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THE
YOUNG FORESTERS,

AND OTHER TALES.



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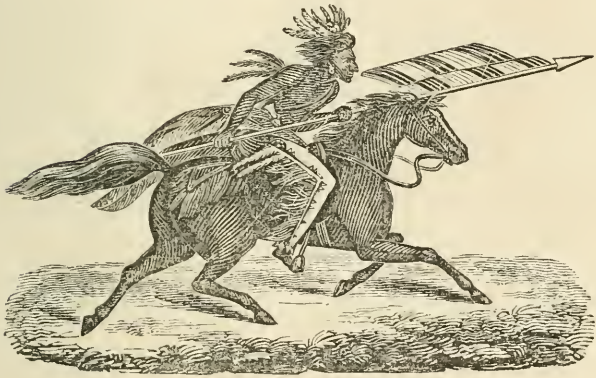
THE YOUNG FORESTERS,

AND OTHER TALES.

BY

WILLIAM H. G. KINGSTON,

AUTHOR OF "PETER THE WHALER," "MARK SEAWORTH," ETC.



NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES MILLER,

(SUCCESSOR TO C. S. FRANCIS & CO.,)

522 BROADWAY.

1865.



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THE YOUNG FORESTERS.

CHAPTER I.

IN one of the quietest and most respectable outskirts of Hackney, where the ends of streets stretch out into the country, and one gets out of London noise and smoke, there stood in my youth a pretty cottage, with a small garden in front and a larger one in the rear, a grape-vine trained along its walls and almost up to its chimneys, a large sycamore-tree sheltering it from the northeast winds, and green fields beyond its garden, from which it was called Meadow Cottage. The family who lived there were called the Foresters. There was a father, three boys, an honest, kindly old woman who did all the housekeeping, but no mother, for she had died four years before the time of my story, when her youngest boy was a baby. The Foresters were not rich, but very comfortable. The father was manager in the warehouse of a wealthy firm of fur importers in the

neighborhood of the London Docks, and had a respectable income. His three boys, Joseph, Henry, and Herbert, were getting their education, the two eldest at Doctor Ashford's school, one of the best in the neighborhood, and the youngest at Miss Green's seminary, for little girls and boys under seven. His housekeeper, commonly called Old Catherine, had come with him and his wife to Meadow Cottage, and continued in the service ever since. Nobody could exactly say how old she was; Catherine kept that a solemn secret, and was yet a stranger to all her neighbors. Her face, though brown and wrinkled, had a good-tempered, honest look; her tall figure, though stooping with years, was yet strong and active. The cloth cap trimmed with fur, and allowing no hair to be seen, and the numerous petticoats, all of bright colors, and one shorter than the other, which were her constant attire, made Catherine rather a curiosity to the people about. She had been born in Archangel, her father was an English sailor, her mother a Russian peasant, and Catherine had lived till middle age in her native northern town, being for many years a housekeeper in the English factory there, till she came over with one of its managers to hold the same office in his fur warehouse, which happened to be the very one where Mr. Forester

was employed. Thus they got acquainted, and the old woman getting tired of keeping the great warehouse, which was left so lonely and locked up at night, took service with him when he got married, and continued to be his housekeeper when Mrs. Forester was gone. A faithful housekeeper Catherine was, and rather like a relative to the family with whom she had lived so long. Sincerely attached to Mr. Forester, in whom she had found a kind and considerate master, and still more attached to his boys, they had grown up under her care, and seemed like her own children.

The young Foresters were good boys, though they had lost their mother so early. Their names were Joseph, Henry, and Herbert. There were four years between each of their ages, for two little sisters had gone to the churchyard before their mother; so Joseph was almost thirteen, Henry was almost nine, and Herbert—little Herby, as they called him—was almost five at the time of my story. They were all handsome, brown-haired boys, with fair open faces, strong frames, and active feet. It was their father's comfort that they would be able to take their own part in the world, and willing to keep out of its evils. Of that he was sure, as regarded the three, but Joseph was his particular trust, being the steadiest

and most sensible, as became an eldest brother; and Herbert and Henry trusted in him too, were guided by his advice, got out of scrapes by his wisdom, and comforted in all their troubles by his brotherly kindness.

Kind and loving were the motherless boys to one another, and happy was the little family as those that dwell together in unity. Every evening found them gathered in the cottage parlor, which Catherine kept so neat and comfortable. Mr. Forester came home from his warehouse, Joseph and Henry came home from Dr. Ashford's, stopping by the way to fetch little Herby home from Miss Green's. The father heard all his boys had to tell of news, adventures, or it might be troubles; gave them his advice or consolation, if that were needed; told them whatever he had seen or heard that might interest them; helped them with their lessons; played with them sometimes; heard them read by turns in some of his own books while he sat resting himself by the fire, and old Catherine worked at the other side and listened. She had never learned to read, yet Catherine spoke and understood English well, and having travelled so far, had a good deal of knowledge for her station. These were their winter ways, but in the fine evenings of spring and summer, they used

to take hours of working in the garden, which their own hands kept the neatest and fullest of flowers in all the neighborhood. When there was no garden work to do, they took long walks into the country, where Mr. Forester told them what he knew of the wild plants and flowers. Though a man of business, he studied many things besides, and had a particular fancy for botanizing; and in the long, warm twilights, they used to sit in the summer-house, have a deal of talk, and sometimes their supper there, and sing the Evening Hymn together before they went in to bed.

The Foresters had little company, because they did not feel the want of it. They had very few relations, and those they had were very distant, living in the north of England, and holding little correspondence with them. So their summers and winters passed, as I have said, till the time of my story, when, as the spring was coming in and there was a deal to do in the garden, the boys could not help perceiving that, though Mr. Forester worked and talked with them as usual, there was some sad thought or trouble in his mind of which he did not care to speak.

Day after day it grew upon him; he took to looking sadly on them all, and asking them would they miss him much if he went away. He said so

one warm evening when they sat down in the summer-house for the first time in that year, and Joseph, after thinking a minute or two, said: "Father, dear, what makes you ask that? you know we would; and you know you are not going away."

"Indeed I am, my boy," said Mr. Forester, evidently taking courage to tell it. "I am going (and must go about midsummer) far away, to Archangel, to take charge of Mr. Benson's concerns in the English factory there. You see, Joseph," and he laid his hand on his thoughtful boy's shoulder, "Mr. Benson, in whose employment I have been these twenty years, is an old man now, too old to go abroad to such a climate, though he managed the firm's business in Archangel, I don't know how long, and brought Catherine with him to London, when he succeeded his uncle as chief of the house. The gentleman who was his agent in the factory died about a month ago, and as soon as the intelligence reached him, Mr. Benson came to me, told me—it was very good of him—I was the only person he could think of trusting with such an important charge; he was pleased to say as a reward for my faithful services, because the agent has a right to trade in furs on his own account, and gets all the advan-

tages of a partner in the firm. It would make me rich and able to provide well for my boys in some years, Joseph—that is a weighty consideration; besides, I cannot refuse Mr. Benson, as he knows of nobody else he would employ in my stead, so I must go, and send you all to a boarding-school, for it would not be safe to leave you here without me, and my relations in the north would not be fit guardians for you. I must send you to school, let the cottage, and find a place for Catherine.”

“Father, dear, couldn’t you take us with you?” cried all the boys in a breath; the idea of parting from him, and being sent to live among strangers, was more than they could bear, and Herbert began to cry.

“My children, it is far away, and a terrible climate; the winters there are eight months in the year, no ships can come all that time over the frozen sea or up the frozen river.”

“But there are Englishmen there, and you are going,” interrupted Joseph.

“Yes, there are Englishmen everywhere,” said his father.

“And why should not English boys go? Henry and Herbert are not afraid of the cold.”

“No, that we are not,” cried the two.

“I would take care of them and help you; I

am a great boy, nearly a man, now," continued Joseph. "You won't leave us behind, father, we couldn't live without you. We'll give you no trouble, we'll learn just as well in Archangel; I'll warrant there is some sort of a school there. Catherine says it is such a fine town, and we will see the world; you always said that made men of people. Oh, father, dear, let us go with you." And Joseph clasped his hand, while the two younger boys clung about Mr. Forester, with the tears in Henry's eyes, and little Herbert crying outright, as they all joined in the petition, "Father, dear, let us go with you."

The father tried to reason them out of it, but he couldn't manage that well, for his own mind was set against parting with his boys. He had lived so much with them, found such comfort in them, and had such a special trust in Joseph's sense and courage, that when his eldest and much-valued son proved to him that it was making milk-sops and girls of them not to take them to Archangel; that English boys ought to be able to face any climate, and get used to any strange ways; that they would, every one, learn his business and be great helps to him; that old Catherine would go with them and keep house for them in the factory, as she used to do in Mr. Benson's time; and

that they would all be as well off as in Meadow Cottage, Mr. Forester gave his consent, after some hesitation about taking little Herbert, who could not, and would not, be left behind; and it was agreed that the whole family, Catherine included, should set out for Archangel, provided the old woman was ready to go. She came with the supper just as they had reached that conclusion, and Catherine's eyes positively sparkled under her furred cap, when the proposal was mentioned. She would go with all her heart, nothing would induce her to leave the master and the boys; and, as for going back to Archangel, hadn't she been born there? there was no place like it in the world. Many a time she had longed for the fine frost that made the ground so dry and the sky so clear—for the long winter nights and the long summer days; it was the only wish she had to see them once again, and be laid beside her mother in the burying-ground of the monastery beside the forest, where they kept off the wolves with great fires in winter nights.

CHAPTER II

THE WINTER LAND.

HAVING made up his mind, Mr. Forester lost no time in executing his plan. His employer, Mr. Benson, thought it a great venture to take his boys with him; but since their father was unwilling to leave them without a near relation in England, and they would go, he said it might be for the best. He would write to his people in the factory to pay the family every attention, and they should all have a passage out in the "Ice Queen," one of the Russian Company's ships, always freighted with his goods, and considered a safe and fast sailer.

Then there was a providing of warm clothes, socks, and flannels, enough to last them all their lives, the boys thought. But old Catherine could tell them how much of the kind they should want

in Archangel, and Mr. Forester, though he had never been there himself, had so many acquaintances in the way of business—Russian merchants, and English agents who had resided in and knew all about the place—that he was not at a loss how to make his preparations.

They were all made at last. The warm clothes packed in great chests, with books, stationery, and all necessary things to be got cheap and easily in England, but scarcely to be had in Archangel at all. Then the cottage was given over to a house agent, to be taken care of and let as well as he could, till Mr. Forester returned to his own country, which would not be for many a year. Joseph and Henry took leave of Dr. Ashford and their schoolfellows, got some keepsakes and all sorts of good wishes. Herbert bade farewell to Miss Green and the little girls with a considerable cry, and the present of a primer full of pictures. Old Catherine had nobody to take farewell of, but she put her cat in a basket, determined that it should go northward too. Every one cut a bunch of flowers from the little garden they were leaving in its summer bloom—their father told them none of all those flowers could grow where they were going—and early one morning in the beginning of July, the family that might well be called the exiles of com-

merce, drove down to the London Docks and got on board the "Ice Queen," a large merchant ship fitted up for the northern trade, with all her cargo already stored away and just about to lift her anchor. Away the good ship steered down the Thames, and out at the Nore, far over the German Ocean day after day and night after night; holding due north past England, Scotland, and the Shetland Isles, past Norway, Iceland, and the Isles of Faroe, but keeping so far out to sea and out of sight of any of them, that scarcely a coast or headland was visible, till sailing past Lapland they saw the North Cape, a ridge of barren rock, running out into the Northern Ocean, and known to geographers as the uttermost point of Europe. When she had doubled that cape, as sailors say, otherwise, got fairly round it, the ship held on her course by the east coast of Lapland; for now she took an easterly as well as a northerly direction, till she entered that gulf or inlet of the Northern Ocean which pierces deep into Russia, and is called the White Sea, from the ice with which it is often covered, and receives the great river Dwina, upon which, about thirty miles from its mouth, stands the town of Archangel. On that same track an English ship had steered about the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's long reign, the first that ever

reached the then desert shore, where nothing but a monastery belonging to the Greek church, dedicated, after its manner, to the archangel Michael, then stood; and the land had no inhabitants but the few solitary monks who lived there and the wild tribes of Samoiedes or Russian Lapps, who hunted the furry creatures with which its pine-forests and wintry wastes abounded, to live on their flesh and keep themselves warm with their skins. The ermine, the sable, the black and white fox—in short, all animals that yield the most valuable furs—were to be found there, and their skins could be bought from the wild hunters for glass beads, knives, and scissors. The English merchantman brought home such a cargo as made other ships venture on the same voyage. Their profits induced English merchants with their clerks and servants to go out and settle there for the purpose of buying up furs and sending them home to England; thus the English factory was founded, and the town of Archangel grew about it, taking its name from the old monastery, and gradually increasing by the influx of Russian traders and settlers till it became the first seaport of the northern empire, for, till its foundation, Russia had no trade by sea. What is called the Russian Company, that is to say, a number of English mer-

chants engaged in the Russian trade, took its rise about the same time, and is now one of the richest companies in London. It still imports its furs from Archangel, keeps its factory and agents there for collecting them, and its ships go and come every summer, from July to September.

The Foresters' voyage was a prosperous one, they had fair winds and calm seas all the way, and it was full of wonders for the boys. The wide waste of waters seen for the first time, and sailed over night and day, with the sun going down into their depths and the moon rising out of them; the flocks of northern sea-birds that passed over, with their strange cries and feathers; the shoals of great northern fishes that rose and showed themselves on the surface of the sea; the wild coast of Lapland, made up of ridgy rocks and pine forests; the lonely North Cape, so often mentioned in their school geography; and, above all, the lengthening of the summer daylight as they sailed northward, was a new and marvellous sight for the young travellers. At length, they sailed up the White Sea and entered the Dwina, a mighty river, twice the breadth of the Thames at Gravesend, and cast anchor at Nowa, a Russian fortress built on an isle at its mouth, with a little town of merchants' storehouses built on its ramparts; for the river is

so shallow, notwithstanding its mighty breadth, and so blocked up with sandbanks, that no large ship can come nearer to Archangel, which lies ten miles up. So all the heavily-laden merchantmen anchor there, and store up their goods till they are sold, and the officers of the Russian Custom-house look sharply after their government dues. The anchor was cast, the gangway was lowered, the unloading began, and the Foresters stood in a safe corner of the deck; the elder boys holding little Herbert fast by the hands, while they all gazed on the strange scene around them, and their father stood hard by watching the unloading and answering their curious questions. As far as their eyes could reach up and down the river there was nothing but ships to be seen, some taking in, some getting out cargoes, with a Babel of all the tongues of the North, and thousands of boats moving among them, of every size and shape, with men in all manner of strange dresses. Far off, on either side, lay the low flat lands, mostly rough pasture or wild moss, as their father told them, for no cornfields or orchards ripen there; the country lies too far north, and must get its bread from more southern quarters; but he pointed to a dim outline like a great shadow to the southward, and said it was the mighty forest of fir, larch, and pine, which covered

most of the province, afforded timber for the ship and boat building, the chief manufacture in Archangel, and sent millions of deals to their own England.

While he was yet speaking one of the boats came close alongside the "Ice Queen," and out of it stepped first a tall man, dressed in a long straight coat, or rather gown, of dark blue cloth, ornamented with very large and bright brass buttons, fastened round his waist with a belt of polished black leather, from which a large pocket of the same material hung on either side, and there were no other garments to be seen, except a pair of rough boots and a cloth cap trimmed with fur, like old Catherine's. After him came another man still taller, but he had a more stooping gait, and his gown, though of the very same shape, was made of tanned sheepskin. Neither of them showed a morsel of linen, they had both bare necks, long, red hair, and longer beards of the same color, covering the whole of their faces; yet the one reckoned himself of the merchant-class, for he had been clerk to Mr. Benson's agent, who died at Archangel—would be clerk to Mr. Forester, and his name was Nicholas Grimzoff; while the other was Ivan Paulowitz, that is to say, in English, John, the son of Paul, a serf or peasant in his

employment, for doing porter's work and the like, and also a nephew to old Catherine. Being so long in English service they could both speak the language, and made equally low bows to Mr. Forester, wishing him a very good day, and thanking God for his safe arrival. Then the clerk entered into matters of business, while Ivan kissed his aunt, seemed right glad to see her, and fell to talk in Russiac, as the boys guessed, about them. They had heard the language before from merchants and seamen, who met their father in the streets of London, and Mr. Forester understood it well, as his business required. They also knew enough of Russian customs to perceive that the cloth gown denoted the man of trade and education, and the sheepskin coat the poor peasant, whom his lord sold with the estate and hired out as he thought proper or profitable. The red beard and the red hair, as well as that queer costume, made both men look very much the same; but Joseph thought, and Henry agreed with him, that Ivan had a remarkably stupid look, and Mr. Grimzoff uncommonly cunning eyes.

They all got into the boat with their household goods and chattels. Ivan and another sheepskin-clad man rowed them up through the forest of shipping to the town, and the boys saw that oldest

port of the Russian empire, made up of narrow but straggling streets of wooden houses, painted all colors, but mostly red, blue and yellow, with wooden churches equally painted, their spires topped with large copper balls, and their bells always ringing. They saw, too, the only stone building in the place, a sort of fortress with a deep ditch, and a wall surmounted by towers all round it, called in the Russian tongue, "The Court of Trading Strangers." The English factory was first built there by early and adventurous merchants, and the principal firms of the Russian Company have still their warehouses and offices within the walls; but Germans and Dutch, Swedes and Danes, have built there also, and the court forms a little town of itself. Along the quays, covered with stalls of all northern merchandise, and crowded with people in all sorts of strange costumes, buying, selling, and making a tremendous noise, through the narrow streets and past the wooden churches, the Foresters went to their new home; followed by half a score of Russian porters, carrying their goods, and commanded by Grimzoff, they got over a kind of drawbridge thrown across the ditch, in at the principal gate, and found themselves in an open square, paved like the streets of the town with logs of wood, and

surrounded by tall houses, solidly built, but rather dingy-looking, where the merchants kept their stores and offices, and the clerks and agents of the Russian Company lived. One of them belonged to Mr. Benson, a good but old-fashioned house of three stories; the lower one for his agent's residence, the two upper to serve as fur stores. It was comfortably furnished, partly in the English, partly in the Russian style. The boys were astonished at the great size of the stoves, which took up so much space in every room; but Mr. Forester told them they would find out their value before Christmas; and when they wondered at the small size of the windows, he said they would find out the reason of that about the same time. Old Catherine looked at the place as if she found herself at home again; the good woman had been in England nearly twenty years; but she remarked how badly the furniture had been polished since she left; that her grandmother's spinning-wheel, which she had stowed away in the store-room, was rather dusty; and that there was a new cow in its appointed house, which opened conveniently from Catherine's kitchen. All the arrangements of that northern home were made for the long season of frost and snow, as little going out of doors as people could help; cellars, stores, outhouses, all

opened from within, and were under the same roof. There was no yard, no garden; but the late agent had left a box of mould covered with glass, in which two or three dwarfed crocuses were blooming at a window, which looked southward, and Ivan said, though he did not see the use of them, he had watered them as his English master used to do, just for his sake, because the agent had been kind to him.

It was a place built for the winter, and far unlike their Meadow Cottage; but the Foresters settled themselves there, unpacked their English necessaries, laid up their mighty stock of warm clothes against the cold that would come, and made themselves at home in the strange country. Mr. Forester had business to attend to, and his boys had wonders to see, for every thing there was new, and every place full of busy life in the brief bright summer of the north. Traders from all the world's wildest corners were pouring into Archangel day and night, or rather the time which is night in England, for there is no such thing at that season on the shores of the White Sea. They saw the sun go round to the west, but instead of setting there he moved away lower and redder still to the extreme north, where they lost sight of him about eleven o'clock, when he seemed to sink

into the frozen ocean. Those that happened to be awake, saw him rise again out of the pine forest to the eastward, a little after one, and the evening twilight never melted away from the sky, but brightened back into the dawn. Those long days brought ships from all quarters to the river, and traders from the most distant regions to the town. Caravans came from Siberia, with all manner of furs, bought from the northern hunters, and Chinese goods, purchased at the eastern fairs, packed in rough, heavy wagons, drawn by shaggy horses, or wild-looking oxen, with Tartar drivers, in canvas coat, and caps of lambskin. Corn-dealers came from the banks of the Wolga and the Don, who had traversed in their low, flat-bottomed barges that long chain of canals, lakes, and rivers, which link the south of Russia to the north, a distance of more than a thousand miles. There were troops of tall fair Fins, from the Swedish frontier, who brought their bundles of dried fish, bales of hides, and bags of salt, to sell on the crowded quays. There were seamen and merchants from all the ports of the Baltic, all the Dutch towns, and chiefly from England. There were multitudes of German traders and Polish Jews, who came overland from far-off cities with every thing to sell, and it was said a good deal of

cheating among them. But the strangest sight of all to the young Foresters, were those wild people whom the first English merchantman found hunting and fishing on that lonely shore, before a town was built or a ship cast anchor there. The dwarfish, swarthy, uncivilized Samoiedes, still clothed in the skins of wild animals, armed with the bow and quiver, living in tents of half-tanned leather, and owning no property but their herds of reindeer, and the furs they collect in hunting the trackless wastes and forests which lie between Archangel and Siberia. With these spoils of the chase tied in bundles on their own backs, or packed in larger bales on the reindeer, they came, men, women, and children, all dreadfully dirty, and with such flat faces, small eyes, and dark complexions, that one would scarcely think they belonged to the human family. They pitched their tents on a rising ground outside the town, for the Russians would not let them into it, set the reindeer to graze on the coarse mossy grass that grew there in summer-time, and made as stiff bargains as they could with the agents of the Russian Company; for, wild and dirty as they were, the richest sable and the most beautiful ermine were to be had from the Samoiedes.

The Court of the Trading Strangers was as busy

as the town. Mr. Forester and Grimzoff were overworked with inspecting furs which the traders brought, making English goods pass for money in buying them (the wild people had no use for gold or silver coin), and getting their purchases properly put away in the store. That was partly Ivan's work; he was a good honest fellow, as Catherine's nephew should have been; but Ivan had an unfortunate inclination, too common among Russian peasants—he was fond of corn brandy, the strong liquor of the north. His last coppie, a Russian coin something less than a half-penny, went to procure it, and when Ivan had got sufficient of his favorite beverage, he was fit for nothing but sleeping under the outside stair. Often had the unlucky man been admonished, often threatened with dismissal; but he was trusty, honest, and Catherine's nephew, always ready to promise reformation, and particularly grateful to Mr. Forester for saving him from Grimzoff's cane; a discipline to which Ivan had been pretty well accustomed before his coming, as everybody in Russia beats his inferior.

The boys helped to save him, too. They and Ivan grew great friends, they assisted him in putting away the furs after helping their father and the clerk to count and sort them. Every hand

was wanted in that busy summer time ; and it was their pride to show how useful they could be in the far north. When business permitted, they rambled about under Ivan's guidance through the strange and crowded town, saw all its wondrous sights of men and merchandise, picked up Russian and Tartar words, and looked particularly at the ships in the river that came from or sailed away to England. Sometimes they went far into the surrounding country, gathered juniper and cranberries in the wide, rough pasture lands, where the small black cows and hairy sheep of that northern land were grazing, and saw the peasant people with their ways of work and life ; pitch-gatherers on the edge of the forest with their great fires to burn the fir-trees, and pots to catch the pitch in ; woodmen who lived and worked among the tall pines, cutting them down and hewing them into logs, to warm the stoves in winter, or dragging them away to the saw-mills, where they were sawn into deals, which were shipped by thousands to England. It was a great temptation to go far into the forest, in search of the bright-colored mushrooms and the Lapland rose, abounding in the warm and sheltered hollows, not to speak of the wild birds, with cries and plumage unknown to our English woods. But Ivan knew there

were wolves and bears to be met with, even in the long summer days, and Mr. Forester laid strict commands on them not to go out of sight and hearing of the woodmen. So the deep thickets and long mossy paths, which stretched away through the pines and firs, had to be left unexplored. Ivan said there was no end to them. The forest stretched all the way to Siberia, and their father promised that they should travel through part of it with him on a journey he intended taking to the town of Mezen early in the following year.

“We’ll see the forest, then,” Joseph would say, when his brothers looked wistfully along the glades and dingles from which they had to turn back. “Papa says, the way lies right through it, and no stopping place but the hunters’ house, where travellers never come. He will take us out of the way to see it, because it is a curious place, and was built by a relative of Mr. Benson’s. We’ll see the forest, then;” and the boys would go home rejoicing over that expectation.

CHAPTER III.

THE WILD MERCHANT.

IN the mean time the busy summer was wearing away. Ships left the river, and did not come back again; the few that remained made great haste to get in their cargoes before the frost set in. The caravans, with the rough wagons and shaggy oxen, left the town, on their way homè to Siberia; the Tartar corn-dealers moved away up the river in their empty barges; the fur-traders became few, and business slackened in the Court. The days were shortening; they could see the sun setting in the west now. Cold winds began to blow from the north and east; floods of rain and sleet began to fall. The quays grew silent; in the houses and through all the streets where people had slept and traded in the open air for the last three months, there were sounds of carpenters and hammers at

work closing up crevices in the wooden roofs and walls, fitting the windows with double sashes, covering the doors with baize, and the floors with thick Dutch carpets.

The winter was coming; half the merchants of the Court went home to their respective countries; those that remained, made preparations as actively as the townspeople. Mr. Forester was not behind-hand; he had been warned of the winters in Archangel; his stoves, his double windows, and all the other requisites were got ready; every chink in the house was closed; a store of provender was laid in for the cow. Old Catherine got out her grandmother's spinning-wheel, prepared a stock of fine flax, and said she would now have a comfortable winter, like what she used to have in her young days with the old master.

About the middle of September there was not a ship in the river, scarcely a boat to be seen, and very few people in the streets; the wind blew particularly cold one night about bed-time; it rose to a storm before morning; and when they looked out with the first daylight, which now came late and dim, all the town was white with snow. It continued falling the whole day, swept into high white drifts before the blasts till the streets were impassable, and nothing but the upper windows of

many houses to be seen. The storm subsided; they cleared the snow away from the roofs and windows, but it lay deep and solid in the open streets and over all the country round. Next night the frost set in; the snow became firm and hard; the river got a coat of ice, which began upland, and gradually grew down to the sea, getting thicker and harder as the shortening days and lengthening nights went on, with long hours of heavy fogs and occasional snow-storms, the dreary beginning of the northern winter, which comes when the corn is yet in English fields, and the red apples on the boughs of English orchards. Mr. Forester and his boys, like all the Court and all the townspeople, were shut fast within doors, there was no going out in those thick fogs and fierce storms. There was no more business to be done, the fur-stores were closed, the dealers and traders gone, and the few clerks and agents who remained in the place had nothing to do but amuse and keep themselves warm for eight or nine months at the least. That was the usual course of things, and the men of business had reason to be satisfied with the close of that summer, for a better market had not been known within the memory of man. The furs had been particularly cheap and abundant; and Mr. Forester, besides doing well

for his employer, had made a profitable investment on his own account, which he hoped to ship for sale to England after his winter journey to Mezen, where he intended to make further purchases from the northern hunters, with whom the house had always been on such friendly terms, that they were in the habit of keeping the best of their furs for its agents.

Being kind and considerate to everybody, Mr. Forester had shown himself the same to their kindred tribe, the Samoiedes, with whom he had done a good deal of business, and concluded most of his bargains with additional presents of knives, scissors, and looking-glasses, greatly to the displeasure of Grimzoff, who warned him that there would be neither peace nor profit got out of those greedy heathens, if he did not give them less than they asked.

The small hardy people had not yet moved homeward; they were waiting till the frost made land and water hard enough for their laden sledges and reindeer. Their fires and tents could still be seen glimmering through the thick fogs and high snow-drifts. They strayed occasionally into the town to make their last purchases; but none of them had any more business in the Court, and the Foresters were rather astonished, as they sat at

breakfast one morning, to hear something very like scolding below, and see old Catherine enter the room in a towering passion, with—

“For mercy’s sake, master, come down with your whip, and wallop this Samoiede from the door; he’ll break it in with his fist,” and her fears seemed confirmed by a continuous powerful knocking like muffled hammers at the outer door.

“No, no, Catherine,” said Mr. Forester, “nobody shall be walloped from my house. What does the Samoiede want?”

“He has broken the big looking-glass he got into the bargain for his marten-skins, and he is begging another one to take home to his mother-in-law that is to be. She is a great woman among them, it seems, and won’t let her daughter have him if she is not satisfied with the presents he brings back from Archangel. I told him you had not another glass in the house, but he won’t take ‘No’ for an answer. Do, master, let Grimzoff or Ivan wallop him away, since you won’t do it yourself.”

“They shall not do any such thing,” said Mr. Forester, getting up; “the man can speak Russiac, I suppose.”

“Oh, yes, and English too,” said Catherine. “He is the man that made such a hard bargain

about the marten-skins that day I was up in the store dusting out the chests. He calls himself the chief of the tribe; I don't know his heathenish name, but master Joseph will remember him, I'll warrant, he had such a talk with him about bows and arrows."

"It is Sorinsk, father," said Joseph, recollecting the Samoiede chief, who had been in Mr. Forester's store at least twice a week all the summer time. He was the man of business for his whole tribe, and spoke English tolerably well, having learned it in his frequent dealings with the agents of the Russian Company. He was also keener and more intelligent than the generality of Samoiedes, and though given to make hard bargains, and get the most he could, was known to be faithful to all his contracts, and honest than many a civilized trader.

"I will go down and speak to him," said Mr. Forester; and down he went, followed by all the boys, to get another look of their northern acquaintance, whose bow and arrows had special interest for them all. When the outer door was opened—for Catherine had talked and scolded from the window—the small, squat figure of the Samoiede chief looked very like a moving snow-ball; but snow was no trouble to Sorinsk, he

dashed a peck of it off the front of his fur cap with his hands, which never saw water except on like occasions, looked up with his small narrow eyes, and said in his best English, "My honorable master, and all my honorable young masters, how you do this very fine morning? Sorinsk has broken his glass, and will break his heart too, if he don't get one other all the same good and big, for Slamwa, him wife's mother: she very proud, great chief's wife; proud and high as the Englishman's house," said Sorinsk, looking up at the fabric, which seemed so magnificent compared with his own leathern tent. Forthwith he entered on the woes which should come upon himself and his promised bride, who dwelt somewhere far north of Mezen, if her mother's goodwill were not secured by the presentation of a looking-glass, good and big as the one he had broken. In vain Mr. Forester assured him he had no glass to give; there was no getting done with Sorinsk and his tale. The Samoiede returned to it from every denial. Time was of no value with his people, and Catherine, Ivan, and Grimzoff, who had gathered to the spot, began to insist on walloping as the only means of getting rid of him, when Joseph recollected that there was a glass in his own and his brother's bedroom. "I am sure we could dress very well with-

out it," he said; "and it is a pity of the chief. These wild people have their own ways and their own troubles; do let us give it to him."

"Well, if you can spare it," said Mr. Forester, "give it to him by all means."

"Oh, do, honorable master," cried Sorinsk, catching part of their whisper, "find me a glass, and Sorinsk will pay for it honorably in good skins when you come to Mezen; and if you don't come this winter, Sorinsk will drive to the hunter's house, and leave the skins safe and dry, and one fox-skin besides for the honorable young master—oh, do find me a glass;" and he began his tale of woe for the seventh time.

Joseph ran for the glass, to the utter disgust of Catherine, her nephew, and Grimzoff. The Samoiede received it, looked it all over, surveyed his own flat face in it, measured it with his dirty hand, said, "He is as good and big; I will bring the furs, honorable master;" and, without another acknowledgment, he thrust his prize under his arm, and ran away through the snow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEPARATION.

THE Foresters saw no more of Sorinsk or his tribe. The stormy weather continued for some weeks, shutting all civilized men within doors; but when the first heavy snowfall of the northern winter was over, the wind fell to a dead calm; the hard, stern frost set in, making the snowy ground like iron, and turning the rivers to stone. The sky was heavily laden with thick gray fogs all day, but they cleared away at nightfall, letting the bright moon and thousands of stars shine out on the white wintry landscape below. Then they saw the Samoiedes rise up one evening when the fogs were floating away, strike their tents, harness the reindeer to their sledges, pack in all their goods and purchases, and speed away over the frozen plain to their country in the north, a journey of

fully seven hundred miles, which nobody would think of taking in that climate except in winter. Away they went, and all the town and all the country round came out too with sledges drawn by reindeer or hardy northern horses shod for ice-travelling. Distant friends went to visit each other, men of business took journeys to remote towns, young men set out on hunting parties far into the forest, or down to the White Sea. It was curious to see the winter life of the town and country, everybody wrapped up, the rich in fine furs, the poor in warm sheep-skins, but all out in the broad moonlight, or the short faint gleams of sunshine. Some in richly lined and decorated sledges, some in rough common ones, but all with jingling bells, merry talk and laughter; while thousands of young people, men and women, boys and girls, went skating along over street and river, as their business or pleasure took them. It was the lively, leisure, pleasant time of their northern year, making up to many for the hard work, the continued bustle, and overcrowding of summer. Mr. Forester and his boys enjoyed it as well as the rest; the warm clothes they had packed up in England, under old Catherine's direction, were of use to them now. The good woman gloried in the fact. "Didn't I tell you what Archangel was?"

she would say; "there is no winter in all Russia like ours. It is the healthiest climate on the face of the earth. I have heard that some learned men think the Garden of Eden was planted here." The short days and the long nights went quickly. December had come, and Mr. Forester was talking of keeping Christmas as they used to do in England, when all his plans were broken up by the arrival of a letter, which came up the Dwina by the Petersburg mail, a light sledge drawn by reindeer, and getting over four hundred miles, the distance between the two cities, in less than three days. The letter was from a partner of Mr. Benson's firm, which, being one of the oldest in the Russian Company, had a house in St. Petersburg too, ever since the great Czar Peter built his new capital on the banks of the Neva, and commanded all foreign merchants to set up factories there, on pain of being expelled from trade in his dominions. The house in Petersburg did the same sort of business as that at Archangel, but the agent there was not so high in the owner's confidence; he and his clerk had got into a dispute with an officer of the Russian Custom-house about some dues which they thought had been paid. As Mr. Forester was the nearest authority, they referred to him for advice, and he found the business of a kind which could

be best settled in Petersburg. People thought nothing of travelling between it and Archangel, now that the winter had really set in, and made all roads equally good for their warm and well-appointed sledges; merchants and men of business were going and coming every day, and experienced drivers were to be got at every post-house. "I would take you with me, boys," he said, "to let you see the city your geography speaks so much of, but I should not have time to let you see any thing, because I want to come back and keep Christmas in our own house here, and I can't spare the expense till my next remittance comes from England. Besides, we are going to Mezen, you know, to meet your friend of the looking-glass, see the tribute paid, and buy up the last of my venture of furs. I hope it will pay me well, and help me to provide for my boys. Joseph, you'll take care of your brothers, especially little Herbert, for Henry can look after himself; and keep good friends with Catherine and Grimzoff. I can leave my goods and you to him safely, though he is a stranger."

So Mr. Forester thought, and so thought his boys. The clerk had always been very civil and accommodating to them; he had the best of characters from the former agent. Mr. Forester had

kept none of his affairs from him ; Grimzoff knew the amount of furs he had in store on his own account, knew what he had agreed to purchase from the northern tribes at Mezen, and if he happened to be detained in Petersburg beyond the appointed time, the clerk was empowered to take his boys with him and make the purchase in his name.

Having settled that question, though determined to return in time to keep Christmas with his boys, if possible, Mr. Forester hired a warm travelling sledge, called a katbitka, in which one could sleep on the journey and carry one's provisions, for there are few inns in Russia ; engaged a driver and post-boy experienced in travelling between Archangel and Petersburg ; provided himself with a store of wrappers ; advised everybody at home to behave well till he came back ; and set forth one evening when the moon was rising and the fogs clearing away. Joseph, Henry, and little Herbert went with him as far as the outskirts of the town. It was the first time they had parted with papa for so long ; they promised him not to run too many risks in learning to skate and sledge, not to venture into the woods without Ivan, and especially to be guided by Grimzoff, and do whatever the trusted clerk bade them till his return. So they parted in good spirits, the three stood watching

the long, low, covered sledge, as it sped away over the icy plain, taking their father from them, and then walked back with a sad, lonely feeling at their hearts, to the Court of Trading Strangers.

The time passed more slowly and heavily in their father's absence ; they missed him morning, noon, and night ; but Grimzoff was kind to them, Ivan had nothing to do but help in their amusements, when the corn brandy was not too convenient, and the winter sights and doings of the town were as many and lively as ever. Mr. Forster's first letter told them of his safe arrival within three days, of his regret at not being able to bring them with him, Petersburg looked so grand and gay in its winter dress, and his fear that the business on which he had gone would detain him longer than he expected. His next letter said the dispute with the Custom-house officer had gone so far, and there were so many matters to settle, that he could not return before the middle of January, but they were to keep Christmas in the English fashion without him, invite all their young acquaintances in the Court, and drink his health in the elder wine they had brought from England. He also reminded them that they were to go to Mezen with Grimzoff, from whom he got the most

satisfactory accounts of them and every thing at home.

The boys followed their father's counsel; they kept Christmas without him and found it a dull one, the half-Russian boys of the Court did not understand the business at all, old Catherine had the rheumatism, and Ivan was fit for nothing but sleeping on the stove. Grimzoff helped the fun with all his power, but, being a Russian too, he was not up to the thing, and just then making his preparations for the journey to Mezen, which seemed to occupy the clerk's mind uncommonly. Every mail brought him letters from Petersburg, and the boys thought from Mr. Forester. He got one about the beginning of the new year, which seemed to have a wonderful effect upon him. Joseph saw him take it out of his pocket, read it over to himself, and look keenly at them when he thought nobody observed him. Once or twice the boy was on the point of asking if all were well with his father; but Grimzoff looked so cheerful, and made such lively preparations for his journey, enlarging on the furs he should buy and the wonders they should see, that Joseph thought things must be right, and prepared for the journey too, with good will and great expectations.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOYS IN PERIL.

THE town of Mezen stands on a river of the same name, about twenty-eight miles from the Icy Ocean, and consists of nearly a hundred huts and houses, a church, a market-place, and a government store. It is reckoned the chief town and grand metropolis of the Samoiede country, but only Russians live there; the northern tribes think it too far south for them. Their chief men in trade travel, and by authority come to Mezen once a year in midwinter, with the tribute which those primitive and peaceable people have paid time immemorial to the Russian government for leave to live and hunt in the frozen wilderness, where nobody else could exist; namely, three fox-skins for every hunter who carries bow and quiver. They generally bring a good deal of furs besides, to sell to the

many traders and merchants who repair to the little town from all parts of Russia, especially Archangel, which is considered near, in those extensive regions, being only a hundred and forty miles southwest of Mezen.

“A nice little journey,” said Grimzoff. “You will travel with me in the light sledge, my young masters. Ivan shall take charge of the goods I have to pay the Samoiedes with, in the heavy one. We shall sleep and drive, by turns; the horses are easily managed in frost-time. You can do it as well as myself, I know. We shall only stop to change at the post-house, and my friend, Nicholas Kloskow will take us in, and make us comfortable, at Mezen.

The boys got ready in high spirits on the day he had appointed to set out. It was a week or so earlier than the time their father had talked of; but Grimzoff knew all about the business, and doubtless had reasons for being in a hurry.

About two o'clock, P. M., on the twelfth of January, when the frost was at its hardest and keenest, the long night had fallen, and the moon and stars were shining as bright as day, the large heavy sledge, stored with goods to pay the Samoiedes, and provisions for their journey, under Ivan's charge, and the light covered one for the

boys and the clerk, were at the door. They had got on all the wraps, every one covered to the nose, as people must be who travel in the north; and old Catherine came to the door to see them off.

“Good-bye, good-bye!” said all the boys, rushing out and scrambling in, for Grimzoff was there cracking his whip, and away they went.

It was a glorious night; all round them the solitary plains lay like one wide extended mirror, reflecting moon and stars, till they plunged into the great forest. There was no underwood among those mighty trees, great pines, that rose high enough for the clouds to rest on them, now all crusted and gemmed with frost, long icicles hanging from every bough, and glistening like diamonds in the moonlight. Every weaker plant had shrunk into the earth, or died away before the fierce winter, and there was clear room for horse and sledge to pass between their great trunks in any direction. Regular road there was none that the boys could see; every path on the frozen ground and between the great trees looked the same to them. But Grimzoff and Ivan knew the way to Mezen by landmarks which their eyes could not discover, for many a time had they travelled it in the same fashion. Besides, the clerk kept them so amused

with his lively chat and tales of former journeys, and what they might expect to see, that Joseph forgot to call his attention to what struck him as a rather unsafe arrangement. There was a large wooden bottle under Ivan's seat in the sledge, to which the man in charge of the goods and provisions had such frequent recourse, that he wondered Grimzoff did not perceive it, and expect the consequences. The first of them was that just as the party emerged on a wide clearing, made by woodmen or by nature, in the heart of the great forest whose dark outline could be seen bounding it on all sides, Ivan's head began to droop considerably, the whip fell from his hands, the reins followed it, and the horses met with some rough ground, which made them swerve away from the track.

Grimzoff at once awoke to the state of the case, and exclaiming: "That rascal has got drunk; here, Master Joseph, take you my whip and reins, these horses will go as quiet as cats with you," he jumped out of the sledge, and took possession of Ivan's seat, tumbling him unceremoniously down among the bales and bundles at the bottom, till nothing but his red head could be seen, and nothing of Ivan heard but a long resounding snore. The boys could not help laughing; Grimzoff himself seemed in a better humor than usual, for

he only gave the prostrate serf a sly kick or two, and they drove merrily on till once more at the entrance of the forest. There two great paths led through the mighty pines,—the one bearing to the east, the other due north; and where they branched off stood one of those great rocks or boulder-stones scattered over all the countries of the north, and used as sign-posts, as this evidently was, for there were Russian characters rudely cut upon it, and a Greek cross pointing to the different roads.

“It’s only telling you the way to Mezen,” said Grimzoff in reply to their questions. “There it is,” and he pointed to the track that led eastward. At the same time something seemed to go wrong with his horses; one of them stumbled and plunged backward, as if suddenly pulled up; and Grimzoff cried in great vexation, “Here is a fine business, his hind shoes are coming off; drive you on that way, master Joseph, there is a blacksmith a mile or two from this who will fasten them on. It’s out of my way to go to his forge, but I can’t help it.”

“Let us go with you,” cried all the boys in a breath; “we never saw a Russian blacksmith at work, and we don’t know the way when you leave us.”

“No, I can’t take you,” cried Grimzoff, “the blacksmith is a cross man, and does not like the English; in fact, it would not be safe for you, and you can’t miss the way. There, it lies straight before you”—he pointed to the eastward track—“drive on as fast as you like, master Joseph, I’ll be sure to overtake you—drive on, I say; are English boys afraid to be left by themselves?”

“We are not afraid!” cried the whole three, and little Herbert was the loudest; “but hadn’t we better wait for you?”

“No, no; drive on if you are not afraid;” and giving his foremost horse the whip, Grimzoff scoured away along the northward road, while Joseph, to prove his own and his brothers’ courage, drove on as he had been directed. He did not like the clerk leaving them in the midst of the wide forest, and long, lonely night; but their father had told them to be guided by Grimzoff, and no doubt he would overtake them.

They drove on in that hope for some time, first at a rapid, and then at a slower pace, as the clerk did not make his appearance, and the path became narrower and more winding among the trees. Joseph slacked the reins, and they all looked back, straining their eyes as far as they could see, and holding their breath to catch the distant sound

of the sledge-bell. But no sight, no sound of life seemed in all the forest, no sign of Grimzoff's coming, and they were alone in the frozen wilderness, not knowing what turn of the intricate way was the right one for Mezen.

"I am afraid to go on lest we miss our way," said Joseph; "I hope Grimzoff will soon come." That was to keep his brother's spirits up, for the boy's heart sunk with a strange dread that they had missed their way already, and the clerk might not find them.

"Is that him coming?" said little Herbert, bending forward to listen. His two brothers did the same, and they could all three catch a sound far off and strange, like mingled cries of some kind which seemed coming nearer. In another minute it was like a pack of hounds in full chase—perhaps some northern hunters had roused a wild boar and were coming that way. The sounds came nearer still, the horses gave a terrified neigh and plunged through the pines. It was beyond Joseph's power to check them, and he did not try it, for a fearful conviction flashed on his mind at the same instant; it was no northern hunt, no pack of hounds they heard, but the hungry wolves howling for prey, and now catching scent of them. They could see them by this time scouring through the wood, a

gaunt, gray, countless troop, increasing every moment, till they seemed hundreds strong, and filling the silent night with a chorus of the most horrible howls. There was no safety but in flight, and on the horses flew, dashing the sledge against the trees, and plunging through every turn and opening. The poor animals knew their danger as well as the poor boys; they wanted neither whip nor rein, but scoured away neighing in mortal terror, while the wolves came on howling behind, and his two younger brothers clung to Joseph, crying out, "What shall we do, they will eat us?"

"Pray to God," said Joseph; "He alone can save us." The boy spoke with a gasp of fear, for he saw no possibility of escape, and a thousand chances against them; the sledge might be broken against the pines, or they might be thrown out, the horses might break the harness and leave them to their fate; at any rate he knew that the Russian wolves could tire out the strongest horses, and already they were gaining fast upon them.

"Save us, Lord, save us!" cried the three forsaken children in one wild prayer, and it seemed to be answered at the moment, for as the sledge turned sharply round, Joseph caught sight of an opening among the thickest of the pines and a log-house standing in it. If they could get refuge

there they might yet be saved; they had got a slight start of the wolves, the pack had lost sight of them by the sudden turn, and were expressing their disappointment by louder howls. Joseph strained, with all his strength, to turn the horses that way, but his utmost efforts were in vain against their headlong speed. Yet, as the terrified creatures dashed by, the sledge was suddenly caught by the projecting roots of a huge pine, half overturned in some fierce northern storm. The traces were fortunately strong, and there the horses stood, plunging, struggling, and making the forest ring with their terrified neighs. The wolves, in the meantime, had recovered the scent, and were coming on. It was hard to leave the poor horses to them, but Joseph saw there was no other chance for life.

“Follow me,” he cried to Henry, clutching little Herbert fast with one hand, while with the other he grasped the overhanging pine roots, cleared the tossing sledge with one jump, followed by his brother, rushed to the door of the log-house, drove it open with one vigorous push—there was no time for knocking—slammed it behind him, and the three set their backs to it by way of bar. They were saved, but their hearts beat hard and loud, and their breath came short and quick as they

heard the poor horses wrench away the sledge at last, and dash on through the forest, pursued by the howling pack, and the howls rose louder in a few minutes, mingled with what the boys knew to be the dying shrieks of their poor horses.

“They will come back to us when they have finished them,” said Henry, with chattering teeth.

“They can’t get at us through this strong door,” said Joseph; “stand fast against it till I strike a light and see if there be either bolt or lock. What a good thing it was I put a box of matches in my pocket, and two of Catherine’s pitched spills.”

The light was struck, and then they saw that the house had strong walls made of pine logs. It contained but one room, with only one window, not glazed but protected by a stout shutter, and the single door against which they stood was some three inches thick, of solid timber, and had equally strong bars above and below, which the boys lost no time in making fast, and Henry said they would keep out all the wolves in Russia. There was no furniture but one large stove, with some straw on the top of it as if for a bed, for that is the favorite sleeping-place of the Russian peasant, two long rough stools, a table of the same make, and a small heap of firewood in the corner. Nobody had been there for some time. There were very

old ashes in the stove, some wild bird's feathers, and the tracks of wild animals on the floor, as if they had come there in search of food and shelter, and had no face of man to fear. Before they had well made these discoveries, the wolves came howling round the house for the prey that had escaped them.

"Oh, for our father's gun," said Henry, "to let fly at them from the window."

"I wish we had it," said Joseph; "but I'll just light this wood and throw a few firebrands out among them. Nothing frightens wolves like that."

The wood was lighted, and the firebrands thrown out with great caution, not to set the pine walls on fire or open the shutter too wide, lest the enemy might leap in. The wolves fled as the blazing chips hissed and flared among them, but came back in a few minutes, closer than ever, and with louder howls. The boys could see them tearing at the walls with their fore-feet, and trying to thrust their noses under the door, till heavy clouds began to come over the moon, and they knew that the fog, which came with the winter day, was settling down on the forest. Then the wolves drew off, pausing, on their homeward march, to utter long melancholy howls, that made the wide woods

ring—but at length these fearful cries died away in the distance. A gray glimmer of daylight began to appear in the east, and Joseph and Henry found little Herbert fast asleep between them, with his head leant against the door, and the tears of silent terror still undried on his young face.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESCUE.

THEY lifted the child up, laid him on the straw at the top of the stove, and covered him with Joseph's great-coat. He was worn out, and so were his brothers, and when they had kindled a little fire of the wood left in the corner and crouched close to it—for that deserted house in the forest was deadly cold—poor Henry's heart, which had held out so gallantly against the terrors of the wolves, fairly gave way, and he began to cry and wring his hands.

“What shall we do, Joseph? What will become of us in this fearful frozen place? We have nothing to eat, it is all gone with Grimzoff, and he will never find us here. The wolves have chased us miles out of the way, and if they don't eat us at

last we must be starved. Oh, Joseph! what shall we do?"

"Put our trust in God," said Joseph.

The boy spoke bravely, though every word his brother said had gone to poor Joseph's heart like a knife. It was only the echo of his own thoughts. He knew it all better than Henry did; and, what was worse, Joseph had now a strong suspicion that the clerk never intended to find them, that he had allowed Ivan free recourse to the wooden bottle, made out that the horse wanted shoeing, and left them on the forest road for some end of his own. But like a true elder brother Joseph kept that fearful suspicion to himself, and tried to cheer up Henry with the only cheer he could offer, reminding him of all their father had told them, and of all they had read about the wonderful works of Providence, preserving people in the midst of danger, and bringing them safe out of the very jaws of death. "Daniel was worse off than we are when he was cast into the lions' den, and Moses when he was left in the ark of bulrushes on the river; yet they were both preserved, and so may we. The same Eye that watched over us in our home in England, on the wide sea, and in the strange city, sees us here in the midst of these frozen woods, and the same hand can send us help. If Grimzoff

don't find us, some hunter or traveller may come this way. It's a frequented place, you see; houses and stoves are not put up in the forest for no use. There may be a road leading to some town which we may find when the day gets clearer. Let us not lose heart, Henry, but pray to God. You know He is the hearer of prayer, and a present help in times of trouble, as the Psalm says."

So Joseph and his brother knelt down beside the half-heated stove, where wild forest birds had dropped their feathers in that forsaken house, and prayed earnestly, as people in fear and danger are apt to do; there was nowhere else they could look for help but that best and highest quarter, and dreadfully as they were situated the poor boys rose up with something like hope in their hearts. Old Catherine had put a parcel of pepper cakes, favorite tit-bits over all the north, into Joseph's pocket; he recollected them now, gave two to Henry, ate one himself, kept the rest for a reserve, and persuaded his younger brother at last to lie down under his great-coat beside little Herbert, and take a sleep till the fog cleared away, and they could see their whereabouts more clearly. He laid down beside them himself, but Joseph could not sleep. The thoughts of their situation pressed on him: his father, far off in Petersburg, perhaps

never to see them more, never to find out what had become of them. His two younger brothers, must they perish with cold and hunger before his eyes, and he had been partly the cause of bringing them to that frozen country? It was through his persuasion that their father brought them with him from England, and were they to be starved or eaten by the wolves? Joseph got up quietly, so as not to wake his brothers, but determined to see the place, and what chance of escape there might be, for the red sun was now looking out through the thick curtain of fog that hung above the pines. He unbarred the door with as little noise as possible, closed it carefully behind him, and scrambled up the half fallen trunk of an old and branchless tree. From that elevation Joseph could see far and wide, but all round lay the same hard white wilderness, tall trees fringed with icicles, and frozen ground—everywhere the same, without beaten path or sign of life. There was no sound to be heard in all the woods, the beasts of prey had retired to their dens, and the smaller creatures and wild birds had left the land at the approach of winter. Joseph came down from the tree, and moved about here and there among the pines, gathering dry sticks to help their fire, and looking out for some track that might lead to human habi-

tations, till he heard the voices of his two brothers wildly crying, "Joseph, Joseph, where are you? have you gone away and left us?"

"No; here I am," said Joseph, running with his bundle of sticks up to them, where they stood hand in hand shivering in the doorway. "Don't be afraid at every trifle; don't cry, Herbert, here is a pepper-cake for you. I have such a lot in my pocket, and I'll give you another, but we can't eat them all, you know, till Grimzoff or somebody comes to us. Come in, we'll make a rousing fire—there are sticks to be got, anyway; then we'll go out, all together, gather as many as we can, and call with all our might; some one in the wood might hear us, or we might find a way to some inhabited place."

They made up their fire, wrapped themselves up as well as they could, and went out, cold and hungry, but in good heart. Joseph's cheerful words and looks kept them from giving way. It was hard for him to keep that face of cheer with so little cause for it, and harder still to keep the boys, especially little Herbert, from eating all the pepper-cakes.

Out they went, keeping close together, and always in sight of the log-house, for Joseph had a dread of losing their way back to it in the trackless

forest. They gathered sticks, they shouted with all their power, they searched for paths, and often thought they had found them; but one led them to the root of a hollow tree, from which they got the glimpse of a bristly head and white, gleaming tusks, signs that a wild boar had fixed his headquarters there; and in another their shouts were answered by a long growl, which sounded like hollow thunder, and they knew it was a great brown bear, waking up in some cavern of the forest. Those sights and sounds made them fly back to the log-house, and bar the door with all speed. Then the twilight of the short day began to fall, the long night came down, and they heard the howl of the wolves gathering once more in search of prey. They did not come about the house that night, but went by in howling packs; all night long the boys could hear them in different directions, and if ever they looked into the clear cold moonlight there was some gaunt gray back crouching at the root of the nearest pine, as if on the watch for the door to be opened, or some of them to come out.

The night passed, and another day came like the one before it, only the cakes in Joseph's pocket grew fewer, and the sticks were harder to get. They made the same endeavors to be heard or to

find a path, but with no better success, and were frightened back by the glare of fiery eyes, and the crash of withered boughs where the pines grew thickest. Another night, with hopeless prayers, and hearts sinking in despair, with heavy sleep and terrible dreams, broken by the long howls of the wolves—they came about the house now, and pushed and scratched at the door. Another morning, but no going out to gather sticks and call for help. A terrible snow-storm, one of those which often come at mid-winter in the north, as if to renew the white coat of nature, had set in; the sky was one mass of leaden gray, the wind came in hollow moaning gusts, so strong that they made the old pines bow and groan, driving before them clouds of hardened snow, or rather hail, which rattled against the door and window like a torrent of swan-shot. By degrees the wind ceased, and then came the regular snowfall, one continuous shower of large heavy flakes, which covered the ground in a few hours deep enough to drown people in the hollow places, half darkened the window, and raised a high barrier at the door. Before night came their sticks were all burned, and their fire went out; they had eaten the last of the peppercakes, they had exhausted every hope and every source of comfort. Poor little Herbert cried him-

self to sleep, and Joseph and Henry having once more said their prayers, and feeling fairly worn out, crept up on the straw, laid the child between them, covered themselves and him with all the clothes they had, stretched their arms over each other—their brotherly love helped to keep them warm to the last—and fell into half sleep, half stupor.

Joseph himself had lain down in despair that night ; there seemed no chance of escape or relief. He had been sleeping and dreaming of the Meadow Cottage, and old happy days far away in England, when a scratching, delving sound at the door made him start up and listen. Were the wolves actually getting in ? Joseph scrambled down from the stove, the place was pitch dark, for the fierce cold made them glad to keep the window shut. But he could hear the sounds going on outside, there was something clearing and scraping its way through the snow. Joseph had heard of bears doing the like, and crept to the door to make sure that its bars were safe ; but, as he stretched to feel the upper one, his ear caught a sound that no bear could make ; it was “ humph,” uttered by human organs. Joseph’s heart bounded as if to a bugle blast. It bounded still higher when a low continuous knocking began outside ;

the bolts were withdrawn in an instant, and there, all one mass of snow, with a horn lantern suspended from his neck, and shining like a star, but looking as undisturbed, and knocking away with his fist, as hotly as he had done at Mr. Forester's door, stood Sorinsk, the Samoiede chief.

"Are you here, my young master?" said he, stepping calmly in, and shaking off the snow.

"Henry, Herbert, we are saved!" cried Joseph, running to his brothers and shaking them up.

"Sorinsk!" cried both boys, darting down from the stove as if new life had got into their hearts.

"Yes, my young masters, it's Sorinsk, come to leave the furs he promised to your honorable father for the looking-glass; it was very good and big: Slamwa was satisfied, and Sorinsk got his wife. You'll take the furs to your honorable father;" and, out of the capacious wallet which hung at his back, the Samoiede produced two marten, two ermine, and two sable skins, with the air of a man redeeming his pledged honor. "Here, my young master," he said, presenting them to Joseph, with the addition of a very handsome white fox-skin: "You will take them safe to him, and keep this, Sorinsk promised it yourself for finding the glass."

"Is this the hunter's house, then?" said all the boys in a breath, recollecting how much they had

heard of the place as having been built years before, by one of Mr. Benson's relations; a young man, who, as people say, would do no good in the business he was brought up to, and when his friends had settled him at Archangel as a clerk, got acquainted with northern hunters, took to their way of life, became a notable hunter himself, and chose to build his house in that desolate region. The man had been long ago lost in a snow-storm, which came upon him while tracking a bear in the forest, but his house remained in that solitary spot, some way off the great road to Mezen, held in high esteem by travellers and hunters as a place of refuge from sudden storms, and of rest when over-wearied, and kept safe and sound on account of common necessity. Had the boys known that, they might have had better hopes; at the same time, but for the getting of the looking-glass, and the Samoiede not finding their father at Mezen, they might have perished there with cold and hunger before anybody came. The Providence which had guided them to the spot, and saved them from the wolves, was with them still. The poor children gave thanks with tears of joy, which even Joseph could not restrain.

“Have you no bread, young masters?” said So-rinsk. His flat face and narrow eyes did not look

ugly then, for there was honest feeling and kindness in them, and out of his wallet he brought what looked very like a lump of black earth, another of a brownish color, and a rough wooden bottle. The lump of black earth was a loaf of Samoiede bread, made of rye-meal, reindeer's moss, and pounded roots, the brownish lump was hard salt cheese, made of reindeer's milk, and the bottle contained a thick hot drink, which the northern tribes make of honey and fermented mushrooms. With his dirty hands Sorinsk divided this fare among them. Nothing would have made the poorest in England stand the smell, much less the taste, of it; but the hungry boys thought it the best bread and cheese they had ever eaten, and a draught from his wooden bottle warmed their very hearts.

Then Sorinsk explained to them how he had missed their father, but saw Grimzoff and Ivan at Mezen; that Ivan had told him they were lost on the road, because Joseph would drive on, and had either lost himself and his brothers in some forest swamp, or been devoured by the wolves. That story had been evidently told to Ivan when he woke out of his sleep at the bottom of the sledge. The clerk had repeated it to Sorinsk, but the shrewd Samoiede's suspicions had been somehow

aroused. He would not deal with Grimzoff, though the latter was buying furs at an unusually liberal rate, and had offered to take charge of the promised skins for Mr. Forester. Without a word of what he thought or meant, Sorinsk harnessed his reindeer, mounted his sledge, and drove off to the hunter's house, there to deposit the promised skins, as few but Samoiedes came that way, and Sorinsk knew that his tribe would not steal them. The snow-storm had overtaken him near the end of his journey, but he and his reindeer knēw their way in light or darkness, and, with a sort of rude snow-plough, which always forms part of a Samoiede's travelling equipments, they got through the drifts and reached the barred-up door in time to save the starving children.

When Sorinsk had heard their story, he merely shook his head, as if nothing better was to be expected; then went out into the calm, starlight night, which had succeeded the stormy day, unharnessed his reindeer, rubbed the snow off them, led them into a corner of the house, brought in his various goods, including a basket of moss for them, two bear-skin cloaks for himself, a leather bag full of charcoal and pine chips dipped in pitch and grease, and another wallet full of provisions like those he had shared with the boys. They gave

him all the help they could in his settling arrangements. Lastly, Sorinsk brought in to another corner his own sledge, long, low, and light as a fishing-skiff, and as he laid it down said—

“It will keep warm there till to-morrow makes the snow hard; then Sorinsk will take you home to Archangel, among the great houses and the Englandmen, for Grimzoff is a very big rogue.”

The Foresters thanked him with all their hearts. He made a fire for them of his charcoal and pitched chips; they got well warmed, went to sleep on the top of the stove under one of his bear-skin cloaks, while he slept under the other; and with the first glimmer of daylight the Samoiede woke them up saying—

“Come, the snow is hard, the fog will be thin, and we will go to your honorable father’s house.”

Right gladly they helped to harness the reindeer, seated themselves in the sledge with all Sorinsk’s goods and chattels, and drove away over the now frozen surface of the new-fallen snow, out of the forest, by ways which they never could have found, across the plain, and into the woods once more. All the way Sorinsk entertained them with Slamwa’s admiration of the looking-glass, the beauty and accomplishments of his Samoiede bride; she had the flattest face in the whole tribe,

and could kill a wolf, it appeared; with the grandeur and magnificence of his wedding-feast, the reindeer that had been slaughtered, and the bears that had been killed for the occasion. At length they discerned, through the clear night which had come again with all its stars, the distant spires of the wooden churches, and the stone towers which arose round the Court of the Trading Strangers. In less than half an hour the sledge was in the town, and at the Court gates; the principal one stood open; there was a sledge and horses at their own door, and out of it was stepping their father, just arrived from Petersburg. What joy there was in their hearts to see him; what a telling of their adventures and escape; what thanks and presents were bestowed on the honest Samoiede; what a lifting up of old Catherine's hands there was, when she heard their story!

"And I knew the villain meant no good," said the old woman: "he staid so long in the store, and kept such a counting-up of something to himself."

"But what could make him do such a wicked thing as to send us astray in the forest? We might have been lost or eaten by the wolves," said Joseph.

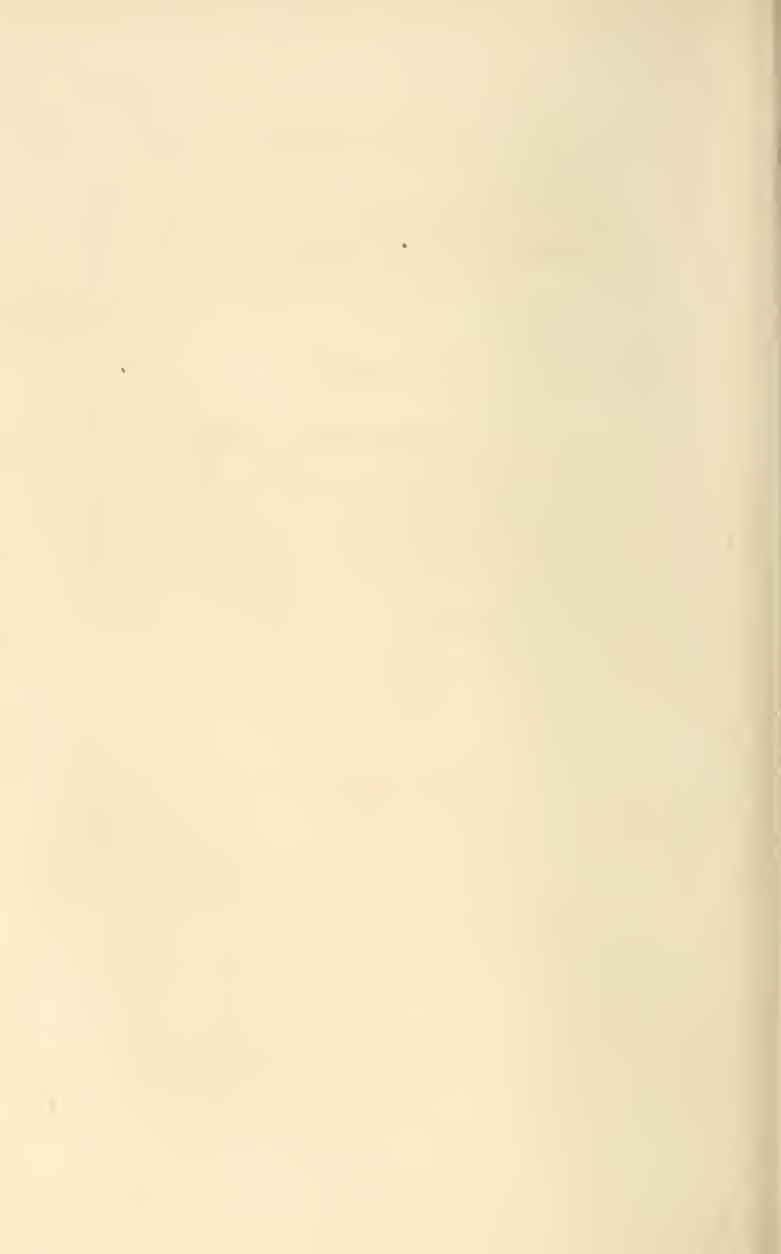
"I'll tell you, my boy," said Mr. Forester, "it

was that root of all evil, covetousness. Listen to me. The very week before I left Petersburg, there was an Englishman of the name of Forester, engaged in the fur-trade like myself, but no relation of ours, drowned by the breaking of the ice on which he was skating, somewhere up the Neva. One of Grimzoff's acquaintances in the town, believing that it was I that had met with such a fate, sent him the intelligence, doubtless in the letter which you saw him reading so often. He knew what a valuable stock of furs I had in hand, how much I had agreed to buy from the Samoiedes, at Mezen; and, thinking to get the whole bought and sold for himself, before news of the agent's death would reach England, he sent my poor children astray in the forest to perish with cold, or be devoured by wolves, that there might be no claimants to my property. I heard the whole story from a trader who travelled with me, for the very purpose of buying the furs from Grimzoff, though he did not know, nor did I at that time, what means the wretch was taking to secure them to himself. I guessed there was some foul play, and have sent to the governor to put the police on his track. And now, my children, there is something more that we have to be thankful for. Mr. Benson wishes me to come back to England, as

soon as the summer thaw opens the river and a ship can come up to take us. He is pleased to say he cannot do without me in the warehouse, and the gentleman who got into the dispute with the custom-house officers in Petersburg, would do better here. So we will go back to our own mild winters and our Meadow Cottage. Catherine will go with us, she says. You will have seen the far north, and never forget it, I dare say. Neither will any of us forget this truly noble chief of his tribe, whose honor and honesty enabled him to save and bring you back to me; but for that looking-glass, and his faithful keeping of his promise, I should have lost my three boys. Never forget that, my children, nor in all your after lives forget to acknowledge and trust in the Providence that was with you in the desert, when there was nothing around you but wolves and winter, and you were deserted and doomed children."



Mr. Frampton relating the Story to his son Harry.



A TALE OF RUPERT'S LAND.

CHAPTER I.

WE cannot boast of many fine evenings in old England—dear old England for all that!—and when they do come they are truly lovely, and worthy of being prized the more. It was on one of the finest of a fine summer that Mr. Frampton, the owner of a beautiful estate in Devonshire, was seated on a rustic bench in his garden, his son Harry, who stood at his knee, looking up inquiringly into his face.

“Father,” said Harry, “I have often heard you speak about the North American Indians—the Red-men of the deserts. Do tell me how it is that you know so much about them—have you ever been in their country?”

Yes, my boy; I passed several of the earlier years of my life in that part of North America which may truly be said to belong as yet to the Red-men, though, as there are but some fifty thousand scattered over the whole central portion of it,

it must be acknowledged that they do not make the best possible use of the territory they inhabit. A glance at the map of North America will show you where the Red river is, with its settlement founded by Lord Selkirk. I was very young when I went there with my father, my elder brother Malcolm, and Sam Dawes, a faithful servant, who had been brought up in the family from childhood. Sam was a great sportsman, a most kind-hearted fellow, and could turn his hand to any thing. We went through Canada to Lake Superior, and from thence it took us, by a chain of lakes and rivers, about twenty-five days to reach the banks of the Red river. I need not describe how we selected our ground, built a cottage, ploughed a field, and stocked our farm; we will suppose all these preliminaries over, and our party permanently settled in our new home. I must tell you, before I proceed, a little about the Indians of this region.

CHAPTER II.

THERE are different tribes. Some are called Crees, others Ojibways or Salteux; and these are constantly at war with the Sioux to the south, chiefly found across the United States boundary. There are also found on the prairies Assiniboines, Blackfeet, Bloodies, and others with scarcely more attractive names. All these people were at that time sunk in the most abject state of heathenism, and were constantly at war with each other. They were clothed chiefly in skins made into leather, ornamented with feathers and stained grass and beads. The tents of the prairie Indians were of skins, and those of the Indians who inhabit the woods of birch-bark. Many had rifles, but others were armed only with bows and spears, and the dreadful scalping-knife. Of these people the Sioux bore the worst character, and were the great enemies of the half-breed population of the

settlements. These half-breeds, as they are called, are descended from white fathers and Indian mothers. There are some thousands of them in the settlements, and they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, and retain many Indian customs and habits of life. Such was the strangely mixed community among whom we found ourselves.

The autumn was coming on, and the days were shortening, but the weather was very fine—sharp frosts at night, though warm enough, yet bracing, with a bright sky and pure atmosphere during the day. Sometimes a light silvery mist or haze hung over the landscape. Such is the Indian summer, the most delightful period of the year in North America.

The day's work was over, and while my brother and I were preparing the table, and Sam Dawes was cooking the supper, we were startled by a loud and peculiar shout, or rather shriek. Our father, who had been sitting reading, started up, and taking his rifle from the wall, turned to the door. Sam, quitting his frying-pan, also took down his rifle and followed with us. In the distance was an Indian, decked with war-paint and feathers, bounding over the ground towards us, while further off were five or six more, as if in hot pursuit of the first.

“That first fellow is an Ojibway by his adornments, and a young man by the way he runs,” observed Sam. “He’s seeking protection here, that’s poz.”

“And he shall enjoy it, though we should have to fight for him,” observed my father warmly. “We must teach the Red-men that we always protect those in distress.”

The fugitive came on at great speed. He was flying for his life. His pursuers, however, were gaining on him. They had fire-arms in their hands, but did not use them.

“They have exhausted their powder,” observed my father. “That is fortunate.”

The young Indian was within fifty yards of us. We could see the gleam of the scalping-knives which his foes had drawn, thirsting for his blood. He bounded on up to the door of the hut and fell exhausted within. Then, for the first time, his pursuers perceived that we stood armed at the entrance. Guessing truly that we possessed plenty of ammunition, and two or more of their number might fall if they attempted to advance, they paused, casting glances of disappointed vengeance towards their victim, who lay unconscious behind us. Our father told Malcolm and me to take him in and to try and revive him. We did so, and

when we had moistened his lips with water he quickly revived. Springing up, he seized Malcolm's gun and hurried to the door. The other Indians had not moved. On seeing him, however, they instantly darted behind some trunks of trees for shelter, and then we saw them darting away till they got beyond range of our fire-arms. The young Indian would have followed, but my father restrained him, and gave him to understand that though he had saved his life he had no intention of allowing him to take the lives of others. Darkness was coming on, and we soon lost sight of the band. Having closed our door with more than usual care, we placed food before our guest, of which he eagerly partook, and then told us that his name was Sigenok; that he, with others of his tribe, had been out hunting, and had been surprised by a war-party of Sioux, who had taken the scalps of all the rest. He had wandered away unarmed from the camp when he saw all his companions killed. To revenge them, which the Indian thought was his first duty, was then impossible, so he took to flight, hoping to retaliate on another occasion. His wary foes, however, discovered his trail and followed. He had caught sight of them when they were not aware of it, and redoubled his speed, making for the settlements.

He gave us to understand that he could not have continued his flight many more hours, and that he was very grateful to us for preserving his life. We had brought a dog from England, and we had lately got another, both very sagacious animals, and so we stationed them outside the hut at a little distance to give us due notice should the Sioux return.

Sigenok, as soon as he had satisfied his hunger, proving his confidence in us, laid himself down in a corner of the room and was immediately fast asleep. He spent two days with us to recover his strength, which had been greatly tried, and then set off to carry to his tribe the sad tidings of the loss of their friends. For an Indian, he was a good-looking young man, and decked with his war-paint and feathers, he had a picturesquely savage appearance.

CHAPTER III.

THE winter came—we did not feel the cold so much as we expected—it passed on, and spring approached. We were looking forward to the pleasures of summer and to a buffalo hunt, which we had promised ourselves, when, after finding the heat unusually great at night, on rising in the morning, loud cracks in the ice were heard, and we discovered that a thaw had commenced. We were surprised at the rapidity with which the snow melted, and the low shrubs and the green grass appeared, and long-dormant Nature seemed to be waking up to life. “How jolly!” exclaimed Malcolm; “we shall soon be able to paddle about in our canoe: we may as well have a look at her, to see that she is in order.”

We had a supply of gum with which to cover up the seams as the Indians do, and our canoe was soon fit for launching.

“We must look to the plough and our spades,” remarked our father: “we shall speedily be able to get in our seeds.”

Perhaps Sam Dawes thought more of his fishing-lines and nets and guns.

The next day, an Indian coming up from the lake told us that there was an extraordinary accumulation of ice at the mouth of the river, which had begun to swell, with an impetuous torrent, carrying vast masses along with it. Speedily it rose higher and higher; the waters came up the bank, and then filled the narrow gully which usually discharged water into it after the rain, but now carried its waters backward into the plain.

“It will soon subside,” observed our father: “that current will soon carry away the barriers at the mouth.” So we all went as usual to bed.

The next morning, when we looked out, we were on an island. The water covered our field and the greater part of the garden round the house. Between us and the house of the nearest settler to the south was one sheet of water, while to the north not a habitation was visible. We made out, at the distance of a mile, our neighbor and his family crossing in a large boat to the hills on the east. “We may possibly have to follow his example,” observed our father; “but I hope

that the waters may decrease before that becomes necessary."

The sheep and cows were now collecting of their own accord in the garden, and we had to drive up the pigs, whose sty was threatened with submersion. The scene was truly one of desolation, as we looked beyond our own homestead; trunks of trees and palings, and now and then a haystack, and barns, and parts of houses, and occasionally whole dwellings came floating by, showing what ravages the flood must have committed above us. Malcolm and I agreed that it was fortunate we had repaired our canoe. As the waters extended, the current in the river was less strong. Our father observed this. "My sons," he said, "freight your canoe with the tent and some provisions, and take this case of books, and go off to the hills. Should the waters increase, return for Sam and me; we must remain to look after the cattle. Mounted on our horses, we shall be able to drive them to yonder rising ground on the southwest."

He pointed to a slight elevation, between which and us he considered that the water was not more than one foot and a half deep. Accustomed to obey without question, Malcolm and I, having loaded our canoe with as many valuables as she

could possibly carry, prepared to cross to the eastern hills, hoping that our father and Sam would start at once with the cattle towards the more remote but seemingly more accessible ground to the west. Just as we were shoving off, he remarked—

“The water has not risen lately; we may still avoid a remove. Heaven prosper you, my dear boys.”

We hoped that his words would prove true: the sky was bright, the water smooth, and it was difficult to believe that there was any danger. Malcolm and I were expert with the use of the paddle, but in crossing the river we were swept down some way, and narrowly escaped staving in the canoe against stumps of trees or palings and remnants of buildings. We persevered, however, and at length reached the eastern hills, or the mountains as they were called. Here we found our neighbor and several other families encamped. He told us that he had driven his cattle off on the first day, and wished that we had done the same. The waters did not appear to be rising, though we looked with anxiety towards our home; but it was too small a speck to be visible among the wide expanse of waters at the distance we were from it. We had put up our tent, and were intending to occupy it,

when we recollected that there were several of the other settlers' wives and daughters without so good a covering, so we went and begged them to occupy it, while we slept under our canoe.

The night was bright and starlight, but we could not sleep much for thinking of our father and Sam Dawes. We resolved as early as we could see in the morning to go back to them. We were awoke early in the morning by a peculiar murmuring and hollow sound. As soon as it was daylight we looked out over the flooded country. We asked others if they had heard the noise. They replied that they had, and that it was caused by the water rushing over the land. "Then the flood must have increased," exclaimed Malcolm and I with anxiety.

"No doubt about it, boys," was the unsatisfactory reply.

We were for starting off immediately, but one of the farmers' wives, to whom we had given up our tent, insisted on preparing some breakfast for us, and in putting a supply of food into our canoe.

"It is a long voyage, my boys, and you do not know what you may require before you return," she observed.

We paddled on very anxiously. We had only the line of eastern hills we were leaving and some

high land to the south to guide us, but we thought that we could not help hitting upon the spot where our abode stood. For a long way we paddled on easily enough, only taking care not to run against stumps of trees, and as we got nearer the settlement, stakes or ruined buildings were our chief danger. Too many evidences met us on either side that the water had increased considerably since the previous day. In vain our eyes ranged around, in no direction was our cottage visible. We must have mistaken the locality. The current was here very strong, we thought that we might have drifted down further than we had calculated on doing. We went further west, and then steered south, where the current was less strong. After going some way, Malcolm stopped paddling suddenly, and exclaimed—

“Look, Harry! look there! Do you know that tree?”

“Its head is very like one that grows close to the house,” I answered.

We had both mechanically turned the head of the canoe in the direction in which he pointed. We had been engaged in fastening a flag-staff to the tree near our house. A minute would decide whether this was it. Our hearts sank within us, our paddles almost dropped from our hands, when

we perceived among the bare branches the rope and the pole which we had been about to erect. Where was our cottage? where our kind father and the faithful Sam? Not a vestige of the cottage remained, it had too evidently been carried away by the flood.

“Had they been able to escape with the cattle?” was the question we asked each other. We hoped they might; but still it was too possible that our father would have persisted in remaining in the house, as a sailor will by his ship, to the last, and Sam, we knew, would never have deserted him. We could just distinguish the heads of some strong palings above the water, marking the position of our cottage. We made fast to the tree for a few minutes to rest and recover ourselves, and to consider what course to pursue. We naturally turned our eyes towards the rising ground in the south-west, to which our father intended to drive the cattle. It seemed a long, long way off, still we determined to attempt to reach it. We felt thankful that the farmer's wife had supplied us with provisions, though we were too anxious just then to be hungry. We left the tree and paddled on, but it was very hard work, for there was a current against us setting towards Lake Winnipeg; but the canoe was light, and as there was no wind we

managed to stem it. Hitherto the sky had been bright, and there had been a perfect calm, but as we paddled on we saw clouds rising above the high ground for which we were steering. They rose, and rose, and then rushed across the sky with fearful rapidity, and the water ahead of us, hitherto bright and clear, seemed turned into a mass of foam, which came sweeping up towards us.

“We cannot face it,” exclaimed Malcolm. “Quick, quick, about with the canoe, we must run before it.”

We were hardly in time. The blast very nearly upset the canoe, and we had to throw our whole weight over on the side the wind struck her, to prevent this, as she spun round like a top, and away we flew before it. All we could do was to keep the canoe before the wind, and to steer her clear of logs of wood or stumps of trees, against which she might have been cast and knocked to pieces.

“But where are we going?” we asked ourselves. “If we continue thus, we may be driven into Lake Winnipeg, and hurled among the masses of ice which are dashing about on its waters.”

We thought still more about our father and Sam. How disappointed they would be, should they have reached the dry land when the storm

came on, and they knew that we could not get to them. But our attention, I must own, was soon concentrated on our own situation. The rain fell in torrents, sufficient of itself almost to swamp our light canoe, while the thunder roared and the lightning darted from the sky, filling my heart, at all events, with terror. I felt both awestruck and alarmed, and could scarcely recover myself sufficiently to help Malcolm. He was far less moved, and continued guiding the canoe with his former calmness. At last I could not help crying out—

“Oh, Malcolm, how is it that you cannot see our danger?”

“I do, Harry, clearly,” he answered gravely; “but we are in the performance of our duty, and God will take care of us.”

His words and tone made an impression on me which I have never forgotten. When dangers have surrounded me, I have asked myself, “Am I engaged in the performance of my duty? then why need I fear, God will protect me. He always has protected me.” The grandest receipt for enabling a person to be truly brave, is that he must ever walk on in the strict line of duty.

We were driving northward at a fearful rate, for the rapidity of the current was greatly increased by the wind. We wished that we could get back

to our oak-tree, as we might make fast to its branches, but it was nowhere visible. To have paddled against the gale would have only exhausted our strength to no purpose. As Malcolm found that he could guide the canoe without me, he told me to bail out the water. As I turned round to do so, I shouted with joy, for I thought I saw a large boat under full sail coming down towards us. On it came, much faster than we were driving; but as it drew near, it looked less and less like a boat, till to my bitter disappointment I discovered that it was a large haystack which had been floated bodily away. At length just before us appeared a clump of trees, and we hoped that the ground on which they stood might be out of water. Malcolm steered towards the spot. We might remain there till the storm was over. The trees bent with the wind, and it appeared as if they could not possibly stand. We approached the spot perhaps with less caution than we had before employed. Suddenly the canoe spun round, a large rent appeared in her bows, over she went, and we were thrown struggling into the water. Before we could regain the canoe she had floated far away, and not without a severe struggle did we succeed in reaching the land. We climbed up by some bushes, and found ourselves

on the summit of a little knoll rising out of the water, and not comprising more than fifty square yards. Our first impulse was to look out to see what had become of our canoe, and we stood watching it with a bewildered gaze as it floated away half filled with water. It was not till it had disappeared in the distance that we remembered it had contained all our provisions. That was bad enough, but we had never experienced hunger, and did not know how long we might exist without food. What appeared then worse was, that the waters were rising round our island, and we might soon have no dry spot on which to rest our feet. We might climb up into the trees, but we had seen other trees washed away, and such might be the fate of these our last refuge. The day wore on, the storm ceased, and the weather again became calm and beautiful. I now grew excessively hungry, and cried very much, and felt more wretched than I had ever done before. Malcolm, who bore up wonderfully, tried to comfort me, and suggested that we should hunt about for roots or underground nuts such as we had seen the Indians eat. We fortunately had our pocket-knives, and with these we dug in all directions, till we came upon some roots which looked tempting, but then we remembered that we had no means of kindling,

a fire to cook them, nor could we tell whether they were poisonous or not. The hunt had given us occupation, and prevented us for a time from dwelling on our misfortunes.

We then tried every device we could think of to kindle a fire, for we wished to dry our clothes, if we could not cook our roots. None of our attempts succeeded, and Malcolm suggested that we should run round and round our island to try and warm ourselves before night came on. At last I felt very sleepy, and so did Malcolm, but he said that he would let me sleep first while he watched, lest the waters should rise and carry us away before we had time to climb up a tree.

I lay down and was asleep in a minute, and when I awoke the stars were shining out brightly through the branches of the trees, the young grass blades reflecting them on their shining surfaces, while I saw my good brother still walking up and down, keeping guard over me. The noise of the rushing waters sounded in my ears and made me desire to go to sleep again, but I aroused myself, ashamed that I had slept so long, and urged my brother to lie down.

“No, Harry,” he answered, “I wished you to get as much rest as possible; but look there, we shall soon be obliged to climb a tree for refuge.”

Walking a few paces, I found that the water had greatly encroached on our island; a southerly wind had begun to blow, which sent large waves rolling in on us.

“Should the wind increase, they will completely sweep over where we stand,” I exclaimed. “Oh, Malcolm, what shall we do?”

“Trust in God,” he replied calmly. “From how many dangers has He not already preserved us! But remember, our father has often told us that it is our business while praying to God for help, to exert ourselves, and so let us at once try and find a tree we can climb quickly in case of necessity, and whose boughs will afford us a resting-place.”

I loved Malcolm dearly. I admired him now more than ever, and was ready to do whatever he wished. We soon found a tree up which we could help each other. The wind howled and whistled through the trees, the waves lashed the shore furiously, and Malcolm had just time to shove me up the tree, when one larger than the rest swept completely over the ground on which we had been standing, with a force sufficient to have carried us off with it. We had seated ourselves among the branches, which waved to and fro in the wind, and as we looked down, we saw the water foami-

ing round the trunk, and often it seemed as if it must be uprooted and sent drifting down with the current.

Malcolm said that he felt very sleepy, and told me that if I would undertake to hold him on, he would rest for a few minutes. I gladly promised that I would do as he wished, but asked him how he could think of sleeping while the tempest was raging round us.

“Why, Harry, we are as safe up here as on the ground,” he answered, in his usual sweet tone of voice, “God is still watching over us!”

I need scarcely say how tightly I held on to his clothes, trembling lest he should fall. I felt no inclination to go to sleep, indeed I soon found that I must have slept the greater part of the night, for before Malcolm again opened his eyes, I observed the bright streaks of dawn appearing over the distant hills in the east. Daylight quickly came on. It was again perfectly calm, and on looking down we could see the blades of grass rising above the water. Malcolm woke up, saying that he felt much better. Looking down below us, he said that he thought the water had decreased since he went to sleep. He might have been right, I could not tell. At that moment there was only one thing I thought of, the pain I was suffering from

hunger. "I shall die! I shall die!" I exclaimed. Malcolm cheered me up.

"Help will come, though we cannot now see how," he observed; "God will protect us. Trust in Him."

Still I felt that I should die. It is very difficult to sustain gnawing hunger, such as I then felt for the first time. I have no doubt that Malcolm felt the same, but he was too brave to show it. Hour after hour passed by; the water did not appear to be rising; the blades of grass were still seen below us round the tree. I, however, felt that I could not endure many more hours of suffering. "I must fall, indeed I must," I cried out over and over again. I should indeed have let go my hold, had not my brave brother kept me up. Even he, at last, showed signs of giving way, and spoke less encouragingly than before. He was silent for some time. I saw him looking out eagerly, when he exclaimed—"Cheer up, Harry, there is a canoe approaching; it will bring us help."

I gazed in the direction towards which he pointed. At first I could only see a speck on the water. It grew larger and more distinct, till I could see that it was certainly a canoe. Then we discovered that there were two Indians in it. We shouted, but our voices sounded shrill and weak.

The Indians heard us, for they waved their paddles and turned the head of the canoe towards the clump of trees. The canoe could not get under the tree, but one of the Indians jumped out, and Malcolm told me to slide down. The Indian caught me and carried me in his arms to the canoe, for I was too weak to walk. Malcolm followed, and the Indian helped him along also. It was not till we had been placed in the canoe that we recognized in our preserver the young Indian, Sigenok, whose life we had saved. We pronounced his name. He gave a well-satisfied smile.

“Ah, you have not forgotten me, nor I you,” he said, in his own language. “Favors conferred bind generous hearts together. Sigenok guessed that you were in distress. Your elder brother has long been looking for you.”

It appeared that Sigenok had been at a distance hunting when the flood commenced; that he had hastened back, and soon perceiving from the height the water had attained that our house was in danger, had embarked in his canoe and hastened towards it, but on his nearing the spot found that it had been swept away. Guessing that we had escaped to the eastern hills, he paddled there, when our friends told him that we had proceeded in search of our father and servant. Having as-

certained the exact time of our departure, with the wonderful powers of calculation possessed by Redmen, he had decided the events which had occurred and the course we had pursued, and was thus able to look for us in the right direction. Had he not found us there, he would have visited other places which he mentioned, where we might have taken refuge. As he was leaving the hills the farmer's wife had given him a supply of food for us, and on his producing it our hunger was soon satisfied. We now told him of our anxiety about our father and Sam Dawes. He listened attentively, and then shook his head.

"They and the cattle never reached the hills," he observed. "We will search for them. There are still some hours of daylight. If the house has held together, they will be found much further down than this."

I fancied by the Indian's manner that his hopes were slight. We now shoved off from the little island which had afforded us so valuable a refuge, and Sigenok and his companion paddled off at a rapid rate to the north. Anxious as I was, I soon fell asleep, and so I believe did Malcolm for a short time. I was aroused by a shout from Sigenok. I lifted up my head and saw a dark object in the distance, rising above the water.



The Grateful Indian.



"It is our house!" exclaimed Malcolm, "Sigenok says so. Oh, that our father may be there!"

We kept our eyes anxiously fixed on the distant object. It was growing dusk. Malcolm said that he saw something moving on it.

"Man there, alive!" observed Sigenok.

Our hopes were raised; but he spoke only of one man. How long the time appeared occupied in reaching the spot! Even through the gloom we could now distinguish the outline of our log hut, which had grounded on a bank among some strong fences and brushwood, and was now fixed securely, partly tilted over.

"Who is there? who is there?" we shouted. "Father, father! we are Malcolm and Harry!"

"Woe's me, young masters, your father is not here," said a voice which, hollow and husky as it was, we recognized as that of Sam Daves. We were soon up to our hut, to the roof of which Sam was clinging. The Indians lifted him into the canoe, for he had scarcely strength to help himself.

"But our father, Sam! our father!" we exclaimed. "Where is he? what has happened?"

"He no speak till he eat," observed Sigenok, after he had secured the canoe to the hut.

We took the hint, and gave him some food. In

a short time he revived, and told us that our father, after we went away, would not believe that the water would rise higher, and that they had retired to rest as usual, when they were awoke by the sound of the water rushing round the house; that they both ran out and mounted their horses to drive off the cattle, as had been arranged. Our father took the lead, urging on before him the cows and horses, while he followed with the sheep, when his horse fell and he was thrown into a deep hole. As he scrambled out, the current took him off his legs. He was nearly drowned, but after floundering about for some time, he found himself carried up against the hut. He immediately climbed to the roof, and shouted as loud as he could in the hopes of recalling our father, but there was no answer. Again and again he shouted. He tried to pierce the gloom which still hung over the land, though it was nearly morning. He felt a wish to leap off and try and follow his master, but what had become of his horse he could not ascertain. The waters were increasing round the cottage. He felt it shake violently, when, to his horror, it lifted and floated bodily away. The logs had been put together in a peculiar manner, dove-tailed into each other, which accounted for this. He told us how forlorn and miserable he

felt, without another human being in sight, believing that his master was lost, uncertain as to our fate, and that he himself was hurrying to destruction. More than once he felt inclined to drop off the roof, but love of life, or rather a sense of the wickedness of so doing, prevailed, and he clung on till the hut grounded where we found it.

We were now in as secure a place as any we could find in the neighborhood, and so Sigenok proposed seeking some necessary rest before continuing our search. We proposed going into the house to sleep, but we found that our bed-places had been carried away, and so, of course, had every particle of furniture, as the bottom of the hut had literally come out. We therefore returned to the canoe to sleep. At early dawn we once more paddled south. There was little current and a perfect calm. The waters, too, were subsiding, for several slight elevations, before submerged, were now visible. After paddling for many hours, we reached the southwestern hills I have before described. Several settlers were there, but no one had seen our father. We crossed back to the eastern hills before night-fall. There were no tidings of him there. The flood subsided, and we, like others, set off to return to the now desolate site of our former abode. Sigenok conveyed us in his

canoe, and we pitched our tent on the very spot our hut had occupied. In vain we searched for our father, in vain we made inquiries of other settlers, no one had seen him. Day after day we waited, thinking that he might have been swept downward with the flood, clinging to a piece of timber or some other floating body, and that he might as yet be unable to return. Sam Dawes looked more and more sad when we spoke of his return. Sigenok, who had remained by us, shook his head. "He gone, no come back," he observed. Our hearts sank within us as the sad truth forced itself on our minds that we were orphans.

CHAPTER IV.

LONG we continued to hope against hope. Neither was our father's body, nor were any of the cattle he was driving off, ever discovered. The current must have swept them down into Lake Winnipeg.

"I ain't much of a person for it, young masters," said Sam Dawes, taking a hand of each of us and looking at us affectionately, "but I loves ye as sons, and I'll be in the place of a father, that I will."

Faithfully did Sam Dawes keep his word.

"Grief is right and does us good in the end, depend on't, or it wouldn't be sent; but it musn't make us forget duty. Now you see it is our duty to live, and we can't live without food, and we can't get food without we work, so let's turn to and plough and sow the ground."

This proposal may seem like mockery, but among the valuables placed by our father in the canoe was a good supply of seed-corn and other seeds, and we had discovered our plough driven deep into the ground. Sigenok disappeared the moment he understood our intentions, and Sam looked very blank, and said that he feared he did not like work and had gone off.

“I think not,” observed Malcolm; and he was right. In a few hours Sigenok returned with two horses and several hides well tanned, and needles, and fibre for thread. I thought Sam would have hugged him, he was so delighted. Without loss of time they set to work and cut out a set of harness, and, lighting a lamp, seated at the entrance to our tent, labored at it the greater part of the night, Malcolm and I helping as far as we could. Sam made us go to sleep, but as I looked up they were still at work, and when I awoke in the morning it was finished. The horses were a little restive, evidently not being accustomed to ploughing, but they obeyed Sigenok's voice in a wonderful way, though it was necessary in the first place to teach him what ought to be done. It is said by some that Indians will not labor. I have reason to know that they will when they have a sufficient motive. Sigenok showed this. His motive was

gratitude to us, and affection excited by compassion. No white man would have labored harder. When the wheat and Indian corn were in the ground, he with his horses helped Sam and us to bring in stuff for fencing and to put it up. All this time he slept outside our tent, under shelter of a simple lean-to of birch-bark. Another day he disappeared, and we saw him in the evening coming up the river towing some timber. He brought a heavy log upon his shoulders. "There is a part of your house," he observed, "we can get the rest in time."

So we did; we borrowed a large boat, and taking advantage of a northerly wind, we brought up, piece by piece, the whole of our hut, which had grounded near the banks of the river. Our neighbors, in spite of the value of their time to themselves, came and helped us, and we very soon had our hut over our heads, though, excepting the articles we had saved in the canoe, we had no furniture remaining.

"Sigenok live here with you," observed our Indian friend.

"Yes—of course; very glad," we answered, thinking that he intended to take up his abode in our hut.

We had arranged that morning to go to the

Fort* to obtain flour and other articles. We were not without money, for our father had put his desk in the canoe, and in it we found a sum of money, considerable for our wants. On our return from the Fort, we found that Sigenok had erected close to our door an Indian wigwam. It was very simple of construction. It consisted of about a dozen long poles stuck in the ground in a circle, and fastened together at the top so as to make the figure of a cone. Against these poles were placed large slabs of birch-bark. It comes off the tree in layers, which having a tendency to regain their circular form, cling round the cone, and are further secured with bands of fibre. In the centre is the fire, while the smoke escapes through an opening left in the top; some mats on the ground, and some lines stretched across on which clothes or other articles can be hung up, form the chief furniture of these wigwams. To these may be added a bundle of hides or mats, and an iron pot.

We had purchased some bedding at the Fort, and Sam and Malcolm soon knocked up some rough furniture, which served our purpose. We should often have been on short commons had not Sam and Sigenok been expert fishermen, so that

* Fort Garry, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company.

we were never without an ample supply of white-fish, or gold-eyes, or sturgeon.

“This very well,” observed Sigenok. “Fish very good, but in winter buffalo better.”

“Will you help us to go and hunt the buffalo, then?” we both exclaimed.

Sigenok nodded; it was what he had proposed to himself that we should do. Although a wood-Indian, he had connections among the prairie Indians, and from living with them had become a good rider and expert hunter. Sam did not like our going; he was afraid some accident might happen to us, but he had not the heart to tell us so. He was to remain at home to take care of the farm. Sigenok procured two other horses, one for himself, and another to drag a light cart which we bought, made entirely of wood. It was laden with our tent and provisions, and our rifles and powder and shot. We felt in high spirits when we were ready to start, and wishing Sam an affectionate farewell, set off to join a large band of hunters proceeding to the plains. There were nearly three hundred men, besides their wives and children. The greater number were half-breeds, but there was also a large body of Indians, among whom we found Sigenok's relatives, who received us in the most cordial manner, and told us that we should

be their brothers, that our friends should be their friends, and our foes their foes. The half-breeds had nearly five hundred carts, each with a distinguishing flag; and there must have been even a larger number of hunters, all mounted. Their tents, or lodges, are formed of dressed buffalo-skins. They are pitched in a large circle, with the carts outside—and when in a hostile country, with the animals in the centre; otherwise they feed outside the circle. They have a captain and regular officers under him; and a flag hoisted on a pole in the centre serves as a signal. When hauled down, it is a sign that the march is to be continued. When the whole body was on the move, it reminded us of a caravan in the East, with the long line of carts winding along over the plain, and the horsemen galloping about on either side. For several days we travelled on without seeing any buffalo, till one day, soon after we had camped, notice was brought by the scouts that a large herd were in the neighborhood. All was now excitement and preparation in the camp. Sigenok called us early in the morning, and, after a hasty breakfast, in high spirits we mounted our horses, and accompanied the band of hunters. We made a wide circuit, so as to let the wind blow from the buffaloes towards us. I should tell you that the

animal denominated the buffalo by the North Americans, is what is properly called the bison by naturalists. They roam in vast herds over the interior of North America, from Mexico as far north as the large river Saskatchewan and Lake Winnipeg. We rode on, drawing nearer and nearer, till, as we ascended a slight elevation, we saw over it on the plain on the other side a vast herd of big-headed, dark, hairy monsters, more buffaloes than I supposed existed on the whole continent. They were feeding quietly, as if not aware of the approach of foes. Our captain, an experienced hunter, rode along the ranks commanding silence, directing every man to look to his arms, and exhorting the novices not to shoot each other, a danger which might be justly apprehended. Each hunter now ascertained that his rifle was loaded, and then filled his mouth with bullets—a ready-at-hand pouch, that he might the more quickly drop them into his piece. I was afraid of following this example, for fear of the bullets dropping down my throat or of my gun bursting. Malcolm and I kept close to Sigenok. He told us to do what he did, not to lose sight of him, assuring us that our horses understood hunting perfectly. Our hearts beat with eagerness. We had now got near enough, in the opinion of our leader, to charge. The signal

was given, and at headlong speed the band of huntsmen dashed in among the astonished animals. The buffaloes fled in all directions, the horsemen following, firing right and left, and loading again with extraordinary rapidity, seldom missing; and as each animal fell, the hunter who had killed it dropped some article of his dress, or other mark by which he might distinguish it. It was the most exciting scene in which I was ever engaged—the hunters, so lately a dense and orderly body, were now scattered far and wide over the plain, many miles apart, in pursuit of the buffaloes; some terror-stricken, others infuriated to madness. Sig-enok had killed five or six, and Malcolm had also, much to our gratification, killed one, though I had not been so successful, from nervousness, I fancy; when the Indian being at some distance, as we were in full chase of another buffalo, a huge bull started out from behind a knoll, and rushed towards us. My brother's horse started at the unexpected sight, and putting his foot into a badger-hole, stumbled and threw him over his head. The faithful animal stood stock-still, but on came the bull. I shrieked out to Malcolm to leap on his horse and fly, but he was stunned, and did not hear me. The bull was not twenty paces from him; in another instant he would have been gored to death.

I felt thankful that I had not before fired. Raising my rifle to my shoulder, I pulled the trigger—the huge animal was within ten paces of him; over it went, then rose on its knees, and struggled forward. I galloped up to Malcolm, who was beginning to recover his senses. With a strength I did not fancy I possessed I dragged him up, and helped him on his horse just before the monster fell over the spot where he had lain, and would have crushed him with his weight. By the time Sigenok returned, the buffalo was dead. He highly praised me when he heard what had occurred, but said that we had had hunting enough that day, and that he would now summon his people to take possession of the animals we had killed. The skins are called robes, and are valued as articles of trade, being taken by the fur-traders and sent to Canada, England, Russia, and other parts of the world. Part of the flesh of the slain animals was carried into the camp for immediate consumption, but the larger portion was prepared forthwith in a curious way for keeping. The meat is first cut into thin slices and dried in the sun, and these slices are then pounded between two stones till the fibres separate. This pounded meat is then mixed with melted fat, about fifty pounds of the first to forty pounds of the latter, and while hot is

pressed into buffalo-skin bags, when it forms a hard, compact mass. It is now called pemmikon, from *pemmi*, meat, and *kon*, fat, in the Cree language. One pound of this mixture is considered as nutritious as two of ordinary meat, and it has the advantage of keeping for years through all temperatures.

CHAPTER V.

Soon after the grand hunting-day I have described, our scout brought word that a party of Sioux were in the neighborhood. Our fighting-men attacked them and killed several. A scalp-dance took place, and other orgies which I will not describe. I was so horrified with what I saw, that I agreed with Malcolm that we would get back to the settlements as soon as we could. We expressed our wish to Sigenok, and he promised to return with us on the following day. Malcolm's great wish was to withdraw Sigenok from his savage companions, and to induce him to settle down as a civilized man and a Christian. We talked to him on the subject, but he replied, that he had been all his life accustomed to hunting and fighting, and that he could not abandon them. The next day we set out, leaving the larger body of Indians still encamped.

We had travelled on for two days, when the belief being entertained that we had no enemies to fear, there was less than the usual caution observed by the natives in our march. We were passing through a sparsely wooded country; I was in advance with Sigenok, while Malcolm and several young Indians, whose interest he wished to excite by descriptions of England and the wonders of the civilized world, brought up the rear, at a considerable distance. Suddenly Sigenok stopped; the crack of a rifle was heard: several others followed. "The Sioux!" he exclaimed, turning round his horse. "Quick! quick! our friends are attacked." No other order was required; keeping close to him, we all galloped back the way we had come, getting our rifles ready for action as we proceeded. A terrible anticipation of misfortune seized me as I thought of Malcolm, and the fate which might have overtaken him. Still he and his companions might be defending themselves, and we should be in time to rescue them. My heart sank when the firing ceased. I knew that the Sioux would not have attacked the party unless greatly superior in numbers, and I dreaded that all was over, and that having slaughtered their victims they had retired victorious. Sigenok might have thought the same, for he sent out

scouts on either side, and advanced with greater caution than before, though still at a rapid pace. We pulled up at an open glade. Sad was the sight which met our eyes. On every side were strewed the bodies of our companions, all denuded of their scalps. I almost fell fainting from my horse. I dreaded to find the body of my dear brother among them; still I eagerly hurried on to ascertain his fate. He was not to be found among the slain. My hopes slightly revived. He might have escaped and be concealed somewhere near, or he might have been carried off as a prisoner. My blood ran cold when I thought of this latter possibility, for I had heard of the horrible mode in which the Red-men tortured their prisoners, and I dreaded lest such should be the lot of my poor brother. The rage and fury of the Indians at finding that their friends had thus been cut off was terrific, and their threats of vengeance terrible. I had hitherto, till this expedition, seen the Red-men only under more favorable aspects. I now perceived what they could become when excited by passion. Still the loss of my brother made me anxious that they should immediately undertake an expedition which might result in his recovery. I saw the Indians examining the ground round on every side, and they soon pronounced an opinion that

the party who had attacked their friends did not equal them in numbers, and would not have succeeded had they not lain in ambush and taken them by surprise. We must have passed close to the Sioux, but in consequence of the superiority of our numbers they were afraid to attack us. A council was immediately held; the principal men spoke, and various plans were suggested. The result of them was, that it was determined to form a camp on the spot, while twenty well-mounted warriors should go in pursuit of the Sioux. I entreated Sigenok to allow me to accompany him. "You are young for warfare, but your heart 'is strong—you shall go," he answered. No time was to be lost. It was of great consequence to follow up the foe so rapidly that they might not be prepared for our approach. A hurried meal was taken, and each warrior furnishing himself with a supply of pemmikon for several days, we immediately set off. Three men, on foot, always kept ahead to act as scouts and to feel the way, while their horses were led by the rest, and when the first were tired others took their places. The Sioux must have retreated very rapidly, for two whole days passed, and though my friends assured me we were on the right trail, we had not overtaken them. I was almost in despair, and began

to doubt that, even if Malcolm was alive, he could be with them. I had just expressed my fears to Sigenok when one of the scouts came hurrying back and exhibited a tag—the end of a boot-lace, such as my brother had worn. This Sigenok considered a sure sign that Malcolm was with them. My eagerness, therefore, increased to overtake them, but the Indians assured me that great caution was requisite, and that instead of going faster, it might be necessary to go slower. This is often the case I have since found in other affairs of life. More scouts were now sent out and still greater caution used. It was the intention of my companions, if possible, to make the onslaught on the camp of their foes at night. All depended, however, on our approach not being suspected. The Sioux, of course, would have scouts out, and the difficulty was to avoid their meeting ours, or discovering any traces. At last, just before dusk, one of our scouts brought in word that they had encamped, and that we were about two miles from them. It was suspected, from the way in which they had formed their camp, they must have thought that they had distanced us. We had now no longer any doubt about overtaking them, but the question was as to the best means of making the attack. The Indians' chief thought was

of revenging themselves for the loss of their relatives, my only desire was to recover my brother, should he still be alive. We continued to advance till we got within about half a mile of the Sioux camp—the hilly nature of the ground and the woods concealing our approach. Beyond that we dared not proceed, as the country was so open that we might easily have been seen had we made the attempt. The band, accordingly, here left their horses, under charge of five of their number, and as soon as it was dusk they commenced their stealthy approach to the camp. Sigenok and another young and active Indian undertook to look after me. Not a word was spoken after we set out—not a leaf was moved, scarcely a blade of grass was uselessly pressed down. On they crept slowly, and so gently that I could scarcely hear the foot-falls even of my two companions. I imitated their way of walking; and as I had on moccasins, I also was able to avoid making the slightest noise. We had got within a thousand yards of the camp, when we all stopped to listen. The camp was still astir, and there were sounds of feasting and revelry. The Indians with me ground their teeth—their enemies, fancying themselves secure, were about to indulge in a scalp-dance over the scalps they had taken in the morning. As yet the scouts had not

got near enough to ascertain if my brother was with them. I entreated Sigenok to let me go and ascertain. "Not without me," was his answer. "Bah, we will go." I eagerly and fearlessly pressed on. We had to crawl along the ground lest our figures might be perceived, by the sharp eyes of the Sioux, against the sky. We reached a small stream. The camp was formed a little way beyond it. We waded across it, and creeping up, looked over the bank. In the centre was a fire which, as it blazed up, threw a strange light on the groups of fierce savages clustering round it. At a little distance was a figure which attracted all my attention—it was that of my brother. He was seated on a log of wood, close to which a stake was driven in, and to this his wrists were tightly secured, though his feet were free. His head was bent down; he sat perfectly quiet, as if resigned to his fate. By the gestures of his captors I thought that they were talking about him, and I feared that they were proposing forthwith to put him to death. I dared not ask Sigenok what he thought; the slightest sound might have betrayed us. Oh, how I longed to rush forward and join his fate, whatever that might be! I believe that I should have done so, when I saw him lift up his pale countenance, so expressive of grief and

pain, had not Sigenok held me back. He was, I was sure, thinking of me, and how miserable I should be when he was taken from me, and I was left alone in the world. Sigenok now made a sign to me to retreat; keeping close to him as before, I unwillingly left the spot. We crawled on till we rejoined our companions. It may seem surprising that the Sioux should have been so completely off their guard; but this arose from their despising their foes, the fact being that the Ojibways are generally very unwarlike, and they, therefore, believed that they would not venture to follow them. My companions' plans were soon formed. It was arranged that the whole party should creep forward as we had done, and that each man should single out one of the enemy, according to his position, and that at a signal from Sigenok, the low croak of a frog, all should fire at the same moment. With the sound of the first shot the men with the horses were to come galloping on, as if a fresh party were approaching the scene of conflict. As, undoubtedly, all the Sioux would not be killed, some might, otherwise, attempt to rush on their concealed foes, but, with the fear of falling into the hands of their enemies, they would now take to flight. My heart beat quick as we now moved on towards the camp of our treacherous foes. The

night was very dark, and so noiseless were the movements of the Indians, that, till I actually touched Sigenok's heel, I fancied at one time that I must be alone. The shouting and shrieking of the Sioux, as they sang their songs of triumph, yet further assisted us to approach. In another moment the death-volley would be given, and most of those fierce savages would be laid low. My only wish all the time was to rush forward and to release my beloved brother. How breathlessly I waited for the signal! The warriors were moving about, and Sigenok was not yet satisfied, apparently, with the positions which they had taken up. Little did they dream of the danger which threatened them. Sigenok's object was to wait till the Sioux were separated as much as possible, so that there should be no mistake as to which of them should be aimed at by the warriors of our party. After sitting down for some time, they all arose with eager and violent gestures; some went in the direction of the temporary wigwams they had formed, and others advanced towards Malcolm. By their looks and gesticulations I had little doubt that it was with the intention of torturing him. Poor Malcolm lifted up his countenance and gazed with calm resignation at his approaching tormentors. My knees trembled for very anxiety.

Just then I heard a low "Croak! croak!" Though warned, I believed that it was really a frog close to me. It was followed by a click, as if caused by the cocking of the rifles. The Sioux one and all started and looked round. Their quick ears had detected the sound. There was another low croak, and at the same instant a rattling volley, and fourteen savages lay stretched on the grass. The rest rushed in all directions, seeking for shelter; but in their alarm, scarcely perceiving whence the volley had proceeded, some darted towards the bank of the stream where my friends still lay concealed rapidly reloading their rifles. Scarcely had the smoke cleared off than I saw through it a savage darting towards Malcolm, with uplifted knife, resolved, apparently, before he died, to plunge it in his bosom. I shrieked out, and sprang forward to throw myself between them. The savage saw me, and was about to vent his rage on my head, but at the moment his gleaming knife was uplifted to strike, a bullet struck him, fired from Sigenok's rifle, and he fell within a foot of me, in vain endeavoring to reach me with his weapon. I sprang to my brother's side: he was unhurt: my knife was busily employed in cutting through the thongs which bound him. More shots were heard as my Ojibway friends caught sight of their Sioux

foes endeavoring to escape. A few of the latter had, however, got to some distance and were trying to catch their horses, on which their only hope of safety now depended. The object of the Ojibways was, of course, to prevent them, lest they should carry the news of what had happened to their tribe, who would, in their turn, send off another war-party in pursuit of us.

The approach of our horses was now heard. Sigenok with a dozen other men threw themselves on their backs almost without stopping them, and galloped off in hot pursuit of their flying enemies. I stood by the side of my brother, who was too much bewildered to understand what had happened. His first words were, "Harry, dear Harry, tell me, is it a dream or a reality. Am I really free?"

"Free, Malcolm, I trust," I answered: "though I might almost ask you the same question; I can scarcely believe my happiness."

"Now I take your hand and hear your voice, I know that it is true," he said, eagerly. "And that poor savage who lies so helpless there, I thought he was going to kill me; but I have been mercifully protected; I will tell you all about it by and by. Oh, what a dreadful state of existence is this wild life! we will quit it, and return to our quiet home, and never leave that. I had often read

about savages, and thought them very fine fellows, but little knew what they really are—how blood-thirsty, cruel, murderous. Let us fly, Harry, let us fly at once. Do not stay here.”

I pacified him after a little time, and persuaded him to remain till Sigenok returned. “He, though still a savage, is, at all events, faithful,” I observed; “he will not desert us till he has seen us home and safe again with Sam Dawes. I wish that we could wean him altogether from his mode of life, and induce him to become a civilized man.”

While Malcolm and I were talking, the rest of the Ojibways had collected, with the exception of those who had gone in pursuit of the Sioux. The fire had sunk low, and I was thankful that the darkness prevented us from watching the horrid task in which they were engaged—that of scalping their fallen foes. The exclamations they uttered while thus employed, showed the delight they took in the dreadful work. “Our brothers are avenged! our brothers are avenged!” they kept shouting. “Their mothers, and wives, and children will not mourn alone; there will be grief and wailing also in the lodges of the Sioux. They will no longer be able to boast that they are the great warriors of the plains. We have conquered them; we have slain them; we have their scalps to show.”

Nearly an hour thus passed: so greatly excited all the time were the savages, that they took but little notice of us.

At last we heard shouts in the distance, which became louder and louder, till, by the light of the fire, which had been renewed, we saw Sigenok and his companions ride into the camp flourishing at the end of their spears the dreadful trophies of their success. But I should not have described those scenes at all, were it not to afford you a true picture of savage life, not as it is painted by romance writers, but as it really is, debased, and wretched, and hopeless. We soon reached the camp, and recommenced our return to the settlements as rapidly as we could push on.

Sigenok told us that the Sioux of whom they had gone in chase had nearly effected their escape, but that he had come up with them as they were attempting to pass a broad river, and where, from being in the water, not hearing the approach of their foes, he and his companions had shot them all down, so that he believed that not one of them had got off. Still, had one escaped, he might prove as dangerous as many, and therefore it might be safer to proceed homeward at once. We urged him to do so, and accordingly, without even resting, we at once set out to return to the camp. We reached

it in safety; but I will not attempt to describe the scenes which took place, and the savage triumph even of the women; how they shrieked, and shouted, and danced; and clapped their hands till they appeared like so many furies rather than human beings. As a war-party of the Sioux would be able to travel much faster than we could, the household goods were at once packed, and we set out on our return homeward. We travelled rapidly, and to guard against surprise we had scouts in the rear, constantly on the watch for the approach of a foe. The conversation of the men all the way related to the events of the expedition, and they evidently gloated over the way in which they had put their enemies to death.

As we proceeded, I often turned my head when I heard any noise behind me, expecting to see the enemy darting out of a wood, or scouring over the prairie in chase of us, and at night, while we were encamped, I frequently started up under the belief that the Sioux were upon us.

“All our sufferings, and the dangers we have gone through, and the horrors we have witnessed, have been owing to our folly,” observed Malcolm; “had we remained at home, steadily assisting Sam Dawes to cultivate the farm, we should have escaped them all. We will be wiser in future.”

CHAPTER VI.

WITH great satisfaction, and gratitude for the dangers we had escaped, our eyes once more rested on the silvery waters of the Red river, as it wound its way through the rich plains of the settlement, towards the lengthened expanse of Lake Winnipeg. Malcolm and I, putting our spurs into our mustangs' flanks, galloped on, eager to announce our arrival to Sam Dawes. He was laboring by himself, putting up a fence to a new field. He saw us coming, and, throwing down his axe, hurried forward to meet us. Never was there a more happy meeting. He had a great deal to tell us, as we had to tell him. Gathering up his tools, he walked by our side to the hut; a hut though it was no longer, for by his persevering industry he had converted it into a very comfortable residence; while he had replaced, though in a somewhat

rough fashion, nearly all the furniture we had lost. My brother and I felt ashamed at having deserted him for so long, while he was laboring for our benefit.

“Well, dear masters, I did oftentimes feel sad and lonely like while you were away, but now I’ve got you back safe, all that seems as light as a feather,” he exclaimed, pressing our hands and looking into our faces with the affection of a parent. He told us that great changes had taken place in the settlement during our absence, that a clergyman had settled near us, that a church was built and a school established, and that many new colonists had bought land along the banks of the river, for many miles towards the south as well as to the north of us. The good clergyman had also induced several families of Indians to settle in the neighborhood, and that they seemed to have accepted with joy the glad tidings of salvation which he had been the means of offering them.

“I wish that Sigenok would come and join them then,” exclaimed Malcolm, warmly; “so brave and energetic a man would bring many others over to the truth.”

The next day Sigenok himself came in to see us. Malcolm opened the subject of which he had been speaking. Sigenok listened attentively, and said

that he would go and hear what the missionary had to say. He did so.

The winter set in, and the river and lake were frozen over, and the ground was covered with snow, and sleighs had taken the place of carts, and thick buffalo-skin coats of light dress, and stoves were lighted and windows closed, and the whole face of nature seemed changed. Sigenok came to us. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "when I knew you first my heart was like the great prairie when the fire has passed over it, all black and foul; now it is white, like that field of glittering snow on which we gaze. I am a Christian; I look with horror on my past life, and things which I considered before praiseworthy and noble, I now see to be abominable and vile."

Day after day, in spite of cold and wind and snow, did Sigenok come up to the missionary's house to receive instruction in the new faith which had brought such joy to his heart. Many followed in his footsteps, and there now exists a whole village of Christian Indians in the settlement, who have put away and forever their medicine-men and their charms, and their false Manitou, and their cruelties and bloodthirstiness, and are worshippers of the true God in sincerity and simplicity of faith. Several of the Indian boys brought up

at the school have obtained a considerable amount of learning, and some are ordained ministers of the Gospel, and others catechists and schoolmasters at various missionary stations scattered throughout the wide extent of Rupert's Land.

You may like to hear something more about that wonderful land, that *terra ignota* of British Central America. At the time of which I have been speaking it was supposed that the only fertile land was to be found on the banks of the Red river, but it is now ascertained that an extremely rich and fertile belt extends from the Red river right across the continent, for eight hundred miles or more, to the base of the Rocky mountains, where it unites with the new province of Columbia. This fertile belt is capable of supporting innumerable herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, and droves of horses, and of giving employment and happy homes to millions of the human race. It produces wheat, and barley, and oats, and Indian corn, or maize, in great perfection, and potatoes and a variety of other roots and vegetables of all sorts, and the finest grass for hay, and hemp and tobacco, and many other plants with difficulty grown in England. The rivers are full of fish, and game of all sorts abound. The climate is very uniform through-

out, like that of Upper Canada—warm in summer and very cold in winter, but dry and healthy in the extreme.

When, as I hope the case may be before long, those lakes and rivers along which we travelled on our journey from Lake Superior to the Red river are made navigable for steamers, this country will become the great highway to British Columbia, to China, Japan, and the wide-spreading shores and isles of the Pacific. With a line of settlements established across it, the journey may easily be performed, and some day, Harry, you and I will run over, and we will pay a visit to the very scenes which I have been describing to you; but instead of roving savages, murdering and scalping in every direction, living by hunting and fishing, I hope that we may find the Indians settled down as Christian men, and persevering cultivators of the soil which Providence will compel to yield a rich return for their labor. You will wish to know more of your uncle Malcolm's and my proceedings. We soon became acquainted with the good clergyman I have mentioned, and after a time he suggested to us that, as our education was far from perfect, it would be wise if we recommenced our studies. This we did, and though we continued

to help Sam Dawes in his farm labors even more efficiently than before, so steady was our application when engaged with our books under our kind tutor, that we made considerable progress in our studies. For three years or more we lived on very happily, with nothing to change our course of life, when we received notice from England that a relation of our father's especially wished us to return. On consulting our friend the clergyman, he strongly recommended us to accept the invitation offered us. As we expected speedily to return, we left Sam Dawes in charge of the farm, though he was almost heart-broken at parting from us. He would, indeed, never have consented to remain, had he not believed that it was for our interest to do so. On reaching England, great was our surprise to find that our relative intended to leave us his property. On ascertaining our attainments in knowledge, he insisted on our both going to the university. Your uncle Malcolm took high honors, and entered into holy orders. I became, as was our relative, a merchant, and without allowing business to absorb me, I have considerably increased the small portion he left me. Your uncle Malcolm and I have constantly talked of going over to visit Sam Dawes, but circumstances have pre-

vented us. We long ago made over the farm to him, and he has greatly increased and improved it. He is, we hear, a hale old man. And now, Harry, I have told you a long story enough, for to-day. Some other time I will tell you more about the wonders of Rupert's Land.

THE STORY OF NELSON.

CHAPTER I.

My great ambition as a boy was to be a sailor ; the idea of becoming one occupied my thoughts by day and influenced my dreams by night. I delighted in reading naval histories and exploits and tales of the sea, and I looked upon Rodney, Howe, Nelson, and St. Vincent, as well as Duncan, Colingwood, Exmouth, and Sir Sidney Smith, as far greater men, and more worthy of admiration, than all the heroes of antiquity put together—an opinion which I hold even to the present day, and which, I hope, all my readers will maintain with me.

Once it happened during my summer holidays that, most unwillingly, I was taken up to London. During the time, a naval friend, having compassion on me, suggested that I might find matter of interest by a trip to Greenwich, and a visit to the Hospital. I jumped at the proposal. I can never forget the feelings with which I entered the wide smooth space on which that beautiful collection

of buildings stands, forming the Royal Hospital for Seamen, with its broad terrace facing the river, and found myself surrounded by many hundreds of the gallant veterans who had maintained not only so nobly the honor of Old England on the deep, but had contributed to preserve her from the numberless foes who had threatened her with destruction.

The building is of itself interesting. On this spot once stood the Royal Palace of Placentia, in which no less than four successive sovereigns were born—Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. Charles II. had intended to rebuild it, but left it unfinished; and it was put into the heart of good Queen Mary, the wife of William of Orange, to establish that noble institution for the reception of the disabled seamen of the Royal Navy, which, much augmented in size, has ever since existed the noblest monument to a sovereign's memory.

I visited the beautiful chapel and the painted hall, where already were hung a number of fine pictures, illustrative of England's naval victories, and my friend then took me to see an old shipmate of his, who was one of the officers of the Hospital. When he heard that I wished to go to sea, and was so warm an admirer of Nelson, he exclaimed—

“He’ll just suit me. Let him stay here for a few days. We’ll fish out some of our men who long served with Nelson, and if he keeps his ears turning right and left, he’ll hear many a yarn to astonish him. He must have patience though. The old fellows will not open out at once; their memories are like wells, you must throw a little water down at first before you can get them to draw.”

I was delighted with the proposal. My friend, however, began to make excuses, saying that he ought to take me back, and that I had no clothes with me. At this the Greenwich officer, Lieutenant R——, laughed heartily.

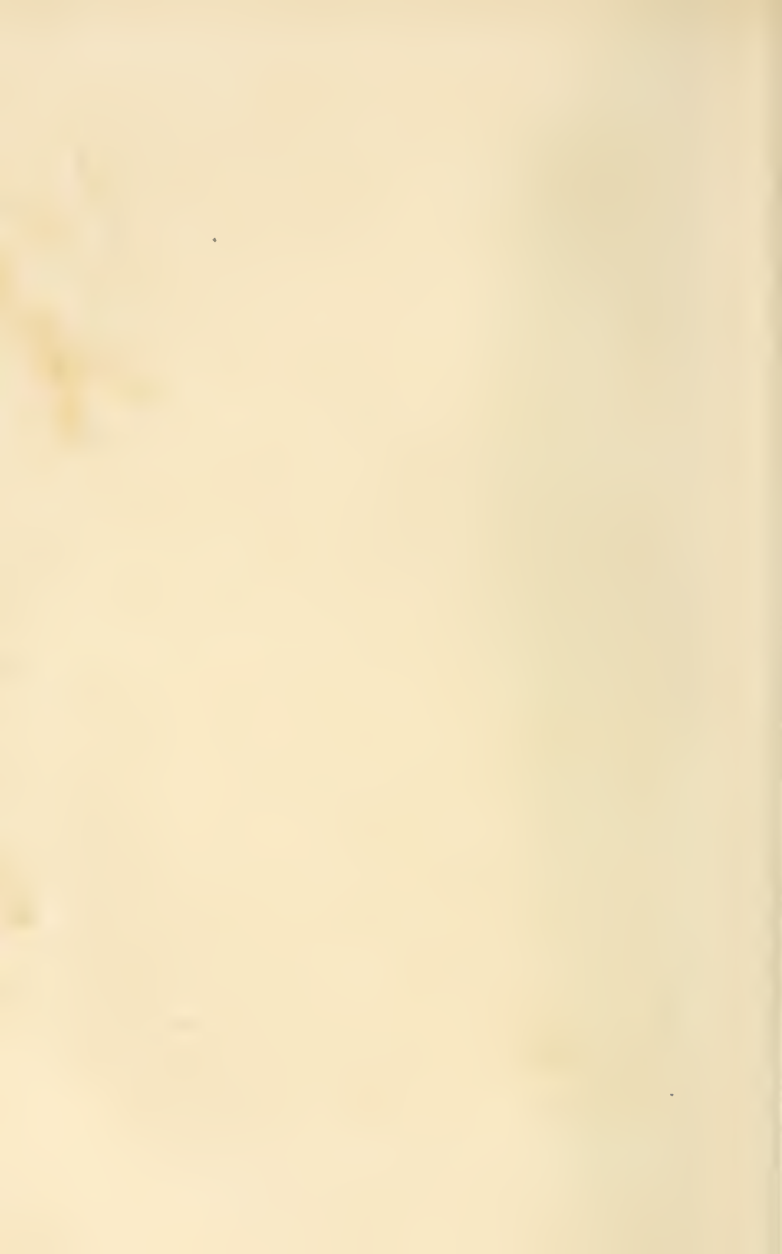
“A shirt-collar and a pocket-comb? What does a midshipman want more?” he exclaimed. “But I will find him all the luxuries he may require. Let him stay, and tell his friends that he is in safe keeping.”

So it was arranged, and I found myself an inmate of Greenwich Hospital.

After I had been seen walking up and down the terrace a few times with Lieutenant R——, the pensioners, when I spoke to them, answered me readily, though at first rather shy of talking of themselves or their adventures. At length I fell in with a fine old man, and sitting down on



“Boy and man I sailed with him all my life, from the day he got his first command till he was struck down in the hour of victory.”



one of the benches facing the river, I began to tell him how much I honored and loved all sailors, and how I longed myself to become one.

“Ay, boy, there are good and bad at sea as well as on shore; but as to the life, it’s good enough; and if I had mine to begin again, I would choose it before all others,” he answered, and once more relapsed into silence.

Just then Lieutenant R—— passed; he nodded at me with a smile, saying, as he passed on, “My old friend there will tell you more of Lord Nelson than any man now in the Hospital.”

The old man looked at me with a beaming expression on his countenance.

“Ay, that I can,” he said; “boy and man, I sailed with him all my life, from the day he got his first command till he was struck down in the hour of victory. So to speak, sir, I may say I knew him from the very day he first stepped on board a ship. This is how it was: My father was a seaman, and belonged to the ‘Raisable,’ just fitted out by Captain Suckling, and lying in the Medway. One afternoon a little fellow was brought on board by one of the officers, and it was said that he was the captain’s nephew; but the captain was on shore, and there was nobody to look after him. He walked the deck up and down, looking very miser-

able, but not crying, as some boys would have done—not he. That wasn't his way at any time. When the captain did come on board, and he saw his nephew, he shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say that he didn't think he was fit for a sea-life. No more he did look fit for it, for he was a sick, weakly-looking little fellow. However, it wasn't long before he showed what a great spirit there was in him."

"Ay," said I, "there is a story I have heard which proved that when he was merely a child. He and another little fellow had gone away bird's-nesting from his grandmother's house, and he not coming back, the servants were sent to look for him. He was found seated by the side of a brook, which he could not get over. 'I wonder, child,' said the old lady, when she saw him, 'that hunger and fear did not drive you home.' 'Fear, grandmamma!' answered the boy, 'I never saw fear! What is it?'"

"True, true!" exclaimed the old man. "Fear! I don't think he ever felt it either. Well, as I was going to tell you, my father followed Captain Suckling into the 'Triumph,' and young Nelson went with him; but as she was merely to do duty as guard-ship in the Thames, the captain sent his nephew out in a merchant-vessel to the West In-

dies, to pick up some knowledge of seamanship. When he came back he soon showed that he had not lost his time, and that he was already a good practical seaman. Soon after this an expedition was fitted out for a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole, under Captain Phipps and Captain Lutwidge, in the 'Racehorse' and 'Carcass.' My father volunteered, and so did Mr. Nelson, who got a berth as captain's coxswain with Captain Lutwidge. The ships, after entering the polar seas, were quickly beset with ice. Mr. Nelson, who had command of a boat, soon showed what he was made of. My father was in another boat, and as they were exploring a channel to try and find a passage for the ships into the open sea, one of the officers fired at a walrus. 'Ah, I've hit him!' he exclaimed,—'not a bad shot!' and he thought no more about the matter. But the brute gave a look up with a face like a human being, as much as to say, 'We'll see if more than one can play at that game,' and down he dived. Presently up again he came, with some twenty or more companions, and with the greatest fury they set on the boat with their tusks, and tried to capsize her. My father and the rest of the crew fought desperately with boat-hook and axes, but they were getting the worst of it, and well-nigh gave themselves

up as lost, when another boat was seen coming along the channel towards them. On she dashed; a young officer, a very little fellow, with an axe in his hand, sprang to the bows, and began dealing his blows right and left at the heads of the walruses till several were killed, when the rest dived down and took to flight. That young lad was Nelson. Soon after this, one morning, he and another boy were missed from the ship. It was reported that they had gone away in pursuit of a bear which had been seen prowling about. A thick fog had come on, and they did not return. The captain began to think that they were lost, and a party was sent out to look for them. After wandering about for some time, the fog cleared off, and there was Mr. Nelson, with a ship's musket in his hand, close up to a big white polar bear, who could have made mincemeat of him in a moment. The party shouted to him to return, but he wouldn't listen to them; and they expected every moment to see the bear turn and crush him. Still on he went, moving sideways with the bear. When they got up, they found that there was a wide chasm which had prevented him from getting closer to the animal. They led him back to the ship, and when the captain asked him why he had gone, he answered, with a pouting lip, that he had set his

heart on getting a bear's skin for his father, and he didn't think he should have a better opportunity.

“The captain reprimanded, but forgave him. There were greater dangers in store for him and all in the expedition; and for a long time they had little hope of getting the ships clear of the ice. Mr. Nelson exerted himself to cut a channel to let them escape; and at length, a favorable wind getting up, they stood clear of it just as it was expected that they would be frozen in. They found themselves free, and reached England in safety. Mr. Nelson had nearly been killed by the cold, and now he was to be tried by the scorching climate of the Indian seas. Such are the rapid changes we seamen have to undergo. He was appointed to the ‘Seahorse,’ and out she went to the Indian station. The climate soon did what no dangers or common hardships could do; it took away the use of his limbs, and almost overcame his brave spirit. He returned home, feeling that he should never succeed in the navy or in any thing else. But then suddenly he thought, ‘I was not born to die unknown. I’ll try what I can do. I’ll trust in Providence. I’ll serve my king and country—I will be a hero.’ I heard him say this long after, and I have often since thought if all lads were to try to do their best, and trust in Provi-

dence, we shouldn't hear of so many as we do getting into poverty and disgrace.

“No officer, I have heard, ever passed a better examination for seamanship and navigation than did Mr. Nelson. His uncle was present, but did not say who the young man was till the examination was over. Whatever he did, he tried to do as well as he could; that was the reason of his success. Just about this time, young as I was, my father took me to sea with him, and we went out to the West Indies. We were shortly turned over to the ‘Hichinbrook,’ a prize captured from the enemy, and mounting twenty-eight guns. I was walking the deck with my father when a thin, sallow, small young man stepped up the side. I should have taken him for a midshipman, but he had on a post-captain’s uniform. He nodded, as an old acquaintance, to my father, who stood hat in hand with the other men to receive him. ‘That’s Mr. Nelson, our new captain,’ said my father; ‘he’ll not let the grass grow under his feet.’ That was the first time I ever saw the great Lord Nelson. What my father said was true. We soon sailed to convoy a fleet of transports destined to attack St. Juan de Nicaragua. Up a muddy river we pulled, led by our captain, with a hot scorching sun striking down on us. We arrived before a fort. Captain

Nelson leaped on shore, sword in hand, leaving his shoes in the mud, to attack it. The fort was taken, and so was San Juan itself; and though the grass did not grow under our feet, it was soon growing over the heads of numbers of the fine fellows who composed the expedition—both red-coats and seamen; and though our captain, receiving notice of his appointment to another ship, the ‘Janus,’ sailed away immediately, we lost the greater number of our people by sickness. The captain was so knocked up that he had to go home invalided, as did my father, who was never able again to go to sea. I went with him, and we lived for some time at Deal.

“I remember early in January, 1782, a tremendous gale sprang up. My father and I were standing on the shore, he with his glass in his hand watching the ships driving here and there, one running foul of another, when we observed a heavy store-ship drive right down on a frigate.

“‘They’ll grind each other down to the water’s edge,’ observed my father. ‘Does no one on board know what to do? I’d like to be off to lend a hand; but that’s impossible: few boats could live in such a sea.’

“While we were talking, a lad came running along the beach, saying that an officer was in a

great taking, wanting to get off to his ship, and no one would go.

“ ‘Who is he?’ asked my father.

“ ‘A Captain Nelson,’ answered the lad.

“ ‘I’ll go, if any man will trust his boat,’ exclaimed my father. ‘Come along, Ned.’

“We ran along the beach, and there we found our late captain walking up and down, fuming away, and trying to persuade the boatmen to take him off.

“ ‘I’ll go, sir, if I had a boat,’ said my father. ‘I’ve long sailed with you.’

“ ‘Ah! Ned Freeman. Thank you—thank you,’ exclaimed the captain. ‘I’m sure you’d go with me anywhere.’

“ ‘We’ll take the captain off if he’ll give us fifteen guineas,’ observed several of the men, owners of a fine boat.

“ ‘Done!’ exclaimed the captain. ‘Off we go at once.’

“My father and I, with the other men, launched the boat. Away we pulled with the white-topped seas dancing up round us, and the dangerous Goodwin Sands to leeward, towards which the frigate was driving fast. Captain Nelson, by word and look, urged us on, though more than once I thought the boat would have been swamped, and

all hands lost. We did succeed in getting alongside. The captain sprang on board, and soon had got the ships clear, with only the loss of the frigate's bowsprit and pennant.

“ ‘ Well, Freeman, if you can't sail with me, your boy must,’ said the captain, as the boat was about to shove off for the shore; ‘ I'll look after him.’

“ ‘ Will you go, Ned?’ said my father to me.

“ There was no time for consideration. I said, ‘ Yes, father.’

“ My kind father wrung my hand, and we parted, never to meet again.

“ The ‘ Albemarle’ soon after sailed for Canada and the West Indies. Our captain had a kind heart. On our first cruise we captured a fishing vessel belonging to Boston. The master wrung his hands, declaring that he had no other property, and a large family at home to support, who would all be brought to beggary. The captain told him not to be cast down; that he would employ him as a pilot, and give him back his vessel at the end of the time. He was as good as his word, and I never saw a poor fellow so happy and grateful as the fisherman was when he was put on shore. Some time after, when we were all suffering from scurvy, not having had a fresh piece of meat or

vegetables for many months, the same man came off to us with a full supply for several days, which I believe saved the lives of many poor fellows on board.

“Soon after this, while cruising off Boston, a squadron of four French line-of-battle ships and a frigate were seen from the mast-head. They made sail in chase, but the captain knew well all the shoals and quicksands in those parts, and soon got into channels where the big ships were afraid to follow. The frigate, however, kept on her course, and when we saw this we hove to, to wait for her. We all looked forward with joy to a brush, but she did not like our appearance, and much to our disappointment, about she went and rejoined her consorts.

“I can't tell you all the things we did in the West Indies. At last we went home, and were paid off; and I remained on shore with my widowed mother till I heard that Captain Nelson had commissioned the 'Boreas.' I went and joined him. He received me heartily, and away we sailed for the West Indies.

“Young as was our captain, he found himself senior officer on the station—that is to say, second in command under the admiral; for in those days we had old heads on young shoulders; so we

should now, if boys would try to imitate the example of wise and noble men, not to ape the folly of foolish ones. We were chiefly among the Leeward islands.

“While visiting the island of Nevis, the captain fell in love with a lady, a Mrs. Nisbet, and they married: a very good, kind young lady she was, that I remember; but after we returned home I saw no more of her. The ‘Boreas’ was paid off in 1787. Thus I have told you most of what I remember about Nelson’s early days. He was soon to be known to the world as the greatest naval captain of his time.”

CHAPTER II.

“ You have heard speak of the ‘ Agamemnon’ of sixty-four guns. I was one of the old Agamemnons, as we called ourselves. We, all her crew, were proud of her, and good reason we had to be so. Captain Nelson commissioned her on the 26th of January, 1793, and it wasn’t many days after this that I joined her. You see I kept my eye on him. When a man has found a good captain, if he’s wise he will follow him whenever he can.

“ I can’t now remember all the places we went to. First, we were one of the channel fleet. Then we were sent out to the Mediterranean, where our captain astonished the admirals, and made the soldier-generals almost tear their eyes out by the way he did things. He took care that the weeds should not grow to the bottom of the ship he commanded. First we had to conquer the island of Cor-

sica.* We drove the French out of every place but the strong fort of Bastia; so we landed, and hauled our guns up the heights, and kept up such a hot fire on the place that it gave up, and then the soldiers marched in and gained the glory. Then we took a place called Calvi. Here it was that a shot, striking the ground, threw up some sand in the captain's eye, and though we thought but little of it at the time, he never saw again with that eye. It was very hard work, and the country was unhealthy, and many of us grew sick, so that we were heartily glad when it was over. There was something better in store for us too. News was brought us that the French fleet, nearly twice as strong as ours, was on the lookout for us. Our fleet was under the command of Admiral Hotham. You may be sure that we kept a bright lookout for the enemy. At last they hove in sight, and one of our frigates, the 'Inconstant,' got so close that she brought to action the 'Ca Ira,' a French eighty-four, which had carried away her main and

* Lord Hood was commander-in-chief. The object of the attack was to co-operate with the patriot Corsicans, who, under their well-known gallant General Paoli, desired to liberate themselves from the yoke of France, then ruled by the tyrannical and cruel Convention. The story of the struggles of Corsica to gain her independence is deeply interesting.

foretop masts. The 'Inconstant,' however, was obliged to bear away, and a French frigate came up and took the line-of-battle ship in tow, while two other line-of-battle ships guarded her on her weather-bow.

Our captain had been watching all that took place, and, though we had no line-of-battle ship to support us, we made all sail in chase. There was not a man on board whose heart didn't beat high with pride at the way we went into action against odds so great; but we Agamemnons knew well enough what our captain could do and would do. As soon as the enemy could bring their guns to bear, they kept firing away their stern-chasers at us. We stood on, without answering a shot, till we were within a hundred yards of them. 'Star-board the helm!' cried the captain. The after-sails were brailed up, and the ship falling off, our broadside was brought to bear on the retreating enemy. Now we opened a tremendous fire on them, every gun telling. Then the helm was put a-port, the after-yards braced up, and again we were after them.

"Again and again we practised the same manœuvre, never allowing the 'Ca Ira' to get a shot at us with one of her broadside guns. The enemy, however, were not idle with their after-guns,

though it was not till we had torn her sails almost to ribbons that the French frigates began to open their fire upon us. Then down came more of the enemy's ships towards us. The captain seemed only the better pleased at seeing this, and it's my opinion he would have hove to to meet them, and still managed to come off victorious by some means or other, even if the admiral had not made the signal of recall. Though our sails and rigging were much cut up, we had only seven men wounded, while the 'Ca Ira' lost one hundred and ten that day.

"The next day we were again at it, for we managed to cut off the 'Ca Ira,' and the 'Censeur,' which had her in tow. This time we got one on each side of us, and both of them fought well; but we fought better, and at length both struck, and our boats were sent on board to take possession. I never before had witnessed such a scene as that I saw on board the 'Ca Ira.' On her decks lay three hundred brave fellows, dead or dying, or badly wounded, besides those she had lost the day before, while the 'Censeur' had lost three hundred and fifty. Our captain wanted to follow up the enemy, and it's my belief, if we had, we should have taken every one of them; but the admiral would not let him, and said we had done very well

as it was. So we had; but, you see, our captain was the man who always wanted to do something better than well. *Do well* sits on the main-top: *Do better* climbs to the truck.

“The ‘Agamemnon’ had been so knocked about, that the captain now shifted his flag into the ‘Minerva’ frigate, and took me and many other men with him. One of our first duties was to carry off the English garrison and privateers and merchantmen from Corsica, which had declared for the French. We soon afterwards fought several actions with the enemy, and then war broke out between England and Spain, and we had a narrow escape from an overwhelming force of Spanish ships. We had just sailed from Gibraltar, when two Spanish line-of-battle ships followed us. We were keeping pretty well ahead, when a man fell overboard. To let a man drown without trying to help him was against our captain’s nature. A jolly-boat, commanded by Lieutenant Hardy, was lowered, and away she pulled to try and pick up the poor fellow. The boat was within range of the enemy’s guns: the man was not to be seen. The captain had been anxiously watching all that took place. ‘I’ll not lose Hardy,’ he exclaimed. ‘Back the main-top sail!’ No order was ever obeyed more readily, and soon

we were dropping back towards our boat, and towards the enemy. We fully expected to be brought to action, but we did not care for that; we got back Mr. Hardy and our boat, when what was our astonishment to see the headmost Spaniard shorten sail to wait for his consort. There can be no doubt he thought we had assistance not far off. The Spaniards were very timid of us in those days—they had good reason to be so. With flying colors we sailed out of the Straits, laughing at our enemy.

“Both officers and men were constantly being shifted from ship to ship in those days; and, as soon as we reached Cadiz we found ourselves transferred to the ‘Captain,’ a fine seventy-four. Captain Nelson hoisted his pennant, as commodore, on board of her, with Captain Miller under him. You have heard speak of the battle of St. Vincent. Sir John Jervis, who was made Earl St. Vincent, was our admiral, and Commodore Nelson was second in command. He was now going to show all the world what he really was. The Spaniards had twice as many ships as we had. They were much bigger, and carried heavier guns; but what did Nelson or we care for that? It is the men who fight the battles, and Nelson knew the stuff British seamen are made of.

“Early in the morning of the 14th of February, the Spanish fleet hove in sight, and we bore down on them. They were in line; that is, one following the other. We managed to break that line, and cut off one part from the other, just as you would cut a snake in two. We followed the head, the biggest part. That part bore away before the wind to join the tail. The ‘Captain’ was instantly wore round, instead of tacking, according to a signal just then made by the admiral, and away after them we went, followed by the ‘Culloden,’ ‘Blenheim,’ and ‘Diadem.’ The ‘Captain’ was in the rear of the British line; but by the manœuvre just performed, we came up with the Spaniards, and in a short time we and the ‘Blenheim’ were tooth and nail with no less than seven Spanish line-of-battle ships—one, the ‘Santissima Trinidad,’ of one hundred and thirty guns, and the ‘San Josef’ and ‘Salvador del Mundo’ of one hundred and twelve, the others being of eighty and seventy-four guns. For nearly an hour we pounded away at them, till Captain Collingwood, in the ‘Excellent,’ came up and gave us a helping hand by pouring a tremendous broadside into the ‘San Nicolas.’

“Our captain now let us fall close alongside that ship, and then he called for boarders, and away we dashed into her. Right through her we

went; her flag was hauled down, and then, more boarders coming up, on we dashed aboard the big 'San Josef,' and in a little time we had her also. We followed our captain to the quarter-deck, and then the Spanish officers assembled, and their captain and all of them presented their swords to Commodore Nelson. As he received them he gave them to one of his barge-men, William Fearney, who, with no little pleasure, tucked them under his arm, just as you see in the picture in the Painted Hall yonder. All the seven ships were taken, and if the Spaniards had had any pluck we should have taken the remainder; but they hadn't, and made off while we were unable to follow. That is the worst of fighting with cowards. If they had been brave men they would have stopped to fight, and we should have captured every one of their ships. That was the battle of St. Vincent. The commodore was made an admiral and a knight, and now everybody in England, high and low, rich and poor, had heard of him, and sung his praises.

“ You've seen a picture of Sir Horatio Nelson, as he was then, in a boat attacked by Spaniards, and his coxswain, John Sykes, defending him, and receiving on his own head the blow made at him by one of the enemy. I'll tell you how it was.

“His flag was flying on board the ‘Theseus,’ and he had command of the inner squadron blockading Cadiz. The Spanish gunboats had annoyed us, and he resolved to attack them with the boats at night. In we pulled. In the admiral’s barge there were only his ten barge-men—I was one of them—Captain Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, when suddenly we found ourselves close up with a Spanish launch carrying twenty-six men or more. To run was not in our nature, so we tackled to with the launch. It was desperate work, and the Spaniards fought well. Sir Horatio was foremost in the fight; but the enemy seemed to know who he was, and aimed many a blow at his head. Sykes, not thinking of himself, defended him as a bear does her whelps. Blow after blow he warded off, till at last his own arm was disabled. Still, instead of getting over to the other side of the boat, he stood by the admiral. Down came another Spaniard’s sword which Sir Horatio could not ward off, but Sykes sprang forward and received the blow on his own head, which it laid open. This did not make us less determined to beat the enemy. One after the other we cut them down till we killed eighteen, wounded the rest, and towed their launch off in triumph. It will just show you how the men who served

with him loved the admiral. That was a desperate fight in a small way, let me tell you; but before long we had still worse work to go through.

“Many men are thought a great deal of if they gain one victory. Nelson never but once suffered a defeat. It was at the island of Teneriffe. He was sent there, by Sir John Jervis, with a squadron to cut out a rich Manilla ship returning to Spain, which lay in the harbor of Santa Cruz. Our squadron consisted of four ships of the line, three frigates, and the ‘Fox’ cutter. Our first attempt at landing failed, and then the admiral, who never would be beaten, against the orders of Sir John himself, determined to take command of the expedition on shore. Midnight was the time chosen for the attack. The orders were, that all the boats should land at a big mole which runs out from the town. Away we pulled; the night was very dark, the boats got separated, and when we reached the mole there were only four or five boats there. A heavy fire was at once opened on us, but the admiral would not be turned back. Drawing his sword, he was springing on shore, but the same moment he was struck by a musket-ball, and fell back into the arms of his step-son, Lieutenant Nisbet. The lieutenant and one of our men bound up his arm, while all those who could

be collected jumped into the boat to shove her off. It was difficult work, for she had grounded. We pulled close under the battery, to avoid the heavy fire from it. As we moved on, all we could see was the bright flashes from the guns extending in a long line in front of us. On again pulling out, a fearful cry was raised. It came from the 'Fox' cutter. A shot had struck her between wind and water, and down she went, leaving her crew struggling in the waves. The admiral had just before been lifted up in the stern-sheets by Mr. Nisbet, to look about him.

" 'Give way, lads—give way,' he shouted, forgetting his own desperate wound. 'We must save them.'

" Soon we were in among the struggling men, and hauling them into the boats as fast as we could, the shot all the time rattling about us. The admiral seemed to have recovered his strength, and worked away with his left arm, assisting in saving a great many. Eighty men were saved, but more than half the crew were lost. The first ship we came to was the 'Seahorse.' Her captain's wife, Mrs. Freemantle, was on board, but he was with the boats, and no one could tell whether he was alive or dead.

" 'No, no,' exclaimed the admiral; 'I can give

the poor lady no tidings of her husband ; she shall not see me in this state. Pull to another ship.'

" We managed to reach the 'Theseus.' When a rope was lowered, he sprang up the side, and would have no help. We could scarcely believe our eyes, for we thought he was half dead. His was a wonderful spirit. Then he sent us off to try and save a few more of the poor fellows from the 'Fox.' When we got back we found that he had made the surgeon at once cut off his arm. We brought him the news that Captain Freeman-tle, though badly wounded, had got off in safety to his ship. You may be sure that both he and all of us were very anxious to know what was going forward on shore. At length we heard that Captain Troubridge had managed to collect two or three hundred men—all who were not drowned or killed by shot—and having marched into the square, had taken the town. Of course, he could do nothing against the citadel. Some eight thousand Spanish troops were collecting about the place, but he was not a man to be daunted ; telling them that he would burn the town if they molested him, he was able to draw off all his men in safety. During that business we lost two hundred and fifty men and officers. It was a sad affair, but though it was a failure, every man

engaged in it did his duty bravely, and no one could blame the admiral for what had happened. We heard that the Spaniards treated our wounded men who were left on shore with the greatest kindness and care. No one among the wounded suffered more than the admiral, and it was some months, I've heard say, before the pain left his arm.

“Once more we returned to Old England, and the admiral went up to London to try and get cured of his wound. Since he left home he had lost an eye and an arm, and had been terribly knocked about besides; but people thought of what he had done, not of how he looked, and he was received with honor wherever he went.

“I and a few others of his old hands lived on shore, keeping a lookout for when he should get another command. We were afraid of being pressed, and made to serve somewhere away from him. One and all of us were ready enough to fight for our king and our country, provided we could fight under him. We had not long to wait. We soon got news that the ‘Vanguard’ was to be commissioned to carry Sir Horatio Nelson’s flag to join the Mediterranean fleet under Earl St. Vincent. That was in the year 1798.

“We sailed from Gibraltar on the 9th of May

with three line-of-battle ships, four frigates, and a sloop-of-war, to look after the French fleet, which consisted of thirteen ships of the line, seven frigates, twenty-four smaller ships of war, and a fleet of transports, bound, as we afterwards learned, for Egypt. If the French had conquered that country, they would have gone on, there is no doubt of it, to attack our possessions in India. The admiral, I dare say, knew the importance of stopping that French fleet. In spite of their numbers, we did not fear them. Proud we were of our ship, and prouder still was our admiral of her and her crew and the fleet he commanded. While we were in the Gulf of Lyons, after it had been blowing hard all day, it came on one dark night to blow harder still, and, without warning, first our main and then our mizzen-topmast went over the side, and lastly the foremast went altogether, so that we no longer could carry sail on it. What a crippled wreck we looked in the morning! There was a thick fog: not one of the squadron could be seen. We were boasting the day before that we were ready to meet more than an equal number of the finest ships the French could bring against us; and now we lay docked of our wings, and scarcely able to contend with the smallest frigate. Providence was watching over us, and we had good

reason to believe this when, some time afterwards, we learned that that very day the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and passed within a few miles of us, while we were hid from them by the fog. At last Captain Ball, in the 'Alexander,' came up, and towed us into the harbor of San Pietro in Sardinia, where in four days, with the aid of his and other two ships' companies, we got completely refitted and ready for sea. Away we went in search of the French fleet, with General Bonaparte himself on board. We heard of the French at Gozo, and our admiral would have attacked them there, but they had gone; then on we sailed for Egypt, hoping to find them off Alexandria, but not a sign of them could we discover. If we had had our frigates, we should have found them out fast enough. Leaving Alexandria, we steered for Syracuse, where we provisioned and watered; we visited the Morea; we hunted along the Greek coast. At last we entered the Gulf of Coron, where Captain Troubridge brought us the news that the French fleet had been seen steering from Candia for Egypt four weeks before. Instantly all sail was made for Alexandria. Still we scarcely expected to find the French fleet there. Great then was our joy when the signal was seen flying from the mast-head of the 'Zealous,' Captain Hood,

that the enemy's fleet were moored in Aboukir bay. Not a moment was lost in clearing the ships for action. We all knew that we had hot work before us. We found the French fleet moored in a sort of curve in the bay, but far enough from the shore to let some of our ships get inside of them; that is, between them and the land. This the French little expected, and many hadn't even their guns loaded on that side.

“Oh! it was a magnificent sight, as on we sailed, receiving a hot fire from the shore batteries, but not answering a shot, while silently we furled our sails, and got ready for anchoring. I believe that silence made the hearts of the Frenchmen quake more than our loudest hurrahs would have done. It was evening; the sun was just sinking into the ocean as we entered the bay. The ‘Goliath’ led the way, followed by the ‘Zealous,’ and then came the ‘Orion,’ all anchoring inside the enemy's line. The ‘Vanguard’ (our ship) was the first which anchored outside, within half pistol-shot of the ‘Spartiate.’ We had six colors flying, just as a sign to the Frenchmen that come what might we were not likely to strike to them; and now there was very little to be seen but the flashes and thick smoke from the guns. Other ships followed us outside the French line,

but the greater number were inside. No sooner were our anchors dropped than we opened fire, our example being followed by the other ships as they brought up. We blazed away in right earnest; there was no flinching from our guns. What the Frenchmen were about I cannot tell, but we seemed to fire two shots to their one; but then their guns carried heavier metal than ours, and they had many more of them. It was so dark that we had to get our fighting-lanterns hung up along the decks. Just fancy us then stripped to the waist, with handkerchiefs bound round our heads, and straining every nerve as we ran in and out, and cleaned and loaded our heavy guns, and blazed away as fast as we could. We were covered, too, with smoke and powder, and before long most of us were sprinkled pretty thickly with our own or our shipmates' blood. Such was the sight you would have seen between-decks on board every ship in the action.

“I must tell you what happened in other parts. There was a shoal we had to pass on our starboard hand. The ‘Culloden,’ the ship of the brave Captain Troubridge, struck on it when standing in, for by that time the darkness of night had come on. He instantly made signals which prevented the other ships, the ‘Alexander,’ ‘Swiftsure,’ and

'Leander,' following, and getting on shore. They did their best to help off the 'Culloden,' but could not get her off, so stood on into the battle. Before even they opened their fire, five of the enemy's ships had struck. On standing on, Captain Hollowell fell in with the old 'Billyruffian' ('Bellerophon'), with already two hundred dead and wounded, and almost a wreck from the tremendous fire of 'L'Orient' of one hundred and twenty guns. The 'Swiftsure' took her place, and soon made the Frenchman pay dear for what she had done. I heard of this afterwards. A seaman at his gun can know little more of an action than what he sees before his nose, and that is chiefly smoke and fire, and part of the hull and rigging of one ship, and men struck down, and timbers and splinters flying about, and yards and blocks rattling down, while he hears alone the roar of the guns, the shouts, and shrieks, and groans of those around him. This sort of terrible work was going on for some time, when the word got about that the admiral himself was desperately wounded in the head. It made our hearts sink within us with sorrow, but it did not cause us to fight less fiercely, or be less determined to gain the victory. How anxiously we waited to hear what the surgeons would say about the wound of our noble chief!

and when we were told that it was merely the skin of his head which was hurt, and which had almost blinded him, how hearty the cheer we gave! It must have astonished the Frenchmen, who could not tell the cause. Then at it again we went, blazing away like fury, the round-shot and chain-shot and bullets whizzing and tearing along our decks, making the white splinters fly, and sending many a poor fellow out of the world, when suddenly the darkness, which had till now surrounded us, was lighted up by the bright flames which darted out of every port and twisted round the masts of a burning ship. We soon learned that she was a French ship, the big 'L'Orient,' with which the 'Billyruffian' had been engaged. Never did I see such a sight; in a few minutes she was just one mass of flames, from her truck to the water's edge. Her miserable crew, from one end of her to the other, were leaping into the water to avoid the scorching heat. 'Out boats!' was the order, and each of our ships near at hand sent as many boats as could be manned to the rescue of our unfortunate enemies. Had they been our own shipmates, we could not have exerted ourselves more. Still the battle raged from one end of the line to the other. Suddenly there was a sound as if the earth were rent asunder. In one

pointed mass of flame up went the tall masts, and spars, and the decks of the huge 'L'Orient.' They seemed, in one body of fire, to rise above our mast-heads, and then down they came, spreading far and wide, hissing into the water among the boats and the hundreds of poor wretches struggling for their lives. Among them was the French commodore. Captain Casabianca, I heard, was his name. He was a brave man. He had his son with him, a little fellow only ten years old, as gallant, those we rescued told us, as his father. They were blown up together. We saw the two, the father holding on his son clinging to a spar. We pulled towards them, but just then a bit of the burning wreck must have struck them and carried them down, for when we got up to the spot they were nowhere to be seen. That's the worst of a battle; there are so many young boys on board who often get as cruelly hurt as the men, and haven't the strength to bear up under their sufferings. Well, as I was saying, we pulled about, picking up the half-burnt struggling wretches wherever we could find them among the bits of floating wreck. Only seventy were saved out of many more than a thousand men on board. That was about ten o'clock. For some time not a shot was fired. Every man felt that something

awful had happened, but still many of the Frenchmen hadn't given in. So at it again we went, and blazed away at each other till three in the morning. When daylight returned, only two of the enemy's ships of the line had their colors flying, and they had not been engaged. They with two frigates, cut their cables in the forenoon, and stood out to sea, we having no ships in a fit state to follow them. There were thirteen French line-of-battle ships when the action began: we took nine, two were burned, and two escaped; and of the four frigates, one was sunk and another burned; while the enemy lost three thousand one hundred and five men in killed and wounded. Captain Westcott was the only captain killed, but we lost in all nearly nine hundred other officers and men. As soon as the battle was over, an order was issued that all on board every ship should return thanks to Almighty God, who had given us the victory. Many a hearty thanksgiving was offered up that day. It was a solemn ceremony; not a word was spoken fore and aft till the chaplain began the prayers. A dead silence reigned throughout the fleet. The Egyptians and Arabs on shore could not make it out, I've heard say; and even the French officers, prisoners on board, infidels as they were, listened with respect, and could not help

believing that there must be a God who had given us the victory. Hard work we had to get our ships and prizes fit for sea again after the battering they had got; as it was, we had to burn four of our prizes, as it would have taken too long to refit them; and then at last away we sailed with the larger part of the fleet for Naples.

“The battle I’ve been telling you about was called the Battle of the Nile. It was, I’ve heard say, one of the most glorious and important ever fought on the sea.”

CHAPTER III.

“AFTER lying at Naples for a long time, Lord Keith came out and took the chief command, and we sailed with a squadron for Malta. On our way we fell in with a French fleet, the biggest ship of which was the ‘Généreux,’ one of the line-of-battle ships which had escaped from the Nile. We captured her and a frigate, and not long afterwards the ‘Guillaume Tell,’ the other line-of-battle ship, after in vain attempting to escape from Valetta harbor, surrendered to us; and thus every ship of the fleet which had escorted Bonaparte to Egypt was captured, except, I fancy, one frigate.

“At last we went into Leghorn Roads, and after some time Lord Nelson and Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and other people who had been on board, landed, and travelled through Germany towards England. I have heard say that he was

more than once very nearly caught by the French during the journey through Italy. What a prize he would have been to them! I remained in the 'Foudroyant' for some time. We all missed the admiral, and hoped that he would come out again, and hoist his flag on board his old ship. Whatever ship he went to it was the same, the men loved him, and would have done any thing for him. At last I was sent home in a prize, and was paid off. As the admiral was taking a spell on shore, I thought I would take one too, and enjoy myself. I spent some time with my old mother; but one night, going down to see an old shipmate who was ill at a public-house near Deal, I found myself in the hands of a press-gang, and carried aboard the 'Elephant,' Captain Foley. I had made up my mind to belong to the flag-ship of Admiral Nelson, whatever she might be. Still, it couldn't be helped, and, of course, I determined to do my duty. I there learned that Captain Hardy had commissioned the 'Saint George,' of ninety-eight guns, and that it was supposed Lord Nelson would hoist his flag on board her. This he shortly afterwards did, and it was some consolation, when we sailed for Yarmouth Roads, off the Norfolk coast, to join him. It was soon whispered about that there was work for us to do, and we guessed that there was

truth in the report when the fleet was ordered away up the Baltic. This was in 1801; a long time ago it seems. You see that Russia, and Sweden, and Denmark were all going to join against us to help the French; and as the Danes had a fine fleet, it was necessary to destroy or capture it, to prevent it doing us mischief. We therefore sent to tell the Danes that they must give it up and be friends, or that we would knock their city about their ears, and sink their ships. They dared us do our worst. They ought to have known what Lord Nelson was likely to do; but you must understand that Sir Hyde Parker was commander-in-chief—he was only second in command. A great deal of time was lost in diplomatizing, and all that time the Danes were preparing their ships and batteries to receive us. If you take a look at a chart of the mouth of the Baltic, you will see what numbers of shoals, and small islands, and narrow channels there are about Copenhagen. Fortunately, one of our captains, Captain Dommet, knew the coast, and he persuaded Sir Hyde Parker only to let the lighter ships go up to the attack. The ‘St. George’ drew too much water, and, fortunately for us, Lord Nelson chose our ship to hoist his flag on board. Didn’t we cheer him as he came alongside! Copenhagen stands on a dead flat facing the

sea; it is defended by a large fort and two heavy batteries, thrown up on rocks or sand-banks. Besides these there was the Danish fleet drawn up in a long line before the city, and eighteen floating batteries, mounting no less than six hundred and ninety guns. Some way off, in front of the city, is a shoal called the Middle Ground, and then another channel, and then comes the long island of Saltholm. On the last day of March we entered the channel between the Swedish and Danish coasts, having the castle of Helsingburg on one side, and that of Elsinore on the other, and on we sailed in front of the city till we came to an anchor off the island of Arnak. Sir Hyde Parker remained near the mouth of the channel with the heavier ships, so that Lord Nelson had the lighter ones all to himself, while the brave Captain Riou commanded the frigates. All the night was spent in preparing for battle, and Captain Hardy was employed in sounding the channel, through which we were to pass to the attack. He even reached in the darkness close up to one of the Danish ships, and sounded round her. There was the whole squadron anchored so close in with the Danish shore, that had our enemies known the range they might have done us much mischief. Lord Nelson spent the chief part of the night dictating

orders to his clerks, to send round to his captains to tell them what to do. At last the morning broke, and, with a fair wind, the 'Edgar' leading under a press of sail, the fleet stood down the Danish line, and took up their positions as arranged, the brave Captain Riou and his frigates being opposed to the Crown Battery, at the further end. With a groan, we who once belonged to her saw the old 'Agamemnon' take the ground on the shoal I have spoken of; the 'Bellona' and 'Russel' touched also, but sufficiently within range to take part in the battle. Soon after ten the 'Edgar' began the action, and one by one, as the other ships slipped from their anchors, and following at intervals, took up their position, they also commenced firing. The commander-in-chief, Sir Hyde Parker, was away on our right, you'll understand, with the bigger ships, and from the way the wind was he could not have come up to help us. Now along the whole line the action became general. Opposed to us there were the forts and the floating batteries, and the Danish ships of war, all blazing away together; and many of them had furnaces for heating red-hot shot, which several times nearly set our ships on fire. No men ever fought better than the Danes, and several times when we had killed or wounded all

the defenders of a battery, their places were supplied by fresh hands from the shore, who worked away at their guns as bravely as the first, till they, poor fellows, were shot down. More than once the ships of the enemy had hauled down their flags, and when we were going to take possession again opened fire on us. This enraged us, as you may suppose; but we cut them up terribly, and many of their ships and floating batteries were sinking or on fire. For three hours or more we were at it, pounding away without being able to silence them. They were cutting us up too, let me tell you, riddling our hull, and round-shot, and red-hot shot, and chain-shot, and bar-shot flying around, about, and through us. It seemed a wonder that a man was left alive on our decks. Lord Nelson kept pacing the quarter-deck, watching every thing that was going on. A young Danish officer had got a big raft, with a breastwork mounting some twenty guns, and in spite of our marines, who kept up a sharp fire on him, he held his post till the battle was over. The admiral praised him for his gallantry, and, I believe, would have been very sorry if he had been killed, much as he was annoying us. A shot now struck our mainmast, sending the splinters flying on every side. I saw the admiral smile. 'This is hot

work,' he observed to one of the officers; 'in another moment not one of us may be alive, but, mark you, I would not be anywhere else for thousands.' It's my opinion that most men would have thought we were getting the worst of it; and if we hadn't had Lord Nelson for our chief, we should have thought so likewise.

"Sir Hyde Parker's flag-ship was near enough for us to make out his signals. It was reported that the signal for discontinuing the action had been made. 'Acknowledge it!' cried Lord Nelson. 'Is our signal for close action still hoisted?' 'Yes, sir,' was the answer. 'Then keep it so,' he replied. Soon afterwards he put his glass up to his blind eye, and turning to Captain Foley, he exclaimed, 'I have a right to be blind sometimes, and really I don't see the signal. Never mind it, I say, nail mine to the mast.' Admiral Graves in like manner disobeyed the order, and the rest of the squadron, looking only to Lord Nelson, continued the action.

"I was telling you about the brave Captain Rion and his frigates. The 'Amazon,' his ship, had suffered much, and was so surrounded by smoke that he could see nothing of the batteries to which he was opposed. He ordered, therefore, his men to cease firing to let the smoke clear off,

that they might see what they were about. This allowed the Danes to take better aim at them, and so tremendous was the fire opened on them, that there seemed every chance of the frigate's being sent to the bottom. Just then, Sir Hyde Parker's signal was seen flying. Captain Riou judged that he ought to obey it. He had been already badly wounded in the head by a splinter. 'What will Nelson think of us?' he exclaimed, mournfully, as the frigate wore round. Just then his clerk was killed by his side, and directly afterwards another shot struck down some marines who were hauling in the main-brace. It seemed as if not a man on board could escape. 'Come, then, my boys,' exclaimed the brave Captain Riou, 'let us all die together.' They were the last words he ever spoke. The next moment a shot cut him in two. There was not a more gallant officer, or one the men loved better, in the service.

"Well, as I was saying, on we went at it for four long hours. In spite of the shot, and bullets, and splinters flying about on every side, I had not had a scratch. Several poor fellows had been struck down close to me. I cannot say that I thought that I should not be hit, because the truth is I did not think about the matter. I went on working at my gun like the rest, only just trying how

fast we could fire, and how we could do most damage to the enemy. That's the way to gain the victory; it does not do to think of any thing else. At last I felt a blow as if some one had struck me on the side, and down I went. My trowsers and belt were singed and torn, and the blood started from my side; but I bound my handkerchief over the wound, and in a little time got up and went back to my gun, and there I stayed till the fighting was done, and then I let them carry me below to the cockpit, for walk by myself I could not.

“Some of our ships suffered dreadfully: the ‘Monarch’ lost two hundred and ten men; the ‘Isis,’ a hundred and ten; and the ‘Bellona,’ seventy-five, and all the other ships great numbers. At last, however, the Danes could stand it no longer, and ship after ship struck; but still the shore batteries kept firing on, and killed great numbers of men on board the prizes. One of their ships, the ‘Danbrog,’ after she had struck and was in flames, fired on our boats. Notwithstanding this, when she was seen drifting away before the wind, the fire gaining on her, Captain Bertie, of the ‘Ardent,’ sent his boats to the assistance of the poor fellows as they leaped out of the ports to escape the flames. At last Lord Nelson, wishing to put a stop to the carnage, wrote to the

Crown Prince, the Danish commander, saying if he did not cease firing he must burn the prizes. A wafer was brought him. 'That will not do,' said he, 'we must not appear to be in a hurry; bring a candle and sealing-wax.' Captain Sir Frederick Thesiger, with a flag of truce, took the letter, and after some time the Danes sent one in return to arrange what was to be done, and the battle of Copenhagen, for so it was called, was over.

"While negotiations were going on, Lord Nelson ordered the ships to take advantage of a fair wind, and to start out of the narrow channels. As we in the 'Elephant' were going out we grounded, as did the 'Defiance,' about a mile from the Trekroner battery, and there we remained for many hours. At last, however, we got off. We had to burn all our prizes except one ship, the 'Holstein,' sixty-four, which was sent home. The next day Lord Nelson went on shore to visit the prince, and settle matters. He was received with great respect, and he told the Danes that he never had a braver enemy, or known men fight better than they had done, and that now he hoped that they would all be friends again forever after. Lord Nelson now returned to the 'St. George,' and the fleet sailed to the eastward to look after

the Swedes. We were off Bornholm, but the 'St. George' could not get through a shallow channel which had to be passed, and was some twelve leagues astern of us. Every minute we expected to be engaged with the enemy. At midnight, who should step on board the 'Elephant' but Lord Nelson himself. The night was very cold, but he had come all that distance in an open boat without even a cloak, so eager was he to be present at the expected battle. None took place, and after a little time I was sent home invalided."

CHAPTER IV.

“WHEN I came home from the Baltic, I and others were landed at Yarmouth, and sent to the hospital. I was some time in getting well. I’ll tell you what set me on my legs again. One day as I was lying on my bed in the crowded ward, thinking if I should ever recover, and be fit for sea again, the news came that a brig of war had entered the harbor with Lord Nelson on board. Would you believe it, I was thanking Heaven that our brave admiral had come back safe, and was in a half dreamy, dozing state, when I heard a cheer, and opening my eyes, there he was himself going round from bed to bed, and talking to each of the men. He knew me at once, and told me that I must make haste and get well and join his ship, as it wouldn’t be long, probably, before he again hoisted his flag.

“You shall have any rating you like, remember that,” said he, taking my hand. “We must have medals and prize-money for you; you have gallantly won them, all of you.”

“He passed on, for he had a kind word to say to many hundred poor fellows that day. When I got well I went home for a spell; but before long I heard that Lord Nelson had hoisted his flag as commander-in-chief of the channel squadron on board the ‘Medusa’ frigate. I went on board, and the admiral instantly rated me as quartermaster. We had plenty of work before us, for General Bonaparte, who was now Emperor of France, wanted to come and invade England. He had got a flotilla of gunboats all ready to carry over his army, and he had a large fleet besides. Many people thought he would succeed. We knew that the wooden walls of Old England were her best defence; and so we afloat never believed that a French soldier would ever set foot on our shores.

“They had, however, a large flotilla in Boulogne harbor, and it was determined to destroy it with the boats of the squadron. I volunteered for one of our boats. The boats were in three divisions. We left the ships a little before midnight. It was very dark, and the divisions got separated. We knew that it was desperate work that we were on.

Ours was the only division which reached the harbor. There were batteries defending the place, and troops on the shore, and soldiers on board the flotilla, and the outer vessels were guarded with iron spikes, and had boarding-nets triced up, and were lashed together. In we darted. It was desperate work, and the fire of the great guns and musketry soon showed our enemies to us, and us to them.

“ ‘Just keep off, you brave Englishmen, you can do nothing here,’ sung out a French officer, in very plain English.

“ ‘We’ll try that!’ was our reply, as we dashed on board, in spite of iron spikes and boarding nettings. On we went; we cut out several of the vessels, and were making off with them with loads of Frenchmen on board, when, would you believe it, if the enemy didn’t open their fire on the boats, killing their own people as well as us. To my mind, those French, in war, are as bad as cannibals—that’s what Lord Nelson always said of them. If it hadn’t been for this we should have burned or captured most of them. While I was just springing on board another vessel, among the flashes from the guns, the flames and smoke, the hissing and rattling shot, I got a knock on my head which sent me back to the bottom of the boat. I knew

nothing more till I found myself on board my own ship, and heard that we had lost some hundred and seventy poor fellows. I was sent to the hospital, where one of our gallant leaders, Captain Parker, died of his wounds.

“The next ship I found myself on board was the ‘Victory.’ There wasn’t a finer ship in the navy, more weatherly or more handy—steered like a duck, and worked like a top. Lord Nelson himself got me appointed to her. Away we sailed for the Mediterranean. While Admiral Cornwallis watched the French fleet at Brest, we kept a look-out over that at Toulon, under the command of Admiral La Touche Treville, who had commanded at Boulogne, and boasted that he had beat off Lord Nelson from that port. He could not boast, though, that he beat him off from Toulon: for, for eighteen long months, from the 1st of July, 1803, to the 11th of January, 1805, did we keep watch off that harbor’s mouth. If such a gale sprung up as would prevent the French getting out, we went away, only leaving a frigate or so to watch what took place; but we were soon to be back again. Thus the time passed on. We saw the shore, but were not the better for it; for few of us, from the admiral downwards, ever set foot on it. At last the French admiral, La Touche

Treville, died, and a new one, Admiral Villeneuve, was appointed. We now began to hope that the French would come out and fight us; for you see Lord Nelson did not want to keep them in—only to get at them when they came out. If it hadn't been for the batteries on shore, we should have gone in and brought them out. We had gone away to the coast of Sardinia, when news was brought that the French fleet was at sea. Instantly we got under weigh, passing at night through a passage so narrow that only one ship could pass at a time, and fully expecting the next morning to be engaged with the enemy. First we looked for them about Sicily; then after them we ran towards Egypt, and then back to Malta, where we heard that they had put into Toulon. Now, we kept stricter watch than ever, without a bulk-head up, and all ready for battle.

“It was on the 4th of April, that the ‘Phœbe’ brought us news that Admiral Villeneuve, with his squadron, had again slipped out of Toulon, and was steering for the coast of Africa. Frigates were sent out in every direction, to make sure that he had not gone eastward; and then after him we stood, towards the Straits of Gibraltar, but the wind was dead against us, and we had hard work to get there. I had never seen the admiral in

such a taking before. We beat backwards and forwards against the head-wind, but all to no purpose—out of the Gut we could not get without a leading wind, and so we had to anchor off the Barbary coast : there we got supplies.

“At last, on the 5th of May, an easterly breeze sprung up, and away we went, with a flowing sheet through the Straits. We called off Cadiz, and the coast of Portugal, and then bore away for the West Indies, where we heard the French had gone. We sighted Madeira, and made Barbadoes, then sailed for Tobago ; and next we were off for the Gulf of Paria, all cleared for action, making sure that we should find the enemy there. We thought it would have killed the admiral, when he found that he had been deceived. Back we sailed, and heard that the French had captured the Diamond Rock. You’ve heard about it. It’s a curious place, and was commissioned like a man-of-war. If it hadn’t been for false information, and if Lord Nelson had stuck to his own intentions, we should have caught the French up off Port Royal, and thrashed them just at the spot Lord Rodney thrashed Admiral de Grasse—so I’ve heard say. Well, at last, we found that the French had left the West Indies for Europe, so back across the Atlantic we steered ; but though

we knew we were close astern of them, they kept ahead of us, and at last we sighted Cape Spartel, and anchored the next day at Gibraltar.

“I know it for a fact, that it only wanted ten days of two years since Lord Nelson himself had last set his foot on shore. It was much longer than that since I and most on board had trod dry ground. That was serving our country, you’ll allow—most of the time, too, under weigh, battling with tempests, and broiling under the sun of the tropics.

“We victualled and watered at Tetuan, then once more stood to the west’ard—then back to Cadiz, and once more crossed the Bay of Biscay, thinking the enemy were bound for Ireland. Foul winds made the passage long. Once more the enemy had baffled us, and at last, when off Ushant, we received orders to return to Portsmouth to refit.

“That very fleet Sir Robert Calder fell in with on the 22d of July, just thirty leagues westward of Cape Finisterre, and, although his force was much smaller, he captured two of their line-of-battle ships. It was a very gallant affair; but people asked, ‘What would Nelson have done?’ While the admiral was on shore we were busily employed in refitting the ‘Victory,’ while a num-

ber of other ships he had wished to have with him were got ready for sea. On the 14th of September he once more came aboard the 'Victory,' and hoisted his flag. The next day we sailed for Cadiz. We arrived off that place on the 29th, where we found the squadron of Admiral Collingwood blockading the French and Spanish fleets under Admiral Villeneuve.

"What Lord Nelson wanted, you see, was to get the enemy out to fight him. He wanted also, not only to win a victory, but to knock the enemy's ships to pieces, so that they could do no more harm. To get them out we had to cut off their supplies; so we had to capture all the neutral vessels which were carrying them in. You must understand we in the 'Victory' with the fleet did not go close into Cadiz, but kept some fifty or sixty miles off, so that the enemy might not know our strength. We had some time to wait, however. Lord Nelson had already given the French and Spaniards such a taste of his way of going to work, that they were in no hurry to try it again. You'll understand that there was a line of frigates, extending, like signal-posts, all the way from the fleet to the frigate cruising just off the mouth of the harbor—that is to say, near enough to watch what was going on there.

“ Early in the morning on the 19th of October, the ‘ Mars,’ the ship nearest the chain of frigates, repeated the signal that the enemy were leaving port, and, at 2 P. M., that they were steering south-east. On this, Lord Nelson gave orders for the fleet to chase in that direction, but to keep out of sight of the enemy, fearful of frightening them back into port. Still, you’ll understand, the frigates kept in sight of them, and gave notice to the admiral of all their movements. The enemy had thirty-three sail of the line, and seven frigates, with above four thousand riflemen on board. Our fleet numbered only twenty-seven sail of the line, and four frigates. We were formed in two lines Admiral Collingwood, in the ‘ Royal Sovereign,’ led fourteen ships, and Lord Nelson, in the ‘ Victory,’ eleven.

“ On the morning of the 21st of October, 1805—you’ll not forget that day, it was a glorious one for England, let me tell you—we sighted the French and Spanish fleet from the deck of the ‘ Victory’ off Cape Trafalgar. They were formed in a double line in a curve, one ship in the further line filling up the space left between the ships of the nearest line. They also were trying to keep the port of Cadiz under their lee, that they might escape to it. Lord Nelson determined to break

the line in two places. We led the northern line with a light wind from the southwest. Admiral Collingwood led the southern, and got into action first, just astern of the 'Santa Anna.' We steered so as to pass between the 'Bucentaur' and the 'Santissima Trinidad.'

" 'Well, there are a lot of the enemy,' exclaimed Tom Collins to me, as I was standing near the gun he served.

" 'Yes, mate,' said I; 'and a pretty spectacle they will make at Spithead when we carry them there.'

" 'Ay, that they will," cried all who heard me, and I believe every man in the fleet felt as we did.

"We were watching all this time the magnificent way in which the brave and good Admiral Collingwood stood into action and opened his fire. That was about noon. There was a general cheer on board our ship and all the ships of the fleet. At our mast-head flew a signal. We soon knew what it meant. It was—'England expects that every man will do his duty.' For nearly half an hour the noble Collingwood was alone among the ships of the enemy before any of his followers could come up. We, at the same time, had got within long range of the enemy. On we floated slowly,

for the wind was very light, till at last our main-yard-arm was touching the gaff of the 'Bucentaur,' which ship bore the flag of Admiral Villeneuve; and though our guns were raking her and tearing her stern to pieces, we had ahead of us in the second line the 'Neptune,' which poured a heavy fire into our bows. Our helm was then put up, and we fell aboard the 'Redoubtable,' while the 'Téméraire,' Captain Blackwood, ranged up on the other side of her, and another French ship got alongside the 'Téméraire.' There we were, all four locked together, pounding away at each other, while with our larboard guns we were engaging the 'Bucentaur,' and now and then getting a shot at the big Spaniard, the 'Santissima Trinidad.' Meantime our other ships had each picked out one or more of the enemy, and were hotly engaged with them. At the tops of all the enemy's ships marksmen were stationed. The skylight of the admiral's cabin had been boarded over. Here Lord Nelson and Captain Hardy were walking. More than one man had fallen near them. Mr. Scott, the admiral's secretary, had been struck down after we had been in action little more than an hour. Suddenly, as I turned my head, I saw a sight which I would rather have died than have seen. Lord Nelson was just falling.

He went on his knees, then rested on his arm for a moment, and it, too, giving way, he rolled over on his left side, before even Captain Hardy could run to save him. Captain Hardy had to remain on deck. I, with a sergeant of marines and another seaman, carried him below, covering his face with a handkerchief. We placed him in one of the midshipmen's berths. Then the surgeons came to him. We feared the worst, but it was not generally known what had happened. I can tell you I was glad enough to get on deck again. It was bad enough there to see poor fellows struck down alongside one, but the sights and sounds in the cock-pit were enough to overcome the stoutest heart—to see fine strong fellows mangled and torn, struggling in their agony—to watch limb after limb cut off—to hear their groans and shrieks, and often worse, the oaths and imprecations of the poor fellows maddened by the terrible pain; and there lay our beloved chief, mortally wounded in the spine, parched with thirst and heat, crying out for air and drink to cool the fever raging within. For two hours and a half there he lay suffering dreadful pain, yet eagerly inquiring how the battle was going. Twice Captain Hardy went below to see him; the first time, to tell him that twelve of the enemy had struck; the last time,

that still more had given in, and that a few were in full flight, after whom our guns were still sending their shot. Thus Lord Nelson died at the moment the ever-to-be-remembered battle of Trafalgar was won.

* * * * *

“It was a sad voyage we had home, and great was the sorrow felt by all, from the highest to the lowest in the land, for the death of our beloved leader. I will not describe his funeral. It was very grand, that I know. Many of the old ‘Victorys’ attended his coffin to his grave in St. Paul’s Cathedral. When they were lowering his flag into the tomb—that flag which had truly so long and so gloriously waved in the battle and the breeze—we seized on it, and tearing it in pieces, vowed to keep it as long as we lived, in remembrance of our noble chief. Here is my bit—see, I keep it safe in this case near my heart.”

England’s greatest military chief now lies by the side of one who had no equal on the ocean, in the heart of her metropolis. Within the walls of her finest cathedral, what more appropriate mausoleum could be found for Britain’s two most valiant defenders, Heaven-sent surely in the time of her greatest need to defend her from the hosts of her vaunting foes.

OUR FIRST GREAT SEA-FIGHT;

AN INCIDENT IN THE BOYHOOD OF ADMIRAL BLAKE.

It was in the month of March, Anno Domini 1617—just two hundred and forty-five years ago, when James the First was king—that a lad might have been seen crouched down among some bales of goods on one of the public quays of Plymouth, reading so attentively as to be alike unconscious of the traffic going on around him, and of the bitter blowing of the east wind. Sitting thus, with his knees drawn up and his head resting on his hand, he looked as though he might have been about seventeen years of age. His sober suit of black and gray, cut in the by-gone fashion of a former reign, showed him to be a scholar in some public school; whilst the silver medal, suspended round his neck by a broad ribbon, gave proof of his industry and of the approbation of his masters.

It was a cold brilliant morning, with the wind blowing off the sea, and the dust driving in great

clouds up the streets of the town. The ships outside the harbor were dancing merrily over the crested waves, and even the anchored vessels close against the quays swayed gently with the rising and falling of the waters. Here were merchantmen from Virginia and Guiana delivering their cargoes; great ships of war, with their officers loitering up and down the decks; fishing-smacks; coming in with fresh-caught red mullet and Devonshire pilchards; and small boats, of all sizes, darting about on swift oars among the larger vessels, like sea-birds on the wing.

On shore the scene was still busier, for the quays were crowded with wagons, trucks, porters, sailors of all nations, government officials, merchants, fishermen, beggars, and idlers of every description. In the midst of all this commotion it seemed wonderful that any one should be able to sit down quietly, and forget it in the pages of a book. So, at least, thought a grave-looking gentleman who was pacing slowly up and down the landing-place, superintending the lading of a good-sized trader. Every now and then he made a business-like entry in his tablets. Every now and then a sailor would come to him for orders, or a porter for a gratuity; and still, in the intervals of thinking, walking, or conversing, he occasionally paused to glance, with

a kindly smile, towards the student close by. He was a tall man, between sixty and seventy years of age, weather-beaten, care-worn, but still handsome, with high features and singularly bright small eyes. In his manner of bearing himself there was a dauntless freedom which combined somewhat of the carelessness of the sailor with the uprightness of the soldier; but, wrapped as he was in an ample cloak, and wearing a plain hat, without even a feather in it, he gave, in his dress, no token of belonging either to the army or the navy. Pausing, by and by, he contemplated the youth for some seconds; then went up to him, and said—

“Why seek so bleak a spot for thy studies, my young scholar?”

His voice was high and somewhat piercing; but the boy was lost in his book, and heard nothing of the question. The stranger repeated it, and touched him on the shoulder.

The boy looked up, impatiently.

“I am not cold,” he replied; and went on reading.

But the gentleman was not to be so easily repulsed.

“The book must needs be entertaining,” said he, “since it hath power to deafen thine ear against all the traffic of the quays, and fence thy body

against the sharp March winds. Who is thine author? Plutarch?"

The scholar shook his head, without speaking. He did not choose to be interrupted, and made no effort to conceal his annoyance. He had to deal, however, with one who, accustomed to command, would take no denial.

"Nay," said he, gently, but authoritatively, "if thou art dumb, as well as deaf, I must even judge for myself!"

And with this he took the boy's wrist in his strong grasp, turned the volume half round, and read aloud: "A Discourse concerning the Spanish Fleet invading England in the year 1588, and overthrown by her Majesty's Navy: written in Italian by Petruccio Ubaldino, Citizen of Florence, and translated for A. Ryther, Leadenhall, London."

The boy's eyes flashed with anger under this cavalier treatment.

"Let my book alone," said he, struggling to free his hand. "What right have you to importune me with your questions?"

"None, save the right of an elder student," replied the gentleman, smiling gravely. "A lover of books myself, I am interested when I see others love them also. I know this pamphlet well. 'Tis

a faithful, and not an ill-written narrative; though, if I remember rightly, somewhat tainted with bombast. But you do well to read it in sight of the very waters where our first encounter with the Spaniard took place."

The boy looked up eagerly, and opened his lips as if about to speak; then checked himself abruptly. The stranger sighed, and drew his cloak more closely round him.

"Twenty-nine years ago!" he muttered to himself. "Only twenty-nine years ago! Oh, Time! Time!"

The boy's curiosity was strongly excited; but his pride controlled his curiosity, and he maintained an obstinate silence.

"So, my lad," said the stranger, meeting his inquiring glance, and shaking off his reverie "art thou for a sea-life?"

"Perhaps."

"Perhaps is but a vague word. What is thy name?"

"Robert Blake."

"And thou art a scholar of this place?"

"No; I live at Tavistock."

"And wouldst thou fain be a sailor, and fight the Spaniard?"

"Ay, that would I; but—"

“But what?”

The boy knitted his brow, and looked down. “My father will not have me go to sea,” he said, sullenly.

“For what life, then, art thou destined?”

“I scarcely know. Perhaps for the Church. I go to Oxford next Martinmas; but far sooner would I go to the South Seas with one of our brave Devon captains.”

The stranger smiled, and sighed again, and sat down beside the lad upon a canvas bale.

“The ocean hath its dangers and discomfords, young friend,” said he, “as well as its pleasures. I have sailed all round the world in my time, and I may speak confidently of both.”

“All round the world!” exclaimed the boy.

“Ay, truly; with the brave Sir Francis Drake in his famous voyage.”

“He was a great man,” said young Robert, eagerly. “I would give my silver medal to have seen him.”

“He was so great a man,” replied the stranger, “that I question if England will ever see his like again. What wouldst thou say, lad, if I told thee that I fought one whole day by his side, on board the ‘Revenge,’ in that very sea-fight of which I find thee reading?”

The boy sprang to his feet with excitement.

“ You—you bore part in that brave work !” he cried. “ You saw the Armada !”

The stranger nodded good-humoredly.

“ Then you have seen Raleigh, and Frobisher, and Hawkins ?”

“ Ay, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and Lord Howard of Effingham, and the wild Earl of Cumberland, and all the gallant spirits of that time. I well remember the morning when Lord Howard’s squadrons came round from the narrow seas off the coast of Flanders, and joined fleets with Sir Francis Drake, whose ships lay here in Plymouth harbor. It was on the 23d of May, in the glorious year 1588. Round they came, by yonder point, fifty ships of the line, with all sail set, and twenty ships furnished forth by the loyal city of London. A noble sight—yet not so noble as that of the 30th of May, a week later, when the two fleets put out together, ninety ships in all, bearing away with them all the youth and valor and high blood of the land, with Drake and Howard at their head !”

“ You were with Drake, then, noble sir ?” asked the boy.

“ No—not till some days after. Thy narrative there will tell thee how the Lord Admiral did

twice sail out of Plymouth harbor towards the isle of Seilly, and even within forty leagues of the coast of Spain, seeking the Spanish forces; and how, fearful lest they should take advantage of the good winds, and pass him unobserved, he twice returned without the striking of a blow. It should also tell thee how, the fleets being back again in port, there came into Plymouth on the morning of the 19th of June, a little bark commanded by one Thomas Fleming, who brought news of the enemy. I was in the town at the time, making merry with certain gentlemen of Devon. I well remember how we started up at the first roar of the signal guns, and left the flagons untasted on the table. Going out, we found the townspeople thronging to the quays; officers hurrying down to their ships; women and children wringing their hands, and crying aloud that the Spaniard was upon us. At the landing-place, finding a wherry close against the stairs, but no boatman, I jumped in with two of my companions, seized the oars myself, and rowed off to the vice-admiral's ship, which was then just loosing anchor. There I learnt that the Spanish fleet had been seen hovering off the Lizard Point, the wind being south and by east; and, further, that, despite the difficulty of getting our ships out in the very teeth of that wind, our

commanders had resolved to go forth to the encounter. This, by might of seamanship alone, and by example of the officers, and perseverance of the sailors, we did actually accomplish then and there; and so worked out of harbor, to the number of fifty-four ships, under command of Admiral Lord Howard and Vice-admiral Sir Francis Drake, between the evening of the 19th and the forenoon of the 20th of June."

"And that day you met the Spaniard?" interposed Blake, breathlessly.

"Not so. That day, the wind being against us, and we not desirous of leaving too wide a road betwixt us and the English shore, we coasted at a distance of about twenty or twenty-five miles from land, in the direction of Fowey. Towards sunset, having seen nothing of the enemy all the day through, we beheld the Lord Admiral's pinnace, the 'Disdain,' run up the signal, and then, to the leeward, against the glowing of the western sky, we beheld what seemed like a pine-forest rising out of the ocean. That forest, lad, was a forest of Spanish masts. There lay the huge Armada, and we knew that the morrow must bring work with it. That night we read prayers for our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth on board of every ship throughout the fleet, and implored Heaven for the

safety of these islands. Thus, in pious exercises, and watching, and the burnishing of arms, the brief summer night went slowly by. The morning dawned gray and clear. We were now nearer by some miles than when the sunset faded. Before us, in full battle array, advancing in the form of a vast crescent, we beheld the Spanish fleet. We counted one hundred and thirty-four great ships, besides a vast number of galleys, galleasses, and galleons. The two extremities, or horns, of the crescent seemed to be about eight miles apart. It was a brave sight; but braver still was it to witness the high courage of the great English spirit mounting with the occasion; to see the eager faces of our young gallants; the steady valor of our seamen; the composed gravity of our tried commanders—to hear the shout that went up when the ‘Disdain’ fired her first shot, and gave defiance to the foe!”

“And all this time,” said the boy, “you were only fifty-four ships!”

“Only fifty-four against more than thrice that number,” replied the stranger; “for we had left forty vessels in haven at Plymouth, partly for the better defence of the coast, and partly on account of the difficulty of getting them out to sea.”

“ I beseech you, sir, go on,” said Blake. “ The ‘ Disdain,’ you say, fired the first shot ?”

“ Ay, at nine of the clock, before noon, on the 21st of June ; and immediately the Lord Admiral, in the ‘ Ark,’ sailed forward before all the rest of the fleet, and laid siege to a great ship, of which we believed the Duke of Medina Sidonia to be himself in command. At the same time the ‘ Victory,’ under Master John Hawkins, another goodly vessel under Master Martin Frobisher, and the ‘ Revenge,’ commanded by Sir Francis Drake, on board of which I had that day the honor of serving, put forward to the attack of a huge Portuguese galleon, belonging to Don Martin de Ricaldes, vice-admiral of the Spanish fleet. And now, I promise thee, my young scholar, we had thunder and smoke to our hearts’ content ; and though we came to no hand-to-hand contest, we were near enough to see the swarthy gunners at their work, and the shaven priests going up and down the decks, urging them on with prayers and exhortations. Not that their *Aves* and *Paters* served them one jot against us, however, for our brave fellows stood to their guns manfully, doing rare damage at every shot ; and in the very heat of the fight, as fair fortune would have it, a great ship of Biscay blew up with a terrible explosion, like the

firing of a mine, which threw all the enemy into confusion. They then began drawing off to the eastward, leaving one of their largest galleons in our hands; and with this prize we (being still forty ships less than our total number), thought it best to be content for that day. We then gathered our own vessels together for the night, and having held a consultation of war on board the Lord Admiral's ship, retired each to our own quarters and supped merrily. As for the captain of the captured galleon, Don Pedro de Valdes, we received him and his chief officers on board the 'Revenge,' where Sir Francis Drake entertained them with all courtesy, and sent them, next morning, into Dartmouth, together with the prize and the other prisoners. Well, lad, not to outwear thy patience—"

"That, good sir, you cannot," interrupted the boy. "I would thankfully stay here all the day and night to listen to you!"

The stranger smiled, and shook his head good-humoredly.

"Nay," he said, "the sun declines already, and I am bound to sup with certain officers and merchants this evening at six of the clock. Yet will I sketch for thee some brief outline of the last acts of this great drama. Well, then, the next day we

had no more fighting, but occupied ourselves with searching the ruins of the Biscayan ship, the decks of which were quite shattered with the force of the explosion, and the seamen, fifty in number, all dying or dead—a lamentable sight, and one that shook the nerves of the strongest amongst us! For my part, I would have given half my substance at that moment for some surgical skill, wherewith to help those poor Spaniards in their great agony; but, being unable to succor them, I hurried away as I would have fled a plague-ship; and presently the Lord Admiral sent the vessel in tow, as it was, to Weymouth harbor, under the care of Captain Fleming. On the following morning, the 23d of June, the Armada tacked about, and came down again with the northeast wind, in full array, as before. This time, being reinforced by all the rest of our fleet, we sailed right into the midst of them, and, taking advantage of the superior swiftness and lightness of our vessels, travelled round and round them within the distance of half a musket-shot, battering their unwieldy hulls with our heavy ordnance, and doing them such deadly injury that their commanders were fain to retreat towards evening, leaving the victory with us. That night, as the wind set towards us, we heard from time to time faint

sounds of solemn chanting, and knew thereby that the priests were performing a service for the dead. Having by this time exhausted our stores of ammunition, we were obliged to send ashore for a fresh supply, and, with the exception of a few skirmishes, fought no more battles off this coast; but followed the enemy quietly through the Channel as far as Calais, where both fleets cast anchor, about five miles from the cliffs. And now it became evident to us that the Duke of Medina Sidonia was working his way round to the coast of Flanders, where great reinforcements, furnished by the Duke of Parma, would doubtless await him. This we resolved, at all hazards, to prevent; and prevent it we did, in a manner never before seen or heard of in the annals of naval war. We took eight small ships and filled them with combustibles. We covered the decks and masts with fresh tar, and laid trains of gunpowder and slow matches in such a manner as to insure the rapid spreading of the fire in every part. Then, in the dead silence of the night, when the Spaniards suspected nothing, and were, with the exception of the watch, all sleeping in their berths, we sent these ships, like moving castles of flame, into the very heart of their fleet. Startled from sleep, surrounded in the dark by an eager and experienced enemy,

and anchored off a strange coast, with the dangers of which they were unacquainted, what could their bravest captains do but slip their cables, put wildly out to sea, and save their ships as best they might? In this extremity, like the Persian galleys at Salamis, they came into collision with each other, foundering some, disabling others, and leaving one great galliass, laden with golden ducats, stranded close against the mouth of Calais harbor. By this time it was dawning day, and Sir Francis Drake charged the enemy with one squadron, while Sir John Hawkins, who had been just knighted by the Lord Admiral for his exceeding valor, set upon them with another squadron, and broke right through the main body of their fleet. Never was victory more complete. Shattered, disabled, silenced, with broken masts, and sails all shot to rags, the great Armada retreated slowly northwards. One of her large ships went down in sight of both the fleets; two foundered off the coast of Zealand, and were plundered by the natives; the rest held on their way, followed by the Lord Admiral with several squadrons, and went up by the coast of Scotland, designing to work round by the north, and reach Spain by the outer seas, without again venturing through the English Channel. Within thirty leagues of Newcastle we

left them to pursue their perilous way, and returned to England to protect our southern shores against any possible attack from the side of the Low Countries. Here my experience as a personal witness ends. You, my young hearer, know what followed as well as I. You have read of the great tempests which befell that unhappy fleet off the Irish coast, and of the destruction which was thereby wrought. For one whole month were they driven hither and thither in helpless wreck and ruin. The shores of Donegal and Sligo were strewn with timbers, and bodies of the drowned. Thirty-two ships were cast away. Thirteen or fourteen thousand human lives were lost. Two thousand men were taken prisoners. So vast a calamity never befell the great Spanish power before or since. So signal a deliverance following such a series of victories, never occurred either to England or any other land of which we read in history."

"What a glory to our English seamen!" exclaimed Robert Blake, his cheeks flushed, and his eyes sparkling with enthusiasm.

"Nay, the glory was Almighty God's," said the stranger, reverently lifting his hat. "We but did our duty to Him, to our country, and to our Queen. Fare thee well." And with this he rose up, laid

his hand kindly on the boy's shoulder, and turned away. But Blake ran after him.

"If you will not stay for my thanks, noble sir," he cried, "you will at least tell me your name, that I may remember it while I live, as the name of a brave sailor who fought against the Armada?"

But the gentleman would not.

"Remember me, lad," said he, "as one who hath known great prosperity and bitter adversity; to whom the camp, the cabin, and the dungeon, are alike familiar. Some day, perhaps, I may seek thee out at Oxford, and make thy better acquaintance."

So, waving his hand, he strode rapidly away, and Blake stood still and gazed after him till he was out of sight. It was now four o'clock. The traffic had long ceased, and the landing-place was deserted. The trader, which was being laden in the morning, had drawn off from the quay, and anchored near the mouth of the harbor. In vain the boy looked round for some one who would give him the information he so ardently desired. There was not a living soul in sight, and so, with a sigh of disappointment, he put his pamphlet in his bosom, and took his way to the house where he was staying.

“That man,” said he to himself, as he went along, “is a man of mark. Would that I could learn his name! He breathed not a syllable of his own prowess; but, if ever I saw a brave man, he is one! And I was so churlish to him when he first noted me; shame on me! The dungeon, said he, and the camp, and the cabin? Out on’t! I could not guess, though I tried till Mid-summer day; yet I have a strange certainty upon me that we shall meet again some day. Heigho!—some day!”

* * * * *

A year and nearly seven months have gone by. It is the morning of the 29th of October, 1618, and Robert Blake, gazing from right to left with the wondering delight of a stranger, is being rowed up to Westminster by a Thames waterman. He is now an undergraduate of Oxford, and this is his first visit to London. He could not be out at a gayer time; for the new Lord Mayor has just passed down the river in all the civic glory of his gilded barges, and the stream is crowded with boats, and the bridges are swarming with idlers, and flags are flying at Whitehall, and all is sunshine and merriment. Having seen the pageant, our scholar is now on his way to visit the hall and

abbey of Westminster ; so, alighting at Westminster stairs, he emerges at the back of the Parliament houses, and finds himself suddenly in a dense crowd, close against Old Palace Yard. Concluding that there is something to be seen, and supposing, of course, that this something, whatever it may be, is connected with the show of which he has just been a spectator, Robert Blake presses eagerly forward, wins his way, inch by inch, through the thickest of the throng, and, looking up, sees a scaffold hung with black and guarded by a double row of halberdiers, rising grimly before his eyes. Horror-stricken, shuddering, the young man would gladly escape the fearful sight ; but the crowd has closed up behind him, and retreat is impossible. Now, for the first time, he observes the strange silence of the throng—that silence so unlike the shouts which he so lately heard. He would fain ask whose death they have met to witness ; but he feels that his voice might tremble, and, with boyish pride, he forbears to speak till he has regained his self-command.

All at once, through the deep hush, there is heard a muffled sound of drums, and a tramp of many feet. The crowd, compact as it is, heaves and falls back. More soldiers pour in, and rank themselves closer about the scaffold. The sheriffs,

a couple of clergymen, several gentlemen in rich dresses, and the condemned man between two guards, mount the steps, and appear on the platform. Behind all comes the headsman, with his face masked, and the axe upon his shoulder. Sick at heart, the student covers his eyes with his hand. Be the culprit whom or what he may, it is terrible to stand there, and see him die!

Impelled, at last, by an agonizing curiosity, he looks up. The condemned man has advanced to the front of the scaffold, and is addressing those nearest to him. From this distance his words are inaudible; but his face merciful Heaven! his face is the well-remembered face of the stranger whom he met a year and seven months since on the quay at Plymouth! He looks older, grayer, feebler; but his eye has the same brightness, and his expression the same serenity. He shakes hands with his friends upon the scaffold—he tries the edge of the axe with his finger—he lays his hand upon the headsman's shoulder, and seems to grant him his solemn pardon. Then he flings his cloak aside—kneels—prays for a moment with folded hands—lays his head upon the block

The student saw no more. Trembling from head to foot, blinded with hot tears, and almost

beside himself with pity and horror, he buried his face in his cloak, and sobbed aloud. Presently a deep groan and a shudder ran through the crowd, and he knew that all was over.

“Who was he?” cried Blake, turning to those about him. “What was his name? What crime had he committed?”

“None,” replied one at his elbow. “Before God, he is this day foully murdered.”

“But his name?”

“The brave, the learned, the great Sir Walter Raleigh.”

Time went on; and Robert Blake, still, in his heart of hearts, cherishing the sea-dreams of his boyhood, complied with the wishes of his parents, and embraced a parliamentary career. Having adopted the religious and political opinions of the Puritan body, he first served his party honestly in the senate; then in the field, as a colonel of dragoons; and lastly on the sea, as admiral of the British fleet. He was fifty years of age before he entered on the career to which his genius and his desires had pointed for so long; but he redeemed his lost time nobly. The sea was his true element. One of the bravest of British sailors; one of the most judicious, calm, and skilful of commanders, he succeeded, during the brief remainder of his

useful and glorious life, in reforming the system of our naval warfare, protecting our commerce, reducing our enemies to submission, and spreading the terror of the great English name throughout the civilized world.

TRUE RICHES.

CHAPTER I

THE MISER.

DAILY experience teaches how little wealth, if sought as an *end*, and not as a *means*, tends to promote real happiness. History records innumerable instances where the love of gold has brought misery and distress on nations and individuals; and every day tells us some new story of life or health sacrificed in the pursuit of wealth; each new seeker fancying that to him, at least, it will bring happiness.

In the last few years, the pursuit of gold has left numerous once happy homes desolate, and the bones of many a loving father, idolized husband,

or affectionate brother, bleaching on the distant sands of California; his last moments, perhaps, spent in heart-rending regrets for the home, however humble, which he had left to seek for gold; — obtained, perhaps, but bringing no enjoyment to its possessor.

In all large cities, there are found many who make the acquirement of money, for its own sake, the sole object of this life; some, of course, more engrossed than others. They do not find 'True Riches,' who work solely to fill their coffers, and never permit the golden stream to flow out again, to gladden the hearts of others. The best part of many a man's nature,—the once loving heart; the kind, sympathetic feeling, which forms the only true wealth,—is buried and riveted down to sordid gain, by golden chains.

The prayer of Agar — "Give me neither poverty nor riches" — should be the supplication of every one who wishes to do good to his fellow-man; for while poverty cramps the energies, and arrests the hand which would willingly be held out to relieve the suffering, so do riches, if not worthily employed, clog up and destroy, for want of use, the kindly feelings which should prompt man to assist his neighbor.

In speaking of poverty and wealth, Jean Paul says: "In an age, all the better sinews of which have been cut asunder, save only the universal one of money, even the most exaggerated depreciation of riches is nobler and more useful than the justest censure of poverty; for pasquinades upon gold-dust assure the rich man that his happiness is not dependent on his possessions; and to the poor man, for bitter feelings they substitute the sweetness of conquering them. As it is, everything mean in us, — all the senses, the imagination, and all we look up to as examples, — are united panegyrist of gold."

It is certain that the miser's gold cannot be called true riches; for it affords him no enjoyment, save in its accumulation, and spreads no blessings on those around; it is coveted for itself alone, and spreads no kindly atmosphere in its neighborhood.

In a small town in Massachusetts, not far from its capital, there stood, several years since, on the main road, a small, dingy-looking house, so dilapidated and desolate in appearance, that one would hardly suppose it probable that a human being would voluntarily seek its shelter. It was without

any appearance of comfort or care; the roof was covered with moss, the chimney broken down, and old rags and rough boards supplied the place of glass, which had been in the windows once, but had never been replaced after being broken. The door swung on bits of leather, for want of hinges; and all that remained of the fence was rotten with age and neglect. No trees shaded it; but all around had a bare, comfortless look, which created a feeling of pity for such extreme poverty as would be obliged to seek shelter there.

In this miserable abode, hardly fit for a refuge for the beast of the field, there lived, for some years, an old man; all alone, for he had no children or relations. He was very seldom seen by any one; but if by accident a glimpse was caught of the tenant of this cheerless abode, his appearance was such as to render it doubtful, for a time, of what sex he was. An old, tattered dressing-gown, often a woman's skirt, and an old bonnet, in place of a hat, formed his usual costume. He was, to all appearance, a miserably poor old man; he accepted the smallest piece of money with all the greediness of a beggar, and many a charitable person bestowed alms on him; judging, from his wretched appearance, that he must be suffering



The Old Miser.

from want. But that this was not the fact was well known to all the neighborhood. The rumors of his wealth had waxed louder and louder, until he was looked upon as a walking gold-mine; and many greatly exaggerated stories of his enormous riches were constantly in circulation. But how he first acquired his money was still a mystery; for he had left the Almshouse of his native village when a very young lad, without friends or relatives to care for him, or push him forward in his future career.

Had those who knew Joseph Wilson, studied his character at all, they would have seen even then, in the boy, the dawning of that excessive avarice which afterwards formed so conspicuous a trait in his character.

If by chance, at this early period of his life, a penny came into his possession, it was hoarded carefully, and no temptation would induce him to part with it. If an old garment was bestowed on him, he would immediately endeavor to sell it, however great his need; and an extra meal, offered by the charitable, he would, if possible, try to trade away for two or three copper coins.

Upon his leaving the Almshouse, he begged his way to Boston, and arrived there, barefooted,

ragged, and hungry, without knowing where he should pass the night, or being acquainted with a single person in the city. For many weeks his only place of rest was either in some lumber-yard, or in unfinished dwellings; and his food generally consisted of what he begged during the day.

While in those parts of the city where the poorer class usually dwelt, his attention was directed to one mode in which their children occasionally obtained a little money, and he resolved to try his fortune in the same manner. A price, though a trifling one, was paid for bits of iron and rags; and, indeed, almost any article found a purchaser in those abodes of want, if offered cheap.

He accordingly commenced wandering about, in search of these treasures; and as he brought to his employment, poor though it was, a determined will, his success was much greater than that of the other children.

Every penny was carefully hoarded, and never used, however great the necessity. He would have starved, rather than touch his savings. On some days his earnings would be very small, but at other times he would be more fortunate; and frequently the charitable passer-by would bestow a small sum on the miserable-looking boy. Had the

giver studied the countenance of the lad, he would have read in it, not want, so much as avarice. He usually procured his food by doing little services for the neighbors, who were not able to give him money, but could spare enough to feed him, after providing for their own families. He was not particular in his tastes. A crust of dry bread would keep him from starving; and of dainties and luxuries, such as money could buy, he knew nothing.

After some little time spent in this way, his daily gains became so sure that he ventured to rent a miserable little attic room, for which he was to pay by rendering services, no matter how menial, to the owner of the house, who carried on the business of letting lodgings to the poorer classes, at a very low rate. In this little room he gradually collected large quantities of the most wretched articles of clothing; many of which he had obtained from the open lots in the outskirts of the city, on which they had been thrown with refuse articles and dirt; and it was amazing to see the manner in which he would convert an old rag into something like a garment, which would sell for a small sum.

In the Almshouse where his early years had been passed, he had been taught to sew, and also how to mend shoes; and both of these acquirements he

now turned into active use. A blessing they might have been, had their *end* been other than the gratification of his inordinate thirst for money!

Joseph Wilson, or 'Poor Joe,' as he was usually nicknamed, lived in this manner for several years, — lonely and uncared for. He never sought the companionship of other lads of his own age, and would not allow any one to enter his little room. He never engaged in any of their innocent amusements — it was always work; and for what? To add to his little store of money — the only happiness he knew or cared for!

As he grew older, his intense desire for money increased; and as his daily walks had made him well known among the large stores on the wharves, he ventured at last to seek employment from some of their occupants. His appearance, save in his look of poverty, was not disagreeable; and he possessed a mind naturally acute and observing, together with some acquired talents, which might have made him happier, had they been rightly directed.

So far in his career, Joseph Wilson had never been dishonest; that is, he had never actually stolen. How honest he was, in always getting the best of a bargain, and making the need of others minister to his excessive avarice, might well be

questioned. His industry was untiring; his promptness in performing a job soon made him favorably known among the merchants, and he gradually obtained something like regular employment; always insisting on being paid 'cash down,' as he termed it, however small the promised compensation.

For one merchant, in particular, he did a great many little offices; and, from his faithfulness in performing them, the benevolent old man became gradually interested in the friendless boy, and allowed him to go, at his expense, to a night-school, where he would be taught the plainer branches of education. Being naturally bright, the instruction he here received might have made him a useful man, could his energies have been aroused from their gold-bound slumber.

Joseph soon learned to read and write tolerably well, and showed great proficiency in arithmetic. He had previously learned to count accurately; as it was his practice, every night before retiring, to open the box which contained his money, and tell it over with the satisfaction known only to a miser.

He was cleanly in his habits, so far as washing his skin was concerned; and, indeed, his clothes,

miserable as they were, were free from dirt; for water could readily be obtained, and a piece of soap borrowed or begged of a neighbor.

When at the night-school, Joseph had been in the habit of collecting every little piece of slate-pencil, every scrap of paper, and all the ends of candles which he could lay his hands on; and he generally contrived to make some use of them. He would exchange the bits of pencil with the poor children, perhaps, for a piece of bread or meat; and the candle-ends were quite a source of profit, as he melted them up, and then sold the tallow to some of his neighbors.

Joseph very seldom spoke to any one, except when necessity required; his thoughts were continually engaged in one way; talking he considered a waste of time, and amusements were totally disregarded; for he would not have parted with one penny to have seen all the sights of a great metropolis.

When Joseph Wilson was about sixteen years old, the same merchant who had already befriended him, took him regularly into his employ, as a porter; and during the period in which he held the situation, though receiving but a small salary, he faithfully did his duty; feeling sure that the know-

ledge he gained by accurate observation would soon enable him to obtain a higher post.

He remained with this gentleman until his death caused the business to pass into other hands; after which the boy sought a clerkship, which he easily obtained; for his knowledge of business was well understood. That the other clerks in the store would not associate with him, because he was meanly dressed, gave him no uneasiness; for he always consoled himself by the thought,—‘They will gladly seek to know me at some future day; for I will be rich enough to buy and sell them all!’

Joseph’s intelligence and perseverance soon raised him very high in his master’s estimation, and finally induced him to send his young clerk on a voyage to India, in charge of some business connected with the firm. His negotiations proving very profitable, obtained for him the office of supercargo of one of his employer’s own vessels, and after several very successful voyages, he left the merchant’s service, and remained in India for several years. He returned with much wealth. How he acquired it, no one knew but himself; and, perhaps, none cared to know. That he was rich, would satisfy most of those who had intercourse with him; and they thought — if they thought at all — that it was his

affair, not theirs, if the young nabob's money had been gained by the severest extortion, or even by literal robbery and murder!

He commenced business for himself on the same spot where he had begun his mercantile career, a wretched-looking, poorly-dressed boy; and few, if any, would have recognized, in the rich India merchant, Joseph Wilson, the 'Poor Joe,' who had once been the butt and laughing-stock of the whole neighborhood.

Our young merchant's business, though very extensive, was conducted in the same parsimonious manner, as regarded small things, which had always characterized his dealings. His clerks were paid the smallest possible salary, and every day's absence carefully deducted in the reckoning of their wages, no matter what reason had occasioned the neglect of duty.

Although everybody despised him, and would gladly have avoided any intercourse with him, yet unbounded wealth flowed into his coffers. Everything he touched seemed to turn into gold; and where the best endeavors of many an upright man of business utterly failed, he would double and treble his gains.

His miserable home, if it deserved the name,

was still in the wretched street where he had first lived, after arriving in the city; and although he occupied a rather better apartment than that which had afforded him shelter when a boy, yet it was wholly without comfort. A hard pallet bed, a bare floor, and windows without either curtain or shutter, contented the sordid merchant. He never allowed himself fire or light; but would sit by those of his landlord, until obliged to go to bed, which he generally did in the dark. Not a book or paper was to be found in his cheerless abode; and he would have grudged the payment of a single cent for a newspaper, even to obtain tidings of his richly-freighted vessels. He read the papers by borrowing of his business neighbors; and often boasted that his reading cost him nothing.

Had Joseph Wilson perused one Book, he might have learned "how hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God." But to him that Book had always been sealed, as he had never been taught in early childhood, by the loving voice of a tender mother or respected father, about him who, when on earth, told his disciples that it was "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven."

The miser's excessive avarice showed itself in his always endeavoring to have all labor, performed for him, done at the smallest expense, and the payment delayed as long as possible. He 'ground the faces of the poor.' If a piece of work was finished for him, particularly if done by a female, he would argue for a long time, if possible, on the extravagant price, and would generally manage to make the poor laborers depart with a few cents less than they had anticipated.

Jean Paul, from whom we have before quoted, speaking of those who wish work to remain unpaid for as long as possible, though not always from an avaricious feeling, says justly: "But before you, great and rich, who, helpless in the honeycombs of your enjoyment, and with clammy wings swimming in your fluid sugar of roses, find it so difficult to stretch forth your hands and take out of your money-rolls the wages of those who helped to fill your reservoirs of honey—before you an hour of judgment will hereafter appear, and ask you whether ye were worthy to *live*, not to speak of *enjoying*; shunning, as you did, even the slight trouble of *paying*, while the poor man submitted to the heavy task of earning. But ye would be better, if ye did but think of the misery occasioned among

the poor by your comfortable indolence, and unwillingness to open a roll of coin, or read a short account, if ye were to picture to yourselves the start of inconsolable disappointment, when a wife sees her husband return home without his wages, and the want, and the blotting out of so many hopes, and the sorrowful days of a whole family."

And many such scenes were occasioned by the miser's refusal, under all sorts of pretences, to pay those who had labored hard for their poor reward. Curses, 'not loud, but deep,' were uttered in many a miserable abode; while, perhaps, a sick wife or famishing child pined in want, from his withholding the hard-earned money due to the father of the family.

But he, the "man of gold," never troubled himself about such matters. *He* had done without all comforts, and why not they? They were no better than he was. *He* was never sick; what business had poor people to be sick? for his part, he believed their tales of distress were all lies, made up to extort money from the industrious.

One means of increasing his wealth he had early resorted to; and disgraceful it is, that many a rich man, besides Mr. Wilson, should resort to such measures for amassing wealth. He bought up, at

low rates, every little shanty and poor dwelling-house that came to his knowledge, and then rented them out at exorbitant prices. He was constantly dunning and dispossessing his poor tenants, and often deprived them of their last farthing. On one occasion, and we hope, for the sake of humanity, the only one, he actually turned into the street, on a bitter cold afternoon in mid-winter, a poor family, who had no place of shelter. The father, who was disabled by rheumatism, a delicate, ailing wife, with three young children, and an aged grandmother, were all compelled to encounter the cold and snow of a December night! For what?—Because they could not add a dollar to the already abundant store of the miser's wealth!

When the unfortunate family reached the street, without any knowledge of where they were to find shelter for the night, and signs of great distress were visible on their countenances, the aged grandmother turned suddenly to Mr. Wilson, who was standing near, and said to him, in a voice which rang in his ears for many a day afterwards, "May the curse of the widow cling to you through life; may you know the stings of poverty; and may conscience, which will not always be silent, make your death-bed as miserable as you have made us; may

your spirit seek in vain a resting-place, tortured and harassed by despair, such as you make us now to suffer! Think of us, hardened and wretched man, when about to enter the presence of your God!"

The curse was never forgotten by the miser, although he endeavored to disregard it; but fearfully it came back to him in after years.

The miser had purchased, in the neighboring villages, several miserable old hovels, such as we have described in the beginning of our story, and visited each of them at intervals, and always without giving notice of his coming to the poor persons having them in charge, thereby hoping to detect some useless expenditure, which would warrant him in discharging them at once.

In order to evade the payment of taxes on his hoarded money, he would contrive to avoid the appearance of residing in any particular town, when the first day of May, the time for assessing the tax on personal estate, came round. The assessors could not catch him in any of the houses which he owned in different towns, and occasionally made his residence. But on one of their visits, after being many times disappointed, they thought they detected a faint smoke issuing from one of his dilapi-

dated dwellings. The assessors knocked at the door for some time, and at length the old woman who usually resided there, in charge of the house, partly opened it. "Is Mr. Wilson here?" they enquired. "Oh, no sir; he is not here," said the old woman, trembling at the thought of her master's anger. "But we think he is here, and we shall certainly search the house, if you do not answer us truly," returned the men.

After delaying her answer as long as she possibly could, she finally confessed that he had been there the night before. They proceeded up stairs, resolved to see for themselves whether he was then in the house. The miserable old man was found crouching in a corner of the attic, trembling with terror at the thought of parting with any of his idolized gold. Without waiting for them to speak, the sordid wretch fell on his knees, exclaiming, "Oh, gentlemen, dear, good gentlemen! do have mercy on me, and do n't tax me for more than two hundred thousand dollars!"

"We had never supposed you worth more than one hundred thousand, Mr. Wilson," said one of the assessors, "and we are much obliged to you for the valuable information you have given us."

The rage and despair of the miser at thus over-

reaching himself, may be easily imagined. Still he had made a false return; for his personal property at that time was double what he represented it to be.

In each of his miserable abodes were collected quantities of just such garments as he used to accumulate on his first starting in the world; and, not content with his own possessions, he actually coveted, and had been known to take the hat and coat from a scarecrow in a field of corn! The old man frequently boasted that he made a single pen serve him for months, and that it never cost him anything for ink, as he manufactured such as answered his purpose, in a way only known to himself.

Some instances of his avarice are hardly credible; but they are well known and remembered in the neighborhood where he chiefly resided, and were often related to wondering listeners, when the fact of his great wealth became known, and enquiry was busy concerning his past life.

Mr. Wilson had never sought to know whether he had any relatives; being well aware that if any were living they must be poor, and perhaps their necessities might make them think that they had a claim on him for assistance, and he would more

willingly have known that they were starving, than have given them a dollar.

As he advanced in years, however, and his increasing infirmities warned him daily that he must soon die, and his great wealth pass into other hands, he became anxious to ascertain if there were any members of his family still in existence. He slightly remembered a sister, who was taken from the poor-house when very young, and carried into a neighboring State, to be brought up by some friends, but of her after life he had no knowledge; his parents' death, soon after her departure, leaving him no home but the Almshouse, and his subsequent miserly career never allowing him time or inclination to inquire if she still lived.

But as the miser was well aware that death was slowly but steadily approaching, the necessity of immediately finding an heir to his wealth induced him to make very strenuous efforts to ascertain if he had any relatives then in existence; and after considerable difficulty he ascertained that a nephew, the son of his sister, was living in a neighboring State; he had a family, and was in very moderate circumstances.

Charles Prescott, his nephew, owned a small farm, which he had inherited from his father, and

which enabled him, with very strict economy, to support his family. He well remembered hearing his mother mention a brother whom she had left at home, and of whose life, after leaving the Alms-house, she had not been able to gain any knowledge.

The old man immediately wrote to Mr. Prescott, desiring him to come to him as soon as possible after the receipt of his letter; but a week or more elapsed before his nephew was able to leave home, and in that time the miser had failed very rapidly; yet his increasing infirmities had not induced him to make any alteration in his wretched way of life, and, if possible, he had become more penurious than ever; grudging even the smallest sum spent for himself.

It became very evident to all who saw him, and to himself, that he must soon close his existence here. He had said many times in his heart, "I have laid up much goods for many years;" but One mightier than he had also said, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

When Mr. Prescott arrived at his uncle's miserable dwelling, although accounts of his penurious habits had reached him, he was shocked and astonished at the sight presented, and begged the old

man to allow him to procure at least a suitable bed for him. But the thought of parting with any of his money threw him into such a state of excitement, that his nephew feared the feeble spark of life would wholly expire, if he insisted any further.

CHAPTER II.

THE MISER'S HEIR.

AS soon as Mr. Wilson had satisfied himself as to the identity of his nephew, he had his will regularly drawn out, signed and sealed, leaving all his wealth to Mr. Prescott; but the amount was carefully concealed until his death should make it known.

On the day succeeding Mr. Prescott's arrival, it became very evident that the old man could not live through the night; and his nephew determined to remain by his bedside. The miser seemed to be dreaming of gold; and he murmured in his sleep of many things which made Mr. Prescott shudder with horror. Just at midnight, he was startled at seeing the old man, who had seemed too weak to move, suddenly sit upright in bed, and with clasped

hands appear to be imploring mercy. "Do not curse me so terribly!—I will give you the house! Take it!—Take wealth!—I will give you gold beyond your wishes; only, I beseech you, take away that fearful curse—I cannot die with it ringing in my ears! Have mercy on a poor old sinner! You said I should not die in peace; but leave me, and I will bless you!"

He continued, for more than half an hour, imploring mercy from an imaginary being; and then, with a howl of utter despair, he fell back and died. Was not the old woman's curse fearfully fulfilled? The miser died as he had lived; without a friend to shed a tear over his grave, or a loving heart to sigh for him and wish him back:—

"The hot curse of talents misapplied
Blistered his conscience with its burning smart;
And his soul must lie with Dives, spotted of all its pride!"

After the funeral, the will was opened and read; and the astonished nephew found himself the sole heir to more than half a million of dollars! an amount of money of which he had hardly ever heard before. But at first the fact scarcely brought with it a feeling of pleasure; for the fearful image of that dying old man, imploring mercy from those

he had wronged, was so deeply impressed on his mind, that he longed to leave such painful recollections, and return to his peaceful home and beloved family.

Upon returning to his little homestead, Mr. Prescott immediately made arrangements for removing to the city of Boston, the immense business of his deceased uncle requiring his immediate attention; and in the course of a few days, he and his family safely reached the city.

After procuring a suitable dwelling, and settling his family comfortably in their new abode, Mr. Prescott took charge of his uncle's business, with the intention of winding up the concern, and retiring to live quietly on his great wealth; but the many friends whom his sudden riches called around him, earnestly advised him to continue the business, and place his son Edward, now a young man, at the head of the house, if he himself felt too old to continue it.

Mr. Prescott at first strenuously objected; as his son had not the slightest knowledge of mercantile affairs, having always been associated with his father in the care of their small farm; but he was told that the clerks and book-keeper of Mr. Wilson would be fully competent to do the real work, and

that his son would only have to sign his name, and give his personal attendance to the business.

After some consideration, Mr. Prescott at length consented, though with many misgivings as to the result; for he had early noticed in his son an indecision of character, and a weakness of purpose, which rendered him liable to be overcome by temptation and difficulties.

Edward Prescott was very amiable, loving, and kind-hearted; but without any strength of character. His whole life had been passed within the precincts of his native village; and of a city life, and its varied temptations and trials, he knew nothing from experience. The details of luxury and crime, and the scenes of poverty and ruin, which sometimes reached his ear, seemed to him more like those of some distant land, than as passing within a short distance of him. He had received a tolerable country education, and his father had early made him a good reader, by providing him with such books as would be likely to give him information and also to interest him.

Edward was now nearly twenty-two years old, and unmarried; but had long been engaged and ardently attached to a young girl in his native village. Lucy Lee was poor in worldly wealth, but

rich beyond description in the wealth of a sweet, loving disposition, and gentle, feeling heart, combined with great energy and determination; and richer still was she in an unflinching trust in the Creator of all; endeavoring daily, by her life and conversation, to honour Him who had placed her here for usefulness. Here were 'true riches,' for which the miser's gold could offer no equivalent, and which enabled her to toil uncomplainingly, to support herself and the last relative left her on earth, an aged and helpless grandfather.

It was in order that this dear relative should know no division in her affectionate feelings, that she had so long resisted Edward's entreaties to unite her fate with his, and share the humble home his daily labour would provide.

"Dear Lucy," Edward would say, "why not allow me to work for your grandfather, too? Surely I can love him as well as you."

"You think so now," Lucy would reply; "but you would not be so well satisfied after a while. You know you have to toil hard now for your own support; and two more would burden you too severely. No, Edward; we will wait patiently until my dear grandfather needs my help no more. He will soon fall, like the aged tree, and we will

remain as we are until the time shall come when he will no longer need my care."

Edward had submitted very reluctantly to what he felt was right. But, a short time previous to his father's unexpected change of fortune, the aged man had passed away; and Lucy was now free to fulfil her promise. She was busily engaged in her simple preparations, when Mr. Wilson's death made such an astonishing change in her lover's fortunes. She was now to prepare for a city life, to which she had been wholly unaccustomed.

An early day was appointed for their marriage, and Mr. Prescott forbore pressing too closely on his son the burden of his business affairs, until his union with Lucy should leave his mind more free and composed. A small but handsome house was beautifully fitted up for the young couple; and the kind and loving mother of Edward, with his amiable sisters, spared no trouble in arranging everything which they thought might give pleasure to the gentle and well-beloved Lucy; who, though simple in her tastes, cherished an intense love for the beautiful in any form; and her kind friends sought to please her, by bringing to her new home such luxuries as they knew she loved, but which her limited means had prevented her from enjoying.

A beautiful conservatory, filled with the choicest plants, opened into her light and cheerful parlour, which boasted no finery or expensive furniture, but neatness and good taste reigned throughout; and the light came softened through simple muslin curtains, which shaded all the windows, instead of the heavy damask with which the fashionable upholsterer would fain have furnished them.

Lucy had a love for white; and her own simple dress was usually of that color, when the season and weather would permit her to wear it. When does any young maiden look so lovely as in plain white muslin? no matter whether she is brunette or blonde, it is always becoming. Some say

“Dust will soil, and thorns will tear;
Is it fit for this world's wear?”

We think so, and would always choose it for the young. It is the first dress put on the feeble infant — emblem of its perfect purity; and the last covering for the body from which the prisoned soul has just escaped to join the white-robed dwellers in the world of light! For Lucy it was a very suitable dress; for never was a purer spirit enshrined in a more lovely form. She was far superior in person as well as intellect to her intended husband;

but still she loved him with an intensity of affection. Sometimes his indecision of character, and the readiness with which he was impressed with the opinions of those around him, caused her much anxiety; but the shadow soon passed away, and his ardent, manly affection for her, dispelled all doubts from her mind.

The wedding was to take place early in June, that month of flowers, which Lucy loved so well. The young couple, by Lucy's own desire, were to be married in the village church, and after the wedding to proceed on their bridal tour. They intended to visit some of the beautiful parts of our country, and enjoy the magnificent scenery and an examination of the great natural curiosities with which it abounds, of which they had often read, but had never expected to see.

They were united early in June, and the aged pastor joined together two loving beings, for weal or for woe, to encounter the 'battle of life' together. But lately, the same solemn voice had consigned Lucy's last and dearly-beloved relative to the silent tomb, and sounded in her ear the words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust." She had listened then with a chastened sorrow, and with new and holy thoughts, arising from recollections of his

well-spent life, who now slumbered so peacefully beneath the green sod. The same deep voice now sent her forth no longer alone, but with a manly arm on which to lean, to encounter a life of temptation and perhaps sorrow. But no cloud darkened the prospect then.

After leaving the church and bidding adieu to their friends, Edward Prescott and his bride started for Niagara, where they passed a few weeks, reading new lessons from its imposing grandeur. They afterwards travelled for some time amid the wild western scenery, and other parts of our country, and after an absence of about three months gladly returned to their home.

Lucy was delighted with all that had been done for her comfort, and only wished that Edward's parents and sisters were under the same roof with her; but the good sense of her mother-in-law told her that it was best to leave them to themselves.

Edward's two sisters, Mary and Anna, were very much attached to Lucy, whom they had known from childhood. They were much older than she was, and many years the elders of their brother. They were past the time of life when women generally marry; and although their father's wealth brought many a suitor, they had determined on a

single life, and politely but firmly rejected all persuasions to the contrary.

Mary and Anna had never seen the old miser from whom their father had received his wealth; but when the accounts of his parsimony, although much softened before reaching their ears, were related to them, they would shrink with disgust from the details, and often say one to another, "Can a blessing go with wealth gained in this way?"

It seemed as if they were to be redeeming almoners of that ill-gotten wealth, for they early began to appropriate a part of their father's ample allowance to deeds of charity; and, winter and summer, in heat and cold, these kind and benevolent women might be seen administering comfort to the weary and heart-broken, and sending many a mourning spirit on its way rejoicing. One means of bestowing charity, which the sisters early adopted, was to pay liberally for all work performed for them; not striving to get things done *cheap*, but encouraging, by their liberal compensation, the honest spirit of independence which makes a *laborer* of many a delicate and gently-nurtured female.

Lucy usually accompanied them on their errands of charity, when she could be spared from her duties at home; and she laughingly used to say,

that her sisters consigned to her all the 'babies' that they found were in want of attention; for they well knew her love for children, and that there was no surer way to call forth the best feelings of her heart, than by showing her a little child either sick or in want; and in this way it happened that many a little voice was taught to lisp its daily prayer, by the gentle and good Mrs. Prescott.

The old man's wealth was becoming, in their hands, the cause of their finding 'true riches.' It had never blest him; but it seemed now that it was to be a benefit to others. Was there no warning internal voice which whispered to the young and happy Lucy that it might not be always so?

Edward Prescott had been placed by his father, with many misgivings, at the head of the extensive commercial house of his deceased uncle. The father had not himself any knowledge of mercantile transactions; but he had a clear head, much reflection, and a stern, unbending integrity. He sought to acquire, even at his advanced age, some knowledge of business, in order to aid his son by his advice; and it was always well bestowed as long as Edward consulted his father in his affairs.

For several years everything prospered with the wealthy and happy family. The first shadow which

fell across their path was the death of Edward's mother. She had been ailing for many years, and all that wealth could procure failed to restore her to health. She passed away, blessing her children to the last. Hers had been an innocent and useful life; and she had looked forward to its close here, with a chastened and holy joy. She had never

———"pictured Death, a fearful tyrant;
But as an angel, beautiful as light,
Who watches o'er the sorrowing spirit here;
And when its weary pilgrimage is done,
Unbars the gates of everlasting life,
And vanishes forever!"

She had sought from the Book of Life to find the fountain of 'true riches;' and the blessings and heartfelt regrets of her children, as of many a one who 'had been ready to perish,' followed her to her final resting-place here.

To Lucy, the loss of her affectionate mother-in-law was very great. Her experience, guilelessness, and firmness, had supported her through many a trying scene; and particularly was her value felt in aiding her to bear calmly the little sicknesses and ailments of her infant children; which, when unsupported and alone, bring such trouble to the heart of the young mother.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRESCOTT FAMILY.

THE death of Mrs. Prescott was a severe blow to her husband. For more than forty years she had been his stay and support. In every sorrow, and they had had many, her gentle influence had enabled him to sustain himself with fortitude; and in their poverty, her untiring industry, patience, and economy, had materially lightened his otherwise heavy burden. And in their sudden and unexpected accession to wealth, how much did he owe to her sterling good sense and love of usefulness, to aid him to bear prosperity which his wildest dreams had never conceived!

Mrs. Prescott had felt all a mother's anxiety for Edward, when placed at the head of so large an establishment as the late Mr. Wilson's; and the

weakness and indecision of his character, which sometimes alarmed even the loving Lucy, were better known to her than any one else. She had opposed, so far as she thought right, the intention of placing Edward in so responsible a situation; but her objections had been overruled by those whom, in her humility, she considered better judges of the case than herself.

“Surely we have more than enough for even our most extravagant wishes,” she would say; “why desire to increase our already large possessions? All our wealth will be our children’s at our death, and there is sufficient to supply every reasonable want.”

But her husband’s argument in opposition to this was, “Edward must have employment. He has always had occupation for every moment, and time would hang heavily, and I fear unprofitably, on his hands, if he did not engage in some business.”

So far, Mr. Prescott was right; but had he counselled Edward to remain in the country entirely, he would not have been surrounded by such powerful temptations. Mrs. Prescott acquiesced in his decision reluctantly, at first; but as there had not been anything yet to warrant her early

fears, she became reconciled to her son's new mode of life, and rejoiced over every fresh instance of his success. Well for her that the grave closed from her view the fulfilment of her forebodings, and that she did not live to see the overthrow of her best wishes in regard to this dearly-loved son!

Mr. Prescott's health gradually failed under the pressure of his loss. Life became wearisome to him, comparatively, without her who had made his life so contented and happy. He missed her daily care, her undeviating good temper, the warm welcome which always greeted him, and the numberless little attentions to his comfort, which make home so sweet.

His daughters were unwearied in their efforts for his welfare, and he fully appreciated their kindness and devotion; but much as he loved them, they were not to him what she had been. He 'sank by slow degrees away.' There did not seem to be much bodily suffering; but his mind had gradually become weaker and weaker, and his last hours were spent in imaginary conversation with her who had preceded him to the world of spirits; and affecting it was to hear the aged man converse, as in days gone by, with her who had been so long to him the main-stay of his existence.

His wealth seemed to have passed entirely from the dying man's recollection. He imagined himself still beneath the old elm-tree where he had wooed and won his gentle bride; when they began life with scarcely a spare dollar, but rich in love and simple, confiding trust in the great Father of all; sure that He who suffers not a sparrow to fall unnoticed to the ground, would bless their endeavors to lead a good and useful life.

The old man died. His children mourned for him sincerely. The death of her father-in-law was to Lucy a sore trial; for after Mrs. Prescott's decease, his gradually-declining health had made him an object of great anxiety to all his family, and particularly to the loving Lucy, who seemed again to be watching the last hours of her dear grandfather.

This was the second shadow which passed over the brilliant fortune of Lucy Prescott. It was dark and gloomy at first, but gradually passed away, leaving, for a time, a bright and glorious sunshine. Her two children were daily growing in loveliness; and her daughter Ellen combined great beauty with a very strong mind. She was now about twelve years old. Charming, indeed, was the fair-haired, blue-eyed little girl, whose

every movement was grace, and whose voice was music! She had all the best points of her mother's character, with the firm energy of her grandfather, and the gentle, loving heart of her grandmother. She was idolized by them all; and yet neither flattery nor indulgence marred the beauty of her character. You could readily fancy her intended for a high destiny in life. The luxuries and elegancies of her father's dwelling, which had so greatly increased since her grandfather's death, seemed to be hers of right; and your imagination could scarcely place the fair and delicate child in any other station than the one she now occupied.

To her maiden aunts, now very infirm, but still useful women, Ellen was the 'bright, particular star.' She passed several hours daily, with the two old ladies, listening with meekness and attention to their sensible advice. Lovingly and gently they counselled her how to use aright the wealth which would one day be hers.

"You must count yourself but the steward of the Lord's bounty," they would say; "and it is your duty to endeavor to spend aright what we fear has been amassed by so many acts of extortion and oppression. Let your wealth go abroad, healing sorrow and affliction wherever it may be found.

Happily some may be cheered who have been wronged by the old man from whom your wealth originally came. Let the miser's gold, if possible, find a blessing. It was gained at the expense of suffering, no doubt, and we have often felt as if it must yet bring sorrow."

Ellen always listened with the greatest respect and attention to her kind aunts; and no time passed more pleasantly to her than with those two cheerful and affectionate relatives.

Ellen's brother, William, was two years younger than herself. He was a serious, delicate boy, and passed most of his time in reading and in quiet amusements. For the boisterous and roving sports of robust boys he did not seem to have any taste. He was gentle and yielding, — more like his father than Ellen; his health, moreover, had never been strong.

Well-beloved were they both, those lovely children; and in one thing they were peculiarly united, — both cherished and possessed a talent for music very unusual at their early age. Already Ellen performed with great skill on the piano and guitar; and William, young as he was, had conquered many of the difficulties which occur to most children.

Both Edward and his wife were fond of music;

though neither possessed any knowledge of it beyond that acquired at a village singing-school. As they had early determined that their children's great talent for music should be well cultivated, the best masters had been procured to instruct them; and the rapidity with which they advanced in their studies was a pleasure to both teachers and scholars.

One beautiful summer afternoon, the whole family were assembled, just before sunset, in the piazza of Mr. Prescott's country residence, a few miles from Boston. Ellen, as usual, sat between her two aunts. She had been singing with William several beautiful songs; and gradually a feeling somewhat approaching to melancholy spread over the whole party. They were waiting tea for Mr. Prescott, who had not yet arrived from town. To divert the seriousness which came over them, it was proposed to walk and meet him as he came up the road.

Ellen gave an arm to each of her aunts, and William walked with his mother. No time was spent more pleasantly by the affectionate boy than that passed with his mother; and he always chose her society in preference to that of any other person — his darling sister not being excepted.

On this particular evening they wandered slowly along, out of hearing of the rest of the party. A thoughtful expression was visible on each of their countenances, and some moments passed in silence. At last, William said,—

“Dear mother, will you forgive me, if I ask you a question which perhaps you may think wrong, but which is dictated by no improper curiosity. Answer it or not, as you think best.”

“What is it, my son?” enquired Mrs. Prescott, observing that he paused as if unwilling to proceed further. “I know not any secret that should be between us.”

“Dear mother,” continued William, “I fear that something, I know not what, is troubling father a great deal; and the question I would ask is, whether you have observed any change in him lately?”

“Now that you mention it,” returned his mother, “I recollect that he has appeared quite serious for some time past; but he has always answered my enquiries by saying that he had a headache; and I have had no suspicion of any other cause for his unusual seriousness.”

“Perhaps it is so,” said William; “but yet” — and here he hesitated: — “No; I will not repeat

what I heard — it is, after all, but idle gossip, and not worthy of a thought.”

“You have greatly excited my curiosity, my son,” said Mrs. Prescott; “and if it is nothing disrespectful to your dear father, I should like you to repeat it. Perhaps it might aid me in my desire to ascertain the cause of his unusual seriousness.”

“Well,” returned William, “I will tell you, mother; and if my words should sound disrespectful, remember that they are not mine, but another’s.”

William then proceeded to tell his mother that on the preceding day he had gone to the city with his father, and after walking some distance in the hot sun, became fatigued and warm, and proceeded to his father’s counting-house, to enjoy the cool breeze from the bay, and rest himself previous to returning home. As he passed through the warehouse, the clerks and book-keeper were all busily engaged, and did not notice his entrance. His father was not there, as he had expected, and being very tired, he lay down on the sofa and fell asleep. The sofa stood in such a position that those in the warehouse could not see it without entering the apartment. William had slept some time, when

the sound of voices near at hand awoke him, and the first words he heard immediately arrested his attention. It was the grey-headed book-keeper who was speaking, and who thus addressed the chief clerk:—

“It is very sad that he neglects his business so entirely; I believe he has scarcely been in the store this week, and there are numerous important affairs which require his immediate attention. His business is already beginning to suffer, and his credit is somewhat shaken.”

“What is to be done?” replied the other; “If the old gentleman were living, we might hint to him our suspicions.”

“I wonder,” said the book-keeper, “if Mrs. Prescott has noticed that her husband is becoming intemperate?”

After proceeding thus far in his recital, William paused; for his mother became deadly pale, and he feared she would faint. He placed her upon a seat near by, and ran to procure some water with which to revive her.

When Mrs. Prescott had partially recovered, she kissed William, whose eyes were streaming with tears, and said: “We will not talk further on this matter at present. Perhaps you may not have

heard aright; and at all events, we should not judge any one on such slight grounds." This she said, hoping that William might have misunderstood or heard imperfectly what he had repeated; but a single glance at his sorrowful face assured her that he was not influenced by her argument.

Just then, Ellen's joyful voice reached their ears, calling aloud, "Papa's coming! papa's coming!" and they both arose to meet him. Mrs. Prescott was still pale and trembling, but hoped to escape notice; Ellen, however, as soon as she saw her mother, anxiously enquired,—

"What is the matter, mamma; are you not well?"

"Not very, Ellen," was the reply; "and I will return to the house with your aunts, who, I am sure, must be much fatigued, while you and William walk to meet your father."

They accordingly separated; and Mrs. Prescott, giving an arm to each of her sisters, who were very infirm, the three proceeded to the house, and placed themselves at the tea-table, to wait for Mr. Prescott and the children.

Voices were soon heard approaching the house, and Mrs. Prescott listened almost painfully for the first tones of the voice which had for years sounded

so pleasantly to her. It struck her ear now with a very different sensation, and made her shudder involuntarily; for the first words she heard were uttered in the thick and broken manner peculiar to the intemperate! Ellen was joyfully giving an account of the delightful ride she had taken, accompanied by her brother, on her own dear little pony.

“Do you know, papa, that he canters so fast that I can actually beat William’s horse! We quite ran races this morning, greatly to the scandal of some of our neighbors.”

Mrs. Prescott listened anxiously for her husband’s reply; for she knew that he had always been very careful of William, whose lungs were delicate, and had forbidden him to ride fast. But no sound reached her, except a sort of indistinct murmur.

By this time they had reached the parlor, and Mrs. Prescott’s first glance at her husband confirmed the many fears which had been locked up in her own bosom for some months, but which William’s communication had roused into fearful certainty.

Mr. Prescott’s face was flushed, and his gait trembling and uncertain, and he took his accus-

tomed seat at the tea-table with scarcely a word of greeting. His sisters were too old, and their sight too much impaired, to notice his condition; and William studiously averted his gaze from his mother's face, and the lively Ellen had to talk for the whole.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VOYAGE TO EUROPE.

FOR a short period after the scene just described, Mrs. Prescott's attention was drawn from her husband to attend more particularly to her aged sisters, who began to fail very rapidly, without any actual disease. They were closing, peacefully and tranquilly, their well-spent years; and their lamp of life was gradually going out here, to be rekindled in that home to which they had always looked with the humble hope that theirs' might be the welcome of, — "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

The wealth of Edward's father had been equally divided between his three children; and consequently the sisters had a large fortune at their own disposal. Their wills had been drawn out long before; and Ellen was to receive the portion of one

aunt, and William that of the other;—each to be the other's heir in case of one dying without any children. The property was settled upon them in such a manner as to be entirely subject to their control when they should reach the proper age.

On a beautiful day in August, it became apparent that neither of the sisters would remain many hours longer in this world. Ellen attended each alternately, weeping bitterly; for it might be called her first sorrow; and all know how heavily it falls on the young and buoyant spirit.

“Ellen, dear,” said the feeble voice of her aunt Anna; “do not weep so. It is the greatest privilege to die as we do. Our lives here have become almost useless, and why wish to retain these worn-out bodies here, when you know that in the world of spirits we shall renew again our strength? We have done with earth forever; but if the spirits of the departed are permitted to watch over those they loved on earth, be sure that we shall be often near you; and once more, dear Ellen,—when the wealth which will one day be yours, is at your disposal, remember to use it aright; cleanse it, if possible, from the curse which I fear it will yet bring.”

The morning sun shone on the withered and worn-out frames which had once contained two as

bright and loving souls as ever visited this earth! At their own request, their remains were removed to the village where they were born, and deposited in the churchyard where their young feet had often trod.

Ellen's grief was at first overpowering. She 'refused to be comforted;' and at last her mother, fearing for her health, gently reprov'd her excessive sorrow, and by giving her employment different from her usual course, in some degree kept her mind from dwelling on her loss.

Ellen was at this time about seventeen years of age. She had not yet entered general society, and was looking forward with great pleasure, previous to her aunts' death, to the ensuing winter, when her father had promised her the most brilliant ball that could be desired. But now she cared nothing about it, and was very glad that the respect due to her aunts' memory would prevent it from taking place.

The first thing which effectually roused her from her sorrow, was the gently-intimated fear of her mother for William's health; and when her attention was directed to that point, Ellen was shocked to perceive how much a short time had altered him. He no longer wished to join in her plaintive songs,

but would listen with intense delight to her rich, full voice. The short, quick cough would interrupt him when conversing, and daily he became weaker and more languid.

Mr. Prescott was deeply distressed at the situation of his darling boy; and every means which his great wealth could command was brought to aid his recovery; and for a time the demon which was destroying his own life and health, seemed banished.

A sea voyage having been recommended, the whole family prepared to go to Europe; hoping that the balmy air of the south of France, or the sweet climate of Italy, might bring back health to the sinking boy.

But William had no such hope. From childhood he had always felt a presentiment that his life here would be short; and in his many conversations with his mother, had fully impressed her with his views, and in some degree prepared her for the day which she felt must soon come. But she communicated to no one her feelings or thoughts. Everything that the most assiduous care could devise for her son's comfort, was done with the same unselfish energy which had always characterized her; and no one could have read, in Mrs. Prescott's calm deportment, the sorrow and anguish which were buried

in her bosom. Her grief for the young and innocent boy, whose soul was soon to flee to its eternal home, was lost sight of in bitter regret that the husband of her youth was sinking down into degradation and misery. For though the situation of his son had in some degree arrested his downward course, she knew that, the barrier once removed, he would sink still faster than before.

Of the effect which this bad habit had had on her husband's business, Mrs. Prescott knew but little; yet she could not doubt that it was very bad. Distant rumors of heavy losses came to her ear; and sometimes an impatient exclamation would escape from the infatuated man, which made her fear that all was not well with him.

When their preparations were completed, Mr. Prescott and his family embarked for Havre; and being favored with delightful weather, the drooping invalid appeared much revived, and they all began again to hope that William might yet be restored to health.

After arriving at Havre, they proceeded by easy journeys to the south of France, only remaining long enough in the capital to see some of its most prominent features; and arrived, before the beginning of winter, in a lovely village, where they in-

tended to remain for some time. At first, William was greatly benefited, and became strong enough to take exercise on horseback; and Ellen and he enjoyed some delightful excursions through the beautiful country around.

The party remained in this neighborhood for some time. William seemed to be gradually recovering; though the kind and attentive physician who accompanied them never spoke very encouragingly to his parents, of any permanent restoration. They afterwards proceeded to Italy—that beautiful land, of which Ellen had so often dreamed in past years.

William enjoyed their journey very much, as his parents adapted it entirely to his state of health; going each day just so far as his strength permitted, and often stopping for some time at different places, to admire the lovely scenery, and enjoy the balmy breezes.

During all this long journey, Mr. Prescott's conduct occasioned his wife and William great uneasiness. Sometimes he was extravagantly gay, at others so gloomy that he would scarcely speak a word for days together; and letters from home never failed to plunge him into a state of restlessness and irritation which seemed almost to deprive

him of his senses. Often would poor William press his mother's hand in silent sympathy, as the tears would fill her eyes—tears which she made great efforts to conceal from Ellen, who as yet had not the slightest suspicion of anything wrong, though she would sometimes look surprised at the short, angry answers of her father; but, naturally unsuspecting, she would attribute all to fatigue, and to anxiety respecting William; and by numberless little attentions endeavored to cheer him.

CHAPTER V.

SORROWS.

ONE day a large packet was received, containing letters from home. Each seized with avidity those directed to them. Ellen read with delight those which were sent by dearly-loved young friends in her native land, and Mrs. Prescott was also much interested in messages from old friends; but Mr. Prescott held his in his hand, as if unwilling to open them. At last, finding that his hesitation was attracting attention, he proceeded to break the seals. As he was reading them, his family, who had withdrawn, from motives of delicacy, from the table where he was sitting, were startled by a deep groan from Mr. Prescott. They flew to him in time to prevent him from falling on the floor, in a state of insensibility!

They were greatly alarmed; and when the usual restoratives had roused him, his family were still more surprised to hear the incoherent language which Mr. Prescott uttered. He exclaimed repeatedly, "A ruined man — the curse has followed me!" Then clasping his hands, he would implore his wife and children to pardon him — "a wretched, undone man!"

"What is the matter, dear father?" enquired Ellen; "tell us, that we may share in your sorrow, and perhaps lighten it."

"Cannot you tell, poor child? you are beggars! yes, beggars! — every dollar that I could ever call my own is gone, and we are beggars!"

Again a fearful paroxysm seemed to shake his frame; and the physician who travelled with them found it necessary to administer a powerful opiate, in order to quiet him.

When at last the unfortunate man was tranquilized and removed to his sleeping apartment, and Mrs. Prescott had time to attend to her children, she was startled and distressed to perceive that William appeared to be suffering extremely. She took his hand in hers — it was burning with fever; and the quick breathing, and short cough, told that the scene had been a fearful trial to him.

“My dear boy,” said Mrs. Prescott, “are you suffering pain? How negligent we have all been, to allow you to remain so long without repose. Will you lie down now? See, here is the sofa, and Ellen will sing to you, and I will fan you to sleep. Will you not rest, my dear boy?” and his mother gently raised his head, which was reclining on her breast.

William seemed to be making an effort to speak, but ineffectually; and his mother had but time to place him gently on the sofa, when the crimson stream gushed from his lips, and he fell back nearly lifeless.

Their distress may be better imagined than described. William’s health had seemed so much improved of late, that all fears of immediate danger had passed away, and they had begun insensibly to plan for him a life at least prolonged for years.

William’s situation now, in addition to the fearful state of his father, called forth from Mrs. Prescott and Ellen new energies, to bear and combat with these aggravated trials; and Ellen’s affectionate, unselfish character already began to show itself. Young as she was, and wholly unused to any kind of care, still no childish lamentation broke from her lips; but, composed and firm, she stood by her

mother's side, assisting her to administer to William the necessary restoratives, which finally produced sleep for the sufferer, although attended with great exhaustion.

All night did the anxious mother and daughter watch by the invalids; turning with tearful eyes from the almost death-like sleep of William to the incoherent ravings of Mr. Prescott, whom the physician pronounced on the verge of brain fever.

These distressing events had occurred within a day's journey of Rome, whither they had determined to proceed, and remain a few weeks. Their accommodations at the inn, where they had stopped merely to enjoy the beautiful scenery and afford rest to William, were very scanty and uncomfortable.

The morning sun rose on a scene of great trial and suffering. It became very evident to the tender mother and sister, that the beautiful life of their dearly-loved son and brother was rapidly drawing to a close. The dying boy made many ineffectual efforts to speak; and after a restorative had partially relieved him, he drew his weeping mother and sister close to him, and having kissed them affectionately, said with great difficulty:—

“Dear mother, why weep that I am going to

my home — that suffering and sorrow will soon be ended for me here? I could not aid you in my present state of health; and I thank the Lord that he has pleased, in his goodness, to lighten your burden, by removing one source of grief and anxiety; and that your minds will be at peace as regards me, in the storm of suffering and trial which I plainly foresee lies before you. You are aware, dear mother, that I long ago told you that I feared my Father was wandering sadly from the true way; and as all concealment must soon be at an end, I will venture to advise what I think will be the best course for you all." Here his extreme exhaustion obliged the sufferer to pause; and when again able to speak, he directed his remarks to the weeping Ellen: "My darling sister, — can you, whose life has heretofore been like a summer sunshine, realize for a moment that winter's blasts are around you, rooting up your most cherished plans, and overthrowing all loved and dear associations? But, my dear sister, dark as is the prospect, I have no fears for you. Young as I am, I have already learned to study character well; and I foresee that the dark cloud which will soon overshadow you, will bring out, in beautiful contrast, the strength and brightness of your mind; making sunshine yet for

those you love, by a life, on your part, of usefulness, such as prosperity, uninterrupted, would never have developed. My breath is growing shorter, and warns me that I must hasten what I wish to say. Will you, my dear mother, leave us alone for a moment?"

Mrs. Prescott left the room, in compliance with her son's wish; well knowing what communication he was about to make to Ellen, and sorrowing as only those can sorrow, who know that the loved ones can no longer retain the high station which good conduct entitled them to hold. The great faults of her husband's character were daily making themselves more manifest; and she knew it was best for Ellen to be apprized, by William, of what she must soon know, as sorrow for his approaching departure would blunt the edge of any communication, apart from that.

And she was right. William's information of the downward course of their dearly-loved father struck, it is true, with great force on Ellen's unsuspecting mind; but the anxiety for fear her brother would overtask his strength, and life depart even while he was talking, made the intelligence less engrossing than it would otherwise have been.

William broke the news to his sister gently and

kindly: "I know, dear Ellen," said he, "that no faults of our dear father will ever cause you to vary for a moment in your feelings toward him, or lead you to relax in your duty. And I fear a time will come, when he will be dependent on your love entirely — perhaps for his subsistence; for I think his fortune is gone."

Ellen looked very much astonished at this information; for she had so long been accustomed to regard her father as a rich man, that she could not at first comprehend that it was possible to be otherwise; but her brother told her that, previous to their leaving home, the old book-keeper, who was much attached to him, had told him plainly, that bad speculations, stock-gambling, and, he feared, other species of gambling, had so far impaired his father's fortune, that a few more losses would plunge him into irredeemable ruin; and it was the news of these losses which had overcome Mr. Prescott, on receiving their last package of letters from home.

"And now, dear sister, promise me that when you come into possession of your fortune and mine, which will soon be yours, you will endeavor to repair, with that money, some of the wrongs which our father's conduct may have entailed on others.

It is no ordinary sacrifice which will be required, dear Ellen; for you have been reared in habits which will make privation, perhaps want, very severe to you; and I wish you to consider well before you make the promise, as it cannot be exacted from you without your free-will. I have always felt, like our dear aunts, that a blessing would hardly follow that old man's gold; and many a time has the thought of that aged woman's curse crossed my mind, in the lone hours of the night. Relieve, if possible, some of the suffering caused by his grasping avarice. It may be that your all will be required; but I have no fears, dear Ellen, but that it will be cheerfully given."

Ellen remained silent for some time; and her brother watched with anxiety the changes of her countenance. Standing, as he did, on the verge of eternal life, how trifling and unimportant seemed all of this world's goods to him, in comparison with the 'true riches,' which would enable Ellen, particularly, to find within herself treasures of untold value, in self-sacrifice, and a determination to repair, as far as possible, the wrongs which others had committed! And yet, light as they seemed in comparison, William saw at a glance that Ellen could not as yet feel as he did, who had so nearly

done with time. Life yet spread out to her many a brilliant prospect; and he knew that the overthrow of many loved and cherished plans would follow, if she fulfilled his suggestion.

Anxiously did her brother watch for the good to triumph over the evil, in the struggle which he saw was taking place in Ellen's mind; and the tears flowed freely from his eyes, when he observed the small hands clasped in prayer, and the slight frame, quivering with emotion, bend humbly to implore strength from above. He knew then that her triumph was sure; she had gone to the only source from whence succour could come, in this her hour of trial; and he felt convinced that 'all was well' with her.

A pressure of the hand, and the ardent kiss which Ellen bestowed on the dying boy, told him that the promise was registered on high more plainly than words, and that his dying request would be fulfilled; and he made a sign to Ellen to recall his mother.

With a hand of each firmly clasped in his own, William gently went into a slumber, which being prolonged beyond the usual time, Mrs. Prescott rose from her seat at his bedside, and anxiously bent over him. The last struggle was over! In

that quiet sleep the beautiful spirit of William Prescott had passed to its future home!

No violent grief was manifested, no loud shrieks were heard, as the mother and daughter remained gazing on the sweet, calm face of the dead. Emotions very engrossing in their character, were filling the mind of each; and it would have seemed sinful to the two, now doubly endeared to each other, to have wished for a moment to recall to the suffering which each felt was to come, the dear one, now slumbering so peacefully.

Mr. Prescott's state was still such, that he would not have understood, even if he had been told of his son's death. A heavy stupor had succeeded the violent paroxysms which he had experienced at first; and he had not appeared conscious of any outward objects since then. His previous habits of intemperance added still greater danger to the fever which had attacked him; and his physician watched anxiously, lest life itself should depart.

After waiting a few days, and finding that her husband's condition did not improve, Mrs. Prescott concluded to have William's body removed to its last resting-place, the English churchyard, which was not many miles from the inn where they were staying.

On a glorious day, when all was bright around them, and nature smiling in the luxuriance of summer, the small procession, which bore to its mother earth all that remained here of as pure and lovely a heart as ever beat within a frail body, wound slowly through the beautiful valley, on its way to the churchyard.

Calmly, but with a silent sorrow, stood Mrs. Prescott and Ellen beneath the noble tree which shadowed the simple grave of their dear son and brother. Sorrow for their loss might surely be forgiven them; as it was unmingled with a selfish thought or wish that it might have been otherwise. It was sorrow which chastens and subdues, while it enables the spirit to bear and suffer yet more firmly what may be still to come. Such sorrow

——— “the good man bears,
As the archangel wears his wings, to elevate and glorify!”

After the service was over, Mrs. Prescott and her daughter requested to be left alone for a while; and the rest of the small company having retired, both, with their hands clasped, knelt silently by the grave. Into their hearts at that time, none but He to whom their voiceless prayers ascended, could look. But they rose, after an hour of silent com-

muning with their Father in Heaven, strengthened ; — to go on their way, if not rejoicing, at least without murmuring.

And here we may again quote the words of Jean Paul: — “And let this one sorrow be forgiven them, or made good to them — the sorrow for their dead one ; for this sweet sorrow for the lost is itself but another form of consolation. When the heart is full of longing for them, it is but another mode of continuing to love them ; and we shed tears when we think of their departure, as well as when we picture to ourselves our joyful reunion — and the tears do not differ much.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN HOME.

ON the evening following William's burial, Mrs. Prescott and Ellen sat side by side in the apartment of the unconscious father. Their hearts were full, and each was struggling to support the other; and many a silent pressure of the hand told of sympathy and love. Both knew and fully realized that they were called upon to *act* — that they 'must be up and doing, while the day lasted;' and after a time passed silently, Mrs. Prescott said, in a low, but firm voice: —

“Ellen, my child, let us counsel together what is next to be done. Your father's last intelligible words are still ringing in my ears, and I feel that even in the hour of sorrow we must yet think of how we are to proceed, in order to save more

expense than we have already incurred within a short time."

"Let us return home, my dear mother," replied Ellen, "as quickly as possible. In that dear land of my childhood, I can think, and, I trust, act, better and more wisely than here. Let us go home, and then determine our plans for the future."

"But I fear your father's state forbids removal," returned Mrs. Prescott.

"I have asked our kind doctor," said Ellen; "and he says that he may journey safely after a few days. He intimated, also, that his health would not be materially better for some time — perhaps months."

A slight shudder shook the frame of Mrs. Prescott, as a glance at the vacant countenance of her husband told how many hopes and affections were buried there in that inanimate form. Visions of her youth, when the manly form of her lover, and his earnest pleadings for her to bind her fate to his; hours of sweet communion beneath the old trees of her native village, with no thought of wealth, but what their own labor could realize; and the trembling which had sometimes seized her, when she saw those traits of indecision and weakness which she dreaded — all flashed across her memory

at once. 'Would that the old man's gold had gone with him to his grave!' she was ready to exclaim; 'we should not then have had the burden of a curse to carry with us through life.'

In a few days, Mr. Prescott's bodily health began perceptibly to mend, and something like reason to return to his mind; and taking advantage of this favorable change, the whole family embarked from the nearest sea-port, for home, to which Ellen, in particular, looked forward with intense eagerness. A small branch from a rose-bush which grew near the grave of her deceased brother, was her most cherished treasure; and she never looked at it, but new resolutions sprang up in her mind, to fulfil to the utmost the dying charges he had given her. 'It shall be my talisman,' said Ellen. 'A glance at it shall strengthen me, when my resolution is likely to fail; and it shall always be my companion, serving me as a memorial of the dear one who is now sleeping in a foreign land.'

Ellen had communicated to her mother the last conversation held with her brother, and had received from her a tearful but earnest injunction to do as her own heart prompted. "A few short months, dear Ellen, will put you in possession of a noble fortune. You cannot be called upon to sacri-

fice one dollar of it, unless you choose. Your aunts' will prevents any one from using it, except yourself; and its future disposal rests in your own hands."

"I could not enjoy it, dear mother, while a stain rests on my father's name. If gold poured out freely can wash it out, I will cheerfully give all — yes, all — to do it. You know, dear mother," continued Ellen, smiling sadly, "I used to laugh, and say that it was a pity my voice should be of no use; perhaps its notes may yet bring something of value to us all." A silent pressure of the hand told Ellen how deeply her loving mother felt the possibility of such an event.

A short and pleasant voyage soon brought the wanderers home; and Ellen could hardly realize, as she stood again beneath the roof of her father's costly mansion, that it was not a dream which had passed over her; and almost expected to see the delicate form of her brother, reclining on the sofa beneath the spreading curtain, as he used to do in former times.

The news of Mr. Prescott's heavy losses was not generally known, as many of those interested had waited for his return, trusting that matters might be better than was conjectured. His miserable

state prevented him from taking any active part in arranging his business affairs, as it was only at intervals that reason seemed to break through the heavy clouds which encompassed it; and then it was the moaning of a child over a lost plaything, rather than the manly sorrow of a misguided man.

Mr. Prescott would weep and lament over the prospect of leaving his beautiful house; and almost agonized his poor wife and daughter, by loud lamentations for his grand dinners and costly wines. "We shall starve — all starve, I know!" exclaimed the poor, weak man; "we cannot live unless we have all just as it is now, and I shall have to eat poor things instead of my nice dinners!" and then a violent fit of crying would render his utterance stupid and imbecile.

Poor Ellen! with her high and lofty aspirations after 'true riches,' such as money could not buy, how harshly his childish lamentations grated on her ear! She had nerved herself for great things; but this puerile sorrow almost broke her heart.

Their friends — and they possessed some sterling ones, who were uninfluenced by their golden days of prosperity, and who clung to them just as firmly now that adversity seemed coming upon them — advised Mrs. Prescott to put her husband's affairs

at once into the hands of an experienced man of business. It was possible, by judicious management, that something might yet be saved from the wreck; and if not, why it was better to know the worst.

Many a one said, 'How fortunate it was that his daughter's aunts bound up their property in such a manner that Mr. Prescott could not touch it! Ellen has now a very large fortune at her command, and can still live as she does now, if she chooses.' Little did they imagine that every dollar of it was already appropriated, in Ellen's mind, to the payment of her father's debts; and that she was merely waiting to ascertain the best way in which to accomplish her purpose!

Mrs. Prescott's first step was to leave their stately mansion; giving up all that it contained, including great quantities of plate, and costly furniture. Many things in the house, the creditors, who respected the gentle and lady-like wife and daughter, would willingly have pressed them to retain; but they firmly declined. The valuable jewelry, which Mr. Prescott's pride and affection had induced him to purchase for his wife and daughter, was also left behind in the house, to be sold for the benefit of the creditors. The family

removed to a small cottage, several miles from the city, which had formerly belonged to Ellen's aunts, and was still very comfortably and neatly furnished.

Mrs. Prescott and her daughter left their beautiful residence with scarcely a pang of regret; but the lamentations of Mr. Prescott over his hard fortune, as he termed it, were very distressing.

“To think of going in a common stage! — why, Ellen, I won't go in that way! — Where is Thomas and the carriage? I am sure you need not be so miserly — you have got money enough; then why do you make your poor, unfortunate father so miserable?”

These lamentations were constantly uttered by the poor man, and added new pangs to the heart of his already heavily burdened daughter. To be accused of avarice, when she valued her wealth only because it might save her father's name from disgrace, and repair the wrong which his imprudence had occasioned, was indeed a bitter cup to drink; but when most unnerved by his complainings, a look at the cherished rose-tree would again strengthen her to bear and endure.

CHAPTER VII.

MORE SORROWS.

A HEAVY misfortune, as some would term it, seemed about to overtake Ellen; and it was one from which she shrunk with bitter tears. A blindness seemed about to fall on her gentle and loving mother. For years she had dreaded it; and eminent medical skill had been employed at various times, in order to avert it, if possible. Mrs. Prescott's sight had been somewhat better during their absence; but now the disease seemed to increase rapidly, and the almost heart-broken Ellen was told that probably it would never be cured. Now, indeed, her cup of sorrow seemed full. To her mother she had invariably looked for support and comfort, in the trials through which she knew she must pass before anything like quiet could be again



Death of William Prescott.

restored to them; and to have to cheer and assist her mother, instead of receiving the support she herself needed, was indeed a great affliction; and but for the firm and fixed principle of right which had been early instilled into her mind by her mother and aunts, and which William's dying words had strengthened and encouraged, Ellen would have sunk under it.

In Mr. Stanton, an able lawyer, and esteemed friend of the family, Ellen found a very judicious adviser; and although he was surprised, and at first disapproved of her intention to devote her fortune to the payment of her father's debts, her arguments, and right views of what respect to his name demanded, finally silenced, if it did not convince him.

“I tell you again, my kind friend,” said Ellen, that I cannot enjoy the wealth which you call mine. It came, originally, laden with the tears and groans of perhaps thousands of sufferers; and I feel that no blessing came with it. My dear aunts, and my darling brother, advised me to sanctify it, if possible, by spending it aright; and if but one heart is cheered by its use, why this part of the curse is removed. Nay, do not smile at my superstition, as I suppose you think it!”

“If I were so disposed, my young friend, I should certainly suppress all such feeling, and bear my willing testimony, that the source whence comes your present strength to perform so noble an action, must be on high;” and the speaker bowed his head almost reverently before the blushing Ellen.

“Do not praise me too much, Mr. Stanton,” replied Ellen. “But for my dear aunts and brother, I fear I never should have had courage to undertake so great a task; but I feel that their blessing goes with it.”

“And what is your plan?” enquired Mr. Stanton; “I should like fully to understand your views.”

“First,” replied Ellen, “to ascertain the amount of my father’s debts; and if my own fortune will cover them, in addition to what may be realized from his houses and personal property, to give it all up to the creditors, reserving merely enough to make my father and mother comfortable during the remainder of their life. Six or seven hundred dollars a year will do that, with economy; and at their decease, that sum shall also go toward liquidating any further claims.”

“And for yourself, my dear young lady?” en-

quired the wondering lawyer. "You have not named any sum for yourself."

Ellen's answer was to open the grand piano, which her loving aunts had provided for her use, in the house in which they lived, and where so much of her life was spent; she struck a few chords with a trembling hand at first, but which gradually became stronger, and then a gush of melody flowed from her lips, fairly startling the listener with its sweetness and power.

"There is my fortune!" said Ellen, almost gaily, though a tear was in her eye; for it was the first time she had sung since the death of her brother. "There is my gold-mine! What is the use of having a voice to sing, if one cannot use it? I intend to teach other birds to carol like myself!"

"My dear young lady, I fear you little realize what you are about to undertake. You cannot be aware of the heavy task of teaching."

"Indeed you are mistaken. I have thought much of it, and I think fully understand all the difficulties in my way; but with you to bear testimony to my abilities, I do not doubt that I shall succeed."

"Well, may God speed you," replied Mr. Stanton; "and I am sure he will; for your conduct

deserves the blessing it will surely find. And now farewell for a few days. When I see you again, it will probably be to deprive you of that golden charm which some would prize beyond that priceless spirit which aids you now in your seeking after 'true riches!'

Great were the outcries, and even remonstrances, of Ellen's friends, when they became aware of her determination to appropriate her wealth towards paying her father's debts. "What nonsense!" cried one. "She must be mad! They are not her debts — what business has she to be paying them?" "And," said another, "she might still live in that beautiful house, and keep her carriage, just as her parents formerly did. To think of throwing away such a noble fortune, in order to pay other people's debts! — I have no patience with such folly!"

But all did not make such remarks as these; for young Mr. Stanton expressed his admiration in the most ardent terms. He had long loved the gentle Ellen, but unknown to her; for her youth, previous to her departure for Europe, had prevented him from ever paying her any particular attention. His feelings towards Ellen, however, were well known to his father, and he had his permission to win her for his wife, if he could; but now, when

she was about to give up her noble fortune, and seek a livelihood for herself, he somewhat feared that his father might change his opinion. But he soon found that his father looked with feelings of admiration on the noble resolution of Ellen; and Mr. Stanton, when questioned on the subject by his son, replied: "My dear boy, if my consent was cheerfully given when you asked it before, be sure that I will even aid you now to obtain such a treasure as any man will possess in that self-denying, excellent girl. I have ample means — honest, hard-earned wealth — enough for you both, and which will be yours at my decease; you need not the miser's gold to make your life, should you win her, a happy and prosperous one."

The young man had been educated for the ministry; and with something of the same unselfish energy exhibited by Ellen, he had not sought a pulpit in the city, but wished to carry out into the 'Far West' his talents and desire to benefit mankind; yet, being an only child, and his father advanced in years, he had remained at home, to give to his parent the attention which he knew he needed and would miss.

In the course of a few weeks, Ellen's large fortune passed into other hands, save the small sum

reserved for the support of her almost idiot father and ailing mother. They were established in their cottage home, which Ellen had also retained, and from which every article of luxury was banished, save Ellen's piano, which was to bring the means of support to the ardent and energetic girl.

The knowledge of Ellen's history soon brought many pupils to her residence, and she attended a number of others at their homes. Curiosity, no doubt, prompted some to patronise her, in order to see how the wealthy heiress would appear in her new station; and perhaps similar ill feelings may have prompted others; but the majority looked on her as a dearly-loved friend, and bestowed every attention on her which delicate interest could prompt.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

ONE day, just as Ellen was preparing to leave home, a strange, rough-looking man entered the little garden before the cottage, and enquired, in a loud voice, for Mr. Prescott. Ellen, who was standing near the door, asked him his business, telling him that Mr. Prescott was ill.

“Ill? I’m sorry for it; for I wished to tell him something that perhaps might please him; and now I think of it, *you* must be the one I ought to thank.”

“And for what, my good friend?” asked Ellen, mildly; “I do not remember ever seeing you before.”

“I dare say not: but did you never hear of the curse which Mr. Wilson received from the old woman?”

“Yes,” replied Ellen; “but why allude to what passed so long since? I do not like to think of it at all.”

“I dare say not; for it was a heavy curse,” said the man. “I heard it uttered, and in my childish heart joined in; for I was the little boy whose hand my grandmother held when she pronounced those dreadful words.”

“Were you indeed?” enquired Ellen, fearing that the man sought to see her father, in order to add a new insult to his already heavy load. But he looked at her with almost tearful eyes, and told her that he had sought employment from Mr. Prescott, with the intention of injuring him in some way; and that his grandmother had charged him to pursue the family with the hatred which she carried to her grave.

For several years, the man had worked for Mr. Prescott, without ever alluding to his relationship to the old woman, but still cherishing an inward dislike to his employer. Gradually, however, his ill feeling had disappeared; and a short time previous to Mr. Prescott’s departure for Europe, he had permitted quite a large sum of money, for a poor man to have saved, to remain in his hands; so that when he received the news of his employer’s

failure, the thought of his own loss nearly drove the man distracted.

“I was nearly mad, my dear young lady, and thought that my grandmother’s curse was visited on me for trusting any one belonging to a man whom she so bitterly hated. I scarcely know what I should have done, for I was like a maniac; when one morning, a few weeks since, I was sent for to Mr. Stanton’s office, and there received every cent due me; and,” continued the hard-featured man, evidently struggling with deep emotion, “I was also told that to Mr. Prescott’s daughter I owed it that I was not a ruined and undone man. And now take a poor man’s blessing; and may it drive away the dreadful curse which still hangs around the old miser’s gold!”

So saying, the man turned and left the garden as abruptly as he had entered; but Ellen returned into the house, to cheer her mother with the tale. Ellen’s arduous duties that day were lightened, and she returned home that evening light-hearted and encouraged. She found that a physician, formerly well known to their family, had visited her mother during her absence, and pronounced her eyes curable, if she would submit to a painful operation, and some months of close confinement;

and suggested that it would be much better for her to become a resident of the Hospital, during that period.

“But how could I leave you, my dear Ellen, alone with your poor father? You know how wearisome are his complaints after his lost wealth, and how bitterly he reproaches you for depriving him of the use of your money. How could you bear this trial alone? and where should we find means to pay the great expense?” and poor Mrs. Prescott’s countenance again became very sad, as the difficulties which presented themselves dissipated all the hopes which had at first inspired her.

“There’s nothing to prevent, dear mother,” replied Ellen. “You must go, and trust me for removing all obstacles. You know my wand turns all to gold!” continued she, gaily; “and I shall have ample means to pay all expenses; and as for poor father, never fear. I will so amuse and pet him, that he will forget past days and enjoy the present!”

Ellen spoke cheerfully and gaily; for the thought of her mother’s restoration gladdened everything around her, and she felt as if all else was light in comparison.

On her next visit to the city, Ellen sought out

the physician who had visited her mother, and received from him so much encouragement that her sight could be entirely restored, that she begged the necessary arrangements might be made without delay. In a short time, Mrs. Prescott was removed to the city, and Ellen accompanied her; with tearful eyes, but a cheerful voice, encouraging the failing strength of her mother, by bright pictures, which she drew of scenes of future enjoyment, when she should have recovered her sight.

“You will not know me, dear mother. I am such a great, red-cheeked girl, that you will not believe it is your delicate, often-drooping Ellen. I am happier in the possession of health than all the gold of the Indies could make me. I have found riches of which the old miser, in his gold-seeking, never dreamed. I have found within myself such riches as I never should have discovered, had I continued to live in that hotbed of splendor and indulgence in which my early days were passed. Believe me, dear mother, I should not have found ‘true riches’ there; for I should have considered that it was impossible to work, or use those gifts which I possess.

Mrs. Prescott was cheered and encouraged by Ellen’s conversation; and though the thought of

parting was a very hard one, yet each was comforted by the consciousness of doing her duty, and the determination to support each other in this added trial.

When Ellen had seen her mother comfortably fixed with their kind friend, Dr. Howard, and had remained long enough to see that the tremor, which at first was agitating her, had begun to subside, she kissed her affectionately, and bidding her good-bye, said gently and cheerfully: "Do not have an anxious fear, dear mother, for my father. I will watch him very carefully and obediently, and strive to divert him as much as I can. You know I have two or three holidays this week."

Ellen spoke cheerfully to her mother; for she saw plainly that her naturally strong mind was sinking gradually under the pressure of this great affliction; for to deprive Mrs. Prescott of the power to *act*, was indeed the greatest of all suffering. She had borne unrepiningly the death of her dear boy, and the loss of their fortune; even the degraded state of her husband had never caused her to vary in her kind and gentle treatment towards him; but the prospect of passing many long years, perhaps, in a state of inactivity, was dreadful for her to contemplate. Dr. Howard

spoke encouragingly to his patient; and though he carefully avoided exciting hopes which might be disappointed, still he said enough to cheer them both.

The parting of mother and daughter was a very great trial; but as it was absolutely necessary, it was submitted to without repining, and Ellen left her mother, to return to a home cheerless, indeed, now that that dear parent was not there to advise and assist her to press onward in her duty; for Ellen had many trials to encounter in her new avocation; and numerous mortifications, of which, at a former period in her life, she had never supposed it likely that she would be the subject, often sent her home in tears. But never for a moment had Ellen regretted the use to which her property had been applied, or failed in one single duty toward her erring father, whose state was daily becoming more and more pitiable.

When Ellen reached home, she found her father sitting in the piazza; and after speaking to him pleasantly and affectionately, she explained the cause of her mother's absence. She had some difficulty in making him comprehend why it was necessary for her to leave home. He shed tears, as he always did now, when anything crossed him,

and complained bitterly that he was always the sufferer.

“But for you, Ellen, I might have still had my nice house and plenty of attendants, and your mother need not have had to go away like a pauper. You gave away your money to strangers, and let your parents want; and that you call doing your duty!”

Ellen bore his reproaches in silence; the whole ground had been so often gone over before, without making her father conscious that it was *his* fault, not hers, which had occasioned the change in their manner of living, that she seldom replied now to his remarks.

The poor man, aged in appearance, from excesses, not from years, wept and lamented for some time over his hard fate; and when he seemed to become more calm, Ellen led him into the house, and persuaded him to rest on a sofa; then opening her piano, though wearied with her day's work, she poured out for him such beautiful melody, that his restless and complaining spirit was gradually soothed, and Ellen soon had the satisfaction of finding him much more quiet and contented, and even disposed to speak somewhat kindly to her. Cheered by this good beginning, his affectionate

daughter related to him every little event which she could recollect, that would be likely to amuse and interest him; and he finally retired for the night, without resorting to his usual tumbler of brandy and water.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW TRIALS FOR ELLEN.

BEFORE her mother left home, Ellen had received a very feeling and manly letter from young Mr. Stanton, telling her of his hopes, and begging her to give a favorable answer. Ellen had always esteemed him greatly; and, perhaps, under other circumstances, would have willingly accepted his suit; but the promise, silently made at the bedside of her dying brother, never to forsake her father during his life, forbade her encouraging any attentions, and she firmly but gently requested Mr. Stanton never to mention the subject again.

“I shall never marry while my father lives. I have bound myself by a promise, never to leave him, or suffer him to want for any personal attentions, while he remains here; and highly as I

esteem myself honored by your sentiments, so kindly expressed, and by your respected father's approval, I must again repeat, that all solicitations to induce me to change my mind will be in vain."

When Ellen's answer reached Mr. Stanton, his disappointment was at first severe, yet he respected and even loved her more for her decision; but feeling it to be impossible for him to meet her without painful feelings, he begged his father's permission to travel for a while, to which he consented; and after an interview with Ellen, who told him frankly, that under other circumstances she might have decided differently, and promised to retain for him a place in her memory, as among her best friends, the young man bade her and his father adieu, and departed for a tour in Europe; resolved to use all his energies to make himself a better teacher and minister of God's word, by bringing to his work a mind chastened and subdued by this, his first severe trial.

Mr. Stanton had Ellen's permission to write to her; and his letters always interested her extremely, especially when he wrote from such places as she had visited; and tears of fond recollection stole down her cheeks, when a large package reached her, containing a minute account of his visit to her

brother's grave, and kind messages from many who remembered the sweet American girl, who so tenderly loved, and assiduously watched over her invalid brother. A few leaves, carefully dried and pressed, from the rose-bush which grew near her brother's resting-place, were also enclosed.

Mr. Stanton often alluded delicately but feelingly to the cause of his leaving his country, and expressed his appreciation of her motives in declining his suit, in such terms as made Ellen gratefully feel that at least she had gained a warm friend, and one who would always be willing to aid her in pursuing the right way.

Ellen's trials heretofore, though very severe for so young a person, had been of the kind which admits most readily of consolation to those who look for it from the proper source. In the death of her dear grandparents and aunts, the knowledge that they had passed the period when a continued stay here is not desirable, reconciled her, after the first bitter pain of parting was over; and after her brother's death she had also been consoled by the conviction that a prolonged life would have been one of physical suffering, from which she unselfishly rejoiced that he was delivered. But her mother's blindness was an event which had never

occurred to Ellen as possible; for Mrs. Prescott had carefully concealed from her family the apprehensions which had filled her own mind; and though she was cheered somewhat by Dr. Howard's hopes of a permanent cure, yet sadly and bitterly the poor girl wept when she was first left alone to watch over the other parent, whose 'living death' was a far greater trial than committing to their mother earth the bodies alone of those she had so loved.

Mr. Prescott's state was indeed a pitiable one. Never strong in character, or able successfully to combat with temptation, the sudden change from his quiet life in the country to the thousand snares and enticements of the city, had completely unsettled his mind; and he had gradually wandered away from the straight path of right, and groped in thick darkness, without the bright light of religious faith and trust to guide him through the bewildering vices which beset him on his sudden accession to wealth. Designing men had early singled him out for a prey; and through them he had entered into the most rash and daring speculations; contrary to the advice, and indeed sometimes without the knowledge of the worthy and intelligent men who had really conducted the prosperous busi-

ness of Mr. Wilson; for he, selfish and grasping as he was, had seen enough to know that he must have able men to take charge of his affairs. But Mr. Prescott chose to trust to the representations of men who flattered his self-love by an assumed deference for his opinions, and who aided their schemes by bringing him constantly into scenes fraught with temptation, which they well knew would gradually overthrow what little firmness he possessed.

At first, Mr. Prescott's evenings only were passed in the luxurious rooms which were fitted up by the men whose deep-laid plans were at last successful in ruining his business; and different games of cards were always in readiness whenever he chose to join; but it was to the demon of strong drink that they finally owed their success. At first, it was but the glass of wine, which was proffered to their welcome guest, the rich merchant, Mr. Prescott; and months elapsed before the wine was exchanged for stronger liquids; but the taste for drink, and the necessity for stimulants, had been firmly fixed, and it needed but little of a more powerful spirit to disarrange his ideas and completely bewilder his memory. Then the largest speculations, and not very honest proposals of these

harpies, were met with but little opposition; and his money or his signature was easily obtained in order to carry out schemes which were rash and oftentimes dishonorable.

Mr. Prescott's departure for Europe had left them still further time to operate; and the passion for drink was by this time so firmly established, that he could not, even if he had wished, untangle the web which they had wound about him.

Drinking had affected his health, by making him heavy, dull, and stupid; and most of the time, a vacant stare took the place of intelligence in his eye; and mumbled, indistinct words were often the only answer obtained of him when asked a question. Childish repinings and wearying complaints were much more common than violence; but sometimes he would become quite ungovernable and self-willed. And this miserable being Ellen attended with assiduous care; cheerfully resigning the smallest gratification of herself, and never leaving him, even for an hour, except when obliged to attend to her pupils. They had secured the services of an old and faithful servant, who had lived with Mr. Prescott when he first brought to his home his gentle Lucy, a bride, and who was extremely attached to them both; and in her care

Ellen felt that her father was quite safe during her necessary absences, provided he was not attacked by one of those ungovernable fits of violence; yet every evening, when returning home, how wildly her heart would beat, until assured of his safety by looking into his room, and seeing him in his usual arm-chair, with a newspaper before him, which he thought he was reading, but which was seldom turned over.

A ray of something like pleasure would gleam across his face, when his lovely and gentle child would greet him with her sweet voice and pleasant smile; and he would listen to her melodious voice as she sung to him, with apparent gratification. Sometimes Ellen would gently coax him to take a walk with her into the village; and not an uncourteous or unkind remark ever reached her ear, nor did a stare of vulgar curiosity ever cause her to blush, as, giving him her arm, she carefully guided her father's tottering and feeble steps along the way. So well was her story known, and she herself so much respected and loved, that her sphere of purity and holy piety threw a halo even around the poor, degraded and fallen man.

The most encouraging accounts continually reached Ellen, of her mother's gradual recovery of sight;

and after an anxious interval of four months, their kind friend, Dr. Howard, came himself to tell the tearful but happy Ellen, that her mother had again recovered her sight, and that nothing now prevented her return home, but the care necessary to recruit her general health; and he advised a still further residence where she was, as he feared any excitement would materially injure her. Hard as it was to bear the continued separation, still Ellen at once acquiesced in his advice that she should not attempt to see her mother for at least a couple of weeks.

Ellen observed that Dr. Howard several times looked earnestly and anxiously at her father; and she asked him, when they had left the apartment, if he perceived any indication of sickness in his appearance; to which he candidly answered that he did.

“He looks much more feeble than he did some weeks since. Have you noticed any indications of his not being well, within a few days past?”

Ellen replied, that he had appeared to be much weaker than usual, and more inclined to sleep; but otherwise she had not observed any change.

Dr. Howard left her directions for some medicine for her father, and told her what to do in case the attack should prove such as he suspected; he then

took his leave, promising to visit her father again on the morrow.

Ellen resolved not to leave her father during the night, but to remain on the sofa in his room. He retired to rest at his usual hour; but Ellen observed that he seemed to be weaker than usual, and fell asleep almost as soon as he lay down. She had administered the medicine, as directed, and leaving him calmly sleeping, she went down stairs to communicate her fears to old Margaret, who she found had also noticed a change in him. Ellen reclined on the sofa, merely exchanging her dress for a wrapper, and Margaret remained in an adjoining room, ready to be called, should she be needed.

Mr. Prescott seemed to be sleeping quietly, and Ellen's fears being somewhat removed, she gradually became drowsy, and soon fell asleep, and dreamt of many a pleasant scene in her past life, which suddenly, however, became mingled in her fancy with dark and dismal pictures. She imagined that she was standing by a beautiful waterfall, such as she had often seen in their wanderings abroad,—that heavy clouds were above her, and that suddenly the roar of the cataract became almost deafening, and a hand, which she had not seen, was

pulling her forcibly towards it. She awoke with a sudden start, and found old Margaret standing by her, trying to arouse her, and an appalling sound, as of heavy groans or sighs, issuing from her father's bed. In an instant, Ellen was on her feet, and found Dr. Howard's prediction verified, that Mr. Prescott would shortly be attacked with apoplexy.

Old Margaret instantly summoned the nearest physician, whom Ellen had apprized of her father's illness, before retiring to rest. He came to her immediately; but a glance satisfied him that all remedies would be useless. Poor Ellen's fortitude did not forsake her under these trying circumstances; but how she longed for her dear mother's support! Yet she knew that her life perhaps depended on her being kept free from excitement; and earnestly and humbly did the good and pious daughter implore assistance from her Father in Heaven, to enable her to fulfil perfectly her duties to her earthly parents.

Mr. Prescott never recovered a moment's consciousness. He lingered for twenty-four hours, and then departed from this world, where he had so little honored his Maker's greatest gift — that of life!

When Ellen became aware that her father was indeed no more, she was, for a time, wholly overpowered by the bewildering thoughts which crowded on her memory. Her imagination flew rapidly back to the time of her childhood, passed in her father's costly mansion, surrounded by every luxury which wealth could provide; and when that father, whose bloated and disfigured corpse now rested in its last sleep, was her idol, whose foot-step, as he returned from his business, was watched for, and on whose knee some of the happiest hours of her youth were passed—when her slightest wish expressed to him was instantly granted, and who had never uttered a harsh word to her, until he became no longer master of himself, and so bitterly reproached her for depriving him of those luxuries he so much prized. But these complaints and his harshness were all forgotten. She mourned now for the father she had so dearly loved; and sorrow gently threw a veil over his faults, leaving freshly impressed on her mind the beautiful remembrance of her father's early love.

It was considered best to apprise Mrs. Prescott of her husband's death, and also to counsel her to remain quietly where she was, so as not to expose her health to the excitement which would be the

consequence if she attended the funeral; to which she consented reluctantly, at first; but Ellen having written to her, and implored her to remain quiet, saying again and again, "Dear mother, I have none left now but you! Oh, think how precious is your life now to me, and do not risk it by exposing yourself to this painful scene!" this strong argument, as Ellen well knew, operated more powerfully with her unselfish and gentle mother than any other; and Mrs. Prescott remained, and Ellen encountered the sad trial of attending her father's remains to their final resting-place, without any relative to sustain her, or whisper words of comfort — yet not alone — for her Heavenly Father was breathing peace and comfort into her soul; and the consciousness that, as far as it was in her power, she had saved her earthly father's memory from reproach, cheered her, even amidst the dark and trying scene.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

THE meeting of Ellen and her mother can be more readily imagined than described. How closely the bonds which united them together were tightened by their lonely situation! but they gave not many hours to useless sorrow.

Ellen, true to her promise, insisted that the creditors of her father should receive the sum which she had reserved for his lifetime, and which her mother absolutely refused to retain for her own use.

“If my gentle Ellen can encounter the trials necessary for our support, surely I can; and I could not enjoy living on that money, while the thought that even one poor man might be suffering from poverty and privation, in consequence of the

wrongs which others more than himself made my unfortunate husband commit."

Finding these two gentle women firm in their refusal to avail themselves of the small income which remained, Mr. Stanton added to the amount already received, the proceeds of the sale of the pretty cottage which had belonged to Ellen, and also the small sum retained by her for her father's use; and Ellen declared that she now felt free for the first time since her father's misfortune.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the enthusiastic girl, "I have not now a dollar of the old miser's gold! All has gone, and cheerfully been relinquished, to wipe away, if possible, the guilt and sorrow caused by its accumulation. Now, how cheerfully will I work, and never dread to hear the reproach that Ellen Prescott lives in luxury, and the poor man, who trusted her father, is starving! The curse which came with the miser's gold will never haunt me again!"

And now, strong and hopeful in her sense of right, Ellen went on her way rejoicing; bringing to her daily labor a cheerful, unbroken spirit, and still spreading sunshine around her, by her uncomplaining submission to her present situation in life. To be of *use*, was her great desire; and the only

wealth which she coveted, was that which should make her *rich*, by enabling her to benefit mankind in any way, however small; and she daily realized that, in order to do this, worldly wealth was not so much needed as an unselfish disposition, and a determination to make a good use of what had been bestowed on her. Her 'mite' often brought more real joy and comfort than all the 'treasures' cast in by others; for a blessing surely went along with it.

Ellen became in a short time the beloved and respected wife of Mr. Stanton; and in the 'Far West,' whither he voluntarily turned his steps after his father's death had left him free, she is cherished as a gift from Heaven. She and her dear mother are indeed 'ministering angels' to many a sufferer; and she follows in her husband's steps, 'pouring in oil and wine' to many an outcast, left 'by the way, to perish.'

That Mrs. Stanton has found the source of 'true riches,' her cheerful, happy life shows. She had known what life was, burdened with unhallowed gold; she had also known the precious feeling of independence earned by her own endeavors; and she thanked God daily, that she was enabled, by his assistance, to seek for the fountain of true

wealth — purer than gold, “and more to be desired than fine gold.”

“Oft the cloud, which wraps the present hour,
Serves but to brighten all our future days!”

THE END.





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