibly in rather peculiar circumstances. Many years ago I was travelling afoot in the Tyrol, and chancing to pass by a shepherd's cottage, turned aside to inquire my way. The good people of the house, with native hospitality, pressed me to tarry an hour and partake of their mid-day meal. I acceded. The fare, as you may suppose, was simple. There was no intoxicating liquor. But never shall I forget the gesture or the words of that simple shepherd as he placed a bowl of goat's milk before me on the board. His words

—a short sentence only—left such an impression on my mind that to this day I never seat myself at table without repeating them to myself. Three times a day for over thirty years I have repeated those words and seen in imagination the magnificent gesture which accompanied them. The words of my simple shepherd were——"

(Here Sir Felix reproduced the simple shepherd's magnificent gesture, and paused.)

"And then," he pursued, "as he set the bowl of goat's milk on the board, that simple Tyrolean turned to me with a magnificent sweep of the hand"—gesture repeated—"and exclaimed——"

Here followed a prolonged pause, and it slowly dawned upon the audience that by a pardonable trick of memory Sir Felix was for the moment unable to recall the words he had repeated thrice a day for the last thirty years.

The situation was awkward. At the back of the platform Mr. Rabling rose to it. He had once a tenor voice of moderate calibre which he was used to exert publicly in the days of Penny Readings. And the word "Tyrolean" now suggested to him a national song which had long

reposed in his musical cabinet at home. He leaned forward, screened his mouth with one hand and whispered—

"Sir Felix——"

"Hey?" Sir Felix whipped round.

"Did a' say" (with sudden and piercing jödel) "*Lul-ul-i-e-tee! Lul-ul-i-ee! Lul-ul——*"

Sir Felix stamped his foot; and I think we all felt glad for Rabling at that moment that he held his cottage on a ninety-nine years' lease. But the lecture was spoilt before it began. The missionary piled his statistics to the moon, and turned down the gas, and showed us "The Child: What will he become?" But we took no interest in that question. The question for us was, What exactly did that simple Tyrolese shepherd say to Sir Felix? And that is just what we have been asking each other for a week past.

Sir Felix recovered himself towards the close of the address, and at the close acknowledged our vote of thanks in a pleasant little speech—in which, however, his Tyrolean friend was not so much as alluded to. It was pretty, too, to see the Little Knights of Abstinence afterwards, with

their sashes and banners, marching uphill after the band, like so many children of Hamelin after the Pied Piper. Only, my dear Prince, what tune do you think the band was playing? Why—

> "*Come where the booze is cheaper,*
> *Come where the pints hold more . . !*"

The missionary, I am told, is already beginning to talk as if we disappointed him. But this was certain to befall a man of one idea in a place of so many varied interests.

LEGENDS

I.—THE LEGEND OF SIR DINAR

A PUFF of north-east wind shot over the hill, detached a late December leaf from the sycamore on its summit, and swooped like a wave upon the roofs and chimney-stacks below. It caught the smoke midway in the chimneys, drove it back with showers of soot and wood-ash, and set the townsmen sneezing who lingered by their hearths to read the morning newspaper. Its strength broken, it fell prone upon the main street, scattering its fine dust into fan-shaped figures, then died away in eddies towards the south. Among these eddies the sycamore leaf danced and twirled, now running along the ground upon its edge, now whisked up to the level of the first storey windows. A nurse holding up a three-year-old child behind the pane, pointed after the leaf—

"Look—there goes Sir Dinar!"

Sir Dinar was the youngest son and comeliest

of King Geraint, who had left Arthur's Court for his own western castle of Dingerein in Roseland, where Portscatho now stands; and was buried, when his time came, over the Nare, in his golden boat with his silver oars beside him. To fill his siege at the Round Table he sent, in the lad's sixteenth year, this Dinar, who in two years was made knight by King Arthur, and in the third was turned into an old man before he had achieved a single deed of note.

For on the fifth day after he was made knight, and upon the Feast of Pentecost, there began the great quest of the Sancgrael, which took Sir Lancelot from the Court, Sir Perceval, Sir Bors, Sir Gawaine, Sir Galahad, and all the flower of the famous brotherhood. And because, after their going, it was all sad cheer at Camelot, and heavy, empty days, Sir Dinar took two of his best friends aside, both young knights, Sir Galhaltin and Sir Ozanna le Cœur Hardi, and spoke to them of riding from the Court by stealth. "For," he said, "we have many days before us, and no villainy upon our consciences, and besides are eager. Who knows, then, but

we may achieve this adventure of the Sancgrael?" These listened and imparted it to another, Sir Sentrail: and the four rode forth secretly one morning before the dawn, and set their faces towards the north-east wind.

The day of their departure was that next after Christmas, the same being the Feast of Saint Stephen the Martyr. And as they rode through a thick wood, it came into Sir Dinar's mind that upon this day it was right to kill any bird that flew, in remembrance that when Saint Stephen had all but escaped from the soldiers who guarded him, a small bird had sung in their ears and awakened them. By this, the sky was growing white with the morning, but nothing yet clear to the sight: and while they pressed forward under the naked boughs, their horses' hoofs crackling the frosted undergrowth, Sir Dinar was aware of a bird's wing ruffling ahead, and let fly a bolt without warning his companions; who had forgotten what morning it was, and drew rein for a moment. But pressing forward again, they came upon a gerfalcon lying, with long lunes tangled about his feet and

through his breast the hole that Sir Dinar's bolt had made. While they stooped over this bird the sun rose and shone between the tree-trunks, and lifting their heads they saw a green glade before them, and in the midst of the glade three pavilions set, each of red sendal, that shone in the morning. In the first pavilion slept seven knights, and in the second a score of damsels, but by the door of the third stood a lady, fair and tall, in a robe of samite, who, as they drew near to accost her, inquired of them—

"Which of you has slain my gerfalcon?"

And when Sir Dinar confessed and began to make his excuse, "Silly knight!" said she, "who couldst not guess that my falcon, too, was abroad to avenge the blessed Stephen. Or dost think that it was a hawk, of all birds, that sang a melody in the ears of his guards?"

With that she laughed, as if pacified, and asked of their affairs; and being told that they rode in search of the Sancgrael, she laughed again, saying—

"Silly knights all, that seek it before you be bearded! For three of you must faint and die

on the quest, and you, sir," turning to Sir Dinar, "must many times long to die, yet never reach nearer by a foot."

"Let it be as God will," answered Sir Dinar. "But hast thou any tidings, to guide us?"

"I have heard," said she, "that it was seen latest in the land of Gore, beyond Trent Water." And with her white finger she pointed down a narrow glade that led to the north-west. So they thanked her and pricked on, none guessing that she herself was King Urience' wife, of Gore, and none other than Queen Morgan le Fay, the famous enchantress, who for loss of her gerfalcon was lightly sending Sir Dinar to his ruin.

So all that day they rode, two and two, in the strait alley that she had pointed out; and by her enchantments she made the winter trees to move with them, serried close on either hand, so that, though the four knights wist nothing of it, they advanced not a furlong for all their haste. But towards nightfall there appeared close ahead a blaze of windows lit and then a tall castle with dim towers soaring up and shaking to the din of minstrelsy. And finding a great company about

the doors, they lit down from their horses and stepped into the great hall, Sir Dinar leading them. For a while their eyes were dazed, seeing that sconces flared along the walls and the place was full of knights and damsels brightly clad, and the floor shone. But while they were yet blinking, a band of maidens came and unbuckled their arms and cast a shining cloak upon each; which was hardly done when a lady came towards them out of the throng, and though she was truly the Queen Morgan le Fay, they knew her not at all, for by her necromancy she had altered her countenance.

"Come, dance," said she, "for in an instant the musicians will begin."

The other three knights tarried awhile, being weary with riding; but Sir Dinar stepped forward and caught the hand of a damsel, and she, as she gave it, looked in his eyes and laughed. She was dressed all in scarlet, with scarlet shoes, and her hair lay on her shoulders like waves of burnished gold. As Sir Dinar set his arm about her, with a crash the merry music began; and floating out with him into the dance, her scarlet shoes

twinkling and her tossed hair shaking spices under his nostrils, she leaned back a little on his arm and laughed again.

Sir Galhaltin was leaning by the doorway, and he heard her laugh and saw her feet twinkle like blood-red moths, and he called to Sir Dinar. But Sir Dinar heard only the brassy music, nor did any of the dancers turn their heads, though Sir Galhaltin called a second time and more loudly. Then Sir Sentrail and Sir Ozanna also began to call, fearing they knew not what for their comrade. But the guests still drifted by as they were clouds, and Sir Dinar, with the red blood showing beneath the down on his cheeks, smiled always and whirled with the woman upon his arm.

By-and-by he began to pant, and would have rested: but she denied him.

"For a moment only," he said, "because I have ridden far to-day."

But "No" she said, and hung a little more heavily upon his arm, and still the music went on. And now, gazing upon her, he was frightened; for it seemed she was growing older under his

eyes, with deep lines sinking into her face, and the flesh of her neck and bosom shrivelling up, so that the skin hung loose and gathered in wrinkles. And now he heard the voices of his companions calling about the door, and would have cast off the sorceress and run to them. But when he tried, his arm was welded around her waist, nor could he stay his feet.

The three knights now, seeing the sweat upon his white face and the looks he cast towards them, would have broken in and freed him: but they, too, were by enchantment held there in the doorway. So, with their eyes starting, they must needs stay there and watch; and while they stood the boards became as molten brass under Sir Dinar's feet, and the hag slowly withered in his embrace: and still the music played, and the other dancers cast him never a look as he whirled round and round again. But at length, with never a stay in the music, his partner's feet trailed heavily, and, bending forward, she shook her white locks clear of her gaunt eyes, and laughed a third time, bringing her lips close to his. And the poison of death

was in her lips as she set them upon his mouth. With that kiss there was a crash. The lights went out, and the music died away in a wail: and the three knights by the door were caught away suddenly and stunned by a great wind.

Awaking, they found themselves lying in the glade where they had come upon the three red pavilions. Their horses were cropping at the turf, beside them, and Sir Dinar's horse stood in sight, a little way off. But Sir Dinar was already deep in the forest, twirling and spinning among the rotten leaves, and on his arm hung a corrupting corpse. For a whole day they sought him and found him not (for he heard nothing of their shouts), and towards evening mounted and rode forward after the Sancgrael; on which quest they died, all three, each in his turn.

But Sir Dinar remained, and twirled and skipped till the body he held was a skeleton; and still he twirled, till it dropped away piecemeal; and yet again, till it was but a stain of dust on his ragged sleeve. Before this his hair was white and his face wizened with age.

But on a day a knight in white armour came riding through the forest, leaning somewhat heavily on his saddle-bow: and was aware of an old decrepit man that ran towards him, jigging and capering as if for gladness, yet caught him by the stirrup and looked up with rheumy tears in his eyes.

"In God's name, who art thou?" asked the knight. He, too, was past his youth; but his face shone with a marvellous glory.

"I am young Sir Dinar, that was made a knight of the Round Table but five days before Pentecost. And I know thee. Thou art Sir Galahad, who shouldst win the Sancgrael: therefore by Christ's power rid me of this enchantment."

"I have not won it yet," Sir Galahad answered, sighing. "Yet, poor comrade, I may do something for thee, though I cannot stay thy dancing."

So he stretched out his hand and touched Sir Dinar: and by his touch Sir Dinar became a withered leaf of the wood. And when mothers and nurses see him dancing before the wind, they tell this story of him to their children.

II.—"FLOWING SOURCE"

MASTER SIMON'S inn, the "Flowing Source"—"Good Entertainment for Man and Beast"—leant over the riverside by the ferry, a mile and a half above Ponteglos town. The fresh water of Cuckoo River met the salt Channel tide right under its windows, by the wooden ladder where Master Simon chained his ferry-boat. Fourteen miles inland, a brown trout-stream singing down from the moors, plunged over a ledge of rock into the cool depths of Cuckoo Valley. Thenceforward it ran by beds of sundew, water-mint and asphodel, under woods so steeply converging that the traveller upon the ridges heard it as the trickle of water in a cavern. But just above Master Simon's inn the valley widened out into arable and grey pasture land, and the river, too, widened and grew deep enough to float up vessels of small tonnage at the spring tides. In summer, from

the bow-window of his coffee-room, Master Simon could follow its course down through the meadows to the church-tower of Ponteglos and the shipping congregated there about the wharves, and watch in the middle distance the sails of a barge or shallow trading-ketch moving among the haymakers. But from November to March, when the floods were out, the "Flowing Source" stood above an inland sea, with a hay-stack or two for lesser islets. Then the river's course could be told only by a line of stakes on which the wild fowl rested. The meadows were covered. Only a few clumps of reed rose above the clapping water and shook in the northerly gales. And then, when no guests came for weeks together, and the salt spray crusted the panes so thickly that looking abroad became a weariness of the spirit, Master Simon would reach down his long gun from the chimney-piece and polish it, and having pulled on his wading-boots and wrapped a large woollen comforter round his throat and another round his head, would summon his tap-boy, unmoor the ferry-boat, and go duck-shooting. For in

winter birds innumerable haunt the riverside here — wild duck, snipe, teal, and widgeon; curlews, field-fares, and plovers, both green and golden; rooks, starlings, little white-rumped sandpipers; herons from the upper woods and gulls from seaward. Master Simon had fine sport in the short days, and the inn might take care of itself, which it was perfectly well able to do. Its foundations rested on sunken piles of magnificent girth—"as stout as myself," said Master Simon modestly—and on these it stood so high that even the great flood of 'fifty-nine had overlapped the kitchen threshold but once, at the top of a spring tide with a north-westerly gale behind it; and then had retreated within the hour. "It didn't put the fire out," boasted Master Simon.

He was proud of his inn, and for some very good reasons. To begin with, you would not find another such building if you searched England for a year. It consisted almost wholly of wood; but of such wood! The story went that on a blowing afternoon, in the late autumn of 1588, two Spanish galleons from the Great

Armada—they had been driven right around Cape Wrath—came trailing up the estuary and took ground just above Ponteglos. Their crews landed and marched inland, and never returned. Some say the Cornishmen cut them off and slew them. For my part, I think it more likely that these foreigners found hospitality, and very wisely determined to settle in the country. Certain it is, you will find in the upland farms over Cuckoo Valley a race of folks with olive complexions, black curling hair and beards, and Southern names—Santo, Hugo, Jago, Bennett, Jose. . . .

At all events, the Spanyers (Spaniards) never came back to their galleons, which lay in the ooze by the marsh meadows until the very birds forgot to fear them, and built in their rigging. By the Rôles d'Oléron—which were, in effect, the maritime laws of that period—all wrecks or wreckage belonged to the Crown when neither an owner nor an heir of a late owner could be found for it. But in those days the king's law travelled lamely through Cornwall; so that when, in 1605, these galleons were put

up to auction and sold by the Lord of the Manor—who happened to be High Sheriff—nobody inquired very closely where the money went. It is more to the point that the timber of them was bought by one Master Blaise—never mind the surname; he was an ancestor of Master Simon's, and a well-to-do wool-comber of Ponteglos.

This Master Blaise already rented the ferry-rights by Flowing Source, and certain rights of fishery above and below; and having a younger son to provide for, he conceived the happy notion of this hostelry beside the river. For ground-rent he agreed to carry each Michaelmas to the Lord of the Manor one penny in a silk purse; and the lord's bailiff, on bringing the receipt, was to take annually of Master Blaise and his heirs one jack of ale of the October brewing and one smoke-cured salmon of not less than fifteen pounds' weight. These conditions having been duly signed, in the year 1606 Master Blaise laid the foundations of his inn upon the timbers of one galleon and set up the elm keelson of the other for his roof-

tree. Its stout ribs, curving outwards and downwards from this magnificent balk, supported the carvel-built roof, so that the upper half of the building appeared—and indeed was—a large inverted hull, decorated with dormer windows, brick chimneys, and a round pigeon-house surmounted by a gilded vane. The windows he took ready-made from the Spaniard's bulging stern-works. And for signboard he hung out, between two bulging poop-lanterns, a large bituminous painting on panel, that had been found on board the larger galleon, and was supposed to represent the features of her patron, Saint Nicholas Prodaneli. But the site of the building had always been known as Flowing Source, and by this name and no other Master Blaise's inn was called for over two hundred years.

By this time its timber roof had clothed itself with moss upon the north side, and on the west the whole framework inclined over the river, as though the timbers of the old galleon regretted their proper element and strained towards it tenderly, quietly, persistently. But

careful patching and repairing had kept the building to all appearance as stout as ever; and any doubts of its stability were dispelled in a moment by a glance at Master Simon, the landlord. Master Simon's age by parish register fell short of forty, but he looked at least ten years older: a slow man with a promising stomach and a very satisfactory balance at the bank; a notable breeder of pigeons and fisher of eels. He could also brew strong ale, and knew exactly how salmon should be broiled. He had heard that the world revolves, and decided to stand still and let it come round to him. Certainly a considerable number of its inhabitants found their way to the "Flowing Source" sooner or later. Marketers crossed the ferry and paused for a morning drink. In the cool of the day quiet citizens rambled up from Ponteglos with rod and line, or brought their families by boat on the high evening tide to eat cream and junket, and sit afterwards on the benches by the inn-door, watching the fish rise and listening to the song of the young people some way up stream. Painters came, too, and

sketched the old inn, and sometimes stayed for a week, having tasted the salmon. Pigeon-breeders dropped in and smoked long pipes in the kitchen with Master Simon, and slowly matured bets and matches. And once or twice in the summer months a company of pilgrims would arrive—queer literary men in velveteen coats, who examined all the rooms and furniture as though they meant to make a bid for the inn complete; who talked with outlandish tongues and ordered expensive dinners, and usually paid for them next morning, rather to Master Simon's surprise. It appeared that there had been once, in the time of Master Simon's grandfather, a certain pot-boy at the "Flowing Source" who ran off into the world and became a great poet; and these pilgrimages were made in his honour. Master Simon found this story somehow very creditable to himself, and came in time to take almost as much pride in it as in his pigeons and broiled salmon. Regularly after dinner on these occasions he would exhibit an old pewter pint-pot to the pilgrims, and draw their attention to the following verse, scratched

upon it—as he asserted—by the poet's own hand:

> Who buys beef buys bones,
> Who buys land buys stones,
> Who buys eggs buys shels,
> But who buys ale buys nothing els.

And the pilgrims feigned credulity according as they valued Master Simon's opinion of their intelligence.

But most welcome of all were the merchant-captains from Ponteglos, among whom custom had made it a point of honour to report themselves at the "Flowing Source" within twenty-four hours after dropping anchor by Ponteglos Quay. When or why or how the custom arose nobody was old enough to remember; but a master mariner would as soon have thought of sailing without log or leadline as of putting in and out of Ponteglos without tasting Master Simon's ale—"calling for orders," as they put it. Master Simon had never climbed a sea-going ship except to shake hands with a friend and wish him good voyage and return to shore with the pilot; but the teak

walls of his parlour were lined with charts of such very remote parts of the globe, and his shelves with such a quantity of foreign china and marine curiosities, and he spoke so familiarly of Gallapagos, Batavia, Cape Verde, the Horn, the Straits of Magellan, and so forth, and would bring his telescope so knowingly to bear on the gilt weathercock over Ponteglos church tower, that until you knew the truth you would have sworn half his life had been spent on the quarterdeck. And while the sea-captains—serious men, attired in blue cloth, wearing rings in their ears—sat and smoked canaster and other queer tobaccos in painted china pipes, and talked of countries whose very names conjured up visions of parrots, and carved idols, and sharks, and brown natives in flashing canoes, Master Simon would put a shrewd question or two and wag his head over the answers as a man who hears just what he expected. And sometimes towards the close of the sitting, if he knew his company very well, he would reward them with his favourite and only song, "The Golden Vanitee":

"A ship I have got in the North Countree,
And I had her christened the Golden Vanitee;
O, I fear she's been taken by a Spanish Gal-a-lee,
As she sailed by the Lowlands low!"

In some hazy way he had persuaded himself that the Spanish galleon of the ballad was the very ship whose timbers over-arched him and his audience; and for the moment, being himself inverted (so to speak) by the potency of his own singing, he blew out his chest and straddled out his thick calves and screwed up his eyes, quite as if his roof-tree were right-side-up once more in blue water, and he on deck beside the weather-rail. But the mood began to pass as soon as he bolted the front door behind his guests, and Ann the cook poured him out his last cup of mulled ale and withdrew with the saucepan. And another noon would find him seated under his leaning house-front, his eyes half-closed, his attention divided between the whisper of the tide and the murmur in the pigeon-cotes overhead, his body at ease and his soul content.

His was a happy life——or had been, but for two crumpled rose-leaves.

To begin with, there were those confounded pot-boys. It puzzled Master Simon almost as much as it annoyed him; he paid fair wages and passed for a good employer; but he could not keep a pot-boy for twelve months. As a matter of fact, I know the river to have been the bottom of the mischief—the river, and perhaps the talk of the ship-captains. It might satisfy Master Simon to sit and watch the salmon passing up in autumn towards their spawning beds, and rubbing, as they went, their scales against his landing-stage to clear them of the sea-lice; to watch them and their young passing seaward in the early spring; to watch and wait and spread his nets in the due season. But for the youngsters this running water was a constant lure—the song of it and the dimple on it. It coaxed them, as it coaxed the old galleon, to lean over and listen. And the moment that listening became intolerable, they were off. Only one of them—the poet before mentioned—had ever expressed any desire to return and revisit—

"The shining levels and the dazzled wave
Emerging from his covert, errant long,
In solitude descending by a vale
Lost between uplands, where the harvesters
Pause in the swathe, shading their eyes to watch
Some barge or schooner stealing up from sea;
Themselves in sunset, she a twilit ghost
Parting the twilit woods . . .

Ah, loving God!
Grant, in the end, this world may slip away
With whisper of that water by the bows
Of such a bark, bearing me home—thy stars
Breaking the gloom like kingfishers, thy heights
Golden with wheat, thy waiting angels there
Wearing the dear rough faces of my kin!"

I doubt if he meant it, any more than Virgil meant his "*flumina amem silvasque inglorius.*" At any rate, the public knew what was due to itself, and when the time came, gave the man a handsome funeral in Westminster Abbey. Among his pall-bearers walked the Prime Minister, the Commander-in-Chief, the President of the Royal

Academy of Arts, and (as representing rural life) the Chief Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

What else disturbed the placid current of Master Simon's cogitations? Why, this: he was the last of his race, and unmarried.

For himself, he had no inclination to marry. But sometimes, as he shaved his chin of a morning, the reflection in his round mirror would suggest another. Was he not neglecting a public duty?

Now there dwelt down at Ponteglos a Mistress Prudence Waddilove, a widow, who kept the "Pandora's Box Inn" on the quay—a very tidy business. Master Simon had known her long before she married the late Waddilove; had indeed sat on the same form with her in infants' school—she being by two years his junior, but always a trifle quicker of wit. He attended her husband's funeral in a neighbourly way, and, a week later, put on his black suit again and went down—still in a neighbourly way—to offer his condolence. Mistress Prudence received him in the best parlour, which smelt damp and chilly in comparison with the little room behind

the bar. Master Simon remarked that she must be finding it lonely. Whereupon she wept.

Master Simon suggested that he, for his part, had tried pigeon-breeding, and found that it alleviated solitude in a wonderful manner. "There's my tumblers. If you like, I'll bring you down a pair. They're pretty to watch. Of course, a husband is different——"

"Of course," Mistress Prudence assented, her grief too recent to allow a smile even at the picture of the late Waddilove (a man of full habit) cleaving the air with frequent somersaults. She added, not quite inconsequently:

"He is an angel."

"Of course," said Master Simon, in his turn.

"But I think," she went on, quite inconsequently, "I would rather have a pair of carriers."

"Now, why in the world?" wondered Master Simon. He kept carrier pigeons, to be sure. He kept pigeons of every sort—tumblers, pouters, carriers, Belgians, dragons . . . the subdivisions, when you came to them, were endless. But the carriers were by no means his show-birds. He kept them mainly for the convenience

of Ann the cook. Ann had a cunning eye for a pigeon, and sometimes ventured a trifle of her savings on a match; and though in his masculine pride he never consulted her, Master Simon always felt more confident on hearing that Ann had put money on his bird. Now, when a match took place at some distant town or flying-ground, Ann would naturally be anxious to learn the result as quickly as possible; and Master Simon, finding that the suspense affected her cookery, had fallen into the habit of taking a hamper of carriers to all distant meetings and speeding them back to "Flowing Source" with tidings of his fortune. Apart from this office—which they performed well enough—he took no special pride in them. The offer of a pair of his pet tumblers, worth their weight in gold, had cost him an effort; and when Mistress Prudence, ordinarily a clear-headed woman, declared that she preferred carriers, she could hardly have astonished him more by asking for a pair of stock-doves.

"Oh, certainly," he answered, and went home and thought it over. Women were a puzzle;

but he had a dim notion that if he could lay hand on the reason why Mistress Prudence preferred ordinary carriers to prize tumblers, he would hold the key to some of the secrets of the sex. He thought it over for three days, during which he smoked more tobacco than was good for him. At about four o'clock in the afternoon of the third day, a smile enlarged his face. He set down his pipe, smacked his thigh, stood up, sat down again, and began to laugh. He laughed slowly and deliberately—not loudly—for the greater part of that evening, and woke up twice in the night and shook the bedclothes into long waves with his mirth.

Next morning he took two carriers from the cote, shut them in a hamper, and rowed down to Ponteglos with his gift. But Mrs. Waddilove was not at home. She had started early by van for Tregarrick (said the waitress at the "Pandora's Box") on business connected with her husband's will. "No hurry at all," said Master Simon. He slipped a handful of Indian corn under the lid, and left the hamper "with his respect."

Then he rowed home, and spent the next

two days after his wont; the only observable difference being the position of his garden chair. It stood as a rule under the shadow of the broad eaves, but now Master Simon ordered the tap-boy to carry it out and set it by a rustic table close to the river's brink, whence, as he smoked, he could keep comfortable watch upon the pigeon-cote.

"You 'll catch a sunstroke," said Ann the cook. "I hope you 're not beginning to forget how to take care of yourself."

"Well, I hope so too," Master Simon answered; but did not budge.

On the morning of the third day, however, he saw that which made him step indoors and mount to the attic under the cote. Having opened with much caution a trap-door in the roof, he slipped an arm out and captured a carrier pigeon.

The bird carried a note folded small and bound under its wing with a thread of silk. Master Simon opened the note and read:

"*If you loves me as I loves you,*
No knife can cut our loves in two."

He had prepared himself for a hearty chuckle; but he broke out with a profuse perspiration instead. "Oh, this is hustling a man!" he ingeminated, staring round the empty attic like a rabbit seeking a convenient hole. "Not three weeks buried!" he added, with another groan, and began to loosen his neck-cloth.

While thus engaged, he heard a flutter above the trap-door, and a second pigeon alighted, with a second note, also bound with a silken thread.

"Lor-a-mercy!" gasped Master Simon.

But the second note was written in a different hand, and ran as follows:

"I could die of shame. It was all that hussy of a girl. She did it for a joke. I'll joke her. But what will you be thinking?—P. W."

Master Simon rowed down to Ponteglos that very afternoon, and the two carriers went back with him. Happiness seemed to have shaken its wings and quite departed from Pandora's Box; but a twinkle of something not entirely unlike hope lurked in the corners of the waitress's eyes—albeit their lids were red and

swollen—as she ushered Master Simon into the best parlour.

"What can you be thinking of me?" began the widow. *Her* eyes were red and swollen, too.

"I 've brought back the pigeons."

"I can never bear the sight of them again!"

"You might begin different, you know," suggested Master Simon, affably; "some little message about the weather, for instance. Have you given that girl warning to leave?"

"You see, I 'm so lonely here . . ."

Some three months after this, and on an exceptionally fine morning in September, Master Simon put Harmony, his celebrated almond hen, into her travelling hamper, and marched over to the cross-roads to take coach for Illogan, in the mining district, where the matches for the championship cup were to be flown that year.

Now Ann the cook had ventured no less than five pounds upon Harmony. Five pounds represented a half of her annual wage, and a trifle less than half of her annual savings. There-

fore she spent the greater part of the following afternoon at her window, gazing westward in no small perturbation of spirit.

It wanted a few minutes to five when a carrier pigeon came travelling across the zenith, shot downwards suddenly, and alighted on the roof. Ann climbed to the trap-door and put out a hand. The bird was preening his feathers, and allowed himself to be taken easily.

In circumstances less agitating Ann had not failed to observe that the thread about the messenger's wing was not of the kind that Master Simon used. But her eyes opened wide as they fell on the handwriting, and still wider as she read:

"*It is all for the best, perhaps. If only people have not begun to talk.*—PRUDENCE."

A second messenger arrived towards evening with word of Harmony's success. But the news hardly relaxed Ann's brow, which kept a pensive contraction even when her master arrived next evening and poured out her winnings on the table from the silver challenge cup.

She wore this frown at intervals for a fortnight, and all the while maintained an unusual silence which puzzled Master Simon. Then one morning he heard her in the kitchen scolding the tap-boy with all her pristine heartiness. That night, after mulling her master's ale, she turned at the door, saucepan in hand, and coughed to attract attention.

"Well, Ann; what is it?"

"You 've been philanderin'."

"Hey! Upon my word, Ann——"

Ann produced the Widow Waddilove's note and flattened it out under Master Simon's eyes. And Master Simon blushed painfully.

"Are you goin' to marry the woman?" Ann demanded.

"I think not."

"I reckon you will."

"Well, you see, there has been a hitch. She won't leave the 'Pandora's Box,' and I 'm not going to budge from 'Flowing Source.' If a woman won't put herself out to that extent—besides, she cooks no better than you."

"Not so well. You wasn't thinking, by any chance, o' marrying *me?*"

"Ann, you 're perfectly brazen! Well, no; to tell you the plain truth, I wasn't."

"That 's all right; because I 've gone and promised myself to a young farmer up the valley."

"What 's his name?"

"I shan't tell you; for the reason that I 've a second to fall back on, if I find on acquaintance that the first won't do. But first or second, I 'll marry one or t' other at the month-end, and so I give you notice."

Master Simon sighed. "Well! well! I must get on as best I can with Tom for a while." Tom was the tap-boy.

"Tom 's going, too. I bullied him so this morning that he means to give notice to-morrow; that is, if he don't save himself the trouble by running off to sea."

"The twelfth in five years!" ejaculated Master Simon, stopping his pipe viciously.

"And small blame to them. Married man or mariner—that 's what a boy is born for. Better dare wreck or wedlock than sit here and talk

about both. Take my advice, master, and marry the widow!"

Ann carried out ner own matrimonial programme, at any rate, with spirit and determination. Finding the first young farmer satisfactory, she espoused him at the end of the month, and turned her back on "Flowing Source." And Tom the tap-boy fulfilled her prophecy and ran away to sea. And the old inn leaned after him until its timbers creaked. And the autumn floods rose and covered the meadows.

Master Simon sat and smoked, and made his own bed, and accomplished some execrable cookery in the intervals of oiling his duck-gun. Even duck-shooting becomes a weariness when a man has to manage gun and punt single-handed. One afternoon he abandoned the sport in an exceedingly bad temper, and pulled up to jaws of Cuckoo Valley. Here he landed, and after an hour's trudge in the marshy bottoms had the luck to knock over two brace of woodcock.

He rowed back with his spoil, and was making fast to the ferry steps, when a thought struck

him. He shipped the paddles again, and pulled down to Ponteglos. The short day was closing, and already a young moon glimmered on the floods.

* * * * *

The woodcock were cooked to a turn; juicier birds never reclined on toast. The waitress removed the cloth and returned with a kettle; retired and returned again with a short-necked bottle, a glass and spoon, sugar, a nutmeg, and a lemon; retired with a twinkle in her eye.

"To fortify you," said Mistress Prudence, rubbing a lump of sugar gently on the lemon-rind.

"The night air," Master Simon murmured.

"—against the damp house you're going back to," the lady corrected.

"You talk without giving it a trial."

"As you talk, in your parlour, of deep-sea voyages."

"As a ship's captain you would respect me perhaps?"

"No, for you have n't the head. But I should

like your pluck. If I saw you setting off for sea in earnest, I would run out and give you a chance to steer a woman instead of a ship. You would find her safer."

Master Simon emptied his glass, rose, and wound his great comforter about his neck. The widow saw him to the door.

"You 're a very obstinate woman," he said.

And with this he unmoored his boat and rowed resolutely homewards. A strong wind came piping down on the back of a strong tide, and Master Simon arched his shoulders against it.

"Married man or mariner!" it piped, as he rounded the first bend.

"I know my own mind, I believe," said Master Simon to himself; "there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it; and for salmon, 'Flowing Source' will beat Christchurch any day, I 've always maintained."

"Married man or mariner!" piped the wind in the words of Ann the cook.

Master Simon pulled his left paddle hard and rounded the second bend.

"Married man or mar——"

Crash!

His heels flew up and his head struck the bottom boards. Then, in a moment, the boat was gone, and a rush of water sang in his ears and choked him. He saw a black shadow overhanging, and clutched at it.

Mistress Prudence stood in her doorway on the quay, as Master Simon had left her. In the room above, the waitress blew out her candle, drew up the blind, and opened her window to the moonlight.

"Selina!" the mistress called.

Selina thrust out her head.

"What 's that coming down the river?"

A black, unshapely mass was moving swiftly down towards the quay.

"I think 'tis a haystack," Selina whispered, and then, "Lord save us all, there 's a man on it!"

"A man?" cried the widow, shrilly. "What man?"

A voice answered the question, calling for help out of the river—a voice that she knew.

"What is it?" she called back.

"I think," quavered Master Simon, "I think 'tis the roof o' 'Flowing Source'!"

Mistress Prudence ran down the quay steps, cast off the first boat that lay handy, and pulled towards the dark mass sweeping seaward. As it crossed ahead of her bows, she dropped the paddles, ran to the painter, and flung it forward with all her might.

The "Pandora's Box Inn" stands on Ponteglos Quay to this day. And all that is left of "Flowing Source" hangs on the wall of its best parlour—four dark oak timbers forming a frame around a portrait, the portrait of a woman of middle age and comfortable countenance. In the right-hand top corner of the picture, in letters of faded gold, runs the legend—VXOR BONA INSTAR NAVIS.

EXPERIMENTS

I.—A YOUNG MAN'S DIARY

Monday, Sept. 7th, 189—. I am one year old to-day.

I imagine that most people regard their first birthday as something of an event; a harvest-home of innocence, touched with I know not how delicate a bloom of virginal anticipation; of emotion too volatile for analysis, or perhaps eluding analysis by its very simplicity. But whatever point the festival might have had for me was rudely destroyed by my parents, who chose this day for jolting me back to London in a railway-carriage. We have just arrived home from Newquay, Cornwall, where we have been spending the summer holidays for the sake of my health, as papa has not scrupled to blurt out, once or twice, in my presence.

There is a strain of coarseness in papa; or perhaps I should say—for the impression it leaves is primarily negative, as of something *manqué*—an incompleteness in the sensitive

equipment. As yet it can hardly be said to embarrass me; though I foresee a time when I shall have to apologise for it to strangers. There is nothing absurd in this. If a man may take pride in his ancestry, why may he not apologise for his papa? My papa will be forgiven, for he is so splendidly healthy! He left our compartment at Bristol and did not return again until the train stopped at Swindon. In the interval, mamma took me from nurse and endeavoured to hush me to sleep by singing—

Father's gone a-hunting. . . ."

which was untrue, for he had merely withdrawr to a smoking compartment. My nurse—an egregious female—had previously remarked, "The dear child *do* take such notice of the puff-puff!" As a matter of fact, I took no interest in the locomotive; but I had observed it sufficiently to be sure that it offered no facilities for hunting. A few months ago I might have accepted the explanation: for our family has affinity with what is vulgarly termed the upper class, and my father inherits its crude and

primitive instincts; among them a passion for the chase. His appearance, as he returned to our compartment, oppressed me for the hundredth time with a sense of its superabundant and even riotous vitality. His cheeks were glowing, and his whiskers sprouted like cabbages on either side of his otherwise clean-shaven face. An indefinable flavour of the sea mingled with the odour of tobacco which he diffused about the carriage. It seemed as if the virile breezes of that shaggy Cornish coast still blew about him; and I felt again that constriction of the chest from which I had suffered during the past month.

After all, it is good to be back in London! Newquay, with its obvious picturesqueness, its violent colouring, its sands, rocks, breakers and bye-laws regulating the costume of bathers, merely exasperated my nerves. How far more subtle the appeal of these grey and dun-coloured opacities, these tent-cloths of fog pressed out into uncouth, dumbly pathetic shapes by the struggle for existence that seethes below it always—always! Decidedly I must begin to-

morrow to practise walking. It seems a necessary step towards acquainting myself with the inner life of these toiling millions, which must be well worth knowing. Papa, on arriving at our door, plunged into an altercation with a cab-tout. What a man! And yet sometimes I could find it in my heart to envy his robustness, his buoyancy. A Huntley and Palmer's Nursery Biscuit in a little hot water has somewhat quieted my nerves, which suffered cruelly during the scene. I believe I shall sleep to-night.

Tuesday, 8th. The beginning of *Sturm und Drang;* I am learning to walk. Moreover I have surprised in myself, during the day, a tendency to fall in love with my nurse. On the pretence that walking might give me bandy legs she caught me up and pressed me to her bosom. We have no affinities; indeed beyond cleanliness and a certain unreasoning honesty, she can be said to possess no attributes at all. I am convinced that a serious affection for her could only flourish on an intellectual atrophy; and yet for a while I abandoned myself. We went out into

the bright streets together, and it was delicious to be propelled by her strong arms. We halted, on our way to Kensington Gardens, to listen to a German band. The voluptuous waltz-music affected me strangely, and I was sorry that, owing to my position in the vehicle, her face was hidden from me. In the midst of my ecstasy, a square object on wheels came round the street corner. It was painted a bright vermilion and bore the initials of K.V.—"Kytherea Victrix!" I cried in my heart; but as it passed, at a slow pace, it rained a flood of tears upon the dusty road-way. For some time after I sat in a strange calm, but with a sensation in the region of the diaphragm as if I had received a severe blow; and in truth I had. But the shock was salutary, and by the time that nurse and I were seated together by the Round Pond, I was able to listen to her talk without a quiver of the eyelids. Poor soul! What malefic jest of Fate led her to select the story of Georgie-Porgie?

"*Georgie-Porgie, pudding and pie. . . .*"

It is as irrelevant as life itself.

"*Georgie-Porgie, pudding and pie,*
Kissed the girls and made them cry. . . ."

Why pudding? Why pie? Why—if you ask this—why *any* realism? These concrete accidents solidify a thin and abstract love-story for our human comprehension. Or are they, perchance, symbolical? Georgie-Porgie's promises, like pie-crust, were made to be broken. He—

"*Kissed the girls and made them cry.*
When the girls came out to play,
Georgie-Porgie ran away."

—Simple solution of the difficulty! And I am already learning to walk! Poor woman!

Wednesday, 9th. I am troubled whenever I reflect on the subject of heredity. It terrifies me to think that I may grow up to resemble papa. Mamma, too, is hardly less a savage: she wore diamonds in her hair when she came up to the nursery, late last night, to look at me. She believed that I was asleep; but I wasn't, and I never in my life felt so sorry that I couldn't speak. The appalling barbarism of those trinkets

It is raining this afternoon—the sky weeping like a Corot—and I am forced to stay indoors and affect an interest in Noah and his ark! Nurse's father came up and accosted her in the Gardens this morning. He is one of the Submerged Tenth, and extremely interesting. On the threat of running off with me and pitching me neck and crop into the Round Pond, he extracted half-a-crown from her. She gave him the coin docilely. I found myself almost hoping that he would raise his price, that I might discover how much the poor creature was ready to sacrifice for my sake. She is looking pale this afternoon; but this may be because I cried half the night and kept her awake. The fact is, I was cutting a tooth. I have given up learning to walk; but have some idea of trying somnambulism instead.

Thursday, 10th. To-day I was spanked for the first time. When I have stopped crying, I mean to analyse my sensations.

II.—THE CAPTAIN FROM BATH

Extract from the Memoirs of Gabriel Foot, *Highwayman*

Our plan of attack upon Nanscarne House was a simple one.

The old baronet, Sir Harry Dinnis, took a just pride in his silver ware. Some of it dated from Elizabeth: for Sir Harry's great-great-grandfather, as the unhappy alternative of melting it down for King Charles, had taken arms against his Majesty and come out of the troubles of those times with wealth and credit.

The house, too, was Elizabethan, shaped like the letter L, and, like that letter, facing eastward. The longer arm, which looked down the steep slope of the park, contained the entrance-hall, chapel, dining-hall, principal living-rooms, and kitchens.

The ground-floor of the other (and to us more important) arm was taken up by the

housekeeper's rooms, audit-room and various offices, the butler's bedroom, and the strong-room, where the plate lay. On the upper floor a long gallery full of pictures ran from end to end, with a line of doors on the southern side, all opening into bedrooms, except one which led to the back-stairs.

Now, properly speaking, the strong-room was no strong-room at all. It had an ordinary deal door and an ordinary country-made lock. But in some ways it was very strong indeed. The only approach to it on the ground-floor lay through the butler's bedroom, of which you might call it but a cupboard. It had no window, and could not therefore be attacked from outside. The very small amount of light that entered it filtered through a pane of glass in the wall of the back-staircase, which ran up close behind.

I have said enough, I hope, for any reflective man to draw the conclusion that, since we desired no unpleasantness with the butler (a man between fifty and sixty, and notoriously incorruptible), our only plan was to make an

entrance upstairs by the long window at the end of the picture gallery, or corridor—whichever you choose to call it—descend the back-stairs, remove the pane of glass from the wall, and gain the strong-room through the opening.

The house was dark from end to end, and the stable clock had just chimed the quarter after midnight, when I went up the ladder. I never looked for much carefulness in this honest country household, but I did expect to spend twenty minutes on the heavy lead-work of the lower panes, and it seemed as good as a miracle to find the lattice unlatched and opening to the first gentle pull. I pressed it back; hitched it under a stem of ivy that the wind might not slam it after me; and, signalling down to Jimmy at the foot of the ladder to wait for my report, pulled myself over the sill and dropped softly into the gallery.

And then somebody stepped quickly from behind the heavy window curtain, reached out and shut the lattice smartly behind me, and said—

"Show a light, Jenkins, and let us have a look at the gentleman."

Though it concerned my neck, I was taken too quickly aback to stir; but stood like a stuck pig, while the butler fumbled with his tinder-box.

"Light all the candles."

"If it please you, Sir Harry," Jenkins answered, puffing at the tinder.

The first thing I saw by the blue light of the brimstone match was the barrel of old Sir Harry's pistol glimmering about six inches from my nose. On my left stood a long-legged footman, also with a pistol. But all this, though discomposing, was no more than I had begun to expect. What really startled me, as old Jenkins lit the candles, was the sight of two women standing a few paces off, beneath a tall picture of a gentleman with a big lace collar. One of them, a short woman with a bunchy shape, I recognised for the housekeeper. The other I guessed as quickly to be Sir Harry's daughter, Mistress Kate—a tall and slender young lady, dark-haired, and handsome as any man could wish. She was wrapped in a long travelling-cloak, the hood of which fell a little off her

shoulders, allowing a glimpse of white satin. A train of white satin reached below the cloak, and coiled about her pretty feet.

Now, the change from darkness to very bright light—for Jenkins went down the gallery lighting candle after candle, as if for a big reception—made us all wink a bit. And excitement would account for the white of the young lady's cheeks—I dare say I had turned pretty pale myself. But it did not seem to me to account for the look of sheer blank astonishment—no, it was more than this; a wild kind of wonder would be nearer the mark—that came into her eyes and stayed there. And I didn't quite see why she should put a hand suddenly against the wainscot, and from sickly white go red as fire and then back to white again. If they were sitting up for housebreakers, I was decidedly a better-looking one than they had any right to expect. The eyes of the others were fastened on me. I was the only one to take note of the girl's behaviour: and I declare I spared a second from the consideration of my own case to wonder what the deuce was the matter with her.

"Well, upon my soul!" cried Sir Harry, with something between a laugh and a sniff of disgust; and the footman on the other side of me echoed it with a silly cackle. "He certainly doesn't look as if he came from Bath!"

"Sir," I expostulated—for when events seem likely to prove overwhelming, I usually find myself clutching at my original respectability—"Sir, although the force of circumstances has brought me thus low, I am by birth and education a gentleman. Having told you this, I trust that you will remember it, even in the heat of your natural resentment."

"You speak almost as prettily as you write," he answered scornfully, pulling a letter from his pocket.

"This is beyond me," thought I; for of course I knew it could be no letter of mine. Besides, a glance told me that I had never set eyes on the paper or handwriting before. I think my next remark showed self-possession. "Would you be kind enough to explain?" I asked.

"I rather think that should be your business,"

said he; and faith, I allowed the justice of that contention, awkward as it was. But he went on, "It astonishes you, I dare say, to see this letter in my hand?"

It did. I acknowledged as much with a bow.

He began to read in an affected mimicking voice, "*My ever-loved Kate, since your worthy but wrong-headed father*——"

"Father!" It sounded like an echo. It came from the young lady, who had sprung forward indignantly, and was holding out a hand for the letter. "The servants! Have you not degraded me enough?" She stamped her foot.

The old gentleman folded up the letter again, and gave it into her hand with a cold bow. She was handing it to me—Oh, the unfathomable depth of woman!—when he interfered.

"For your own delectation if you will, miss; but as your protector I must ask you not to give it back."

He turned towards me again. As he did so,

I caught over his shoulder, or fancied I caught, a glance from Miss Kate that was at once a warning and an appeal. The next moment her eyes were bent shamefast upon the floor. I began to divine.

Said I, "If that's a sample of your manner towards your daughter, even you, in your cooler moments, can hardly wonder that she chooses another protector."

"Protector!" he repeated, lifting his eyebrows; and that infernal footman cackled again.

"If you can't behave with common politeness to a lady," I put in smartly, "you might at least exhibit enough of rude intelligence to lay hold of an argument that's as plain as the nose on your face!"

"Gently, my good sir!" said he. "Do you know that, if I choose, I can march you off to gaol for a common housebreaker?"

I should think I did know it—a plaguy sight better than he!

"To begin with," he went on, "you look like one, for all the world."

This was sailing too close for my liking.

"Old gentleman," said I, "you are wearisomely dull. Possibly I had better explain at length. To be frank, then, I had counted, in case of failure, to avoid all scandal to your daughter's name. I had hoped (you will excuse me) to have carried her off and evaded you until I could present myself as her husband. If baffled in this, I proposed to make my escape as a common burglar surprised upon your premises. It seems to me," I wound up, including the three servants with an indignant sweep of the arm, "that you might well have emulated my delicacy! As it is, I must trouble you to recognise it."

"Heaven send," I added to myself, "that the real inamorato keeps his bungling foot out of this till I get clear!" And I reflected with much comfort that he was hardly likely to make an attempt upon premises so brilliantly lit up.

"In justice to my daughter's taste," replied Sir Harry, "I am willing to believe you looked something less like a gaol-bird when she met you in the Pump Room at Bath. You have fine

clothes in your portmanteau no doubt, and I sincerely trust they make all the difference to your appearance. But a fine suit is no expensive outfit for the capture of an heiress. You may be the commonest of adventurers. How do I know, even, what right you have to the name you carry?"

If he didn't, it was still more certain that I didn't. Indeed he had a conspicuous advantage over me in knowing what that name was. This very painful difficulty had hardly presented itself, however, before the girl's wit smoothed it away. She spoke up,—looking as innocent as an angel, too.

"Captain Fitzroy Pilkington could add no lustre to his name, father, by giving it to me. His family is as good as our own, and his name is one to be proud of."

"So it is, my dear," thought I, "if I can only remember it. So it's Captain Fitzroy Pilkington I am—and from Bath. Decidedly I should have taken some time in guessing it."

"I suppose, sir, I may take it for granted you have not brought your credentials here

to-night?" said the old boy, with a grim smile.

It was lucky he had not thought of searching my pockets for them.

"Scarcely, sir," I answered, smiling too and catching his mood; and then thought I would play a bold card for freedom. "Come, come, sir," I said; "I have tried to deceive you, and you have enjoyed a very adequate revenge. Do not prolong this interview to the point of inflicting torture on two hearts whose only crime is that of loving too ardently. You have your daughter. Suffer me to return to the inn in the village, and in the morning I will call on you with my credentials and humbly ask for her hand. If, on due examination of my history and circumstances, you see fit to refuse me—why then you make two lovers miserable: but I give you my word—the word of a Fitzroy Pilkington—that I will respect that decision. 'Parcius junctas quatiam fenestras:' or, rather, I will discontinue the practice altogether."

"William," said Sir Harry, shortly, to the footman, "show Mr. Pilkington to the door

Will you take your ladder away with you, sir, or will you call for it to-morrow?"

"To-morrow will do," I said, airily, and stepping across to Mistress Kate I took her hand and raised it as if for a kiss. Her fingers gave mine an appreciative squeeze.

"But who in the world are you?" she whispered.

"I think," said I, bending over her hand, "I have fairly earned the right to withhold that."

Sir Harry bowed a stiff good-night to me, and William, the footman, took a candle and led the way along the gallery and down the great staircase to the front door. While he undid the chain and bolts I was thinking that he would be all the better for a kick; and as he drew aside to let me pass I took him quickly by the collar, spun him round, and gave him one. A flight of a dozen steps led down from the front door, and he pitched clean to the bottom. Running down after, I skipped over his prostrate body and walked briskly away in the darkness, whistling and feeling better.

I went round the end of the gallery wing,

just to satisfy myself that Jimmy had got away with the ladder, and then I struck across the plantation in the direction of the village. The June day was breaking before I turned out of the woods into the high-road, and already the mowers were out and tramping to their work. But in the porchway of the village inn—called the "Well-diggers' Arms"—whatever they may be—I surprised a cockneyfied groom in the act of kissing a maiden who, having a milk-pail in either hand, could not be expected to resist.

"H'm," said I to the man, "I am sorry to appear inopportunely, but I have a message for your master."

The maiden fled. "And who the doose may you be?" asked the groom, eyeing me up and down.

"I think," I answered, "it will be enough for you that I come from Nanscarne. You were late there. Oh, yes," I went on sharply, for fellows of this class have a knack of irritating me, "and I have a message for your master which I'll trouble you to deliver when he comes

down to breakfast. You will tell him, if you please, that Sir Harry was expecting him last night, and the lights he saw lit in the long gallery were there for his reception. You won't forget?"

"Who sent you here?" the fellow asked.

"On second thoughts," I continued, "you had better go in and wake Captain Fitzroy Pilkington up at once. He will pardon you when he has my message, for Sir Harry's temper is notoriously impatient."

And with that I turned and left him, for it was high time to find out how Jimmy had been faring. The past night's experience must have given him a shock, and I reckoned to give him another. I wasn't disappointed either. I walked leisurely down the village street, then crossed the hedge and doubled back on the high moors. At length, drawing near the old gravel-pit, where we had fixed to meet in case of separation, I dropped on all-fours and so came up to the edge and gave a whistle.

Jimmy was sitting with his back to me, and about to cut a hunch of bread to eat with his

cold bacon for breakfast. Instead, he cut his thumb, and jumped up, singing out—

"S'help me, but I never looked to see you again outside o' the dock!"

"No more you did," said I; and climbing down and sitting on a gravel-heap beside him, I told him all the story.

"And now, Jimmy," I wound up, "you must guess what I'm going to do."

"I don't need to," said he. "I know."

"I wager you don't."

"I wager I do."

"Well, then, I'm going back. Was that what you guessed?"

"I think you will not."

"Ah, but I will," said I. "I swore by the blood of a Fitzroy Pilkington I'd be back in the morning, and I can't retreat from so tremendous an oath as that. Back I mean to go. As for the real Captain—if Captain he is—I fancy I've scared him out of this neighbourhood for some time to come. And as for the credentials, I fancy, at my time of life, I should be able to write my own commendation. I believe the old

boy has a sneaking good-will towards me. I can't answer for the girl; but I can answer that she'll hold her tongue for a while at all events. This life doesn't become a man of my education and natural ability. And the risk is worth running."

"I wouldn't, if I were you," says he, very drily.

"And why not?"

"Well, you see, when I heard the noise last night, and all the place grew light as it did, I was just starting to run for dear life, till it struck me that if the folks meant to go searching for me they wouldn't begin by lighting the picture-gallery from end to end. So I drew close under shadow of the wall and waited, ready to run at any moment. But after a while, finding that nothing happened, I grew curious and crept up after you and looked in through the window, very cautious. A nice fix you seemed to be in; but old Jenkins was there. And while Jenkins was there——"

"Well?"

"Well, I should have thought you might

have guessed. The bolt of his bedroom window wasn't hard to force, nor the lock of the small room. Being single-handed, I had to pick and choose what to carry off. But if you'll look under the bracken yonder you'll own I know my way among silver-ware."

I looked at him for a moment, and then lay gently back on the turf and laughed till I was tired of laughing.

THE END