

THE BIGGEST HALFPENNY JOURNAL PUBLISHED.

1<sup>d</sup>  
2

# Standard JOURNAL

1<sup>d</sup>  
2

COMPLETE STORIES, TALES OF ROMANCE, ADVENTURE, FUN ETC.

No. 52.—Vol. V.]

Wednesday, March 3rd, 1897.

[ONE HALFPENNY.]

## CAPTAIN JOE; OR, THE DAYS OF THE MINT.



"OH! OH!" SHE CRIED, CLASPING HER HANDS. "HERE ARE THE MEN CLIPPING UP THE SATELITES"

## CAPTAIN JOE.

"Born the apprentice of Mr. Sawdust have absented themselves from home, and he has become most anxious about them. Jack, or Jack of the Mint, as they call him, he doesn't know where to send for, but Master Dick Marlow's mother's living here. Why—"

"Yes, just so," said Dick. "You want Dick Marlow. I know the mazy blade well. I'll go and tell his mother."

He hastened up the stairs and returned hurriedly in a moment.

"I'm sorry you've come," he said. "Mrs. Marlow was very ill before, but this has made her worse. She has not seen or heard anything of Dick since yesterday morning; and as for Jack of the Mint, she doesn't believe they can be together, for she says they're not friends. She is too ill or she would come round to the shop."

"Oh, tell her not to do that," said the other, with gruff kindness. "I expect it's only some apprentice spree. Good morning!"

"Good morning, sir," said Dick, with a bow. Then he added to himself—"Ha! Jack hasn't returned home. Perhaps he died by the way. This was a close shave, however. Old Scragg, the ironmaster, next door—who the devil would have thought of seeing him here after me?"

In less than half an hour a glorious breakfast had been cooked and eaten; and then Mrs. Marlow, proud of her gaily-dressed son, and little dreaming of the terrible tribulation which was to befall him towards St. Bartholomew's Fields, where a grand fair was to be held.

It was a splendid day, and as they moved along towards the place of merry meeting such a calm feeling of enjoyment fell over Dick Marlow that he could not help expressing a wish that it could be always like this, and that he had never fallen upon the companions who had taught him evil ways and the golden paths into which they led for awhile.

St. Bartholomew's Fields, which extended for some distance on the Surrey side of old London Bridge, were full already of a gay and giddy throng when they reached them. Every class was there represented.

The merchant trader and his family, the gay gallants, the blustering bully, the jolly apprentice and his sweetheart, the moonshiner, the poor poet, the pensive student, and the reckless no-er-do-well—all mingled in the wild confusion, in the ever-moving throng.

"Well, you have made me happy to day, Dick!" said his mother, smiling as they passed to observe the capers of some dancers. "I little thought when I woke gloomy and sad this morning that I should be out in the sunshine all."

"I am glad, indeed, dear mother, that I have been able to give you pleasure," said Dick in a genuine burst of love. "I must come and see you often."

"Indeed, yes," said Mrs. Marlow; "but tell me, my boy, who is this lady you bop to see?"

Dick laughed.

He had only in very truth been an invention of his own fertile brain to pass off his falsehood about the holiday.

"Ah! mother," he said, assuming an important air. "Ah! that I must not tell; if we meet the lady, then shall she be sure-

ded to you. But, see! here are some more ladies; let us pass and see them." Amused for a time by the antics of the tumbler and the jugglers, Dick Marlow did not perceive that both he and his mother were objects of intense curiosity to two persons.

The one a lady, whose face he could not well discern.

The other a man, whose dark visage was nearly concealed by his hat.

The lady was young, as could be seen at once from the contour of her form; and, if the rest of her face could be judged by her eyes, she was also beautiful.

The man was of middle age, short and hardy, and evidently not well pleased at something.

"That is he, my preserver," murmured the young girl in his ear. "Now that you know all, you cannot but be pleased that he tore me from the arms of such a villain."

"I don't know," said the man. "Perhaps he will prove troublesome, find out our secrets, want you himself, and so on."

The young lady laughed.

"Well," she said, "he would at least make a more presentable husband than Sir Albert. Shall we not speak to him?"

"To what purpose?" muttered the man. "You cannot invite him to the booze. You know that would be madness."

A faint flush spread over the young girl's cheeks.

"No; but I can at least thank him," she answered.

And with these words, she advanced towards Dick Marlow, the man reluctantly following.

Dick was crossing the other way when her little arm was laid upon his.

He started as he felt the contact.

His guilty conscience made him think every moment of thieves and thief-takers.

The young girl had drawn aside her veil now and appeared before him in all her radiant beauty.

One instant and Dick recognised her, and a flood of crimson overspread his face.

What could he say now—how could he explain to his mother the truth of the story she would tell?

He had no time left him, however, to think or plot.

"Oh, sir," said the lady, "I am so glad of this meeting. I had thought I should never meet with you again, to tell you how grateful I am for your gallant conduct the other night. Here is my father, Sir John Fleming; he will thank you."

The knight, thus addressed, could not do as she had him, although in his heart he cursed her imprudence.

"Yes, young sir," he said, holding out his hand, "I am indeed glad of this opportunity of thanking you. My daughter was in the power of a villain—a great villain, sir—and I shall be pleased to know the name of her preserver."

Before Dick could reply his mother spoke.

"This is my son, sir," she said. "He bears a once well-known name—one which is honorable, though little heard of in the busy world—he is Lord Eustace Fortescue, son of the lord of the same name who was killed years ago at a masquerade ball. I am his mother."

Dick Marlow listened like one stunned by a sudden blow, and he glanced at his mother as if to detect the gleam of madness in her eyes.

But in this he was disappointed. She was perfectly calm and assured, and

he felt a strange and exciting emotion at his heart as Sir John Fleming took her hand and raised it gallantly to his lips.

"I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Lady Fortescue," he said. "I was afraid from the strange manner in which my daughter Edith made the acquaintance of your son that he was connected with a wild and lawless set of men. His name now is his password, and I trust it will not be long before we see him and you at our house."

As Sir John was speaking, Edith Fleming had approached close to Dick, and, watching her opportunity, slipped into his hands a tiny note, which, with eager haste, he placed in the bosom of his coat.

She was just in time.

Sir John and Mrs. Marlow were just exchanging adieus, and in a few moments the scene was over like a dream, and mother and son were once more alone.

"What means this, mother?" asked Dick. "Why did you introduce me to these people as Lord Eustace Fortescue? Is there truth in it?"

Mrs. Marlow laughed listlessly.

"It was a whim—a fancy," she said, hurriedly, "and which it may be useful to you to keep up. But, come, let us move on, people are observing us."

"A whim—a fancy!" muttered Dick, as they passed on. "It strikes me there is some strange mystery here."

As soon as they had changed their quarters, Mrs. Marlow spoke again.

"What did Sir John Fleming mean, Dick," she said, "by his allusion to the roof?"

Dick smiled, and looked full into her eyes.

"It was a whim—a fancy, dear mother," he said, "just as much as yours."

"Ah! Dick, you are a sad boy," she said, "come let us see the sights."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## GIDEON HASPER'S SABBATH.

It was dark when Dick and his mother reached home, and the apprentice feeling, naturally, that some exposure would follow their return, had stumbled far more than was necessary, in order to give him a false courage.

"Not that he was, outwardly, the worse for liquor."

But his eyes sparkled, his colour was brightened, and his tongue wagged with untroubled freedom.

He had not forgotten, of course, his appointment at the "Willow Tree," and the projected burglary at Humble Lodge; but still he deemed it prudent to go to his mother's house and hear all the news, however perilous that news might be.

But apparently everything at Simon Sawdust's was quiet.

No one had been, and mother and son were soon discussing a goodly supper.

It was during this that a knock came at the door of the room, and as Mrs. Marlow's "Come in!" Gideon Hasper entered.

There was a great change in his manner of dress.

He was attired splendidly, his clothes sparkling with silver lace, which his hands were ringed, and his heavy sword had been exchanged for a lighter and more handsome weapon.

But it was not the alteration in his appearance that caused the most emotion in Dick's heart.

It was his mother that attracted his attention.

At sight of Gideon Hasper, who stood

h-fire her silent and bareheaded, she turned ghastly pale; her white lips quivering with emotion, and she stood glaring at him, with her hands clenching the back of a chair in horse-stricken wonder.

"Madam," said Hesper, "calm yourself. You expected me, surely, after my letter?"  
"Yes, yes," replied Mrs. Marlow, in a gasping voice; "but not so sudden, and— and—not so unannounced. So like him years ago."

"And she sank into a chair.  
"Mrs. Marlow," he said, taking a seat, "calm yourself. I repeat, I do not come as an enemy, but as a friend. I came, however, to do more than you think—to make your son's fortune in spite of all, so that some day he can hold up his head among all and say, 'I am my father's son!'"

"And what a father if what they believed were true," said Mrs. Marlow. "How can you make his fortune, Gideon, who you have nothing?"

"An cruel smile overpread the lips of the man as he answered, turning to Dick—

"Dick, listen to me, and you will know your own story. It is time now that you should."

Mrs. Marlow sprang forward and threw herself on her knees at the feet of the highwayman.

"Oh! no, no, Gideon," she cried, "do not tell him—do not tell him! For the sake of old times let all be forgotten in the grave."

"Madam," said Hesper, "I am resolved that he shall know all, and I may as well tell him now as at another time."

"Dick, I will begin by saying that your mother and I were once lovers."

"Your father and I were twin brothers, and both loved the same woman."

"But, oh! how different were our chances. Our mother had loved, 'not wisely, but too well,' and it was only when it was found that every hour she expected to be a mother that the marriage of our father to her was permitted."

"I was born before the clergyman arrived, my brother after the service had been hurried over, so that I, the elder brother, was illegitimate, and he, the younger, was heir to name, title, and fortune."

"We were exactly alike in form and features; but to avoid the disgrace I was at once hurried away, placed in the hands of a foster-mother, and refused even a mother's blessing."

"So he went on, through a long, long story, which it is unnecessary to tell now, for the cares, and sorrows, and joys (if they were any) are all buried in the graves of the past."

"But the time came when I leaved.  
"We had the same eyes, the same hearts, the same blood, and we loved the same woman—your mother."

"I was poor—a gamekeeper's supposed son. He was rich, the young heir to a fortune, and she married him, although she loved me."

"From that hour I vowed revenge.  
"I left home, went on the high-road, and purposely spread abroad the report that Lord Entance was a robber."

"He then told briefly the scene described in the prologue.  
"I was there watching, and, although I had planned it all—planned his ruin—I could not see him fall by the sword of young Clinton without seeking to avenge him."

"I left the house, and waited on the heath the coming of the slayer of my brother.

"My wonderful likeness to him appalled him, and unmoved his arm, and in a few moments he had received his death-blow."

"And now, after all these years, I am come back to avenge myself and him too."

"Since that terrible night on the heath I have suffered fearful wrongs at the hands of others, and I am here to punish my enemies; but the son of my brother shall live to regain his fortune, and walk again where he walked."

As Gideon Hesper uttered those words Mrs. Marlow had kept her eyes fixed upon his face, and she saw there what Dick could not see.

"Oh! Gideon," she said, "I fear you, I fear I know not what. Leave my boy, come, I entreat. Do not talk of him and vengeance in the same breath. I have scenes of horror enough floating before my brain now—memories of the terrible and irredeemable past; but let me have nothing more to dread in the future."

"Well, then, madam," said Gideon, calmly and sternly, "we will let him decide. Dick, listen to my words, and then choose between her and me."

Mrs. Marlow clasped her hands, and glanced with feverish anxiety at him.

But Dick now was eagerly awaiting the words of the highwayman—his own uncle—and throwing himself down on a stool between him and his mother, he listened with raptured face.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE.

"He will surely choose to remain with me," said Mrs. Marlow, eagerly, as she glanced into the face of the daring highwayman; but you, though the words were bold enough, her voice and manner belied them. Gideon Hesper laughed.

"Well, well!" he said, "he may prefer remaining with you, and if he does, why let it be so; but I fancy he will not. Of what use is his name to him now? When Lord Entance, your husband, was proved to be the head of a gang of daring robbers, his estates, such as they were, were then forfeited to the Crown. He is poor, undeducated, a carpenter's apprentice; and you, how can you help him?"

"No, truly; but I can help him to be honest—to be true to himself, to forget the past which you have smothered up, and keep him, if possible, from being as he was," replied Mrs. Marlow.

"Yes, yes," said Gideon Hesper, impatiently; "but you reason like a weak, silly woman. Years ago you and I were lovers; we thought the world was all made for us—oh! I do not deny it. You loved me then; and I have lived to have my revenge. I do not require a further one; but I like the lad. I know how to give him fortune and happiness, and I offer him wealth and distinction, while you offer poverty and wretchedness. He has begun his career well—do not stop him."

Mrs. Marlow stood agast, clenching her hands excitedly.

"Oh, Dick, deny this," she cried. "Do not let this man tell me to my face that you are a thief. Tell me, dear child, that you are not!"

"Nay, mother," replied Dick, whose proud and rebellious nature was already seething up and heading back the love for mother and home, "do not ask me to say what is untrue. I have been on the highway, else I had not been the happy friend of the beautiful lady we met to-day. Yes, I have taken Mr. Gideon Hesper as my

teacher, and shall, I trust, be well rewarded for so doing."

The wretched woman rushed across and clung to Hesper's knees.

"Ah, Gideon!" she cried, "be merciful. This wretched boy does not understand you. I know well that this is but part and parcel of your revenge. Oh, forgive and forget, Gideon! Leave him to me, if nothing else, and let the wretched past be forgotten."

"And yet you proclaimed his name publicly in St. Bartholomew's Fields to-day," said Hesper, "to one who knew you well. Time flies. I have had enough of this folly. For old times' sake I give you this purse of gold, but remember I live but for vengeance. My purpose will be best achieved by the co-operation of your son, and if he chooses to remain with me his fortune is made; if not, why what can he expect but ruin and disaster? It is of no use denying the fact that he has lost the confidence of Simon Sawdust, and, before many hours are over, will stand convicted before him of belonging to our band. Be advised, then, in time, and do not strive to resist fate."

Mrs. Marlow was now sobbing violently.

Her heart, in fact, was bursting with a strange emotion, and feeling the utter uselessness of endeavouring to turn Gideon Hesper from his purpose, she turned to Dick, still kneeling.

"Dick—Dick—my son!" she cried, raising her streaming eyes to his face, "do not go with this man. He is your enemy, believe it. Once I loved him; but I knew not then his dark and fiery spirit. He will lead you on to utter ruin; he will crush you; he will by your curse and base through life. Oh! Dick, quit your master, return to my home, and be poor, but go not with him—*not with him.*"

Dick's face was very pale; but Gideon Hesper could see in his restless eyes and the quiver of his lips the signs of indecision.

"Time flies," he said; "Marlow, you must decide quickly. Remain here in beggary and misery you will not, because the Bow Street rangers will provide you with other lodgings; but I must know at once. If you decide to remain here in misery and dread, come and remove the dress and emblems of our band, and resume the livery and liveries of veridom. We want no faint hearts or half minds with us."

Dick Marlow's colour came and went, and Gideon saw he was triumphant. He clasped him in a genial manner on the shoulder.

"Come, come," he cried, "no more folly, no more chicken-heartedness. Think of the pretty lady of the heath, who only awaits your coming to give herself and fortune to you. Think of the gold you can call your own, the nights of jollity, the scenes of joy. Come, Dick, say good-bye to your mother. She is excited now, but will welcome you gladly again. Come, the time grows short."

Dick's mind was now made up.  
He saw before him, on one side, only poverty, wretchedness, humiliation.

On the other, freedom, reckless enjoyment, the glorious life of a freebooter, with the smiles of fair girls and the envy of men.

He stepped down and raised his mother to her chair.

"Mother," he said, "I am sure you are wrong. This man is my friend. I believe it is so. I trust him, and, at any rate, tonight I must be with him."

"No, no, my son!" cried Mrs. Marlow, gliding down from her chair, and clasping his knees; "no, no! If you go this night it will be too late—too late to retract. This

moment is a turning-point for good or evil. Oh! by all your love for me—by your hopes of happiness and safety, do not go!"

"Come," said Gideon Hasper, moving towards the door, "we lose a fortune by this delay."

At this instant—at the word "fortune"—there rushed into his mind the fatal memory of the letter which "the mysterious lady," the daughter of Sir John Fleming, had given him at the fair.

This turned the balance.

"Mother," he said, raising her up again, and speaking almost impatiently; "mother, I must go. I can remain no longer—another time I may listen to your entreaties! but now—"

She waited to hear no more, but strode towards Gideon Hasper.

"Curse you!" she cried, while her burning eyes and dilated form told the intensity of her passion; "curse you, villain—coward! I never, in my wildest visions, presumed that I should live to say those words, but now, from my heart, I call down Heaven's vengeance upon you. Oh! may the lightning's flash—"

She spoke no more.

Her face assumed a deadly pallor, her eyes became stony, and then, as she fell prone upon the floor before either could aid her, the red blood bubbled from her lips.

"Oh! Heaven," exclaimed Dick, "what have we done?"

He knelt down beside her, and tenderly raised her head.

"Mother," he whispered hoarsely, with dread, "I will stay with you—look up and speak."

She moved not; and in the ashen pallor of her features Dick read her doom.

If he had not the terrible chance which had come over Gideon Hasper would have told him.

The fierce, hard, stern look which had been so evident in him when he was speaking to Mrs. Marlow had vanished as if by magic, and a softening influence, like the glow of some former day's love, seemed suddenly to crush out all the semblance of the brute within him.

He knelt down, too, and took her face between his hands, and looked into it earnestly.

"Heavens! she is dead!" he cried, and then he kissed her forehead and laid her down gently, just as a thundering knock came to the door below.

At this sound all the robber's instinct within him sprang to life at once.

"Ah!" he said, "raise her up, Dick, and place her on the couch. So she is dead, Dick, and that words of mine should have hurried her on the fatal pathway is terribly true. But that knocking tells me that there are no friends below, so cover her face over; do not give way, it would be madness now. You cannot grieve more than I do, but—come, come. You lose your mother, but with her goes out for me, Dick, the last glimmer of the lamp that lit me in my youth."

As he spoke, and dragged Dick to the door with all his force, a young girl came rushing in.

"Oh! Mrs. Marlow! Mrs. Marlow!" she cried; "here are a lot of constables come below, and they swear that—"

"Hush!" exclaimed Gideon Hasper, crouching round the waist, and absolutely lifting her into the passage; "hush! Mrs. Marlow is very ill, and it would not do for her to hear such things. We will go down and see what these fellows want."

"Oh! they say they want Mrs. Marlow's son, Dick Marlow, and Red Ned, the leader of a band of thieves," exclaimed the garrulous girl, "and they won't go without them!"

"In that case they had better search the house," said Gideon Hasper, quite coolly; "go at once and let them enter."

The girl at once hurried down.

"What mean you?" cried Dick, gazing at his companion in wonder.

"Follow me, and don't ask questions," cried Gideon, and dashed through an open doorway.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

"QUICK! OR THEY'LL BE AFTER YOU!"

THE captain of the highwaymen turned and severely bolted the door behind him and his fellow fugitive before he ventured to look where they were.

They found themselves in a small room without any other outlet but the window, which overlooked a yard and a series of out-houses which extended far along the rear of the dwellings to a neighbouring street.

There was no time to lose, and both eagerly glanced from right to left in the gloom to deary some means of escape.

They could hear the officers tramp up the stairs, they could even hear them enter the adjoining room, and exclaim as they found the dead body of Mrs. Marlow.

"We're engaged," cried Dick; "better have taken poor mother's advice and remained."

"Bah!" exclaimed Gideon, "don't be faint-hearted. If you had remained you would by this time have been a prisoner."

"For what? Only flying from my apprehensions."

"You forget what Jack of the Mint heard before he escaped."

"No; but he could prove no robbery against me," replied Dick; "at least he could only say that I was an associate of robbers. Curse the whole affair, say I!"

"Curse your foolish talkativeness when we are in trouble!" cried Gideon. "Ah! here is a water-pipe—I'm off."

And, so saying, he swung himself from the casement, and had begun his descent before Dick Marlow had well seen what he was doing.

At this moment, however, there was a loud clamour without, and the officers began to hammer at the door.

"Open—open in the king's name!" shouted a constable; and then came the unmistakable dash of a heavy shoulder against it, the timber cracking ominously.

Dick drew a pistol from his belt and fired through the panel.

There was a shriek of agony, a hustling and rushing back of feet, and then the young highwayman, springing out of the casement, followed Gideon Hasper with the rapidity of lightning.

"Who fired?" cried the latter, as Dick slid to his side on the roof of an out-house.

"I did; they were bursting the door open, and so I fired through it."

"It was scarcely prudent," returned Hasper; "it may arouse the neighbourhood, but it cannot be helped now. We must crawl over these house-tops and make for the passage where you see a light under. Come, I know the place better than you do. Follow me."

Crawling on his hands and knees, Gideon Hasper glided over the first wall, and had reached the second out-house when half-dozen heads were thrust out of the window of the room they had just left, and a loud voice roared out like a trumpet—

"There's! There's! Murder!"

"That's old Hesper's voice to a dead certainty," said Grog, so he hid in the shadow of a chimney-stack, "and if I get him alone I'll scold him for that!"

The constables were not satisfied with their shouting out, for when they had all exhausted their lungs in a peevish yappings and showings one of them fired a pistol out of the window.

The result was that the casements at the back of all the houses were thrown open, and scores of heads, male and female, in white cotton nightcaps, were protruded.

"This would be comic if we were only spectators," whispered Hasper to Dick, "but as it is it strikes me we shall be caught like rats in a trap. Oh! if it were only on the highway, and I were hestriding my bonny mare, Bessie, I would not care a rash for them all; but here—here! Ah! see there. Who is it at that window?"

"A young girl alone," said Dick.

It was as a casement near them.

"Let us enter there, then," cried Hasper; "we shall be able to frighten her into showing us some place of concealment."

"Yes; but how are we to enter?" said Dick.

"We must climb up as we descended elsewhere," cried Hasper, "by the water-pipe. Follow me, creep carefully along beneath this wall, in the shadow."

So saying Gideon crouched down by the brick-work, and, unperceived by the young girl, reached the wall of the house.

Then he began to ascend.

The young girl was looking at the house where the Bow Street runners were gesticulating and firing like madmen in the dark, and she did not observe the two highwaymen as they approached the place.

She was not alone, however.

In the bed there was an old man, sitting up, with a red nightcap on his head, and a hinderhouse in his hands.

He was very pale, with the exception of the nose in the middle of his round face, and that was fiery red.

His goggle eyes were fixed in fear and wondering eagerness at the window, where his young wife, in her night-dress and a petticoat, was watching the proceedings outside, and giving in her reports.

"What now?" exclaimed the old fellow, as his wife leaned out further than before, and then darted back from the casement.

"Eh! eh! what the devil's the matter?"

"Oh! oh!" she cried, clasping her hands, but never thinking of closing the casement.

"Here are two men ascending by the water-pipe."

"Shut the window, then—fool—fool!" shouted the old fellow, losing in his sobs fear all respect for the young partner of his home. "Oh, oh! Beck, villains!"

The last words were occasioned by the sight of Gideon Hasper and Dick appearing at the window.

He gave a short yell, raised his hinderhouse, fired so that the contents of it lodged in the ceiling, and then, covering his head with the bedclothes, began to howl dismally.

Gideon Hasper closed the casement, caught the young girl round the waist, and in a stern and determined voice said—

"Tell us quickly—have you any place of concealment here, or can we easily quit the house?"

"I'll show you the way," said the young girl, trembling as she felt the strong arm of the highwayman round her, and saw the little twinkling eyes of her husband peering out at her from beneath the bedclothes. "Qui k, or they will be after you."

The old man was furious as he heard these words, and saw her approach the door and open it.

"She took the lamp from the table and snatched them into the passage, while the old fellow, as soon as they had quitted the chamber, rushed to the window, threw it open, and in a loud voice yelled out—

"Hi!—here, constables—she thieves are here!"

Then he ran to the door and locked it, and reloading his blunderbuss and fired it in the air to attract the attention of the runners.

"This is just as the highwaymen could have wished it to be.

"By drawing their attention to the window, he of course drew it away from the right spot, and ere any of the runners had approached the house the highwaymen had reached the front gate.

"This the young girl opened, and then said in a low voice—

"Gideon Hasper, you owe to me your safety, I make no boast of it, but I do wish you to know that you are indebted to Fanny Armstrong. Do not wait to question me now; let your thoughts wander back over the past, and they will tell you all."

Gideon thought a moment.

"Yes, yes," he cried, "I do remember. You will see me again."

"Quick, now," said the girl, as he bent down and, before she was aware of it, pressed his lips to hers. "Do not risk your life by folly now. Fly!"

The two others waited for no more.

Enragedly rushing into the street, they looked for the means of escape.

On one side there was no thoroughfare, but on the other was a wide archway leading into another street.

Towards this they hurried, expecting by turning to the left to be able to evade the runners, and, proceeding at a trot, and keeping well in the shadow, they reached the street unseen.

Everything seemed now in their favour, and so, keeping on at a steady trot, they made for a part of the town which was well known to Gideon Hasper.

"They know, of course, that the whole neighbourhood was aroused by this time, and consequently it would be difficult to venture out of a certain circuit."

"We must make for old Dame Molyneux's strong box," said Gideon. "This way—follow me."

Diving through another archway, and into a narrow, twisting street, they soon reached a kind of square court, at the end of which stood a stone building, with iron gates and two low stone posts before it.

Darting towards this, Gideon was peering up to see if any light was observable in any of the windows, when, from another narrow passage there darted forth three men, who loudly called on them to surrender.

There was no retreating now.

Fight they must; and so, drawing their swords, they stood in an attitude of defence.

"We are three to two," cried a rasping, unpleasant voice, the voice of the tallest of the three men; "you had better surrender, Gideon Hasper."

"Ah! who is that who knows my name?" cried Gideon; "is it you, Luke Spalding?"

"It is, to your cost, Gideon," replied the other.

"To yours, not mine," cried Hasper; "this sword shall drink your heart's blood; villain, deliver false friend!"

Then came the flash of swords, and the three men rushed upon the two friends.

The neighbourhood had, as Hasper said, been roused by the Bow Street-runners, and detachments had been sent in all directions—some composed of civilians and others of constables.

The most absurd and extravagant reports had been circulated.

The "two most notorious highwaymen" known in London were said to be escaping.

Murder was also laid to their charge, the murder of Mrs. Marlow.

This, as the story flew from mouth to mouth, was enlarged upon; and it was stated that they had broken into the house, robbed it, and murdered all the inmates.

Fortunately for them, however, three nny of the pursuers thought of making their way towards the spot which Gideon Hasper had called Dame Molyneux's strong box, or the fate of our friends would have been sealed.

As it was the fight was desperately uneven.

The three men were none of them bad swordsmen; and as Gideon Hasper stood with clenched teeth and stern eyes, he felt a deadly dread within him as to the result of the struggle.

But he fought coolly and collectedly.

His wrist seemed strong and pliable as steel, his eye sure; and Dick Marlow gazed with admiration at his elegant poise of figure as he delivered his thrusts, and parried those of his enemies.

At length, as one of the three men came sliding up behind Gideon, Dick delivered a side thrust, which, coming unexpectedly, stretched him lifeless on the stones.

"Now, then, we are two to two," said Gideon with a sinister smile. "Dick, keep your man in play and kill him if you can. As for my enemy, he may say his prayers at once."

"Not so," replied Luke Spalding, coolly; "I cannot think calmly enough to say my prayers yet. I will do that when I have killed you."

The fight now became more interesting.

There was no longer any necessity to watch the doings of a third adversary; and so the combat was man to man, sword to sword.

Fortune befriended Dick Marlow.

He had a very decent swordsman opposed to him, but he had learned the art of fence very accurately himself, as the constable soon saw to his cost.

Wounded in the arm, the man sprang forward angrily, and in doing so tripped over the body of his dead companion.

In an instant Dick saw his opportunity, and took advantage of it.

His sword was drawn back, and then with a sudden lunge it was driven through the constable's chest.

As he did so, a dry, chuckling laugh sounded in the night air, and Gideon Hasper literally flung his adversary off the point of his sword.

"Ha, ha! Dick," he cried, as Luke fell at the side of the other constable, "I knew my words would prove true. Knave and fool he heart—let another besides myself assure me of my good luck."

Dick knelt as requested, and felt the man's heart.

"His heart beats not," he said.

"Ha, ha, dead, then," said Gideon Hasper, with a smile; "my vengeance has begun. Ah! Luke Spalding, you will betray no more friends, and make no more enemies. Come, Dick, let's make a bolt of it. The place is not safe now."

They darted off once more, and following the way by which the constables had come, reached another thoroughfare unseen.

But as soon as they had emerged into the light there was again a loud shout, and in an instant some dark forms sprang out from the doorways and rushed after them.

"We must separate," cried Hasper. "I didn't reckon upon this. Curse the folly of going to your mother's."

Away they dashed through the dark streets at a tremendous pace until they reached a narrow passage where the light was stronger than elsewhere.

Here one of the runners raised his pistol and fired.

There was a sharp cry of pain, and as Gideon leaped through into the passage Dick Marlow staggered and fell.

The wound was only in the arm, but it was a terribly painful one, and he had stumbled over a large broken piece of pavement.

The delay, however, was not fatal.

The runners came dashing up, but Dick had caught sight of a narrow alley, into which he dashed, and found himself once more side by side with Gideon Hasper.

"Meet me to-morrow night," said he; and then he paused, adding after a moment,

"No, no; I won't leave you. Follow us, and we will go to Tom the Brushmaker's. Our plan of robbery at Sir Gilbert Bramble, must be abandoned for a time, but we'll have an adventure worth two of that."

And once more they sped.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## MORE MYSTERIES.

THE meeting at the Willow Tree Inn" was postponed, naturally enough, through the events of that day, and on the second and third day Sir Gilbert Bramble's house had been unentered.

On the evening of the third day a strange scene took place in the city.

A storm had been raging throughout the day, but as the sun descended it gradually abated, the wind became hushed, and at length the rain entirely ceased, and twilight set in calm and beautiful.

The hour was ten o'clock.

At this time might have been seen, winding her way with hurried steps past St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street, the elegant figure of a handsomely-dressed female, who seemed bent upon an errand of vital importance.

She was very young and extremely beautiful, but her countenance was pale and careworn, and there was an expression about her eyes which showed that her heart was no stranger to grief.

She looked eagerly up at the clock of the old church, and when she beheld the time she increased her speed, as she murmured—

"I shall be too late. The delay may have ruined all, and ere I can arrive he may be lost. Oh! Heaven aid me, and give me strength to accomplish my task."

She ran, or rather flew, on her way, and breathless with exertion and excitement, she seemed every moment ready to sink into the earth.

She had scarcely, however, proceeded many yards when two fellows who had been lurking in a dirty and lonely alley flew out upon her, and endeavoured to snatch from her a parcel which she carried under her cloak, while at the same time they made use of the most bold and insolent language, as each of them laid hold of her arms and prevented her from escaping from their power.

(To be continued.)

## An Horrible Tale.

The streets of Paris after midnight are, at best, no very pleasant quarters; but on no Irish of February they were even less agreeable than usual.

It was a most awful night. The force black fragments whopped and grinded ghastly as it spat its lightning over the earth, and the wind snarled along, raving like a mad thing. Not a sound reigned in the deserted streets, saving the roar of the contending elements.

At one time the ear caught the spitting of the rain against the window panes; at another, this was stifled in the wild howl of the blast; and anon nothing was heard but the deafening shudder crashing through the skies, loud rattling, and awful as the dread peal of the last trumpet.

Late on this terrible night, in the antiquated saloon of an ancient mansion in the Faubourg St. Germain, sat an old man, who by his looks numbered some three-score years and odd.

The fair hairs which the mediating fingers of Time had left on pinned on his head were hoary with the frost of age; while in his face the same hair, on his head, or the rougher one of care, had scored many a deep and scornful wrinkle.

It was evident by the stripes of rhand decorating his coat that he was one of no mean rank in his country.

A book lay open on the table before him, but matter of a more important and less pleasing character than his paper appeared to engage his mind; for his eyes were abstractedly fixed on the line, his brows were knitted closely together, his face was half buried in his hands, and occasionally certain indistinct and angry mutterings burst from his lips.

The clock on the mantelpiece, tinkling the hour of four, aroused the old man from his reverie. He started wildly from his chair, and his hand, pointing the apartment, exclaimed—

"Four—four! and he still absent! Yes, now it must be as I feared. What else could detain him till such an hour! and so such a night too! Aye, it is too plain—too glaring to be mistaken. He is—O, heaven!—is what I would sooner that he had died than ever lived to be."

The old man stood still and covered his face with his hands for a while. Presently he again burst forth—

"I have long suspected it. The late hour at which he has returned home for many nights hinted as much to me. And to-night—this terrible night, when all hell appears to have broken loose, and to be rejoicing over his perdition, assures me of the fact. My son!—my only son!"

And the aged man sunk upon the sofa in a paroxysm of despair. His feelings were, however, far too fierce and poignant to allow him to rest.

"There is but one—one stern and most humiliating way to be pursued to save my boy from toppling headlong down the dread abyss, which he has so bravely and unconsciously tottering. But it must—aye! and through the heavy task crush me, it shall be done—anything rather than live to look upon my son debased to that basest of all base creatures, a—"

A loud knock at the inner door of his house cut short the old man's speech. His limbs trembled as if palsied, and "looking towards his chair, he exclaimed, in a faint voice, "Tis he! he is!"

The door of the saloon opening, ushering into the apartment a youth, rich with the bounty of some twenty summers. He was evidently the old man's son, and betrayed on entering not a little surprise to find his aged parent occupying such a rank as he did.

"What has made you thus late, Alphonse?" inquired his father, as he motioned the young man to be seated.

"I was with some friends, sir," he replied; "I—"

cooks "Oh, most goodly friends!—most staunch friends!—most disinterested and infallible friends! I'd stake my life upon their fidelity. Wouldn't you, Alphonse?"

"I do not comprehend you, sir," said his son.

"No comprehend me! How should you, boy, when I speak upon so incomprehensible a subject as the friendship of your last night's companions? Come, tell me, now, good Alphonse, where were you last night?"

"I told you before, sir," replied the young man, evidently vexed at being thus doubted, "at the house of a friend."

"At the house of the devil, sir?" vehemently retorted his father, "where, doubtless you were taught to do these abominations."

"I tell you, sir, as I told you the youth—"

"He is, sir, if you do not respond the count, "It is because you have of late become so intimate with the dark band that you are justified in calling him your friend. For to your face I tell you, that at his house, and among his emissaries you squandered away last night."

"I do not understand your meaning, M. le Comte," returned Alphonse.

"Well, sir, since you will be an unlearned in matters of this sort, and needs must have a translation of the sentence, I'll give you one— you passed last night at the gaming table."

"I, sir—! at the gaming table!" stammered out the young man.

His father remained silent for a while, and then said, in a solemn tone—

"Now, on your honour, on your soul, sir, did you not spend last night at the gaming house?"

Alphonse hung down his head with evident remorse, and replied, in a faint voice—

"I did, sir."

"And you won?"

"I lost."

"What?"

"The" replied the youth, drawing from under his cloak a little sack of money and handing it to his father.

"And as these are the wages of your last night's tripudium!" exclaimed the count, as he took the bag and made the coin jingle within it. "Upon my word, a goodly heavy sum—almost as heavy as the hearts of those from whom you won it. Let's see how much it makes."

And the aged man proceeded to empty the money upon the table and to reckon the amount.

"So, five thousand francs, sir," said he, when he had finished the task. "And these, you say, sir, are your winnings?"

"Yes, sir."

"The, sir, you do not say the truth."

"Heaven is witness that you do me wrong!" cried Alphonse.

"Heaven is witness that I do no such thing," exclaimed the count; "for heaven knows that nothing can come of gaming but predation—than so deeply hath the dark fiend schemed, that what you think you win I have a way to tempt the greedy player's appetite—a bribe to tempt the mercenary fool to rashness, craftily making the largest game the heaviest loss."

So I tell you, sir, that these pieces, which you ignorantly call your winnings, are but a man's last by the devil, who shall in time exact an interest so usurious for the loan this house.

Indes, for weary, hungry, peace of mind—all shall you begeth the debt. What shall different eyes," continued he, gazing at the specie laid out on the table before him, "do we behold money differently got! How beautifully appear the bright wages of honest industry! How each small silver coin seems to glisten with a proud and almost conscious chastity! With what a different aspect do these damned evil-gotten pieces strike upon mine eyes! The very diamonds, which before appeared so purely beautiful, on them seemeth the loathsome pale and sickly hue of some most vile disease. But I shall taint no honest of mine. To some poor stretched wretch the money may prove a godsend; but here it can but breed damnation!"

The old count hustled the pieces back into the bag, opened the window, and cast them into the street, exclaiming—

"Away with these! Thus sickly looking and infectious dross I—away!"

"I am now going to tell you, Alphonse," proceeded the count, when he had resumed himself, "a story which never yet has jarred on mortal ear—a story so beast with the sharp and poignant evils of the gaming table, that it do not tear the wild infatuation from your heart, why then, indeed, the vile hag Avarice has played her evil eye upon you, and indolently marked you for her own."

"It is true," said the aged man, after a few moments' deliberation, "about fifty-six years since I—like you now, Alphonse—young, thoughtless, reckless, the mortal of my passions, a slave to Avarice, the lottery of Vice, he took myself to one of Chance's dens."

"I will not attempt to describe to you the wild and savage-looking animals I there saw, chained by infatuation to the spot. The ravenous tiger glared not at his prey with a more intense and hungry eye than did they at the cards, and the tiger springs not with a more glastious fury on its food than they upon their winnings."

"But there was one among this ghastly group whose young man's countenance, and then to fix your eyes upon the haggard, careworn features of those around, to perceive in what deep and legible characters time cuts 'gambling' on the face."

"Well, I saw how little varied was this same youth in all the subtle mysteries of play; and shall I tell you what it came into my head to do? Oh no! no! I cannot, dare not make myself meet you the fatal black villain I that night became. I cannot with mine own hands pluck from my heart all that respect and all that love (for the one must come away with the other) which a father most delights to husband in his child."

"And yet what would not a father have to save that child from such a fate? Alphonse, I will tell you what it came into my head to do; and oh! let it make you shudder to behold the abject depth of the precipice upon whose crazy brink you have at last been carelessly sporting. It was this: to lead that young man on to play, and so—aye! let me out with it, for such it literally was—rob him of his money."

"It needed not much art to win the boy to the first part of my plans. The golden eye of the serpent had beset him from him in all its overpowering brightness, and he had become fascinated with its look."

"We sat down to play."

"You may readily conceive that, having stooped thus much to infamy, I scrupled not to descend to the stale and wily trick of trickling my poor stake with the winnings of the few first games I could perceive, when he had been seduced of the gaming table's savoury food, his regard for it soon became most keen and glutinous."

"Well, we played, and played, and played again, each coup at length but producing another golden coup for me to reap, until in time the petty remnant left him of a thousand francs were staked upon the ensuing game. The cards were dealt—the old thing followed—the sum was mine."

"Perdition!" struck the youth, striking his head with his clenched fists in violent despair.

"Nay, never let it vex you thus! I ex-

Two old count hustled the pieces back into the bag, opened the window, and cast them into the street, exclaiming—

"Away with these! Thus sickly looking and infectious dross I—away!"

"I am now going to tell you, Alphonse," proceeded the count, when he had resumed himself, "a story which never yet has jarred on mortal ear—a story so beast with the sharp and poignant evils of the gaming table, that it do not tear the wild infatuation from your heart, why then, indeed, the vile hag Avarice has played her evil eye upon you, and indolently marked you for her own."

"It is true," said the aged man, after a few moments' deliberation, "about fifty-six years since I—like you now, Alphonse—young, thoughtless, reckless, the mortal of my passions, a slave to Avarice, the lottery of Vice, he took myself to one of Chance's dens."

"I will not attempt to describe to you the wild and savage-looking animals I there saw, chained by infatuation to the spot. The ravenous tiger glared not at his prey with a more intense and hungry eye than did they at the cards, and the tiger springs not with a more glastious fury on its food than they upon their winnings."

"But there was one among this ghastly group whose young man's countenance, and then to fix your eyes upon the haggard, careworn features of those around, to perceive in what deep and legible characters time cuts 'gambling' on the face."

"Well, I saw how little varied was this same youth in all the subtle mysteries of play; and shall I tell you what it came into my head to do? Oh no! no! I cannot, dare not make myself meet you the fatal black villain I that night became. I cannot with mine own hands pluck from my heart all that respect and all that love (for the one must come away with the other) which a father most delights to husband in his child."

"And yet what would not a father have to save that child from such a fate? Alphonse, I will tell you what it came into my head to do; and oh! let it make you shudder to behold the abject depth of the precipice upon whose crazy brink you have at last been carelessly sporting. It was this: to lead that young man on to play, and so—aye! let me out with it, for such it literally was—rob him of his money."

"It needed not much art to win the boy to the first part of my plans. The golden eye of the serpent had beset him from him in all its overpowering brightness, and he had become fascinated with its look."

"We sat down to play."

"You may readily conceive that, having stooped thus much to infamy, I scrupled not to descend to the stale and wily trick of trickling my poor stake with the winnings of the few first games I could perceive, when he had been seduced of the gaming table's savoury food, his regard for it soon became most keen and glutinous."

"Well, we played, and played, and played again, each coup at length but producing another golden coup for me to reap, until in time the petty remnant left him of a thousand francs were staked upon the ensuing game. The cards were dealt—the old thing followed—the sum was mine."

"Perdition!" struck the youth, striking his head with his clenched fists in violent despair.

"Nay, never let it vex you thus! I ex-

devised. 'Try another coup. The goddess Fortune is but a flitting jester at best; and who knows but that the very next game she may bestow her smiles on you?'

'I have no more money,' he cried. 'You have taken all—all—all! And, standing with the thought, he started wildly from his chair, and hurried off to another quarter of the room.'

'He had but avoided Sylla to be drawn into Chrysbis.

Close to where he tarried sat two of Chance's devotees in high, sacrificing mood largely to their blind and remorseless idol. Such was their superstitious zeal, they scrupled not to risk five hundred francs upon the game. I marked the steadfast eager eye with which the young man dogged their play through all its oscillations; nor when he saw the winner clutch his gains was the tough struggle thus evidently then took place within his mind lost to my observation.

'He was too weak to wrestle with the sturdy deity that I plainly perceived was twitting with his heart.'

He returned, and we sat down again to play—not for the driblets we before had done, but for rich and lusty prizes. He had two thousand francs still left. In three games, fifteen hundred of that sum were mine. With a desperate hand he cast his last five hundred on the board. We played again, and as we did so I could see the cards tremble in his hand. He

'Oh! never, never shall I forget the intense and frank glare he then fixed upon me. "Demon!" he shouted with a ghastly grin, and, springing from his seat, dashed like a furious maniac from the room.'

'By the morrow,' continued the count, 'all recollection of the above scene had flitted, like breath upon a mirror, from the surface of my mind, and I rose in the morning with even a lighter heart than usual, gladdened, no doubt, at the increased providence of my purse.'

'I stood engaged that day to escort a young country friend to some of the far-famed sights of Paris. He came, and we set out to view the venerable fane of Notre Dame. Crossing the Pont Neuf on our way thither, I said, "Apropos, Pierre, there is one place peculiar to our city which you have not yet seen."

'*En Vois!* returned my companion, who looked to crack a joke, almost as much as to crack a bottle. And which is that, pray? *La Bastille!*—for if so, I can assure you I have no wish to take other than a superficial view of it.'

'*Pardieu!* Nor would you, Pierre,' I replied, laughing at his jest, 'desire to be any more intimately acquainted, I believe, with the quarter to which I allude, it being none other than the asylum for those ill-starred ladies and gentlemen who may have gone, or perchance been sent, on an ignominious excursion to the other world.—*La Morgue!*'

'*Thinking loud and deep* over such like jests, we approached the solemn object of our intemperate mirth; a swarm of people pressed around the building. Eager to learn the cause of the assemblage I wormed my way into the middle of the throng. Upon the step of the door sat an aged woman weeping most miserably; her gray hair streamed all wild about her cheeks, her face was buried in her hands, and she sang her shrill fingers creaked her tears, while deep and frequent moans burst from her breast.

'It was evidently no slight blast that had stricken the poor old creature down. In my heart I pitied her. I inquired of the persons around the cause of her distress. It was something about her son, they thought; for occasionally she would wring her hands, they said, and cry, "My boy!—my poor, loved boy!"

'I then inquired of the woman, my good woman, if I compassionately accosted her, "My son!—my dear, dear son!" she sorrowfully replied.

'What of your son?' I returned.

'Oh, sir, they have hatched him, and then thrown him like a dog into the river.

Yes, I am sure—too, too wretchedly sure it is! And the poor old creature sobbed again at the thought as if her heart were like to break.

'And what should make you thus sure, my dear madam?' I continued, when she had in a measure recomposed herself.

'Good heavens! has he not been absent all this long, long, long night from home?' she exclaimed.

'All, my good woman,' I said, 'if that be your only ground of suspicion, dry up your tears; for depend upon it you have little cause for fear.'

'Would—would to heaven I had? he energetically cried. "But, no the was too good—too tender—too kind-hearted to allow his poor old mother to sit up one entire, vast, interminable night, in anxious watchings for her son's return. Ah, sir I had you but known him half as well as you, you would have been as ready as myself to swear that, had they but left him life enough to stagger to the door, most willingly would he have tottered home to his dear sister Elzange and me."

'Yes, my dear woman,' I replied, endeavoring to banter her out of her grief, 'I have no doubt but that your son was most exemplary young man; but being a man, and not a chalet, he was not utterly insensible to the charms of the fair sex; and though I cannot but believe there was no lying in reality, he would have behaved in the noble manner which you have stated, still I imagine that were he only dying in love instead his conduct would have been materially different, and that then, like the poor bird with the snake, he would have performed spell-bound—for a night at least—by the witchery of the bright eye that had fascinated him.'

'Oh, sir,' she exclaimed with all a mother's ardour, 'my Eugene was not like other boys. He was too good a son—to find a brother to prefer other roads to that which sheltered us. So long as our eyes were not bedimmed with tears he was satisfied to his heart's content. His whole heart was riveted to his poor sister Elzange and me.' And the tears gushed in torrents again from the poor old creature's eyes.

'But,' said I, 'have you any other reason for supposing such to be the case?'

'Oh, yes, sir,' she replied, 'he was laden with a large—to me a very large—sum of money. It was his quarter's earnings, and all we had to spare starvation from the door for the next three months—for it was but by the toil of his generous hand his poor sick sister and myself were enabled to exist. But he is gone—gone! They have robbed—they have murdered my poor dear boy.'

'Do you see,' I said, 'my good woman,' I responded, 'as you distress yourself thus. Depend upon it, it these be your only grounds for fear all may yet be well, and most likely upon your return home you may find your lost son here.'

'Never—never, I am well assured, shall I behold him there alive again. No, there,' she cried, pointing to the interior of the Morgue, 'there is the only place where I can find him now.'

'How know you? Have you seen him?' I inquired.

'Seen him? she shudderingly exclaimed. 'Oh! never could I bring myself to look upon his dear corpse, through those grim bars, laid out. Perhaps, too, to see a deep gash into his fair flesh, or, may be, to behold a large hole hatched in his skull, and his sweet golden hair all dabbled and matted with his blood. No—no! never could I bring myself to look upon him now. And that he is there, oh, heaven! how wretchedly assured am I.'

'Would you,' I inquired, 'that I go in and see?'

'Oh, if you would,' she passionately cried, 'my thanks—my best, eternal thanks, sir, should be yours.'

'I turned the lock of the door of the dreading Morgue,' she old count continued. 'The door cracked continually as it opened. With a start she made the still place sinister again it closed elzange me. I stood within the dismal walls of death.'

'How exquisitely, how ineffably awful is it to be among the dead! With what a ponderous, suffocating horror weighs the intense and leaden stillness of the scene upon the shrinking heart. Fearful as is the stunning clamour of the thunder, you is speaks not to the mind with one half the mighty and appalling energy of the stark silence of hushed life.'

'I stood overcome with the profound tranquillity that reigned around. No sound startled the solemn quietude of the grim shade. I stood as it were paralyzed. Presently the recollection of the poor old being I had left waiting in acute suspense the issue of my errand came rushing on my brain.

'I cast a hurried glance along the cold, still remains of mortality that there lay petrified, as it were, in death, and I saw—O heaven! How can I tell you what I saw—'

'Language, however nervous, could never express—though, however vivid, could never conceive—the ghastly horror of that sight. Like a thunderbolt then dashed the recollection of each vice set upon my mind.

'The devilish plot I had led to gull the poor boy of his money; the fiend-like gleam with which I glared in his every step towards perdition; the desperate, frenzied look he fixed upon me when I had dragged him there; and, oh, just heaven! the last awful epithet, "Demou!" he flung at me at parting; and then—ah! wretch that I was!—the cruel and inhuman jests with which I had apprached his dismal resting-place—all arose with torture into my mind.

'See!—see, Alphonse!—oh, see what an absorbing whirlpool is this vice. But once allow yourself to sport upon the stream, who can say how long you will be carried helplessly into its very vortex, and be for ever engulfed—aye, and may innocent beings with you, as with me, in unadmirable grief.'

'Here had I been doing what a thousand others had done before me—what you yourself have done this very night, Alphonse!—including in the social game, as it is called; and look—oh, look to what a wail and appalling end it led. There sat an aged mother, writhing with affliction, robbed of her darling son, strip of her peace, plundered of the profit that formed at once the pride and pillar of her tattered age.'

'There stood a poor sick sister, the bitter pangs of illness raging in her breast embittered with the still bitterer pangs of grief; the brother whose sympathy was wont to lull her deeper sufferings, whose magic love made even her poor life most precious in her eyes, snatched—irremediably snatched from her, and she left to linger in a lonely wilderness of life.'

'And there—there before my eyes—in that disgusting den of death, upon his wretched marble bed, his hands clasped, as if in vengeance on my head, and grinning most ghastly and most savage, lay all that remained of a loving son, a doubling brother, the support and solace of his family, and—wretch that I was—my victim!

'I rushed madly from out the hell shade. The poor old woman still sat upon the step. She wiped me by the arm as I came out, and gazed most eagerly my looks. The wretched tidings were too plainly written in my pale face for her to fail to read them.

'Ah! she exclaimed, "I see it is as I expected. Well—well!" she added, raising her eyes to heaven. "Hard and inscrutable though it be, heaven's will be done!"

'At length I entered the sad old creature to her home. I will not elaborate this dolorous



history by describing to you, Alphonsus, the devastating flood of war that overwhelmed the poor youth's feeble sister when first she had the least news.

"For such a death, to such a brother, the hardest heart might feel. Judge, then, how such a sister as the tender-hearted Blanche felt; and judge with what compassionate sympathies did each of the maiden's tears sting my heart.

"The poor old mother saw my anguish, and thanked me for my kind commiseration,—for this and the dear advice was the hand that desolated all her home.

"I strove, as well as I was able of that moment, to efface the wretched couple's grief. I told them I was glad I had it in my power to supply, in one respect at least, the place of their Engage, and I assured them it should be owing to no want of zeal in me if Time did not enable me to do so in all other regards towards them.

"Again they thanked me for my sympathy, and said they feared they must on one account encroach upon my kindness. I begged them to rely on my desire to serve them.

"The favour, then," replied the aged mother, "we would ask of *le bon monsieur*, is this. The only being in this crowded city whom we poor *negresses* could call our friend now, as you know, lies in the Morgue; and I am sure that, for the power Blanche or I could have to rescue his dear corpse from that horrid place, there must be remain. But maybe you, in your goodness, sir, will not refuse to save our poor Engage from such a fate."

"As you may readily imagine, it required no slight self-denial on my part to promise to revisit the abominable den of death, still I could not find it in my heart to say the poor old mothers say, so conscientiously.

"It was not long afterwards before I stood once more upon the threshold of the fatal building. In order to reach the keeper's house it was necessary for me to pass along the wall where lay the ghastly relics of my poor young victim.

"I need not explain to you the haste with which I hurried through the dismal place. On being ordered to by the keeper, I described to him the body which I told him I had come to claim. He inquired of me the young man's Christian name.

"Engage," I replied; "but, pray, monsieur," I added, "allow me to ask what should make you put the question?"

"A letter, sir," he returned, "as found upon the young man, signed with his name *de Blanche*, and in it was but to ascertain the justice of your claim that prompted me to make the inquiry."

"I soon satisfied the governor's doubt upon that head, and having ascertained that the body was to await my disposal, I hurried from the place with the poor youth's farewell letter in my hand.

"You can readily conceive how much I longed for such a retired spot wherein to read the melancholy document. At length I reached the Tulleries. I plunged into the middle of the groves, and, tearing open the billet, read what while money fingers in this brain can ever be erased from out of my mind. It ran as follows:—

"Farewell—a long farewell to you, beloved sister! and a long farewell to you, my darling Blanche! I write to you from the borders of eternity. Oh! my dear, dear Blanche! and, oh! my still dearer mother, I have been happy with you—here I am—in—want. I could have been happy with you—there! I could, proud as I am—in buggery. But, ah! I cannot bear to look upon you in this State.

"I know you will be at a loss to divine how I, who ever looked with scorn on the very depths of my heart, could to-night have got infected by the corruption; how I, who never loved the filthy dross of this world, have for the little count is bestowed on you, could ever have fallen a prey to envy. I will tell you.

"You know young Adolphe Babron, my fellow clerk, and how I used to wonder how he—who I was well aware received but the same small salary as myself, contrived to live in all the luxury he did. Well, the other day I ventured to hint as much to him.

"He said he would be candid with me, and confess it was by play; and taking from his desk a heavy bag of money, told me they were his winnings of the previous night. There must have been three thousand francs at least.

"I did not give such a story into my heart. I thought he was happy and how comfortable you could be wiser to meet with a similar turn of luck.

"The next day I was to receive my quarter's salary. No sooner was the money in my hands than I resolved to go that very night and offer up the hard-earned little sum at fortune's shrine.

"How can I describe to you, dear mother, the bloom of light, of beauty, and of riches, that there flashed upon my eyes! Suffice it, there was gold, glittering, fascinating gold—gold, the signification of this bright world—the apple of man's eye—lying in ravishing profusion about the place; nor were there wanting—to consummate the wily scheme—the bright-eyed and interesting daughters of Eve, to cost man up, or of old, to tempt the damning fall.

"What wonder, then, that I, who had never seen, had never dreamt of anything but as gorgeous, should have been gulled by the glowing baits around me, or that, bewildered by the dazzling sight, I should have allowed myself to be inveigled into play.

"I need not tell you that at the beginning I was most timid and most cautious at the game; but, as I won the first stake and grew more venturesome, played higher and higher on each fresh coup, while each new game served only to increase my already hully gains.

"But the tables at length were turned, and, misfortune with its attendant, desperation, pressed hard upon me. I lost—and lost—and lost again—until at last I started from my coil, dazed at the only manner in which to extricate me for the next three months—a very beggar.

"Starvation I could have suffered by myself without a groan; but to see you in your old age, my dearest mother, and you in your youth, my poor, loved Blanche, writhing with the pangs of excruciating want, to perceive you dragged slowly from the iron hand of hunger to the tomb, would have been intolerable.

"Racked by such thoughts, I stopped unwittingly before a table where sat two of Cheate's sternest favorites worshipping their senseless idol. They had staked five hundred francs upon the game. I watched their play to the end, and when I saw the winner grasp his heavy gains I thought it wiser but one such strategy to me to retrieve my lost fortune.

"The idea was too strong for my weak soul to wrestle with, and—oh, mother! mother! I hardly dare to tell you what it pushed me on to do. But I was mad, desperately mad! overwhelmed with ruin, and, like one drowning, ready to catch at any straw cast before me.

"I had two thousand francs of my master's in my pocket, and, can you believe it—oh, so! so! you never could believe that I, whom you, from my very cradle, taught to teach the honesty could make the poor man the richest man's peer, could so shame your care as to appropriate those two thousand francs to my own secured purposes.

"But I was crazed with desperation, blinded with the glare of ruin, and I knew not what I did; and so, like an idiot, like a villain, with my master's money in my hand, I went and gambled once more.

"I cast five hundred of the sum upon the table. We played. I lost. A second five hundred strewed the board. Again we played. Again I lost. A third five hundred backed the ensuing game. Once more we played. Once

more I lost. The fourth, the last five hundred, with a desperate hand I flung into the pool. One other coup we played. One other time I lost. My only hope was gone! Ruin stared me in the face!

"Frenzied with my fate, I rushed from out the place. But, where to go! Ah, where! Home!—never! I dare not show my guilty face to you. To the country?—pshaw! I must fly to the remotest spot of earth, will not ramour, with her hundred tongues, be sure to hunt me out. No, no, no! there it but one safe, quiet place to go for some now, and that is the grave—the silent grave!

"Death—inextricable, eternal death, then, is my stern resolve. One other half hour, and this breathing form will be a lifeless mass. And yet, great heavens! what agony—what bitter-aching agony is it to read—irreparably read and read the tender lines that bind me to this poor existence! To say farewell for ever and ever to all the darling beings that make this palely life most precious to our hearts.

"Oh, my dear mother, my much-loved Blanche, how does my poor soul with agonies to leave ye—ye! it only care, its only joy, its only glimpse of heaven, and, moreover, to leave ye thus! But there is no alternative. It must— it must be done. So farewell! for ever fare ye well!—EUREKA.

"The next count could say no more. Sorrow, deep, overwhelming sorrow, stifled his discourse. The tears trickled quickly down his furrowed cheeks, and loud and fast the sobs came gurgling from his breast.

He struggled violently to overcome the sturdy anguish, and at length (still sobbing between each word) resumed his solemn tale.

"What my feelings were after reading this stretched letter how often I can now say never disclose, nor human mind conceive. Suffice it, let the strong grief that now suffices me at the mere remembrance of the thing, give you some faint idea of the rigid agony I must have then endured.

"At first I thought to follow my poor victim to the tomb; but deliberation bade me live, and by repentance—deep and absorbing repentance—strive to expunge, if possible, the crime from out my mind.

"Such has ever been the steadfast, anxious character of my life. Not an ear but thine, not even his mother's, has ever listened to the melancholy history of that young man's death. Many sad most bitter have been the tears which I have shed over his grave.

"His mother, who ever believed her setting you but full of your robber's hand, I made my strictest care while living; and when she died—the died beseeching blessings on my head—his sister, Blanche, I spared no means of mine to cure of her disease, and ultimately made her partner of my rank and fortune.

"My whole days have I devoted to charity and prayer for the soul of my poor Engage, and I trust by a few more years of rigid penance yet to be able, ere I die, to atone for all."

"And now, emphatically adding the sorrowful old count, "I pray you let this be a warning to you, young men. Heed it in your heart; and when you think again of play, remember—oh! remember, the Tale of the Morgue!"

THE END.

"This is a backward spring," said the young lady, who adjusted the wings of her improving.

A REPROVERB, in describing the murder of a man named Jorkins, said: "The murderer was evidently in quest of money, but luckily Mr. Jorkins had deposited all his funds in the bank the day before, so that he lost nothing but his life."

REMARK: "My dear, do you know it is the fashion to have a big clock at the head of the stairs?" "Yes, I know, but one does not get going there." "Why not?" "A clock at that point is not necessary. When you come home late I shall always be at the head of the stairs to tell you what time it is."



## DARE DEVIL DICK: THE BOY KING OF THE SMUGGLERS.

CHAPTER XL.—(Continued.)

ONE of the keys was broached, and Heinrich sent the boat back for a couple more, which were duly carried to the station. Lindraka drank to the Dutchman's prosperous voyage in a generous bumper, and then rejoined Dick outside, while

the landlord of the "Albatross" and the skipper of the "Katterina" retired to have their interview.

"You are wondering why I drink with him," said Dick, as he saw Lindraka, as he saw Dick regarding him with a glance that was thoughtful and not approving.

Dick's answer was a significant nod.

"Well," smiled Lindraka, "we are advised to hold a candle to his Satanic majesty when he wants an extra light, and I did so in this case, because I want to watch his game. He thinks my suspicions are lulled, and he will be up to mischief before morning.

"That is more than likely," said Dick; "but don't be too sure that he thinks your suspicions are lulled."

"It does not do to be too sure of anything when dealing with the skipper of the 'Katterina,'" said Lindraka; "and any stratagem is pardonable. Did he seem to be on good terms with your uncle?"

"No; I could plainly see that Uncle Dave would rather have had his room than his company."

"By the way, Dick, did you do anything to offend the Dutchman?"

"Nothing much. He wanted to shake hands, and I kept mine in my pocket. He called me a spy, and I gave him the lie direct—that's all."

"And rather than that, Vandergrift is a man who never forgives, and just as you were turning away he gave you a look as full of malice and murder as the halberd of a black heart could make it."

"Did he?" said Dick, coolly. "Well, I shall be able to take care of myself. But he overlooked our little exchange of compliments, and said he hoped we should be friends, and that I should be some the wiser for a voyage in his ligger."

"Ah," said Lindraka, "there was a double meaning in this, my boy. If he ever noticed you on board his ligger, I would not give much for your life or your liberty."

"So I thought at the time," said Dick. "There was a peculiar look about him when he suggested it, but Captain Heinrich Vandergrift will find that I am not quite so simple as I look."

"Were you present at the interview between him and your uncle David?"

"I was near enough to see them, not to overhear them."

"And what was your opinion?"

"That the Dutchman is up to mischief, and he has, or think he has, some kind of hold over Uncle Dave. It is only an impression of mine, but a very strong one."

for convenience in his pocket, there was absolutely not a sign of life on deck. She rose and fell so lazily that the motes would not have disturbed a sleeping child.

And yet Dick had an idea that, like her master, she was full of mischief, an idea which would have been strengthened could he have heard what passed between Vandergrift and the landlord of the "Albatross."

They had gone into a private room, where they were quite safe from interruption, and Sherlock placed a couple of glasses with a full decanter on the table. The Dutchman pulled out a pipe with

a bowl as large as a moderate sized tumbler, and a handle, curiously embroidered tobacco pouch, lined with oiled silk. Having filled both his pipe and his glass, he took a drink, and began to smoke with the air of a man who felt that he was in a very comfortable position.

"When does that officer—Lindraka you call him—go off duty?" Vandergrift asked after a long silence.

"I might say never," Sherlock replied. "He seems to be on duty day and night, and so he seems to suspect you, you may be sure he will not sleep till your ligger is out of the bay."

"Is he to be bribed?"

"I should not like to try it, unless I wanted to have the words rammed down my throat with his fist, or the handle of his pipe."

"Then he is not like Stimperton, a double handful of yellow shiners and a keg of the real stuff would always make him blind and deaf for a few hours. So much the more pity for him," said Heinrich, "for the man who will see what he should not see, must have his eyes closed by some means. The best part of my cargo must be in your stow-room tonight, David, my friend."

David shook his head.

"I have done with that kind of business for ever," he said. "Do as I do, Vandergrift, and try the luxury of being honest for a time."

David shook his head.

"I have done with that kind of business for ever," he said.

"Do as I do, Vandergrift, and try the luxury of being honest for a time."

David shook his head.

"I have done with that kind of business for ever," he said.

"Do as I do, Vandergrift, and try the luxury of being honest for a time."

David shook his head again.

"Come," said Vandergrift, with rough persistence, "we are old shipmates, and I have done you more than one good turn. This cargo is of special value, and you run so close, but I must have a secret hiding place, as there is only one where it would be safe. You know the one, our old cave in the rocks, under here!"



"DO NOT BE AFRAID," DICK SAID. "YOU ARE ALL MERRY NOW."

"It is mine also, Dick; and I shall keep an eye on him."

"So shall I," said Dick; "he may be a very clever fellow, but he is not going to have it all his own way while I am on the alert."

Lindraka went up the cliff to the hut where Croker was on duty, and Dick continued his stroll along the beach watching the ligger that he could not help thinking looked rather too innocent. With the exception of a broad-beamed sailor, who was smoking a big pipe and taking a sip now and then from a bottle which he kept

"When I can afford it," said Heinrich, with grim laugh; "but I am poor, David, Sherlock and I have no one to fall back upon in the tin of need."

David shook his head again.

"Come," said Vandergrift, with rough persistence, "we are old shipmates, and I have done you more than one good turn. This cargo is of special value, and you run so close, but I must have a secret hiding place, as there is only one where it would be safe. You know the one, our old cave in the rocks, under here!"

"The risk would be too great," said Sherlock, "for the sake of a few kegs of Geneva."

"Don't think I would risk it for a few kegs of Geneva," said Vandergriff, snapping his fingers in contempt. "Those kegs of mine are full of gold."

"Gold!" Sherlock repeated. "How did you come by so much gold?"

"A stroke of luck that," said Vandergriff. "My lugger was not far from the Spanish treasure-ship, the 'Don Estevan,' when she foundered and went down—you heard of that, eh?"

"I heard that she went down with all the cargo and every soul on board."

"A mistake, friend David. Four men, who once sailed with me on board, and they were saved; and the long boat of my lugger happened to be alongside the 'Don Estevan' an hour before she foundered, and these four men of mine hauled a few kegs into the boat—only twenty. They were very heavy; but not till I went to try the quality of the cargo did I find that the contents were gold instead of tin."

"The ship was scuttled by those four men of yours, and you were there by preconcerted arrangement," Sherlock said; "that is the truth of it."

The Dutchman shrugged his huge shoulders. "There is some suspicion of the kind," he said; "as to even my conviction as to honest captain in the service of Hochander Brothers may not save my house from being searched, I brought the kegs away. Each keg contains about fifty pounds weight."

"And you have twenty kegs?"

"No."

"Nearly a thousand pounds weight of gold."

"That is right, said words, say, sixty thousand pounds. Not it would be safe with you till I can get rid of it by degrees, and you shall have your share."

"And if we were discovered?"

"We would not be unless you betrayed me," the Dutchman said; "and you would not do that, for I never desert a friend or forgive an enemy, and this hand of Heinrich Vandergriff, though it may be slow, is not to be trifled with."

"If you can lend it safely," Sherlock said grimly, though his eye glistened at the threat, "I will take care of it, and for my trouble—"

"Aye, what will you expect?"

"One keg."

"Good. That is less than I intended."

"What did you intend?"

"No."

"I have made money, I can afford to be content with one," Sherlock said. "So, to-night, when the tide is low, you can float them in, but take care that Lindrake does not see you, he is staying here."

"Here in this house?"

"Yes, he very often does."

"Himmel! He takes some drink before he goes to bed?"

"Always; but never enough to make him drunk."

"Put something in it that will make him sleep," said Heinrich. "Or should he be awake, and interfere, I shall take a shorter way with him. What does he drink?"

"Brandy."

"A little of this will keep him sound till morning," the skipper said, giving Sherlock a small phial half full of a thick, dark-coloured liquid. "It will only give him a deeper sleep, and he will not notice that."

"Is it a drug merely? Not a poison?"

"Heil! there is no danger. It is a drug, and must be used with care, or he would be waked instead of asleep. I take it myself when I cannot sleep. Let him have twenty drops, not more. He will but sleep a little later, and when he wakes my lugger will be gone."

"If your lugger went to the bottom of the sea, and took you with it," Sherlock thought, "I, for one, should not be very sorry."

had conspired to take care of it. He had no fear of treachery—the man who had planned the scuttling of the "Don Estevan" and the haulage of the "Albatross" dared not be false to his oath.

As for landing the richly-laden kegs in safety in spite of Lindrake's watchfulness, Captain Vandergriff had no doubt. There were some secret landing-places known only to a few, and one of these places could only be reached by a natural inlet—an opening in the rocks—never visible except at low tide, and this ran right through to the cellar under Sherlock's dwelling in the cavern, where it formed a kind of dock, in which a goodly cargo could be stored and left floating or submerged till required.

Vandergriff went back to his lugger soon afterwards, and Lindrake, watching from his post of observation, saw that the lights were put out, except for the lanterns left burning to keep other craft from running into her. All was apparently made safe for the night, but the revenue officer was too old a hand at his work to be taken in by appearances; yet, as the hours passed and he did not hear a sound or see a sign of life, he began to think that he was watching in vain.

"I showed me hand too openly, and put that infernal Dutchman on his guard," he thought. "Perhaps he will sail away quietly, and come back in a day or two when he thinks he will have a better chance."

He was always a cool and collected fellow, who never lost his nerve and rarely lost his temper; but he would have gone nearly mad with vexation had he known that even while he was watching the work was going on. When Vandergriff went back to his vessel he had taken a line with him, connected with a stout rope, one end of which was fastened to an iron pillar in Sherlock's cellar, and the other was attached to a piece of timber, worked by a pulley, and this it reached the outlet in the rocks. Here it was picked up by Heinrich, and towed to the "Katterina" under water out of sight.

When this was done the rest was easy. The kegs were lowered one by one into a boat on the slip furthermost from shore, each one being slung between a pair of studs with a ring fixed to it, so that it could slide along the rope. The kegs were fastened at regular distances from each other, and thus nothing remained to be done but to haul them along under water into the cave. This could be done from the cellar by means of a windlass, and for that final operation Sherlock was awaiting Vandergriff's return.

He had been waiting some time for that. The skipper, feeling sure that Lindrake was on the watch, did not venture ashore with his men till he had a signal from the tavern window, and Sherlock could not give that signal, for just as he was about to do so Lindrake, tired of what seemed a useless watch, knocked at the door.

"You did not expect me?" the revenue officer said, as Sherlock withdrew the bolts, reluctantly if somewhat.

"It is rather late," said David, sleepily.

"Not too late I hope for a welcome and a nightcap?"

"Never too late for either, captain, when you are in the way. You will stay to-night, I suppose?"

"Yes; it is too late for a journey to the station, or to Dink in bed."

"Over an hour ago; like me, the lad is in an early sleep, often at his books before day-break."

"The best time for study," Lindrake said.

"Night work is no good to anyone."

It was a purely natural remark, but Sherlock felt that it had a significance for him, and realized to give him such a dose of that drug as would ensure him a sound sleep.

"It will keep him out of mischief and out of danger as well," David thought; "for if he had an inkling of what was going on he would be in the midst of it if he had not been and risked them all."

"What will you drink?" he asked.

"Really or schamppe, I am not particular."

"Try the brandy," Sherlock suggested with an eye to the colour of the drug. "His schamppe are fiery and new."

"Whatever you drink," said the other, "will do for me."

Sherlock went downstairs to the locker and took out two bottles of brandy; he also took an empty bottle and poured twenty drops of the drug into the bottom of it, on that he poured a fifth of the brandy from one bottle, then put in another twenty drops, and so proceeded till what had been an empty bottle was a full one—the captain generally took about a fifth of a bottle at a time.

"It will be awkward if he feels inclined to take a second drink," Sherlock thought, when he had finished his ingenuous arrangement; "for then he will have forty drops instead of twenty in him; but there may not be such danger, he is a sound sleeper, and our work is done so quietly that he would not be likely to overhear us."

He took both the full bottles, with the corks drawn, and placed them on a tray with glasses, hot water, lemon, and sugar. His uneasy conscience made him fancy that the revenue officer looked at him doubtfully, and, in fact, there was a change that Lindrake could not fail to notice.

"You have been a long time finding those bottles, Dave," he said.

"I keep them in a quiet corner, captain, in case they might be used by accident when I am out; they are too good for the thirty-thousand fibberman, who do not mind what they drink as that it is strong enough."

"Why were you so liberal as to bring two?"

"A bottle each," was the reply; "it is getting scarce, and what you do not drink to-night you can save for to-morrow."

"A good thought," said Lindrake, as he mixed a stiff frolic for himself, "what has been our joy from the Dutchman?"

"He was very honest."

"How long does he remain?"

"I think he is going in the morning."

"Then why should he have put in here at all if he has no further business to do. He would hardly waste nearly four and twenty hours here for the sake of calling on you as an old friend and giving you a keg or two of holland.".

Sherlock had not thought of that, and was rather disconcerted by the other's ready penetration.

"The fact is, captain," he said, with an appearance of blunt frankness, "he wanted us to do a little business with him, but I have no money to spare and told him so. He thinks, perhaps, that I shall change my mind by the morning."

"You will not if you take my advice," Lindrake said; "the fellow has a doubtful reputation, and you know the old saying—that a man is judged by the company he keeps."

"As for that," said David, "I should be sorry to be guided by old sayings—though some of them are true enough. We say 'give a dog a bad name and hang him,' which is not fair to the dog. Not that I was much for Vandergriff, I would rather see him than his rotten state of his company, but he did me a good turn once, and I never forget friends or foes."

"Right," said Lindrake, rising with the glass, which he had scarcely tasted, "gratitude is always a good thing. I will finish this in my own room, Sherlock, or I shall fall asleep as I sit. So good-night."

"Sherlock gave him a lamp, an old-fashioned thing made of brass and shaped like a snout-boob with a lid to it, and the wick sticking out of the spout."

"You will take the bottle with you?" David said.

"Thanks. I may as well."

"I can bring the tray to your door," said David, as he slowly changed the bottles so that he kept the one that he had drugged.

The Captain thanked him again for his civility, took the tray from him at the door and they parted. Lindrake turned the key and sat down on the edge of his bed with the glass in his hand.

"Something wrong here," he said to himself, as he put the liquor to his nose and tasted it again.

Let us see, he brought two bottles, both unopened, and the drug he had never before. It was a long time going to get them, that he has

never done before. Mine was rather a darker colour than his. That I might not have noticed if he had not been so particular in keeping his on his own side of the table, and he changed the bottles at the last moment. Now putting these things together, what does it mean?"

"I looked at his frog again. By this time the liquor was gradually growing thicker at the bottom of the glass. Then the truth flashed upon him in a moment.

"Drugged," he said. "I see it now. The one dose was to make me sleep. Sherlock, Sherlock, I am sorry for this, for I trusted you; but perhaps you are in the Dutchman's power and cannot help yourself."

He let the glass stand while he saw to the leading of his pistol—the fimsy, and put in fresh charges of powder and ball. Then he took a draught of cold water to awaken and refresh himself. By this time the liquor in his glass was its natural colour, and there was a dark, oily sediment at the bottom.

"He poured the liquor off carefully, and putting the tip of his finger on the sediment tasted it. The curious taste—at once sweet and bitter—enlightened him.

"Some preparation of opium," he said; "if I had taken it I should have slept like a dead man till the morning. As it is I am wide awake—very wide awake."

For nearly an hour he sat on the alert, and did not hear a sound. The room he occupied was at the back, and his view was shut in by the cliffs. He would have gone to the front window on the staircase, but he felt convinced that something would take place, and he wanted them to think he was asleep. He was rewarded presently for his forethought and patience, when he heard a tap at his door. He answered with a noise that must have been distinctly audible outside.

"Captain," said Sherlock's voice, "Captain Lindrak."

The reverend officer obliged him with another noise.

"Captain," said the voice again, "did you hear that strange noise just now?"

"No, if I knew your name," Lindrak said to himself, "but I dare say I shall hear something presently. So will you."

"There's something wrong in the bay," Sherlock said, knocking louder at the door. "A strange craft, looks like a smuggler."

"No doubt of it," Lindrak thought. "If craft is another name for cunning, you have more than a little of it. Try again, my friend. You must take me for a very young bird when you want to get that kind of act on my tail. Do try again."

Shel ek did hammer on the panel with his fist, and said, "Smugglers in the bay" in his most stentorian voice, and tried the lock, but there was no reply. Then he listened intently, and heard nothing but the low and regular breathing of a tired man, with an occasional snore so actually thrown in as to rouse no suspicion.

"I must be satisfied," he said, as he descended to the room below, where Vandergrift and half a dozen of his crew were by this time assembled. "So follow me."

He led the way to the cellars. There was a long range of them, extending to the full extent of the foundation on which the house was built; and, having gone to the farthest one, Sherlock put his hand on a heavy cask, a hoghead, one of six that stood across the corner at the back.

"I want a shoveller here," he said.

Two or three men came to his aid, but could not move the cask an inch.

"Stand away," said Vandergrift.

As they obeyed him he seized the hog-hulk by the rim, tilted it, and wheeled it round on edge, not sorry to make this exhibition of his terrible strength before his crew; it showed them the kind of man they would have to deal with should any dispute arise.

"Why do not do it so?" he said.

"You men have your strength," Sherlock said, "and though it is a useful thing to have, it does not make you invulnerable. A bullet will find its way through a Hercules as easily as through the pinkest middleman that ever wore a shirt."

The skipper scowled at him darkly. He thought the remark ill-timed, the more especially as one

or two of the crew smiled in grim approval as they heard it.

"With strength like mine," he said, sternly, "an eye as quick, and a hand as sure as the lightning's flash, I fear no bullet or steel aimed at me from the front, but, as you say, no man is invulnerable. No man can guard against the back of a traitor's shelter. But I have always a friend to warn me, and let those who know the best say whether my friends or my foes live longest."

The men who had smiled in approval looked grave again—some of them shuddered. It was a tradition amongst them that Heinrich Vandergrift bore a charmed life. Some said he was in league with Satan, who warned him when he was in danger. For if there was a traitor in the crew the man was sure to be found out, and then his end would be a sudden and a sanguinary one.

The rest of the casks were swung aside in silence, and then Sherlock, with a long iron bar wedged at the end, prised out a small square stone, that looked like a portion of the solid rock. He put his arm through the aperture and a clinking sound was heard, then a pyramid-shaped mass of the wall rolled outwards on invisible wheels, and the way to the secret cave was open.

"The right way, as you well know to Vandergrift and Sherlock," they descender with caution, each bearing a lighted torch, the others following still more carefully. A few steps down took them to a tolerably level floor, and the lights revealed a large chamber, with a light and lofty roof, from which numerous stalactites hung in glittering splendour. It was a natural cave, untouched by human architect or builder.

"Welcome, my friends, to the smuggler's cabin," said Vandergrift. "Bide as the furniture may be there is the mansion of a king in those old boxes there."

He pointed to some massive cask chests, which were locked and barred and fastened to the wall with chains. Two or three roughly made tables, with a few stools, were all the furniture it contained; a number of kegs were piled against the front wall, and a window stood in one corner. A few coils of chain were round the solid stone, and the chain disappeared through a hole in the floor. Into this hole Sherlock inserted the wedge of his iron bar, and with Heinrich's help prised up a flap which served as a trap-door; when this was removed the restless wash of water could be distinctly heard.

"Where does that lead to?" asked one of the crew, a fair-haired Hollander, who looked too young and frank and manly for such associates. "I might as well say, my friends," said Heinrich, grimly, "and more than once it has taken a dead body with it from here; aye, from here. The sweet way with noise and traitors; no mark of violence, no bullet hole or knife gash, just a splash, a gurgle, a waiting for the tide to rise, the body found on the beach perhaps; a verdict of drowned, and then an end. Come here, my Hans, and look."

"I might as well say," Vandergrift held the torch, and the young Hollander could see the ruffian water beating to and fro ten or a dozen yards beneath him.

"You know the secret of the cavern now," Heinrich said, patting him kindly on the shoulder; "and you know, my Hans, what your fate would be if you were to turn spy or traitor; but see, David, my friend."

"What?" said Sherlock.

"I'll tell you, my Hans, you have never seen before."

"Never."

"He is the younger brother of my Katterina, my own dear wife, after whom I named my matchless craft now in the bay; and, as you see, he is innocent and handsome to look at."

"As fine a fellow as anyone could wish to see," said Sherlock.

"So; and yet he is jealous, haughty, and was poor; and he had a pretty frontier, so pretty that he thought it was his duty to hang about her too good for Hans, and that burgomaster's son was found dead, with a knife through his throat, and some people say it was Hans. Was that so, my Hans?"

By the resentful glow in the young Hollander's face, Sherlock could see that he did not take kindly to his grim banter.

"Well, well," said Vandergrift, seeing that he was going too far, "it was a fair fight, but Hans did not feel that he was safe, so I gave him shelter on the lugger, and he is one of us, and with us the heart's blood of all is ready to defend the life of one, and of one for all, so we are aware. Now, look, to the windows, and, hey, for the kegs of gold!"

One of the secrets of his success, the extraordinary command he had over his men, was the rapidity with which he could turn from one mood to another. Nothing could have been more impressive than his manner when he said that having given Hans Steinitz shelter on his lugger the young Hollander was safe. Nothing could have been more jovial than the swift transition with which he sent his men to the windows for the gold. Sherlock, who liked to call no man his master, felt that for the present he must give way; but he bided his time, and meant one day to stand at least on an equal footing.

The men went to work with a will, and the ponderous drum went round till the entire length of chain was coiled, and the rope began to show itself. Here the weight began to tell, and Vandergrift, in his eagerness, pushed his men away, and took the iron handle in his mighty grip. Had he let go, he must have been struck dead by the awful velocity of the reversed steel, but he kept on, though the veins in his forehead stood out like knotted string, and the muscles on his arms might have been made of flexible steel. Suddenly he stopped.

"Here," he said, "is one."

The first keg was swinging slowly to and fro in the aperture, and a dense eager band released it.

"And here another," said Vandergrift. "Loss no time, my lad, but haul away!"

"Shall I help you?" said Sherlock.

"A thousand devils! No, I only want your help to keep what I can get."

"They were all so raved by his grim determination, that one by one he spoke till the twentieth keg was placed on the cavern floor, and the last link of rope, with an iron hook at the end of it, was fastened to the drum. Then Heinrich wiped his brow, and said with a laugh—

"First a drink to our success, and then to see what treasures we have to divide when the time comes. Remember that we are fifty all told, and we share and share alike."

"Ten shares for you, captain," said a brawny Titan of the Netherlands, "that was our agreement."

"Dinner and liquor! who cares for an agreement when each share is worth ten! Did any of you ever know Heinrich Vandergrift to take more than his own?"

"Never," said the men in chorus.

"Did he ever fail to stand by when one of you was in trouble?"

"Never," was repeated in such stentorian tones, that the vaulted roof rang and re-echoed.

"Then content. So long as I am your leader, and when you want a better cut, find him—heavy handed! I may be, obedient I will have, but it is for the common good of all; and we share and share alike, always remember that; and let our motto be—true to each other while a drop of blood remains in our hearts."

"Hurrah."

The impulse to cheer him was irresistible, and though the hearty sound gladdened him he felt his impudence, and put up his hand to enforce attention. He stood in that striking attitude listening intently, and said:

"No rocery to a traitor."

"And—"

With a leap like that of a tiger he bounded to the opening of the cave, and said, with deep ferocity:

"Death and fury, a spy!"

There was a brief struggle, and then they saw him on his knees with the helpless body of a man whom he was strangling throws across the other. The upturned face turning black under his merciless fingers was that of Captain Lindrak; he had missed his footing and stumbled into this den of demons like a blind man. In another moment he would have been dead, but an interruption came from an unexpected quarter.

"Stop."

It was David Sherlock who spoke. "Too late," said Heinrich grimly. "Dead men talk no tales, and this is a dead man, or will be."

Sherlock took a pistol from his pocket and placed the muzzle of it in Vandergrift's ear—

"Let him go," he said, "or my finger is on the trigger and I send an ounce of lead through your brain."

The Dutchman was so completely taken by surprise that he released his hold, and Lindraks dropped heavily to the floor. Sherlock dragged him safely out of reach, then replaced his pistol with a laugh.

"It was the only way," said Vandergrift, he said, "with such an exact imitation of the skipper's tone and manner, that the men looked at him in wonder and admiration. 'This man is my friend, and I answer for him. He shall have a fair trial at least, and should be promise to keep our secret we can take his word.'"

Vandergrift put his hand to his pistol, but before he could more than touch the butt Sherlock's weapon covered him.

"Death and fury," the skipper said between his teeth.

"A thousand deaths, and ten times as many furies if you like," said Sherlock, with a stern manner in his usual. "You know, Heinrich Vandergrift, how sure a shot I am, and I claim him as mine. He shall not be murdered now or here."

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE TRIAL IN THE CAVERN.

No one was more surprised, perhaps, than Lindraks himself, when he found he had such a staunch champion in David Sherlock, and grateful to him for it felt that nothing could save him.

He gave himself up for lost when he made that unfortunate stumble down the steps, and the Dutch skipper's powerful grip was fastened on his throat. Now, as he stood plained by two of Heinrich's crew, and looked round at the dark faces, scowling at him, he saw that he had little hope for mercy, even if he cared to ask for it, and nothing was left of his thoughts than that—

"Let him be brought here," Vandergrift said, taking a seat over the centre of the cave, "and sure he has a friend in my old shipmate, Sherlock, we will see what he has to say for himself. He shall have a fair trial though it must be a brief one."

"Give him a drink then," suggested one worthy ruffian, grimly. "It may be his last."

"Good," said Heinrich, whose sardonic humour was amused by the idea, "he shall not go into the next world dry, moist or out, so broach a keg."

The man looked round for a gimlet, and not finding one, took the iron bar and knocked in the bung of a small barrel. A dozen drinking cups—some of metal, some of horn—laid there from some previous orgy—were on the rough table; and the man with the keg tilted the bung-hole over one of them. As he did so he uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Mein Gott," he said, "this is no schnappa, 'tis powder."

So it was. It filled the floor and poured over the table in a black stream before the man who held the keg had the presence of mind to turn it away. At the same moment it was watched from him, and he was struck down by the furious explosion.

"Ten thousand devils," thundered Vandergrift. "Down lights and hold fast to your man. Do you want us blown to pieces?"

The men who held the torches brought the ends of them in the floor, and so left the cavern in darkness for a few moments. In those few moments an agile figure glided swiftly in and was hidden behind a pile of kegs, close to where Vandergrift had placed the barrels filled with powder.

"We will have no drink till this is over," said Heinrich, rendered more savage by the danger they had so narrowly escaped, "you shall have all the formalities of a proper trial, Captain Lindraks. That, I think, is your name?"

"Frank Lindraks," was the undaunted reply. A captain in His Majesty's naval service, and now in command of the coastguard station at Tregodan."

"Your age?"

"Thirty-five."

"Too young to die," said Vandergrift, "but you have no one to blame. You have thrown away your own chance of life—suicide."

He paused and looked round at his men. Frank Lindraks was a handsome fellow, looking younger than his age, and though his face was pale he faced his foes with such a gallant bearing and unflinching eyes that the Dutch skipper could not help feeling some compassion for him.

"Unless," he said slowly, "you will swear to keep what you have seen a secret locked in your own breast and become one of us."

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy."

"Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

"And if I refuse?"

"You will die the death of a traitor and a spy." "Come, Captain Vandergrift," Lindraks said with a laugh, "you can murder me if you like, but you cannot condemn me to death as a traitor or a spy. When I took the oath of allegiance as an officer I swear to do my duty faithfully and truly to my king and country—if I were a traitor to my oath what faith could you have in me as a member of your crew?"

property would not be said if you were free. Let your friend, Sherlock, say if I am wrong?"

"I ask him nothing," Lindraks said. "I am only sorry to see that he is one of you. I do not want five minutes to decide in. I have stood face to face with death too often to fear it now. I am as ready to die here as in storm or battle on the open sea. Let it fall in accordance of my duty."

"Let him die," growled the ruffian, who had opened the powder keg by mistake. "There is no other way, and we do not want to stay here all night. Blitzen! We have cut a dozen throats in half this eve."

"Captain Lindraks," Sherlock said impudently, "give your word that this night's work shall be kept secret, and you shall go free. De that, for my sake."

"Silence," said Lindraks, sternly. "I know you now for what you are, and if I were free I would denounce you with the rest."

Sherlock turned from him with a groan. All that he had done was in vain, and he could do no more.

"You know your duty, men," said Vandergrift, with gloomy brow. "He is a brave man, and I am sorry, but he must die. The way is there; drop him down into the water, and his body will float out to sea where the life begins to turn."

The two men who held Lindraks began to drag him towards the fatal course, and Vandergrift drew a pistol intending to stun him with a blow from the butt before he was plunged down. Up to this moment the revenue officer had met the slightest resistance, but now, with the instinct of life strong upon him, he made a desperate struggle, and though his captors were powerful fellows, he broke away from them; he had passed the door when he was seized again, and the terrible struggle recommenced, when a clear young voice said—

"Hold for your lives!"

Startled as the smugglers were at the unexpected sound, they were still more startled when Dave Devil Dick sprang suddenly into sight, his eyes blazing like stars, and leveling a pistol at the Dutchman, spoke again.

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

"Eisen him," said Dick, "or you die." Heinrich laughed aloud in derision, and was about to move towards him when the daring boy did something that sent a thrill of horror through every man; he drew a second pistol with his left hand, and put the muzzle of it in the hunchback of the powder keg.

"Release Captain Lindraks," he said, "or by the bright sky I may never see again I will the trigger and send you all to bed before your eyes."

do for you. I promise that this night's work shall never be mentioned by me."

"Why that," said Vandergriff, "is all we want. The word of Captain Lindrake is more sacred than the oath of most men."

"But," said Lindrake, "I do not say that this night's work will be forgotten by me. If you ever again, Heinrich Vandergriff, or any of your men, come between me and my duty, I will hunt you down to the death. Duck, keep your pistol in the powder keg till I have made our safety sure."

"I intend to," said Dick, quietly.

"Captain Heinrich Vandergriff," said Lindrake, "you will show your men a good example. You are well armed, I know, so are your men, so put your weapons on the table here. David Sherlock will search you one by one."

Not sorry for the task imposed upon him, David began with Vandergriff, from whom he took two braces of pistols, a short, broad-bladed dagger, keen as a razor, and a long clasp knife that closed with a strong spring. The others did not carry quite so many, but by the time Sherlock had finished the table was piled up with arms enough for twenty men.

"What next, captain?" he asked, respectfully.

"Take a pistol in each hand and conduct these gentlemen singly to the door of your very excellent cavern, 'The Altar-trees.' As each one goes out you will lock and bar the door behind him."

"And return for the next?"

"Yes; leaving Captain Vandergriff, this honest master of a trading vessel, to the last."

The Dutchman ground his teeth, and his broad chest moved with the heaving that was in him to strike Lindrake down and regain his mastery.

"One question," he said. "What is to become of the cargo I brought here to-night?"

"You have my promise that with to-night's work I have nothing to do that promises to include your cargo."

"Then I may remove it at any time?"

"Settle that as you please between Sherlock and yourself. I have nothing to do with it in my way."

"Then we will take it back," said Heinrich.

"Not to-night," Sherlock said, shaking his head. "It is quite safe with me—my orders are to see you out, unarmed and empty handed."

"Put his tubs on the beach for him to remove, or any time he likes within a week,

and he may take them away. These be brought to-night, no others."

"Damn!" said Vandergriff. "But you see a generous enemy, and I am not sorry that young tiger saved your life. None the less he will have to settle a heavy score with me, Sherlock."

"Well."

"You will see my lugger in the bay on the morning of this day week, and you will have those tubs on the beach for me."

"They shall be there, Vandergriff."

"If you turn traitor," said Heinrich, dackly,

He turned to the first of the men—it was the ruffian who had knocked in the hinge of the powder keg—and said:

"Come, take a torch, and go in front, and do not drop the torch, for I shall be close behind you, and you would have a bullet through your back."

The man obeyed him with a docility singularly at variance with his sullen brow and fierce expression, and leading him through the passages and cellars to the outer door, David pointed significantly to the beach.

"If you are wise," he said, "you will be ready to weigh anchor and set sail in an hour, for the captain's promise only concerns your skipper, and for the morning of this day week. At any time, before or after, you will be in danger."

The man departed without a word, but when the door was locked and barred behind him, he shook his fist at it, and med some explosives that would have made even a Dutchman ashamed of his own language.

He went to the beach, where a boat was left, and waited for his comrades, who joined him—crestfallen and silent. It was curious with what anxiety they, with one exception, said here things of Dick, while they spoke of Lindrake in terms of praise.

"But," said the ruffian who had offered the powder keg, "to be beaten by a boy!"

"A tiger rather," said a second, "an imp of Satan. We must find a way to silence him, for he would know us anywhere again, and our lives would be at his mercy."

"Nay, nay," said the flaxen-haired Hans, "the lad is a good lad, brave and true. He did his duty nobly, and they who fear him as an open foe shall not strike at him in the dark."

"Who will prevent it?" asked the hero of the powder keg.

"I, Hans Steinitz, and you know me, Max Barsboffer."

Evidently Max Barsboffer knew him well enough, for he did not carry on the conversation, and not much more was said while they manured the boat and waited for their captain. When Vandergriff appeared no one dared speak to him.

They saw the demon in his face, and half expected that his pent-up fury would break out before they were on board.

When they were on the deck he turned his bearded face over his shoulder, while on the point of descending to his cabin.



"RELEASE HIM," SAID DICK, "OR YOU DIE."

"as you seem more than half inclined to do, you know the penalty."

"I know the penalty."

"There is no course on earth in which you could hide from our search; there is no power on earth that could save you from our vengeance."

"If I wished to be a traitor," Sherlock said calmly, "I could shoot you down as you stand—you and your men—us by one; let your bodies float out to sea when the tide begins to turn, and scuttle your lugger in the darkness of this night. But an idle threat does not make me angry."

"You would know that boy again anywhere?" he said in a deep and savage undertone.

"Aye, aye, captain."

"And you know the value of the gold in the covers?"

"Aye, aye."

"Well, I would give all that to have that boy brought to me on this lugger alive—not dead, mind you, my men—I want him alive, full of strength and courage, so that I may break his heart, and kill him at my leisure."

The cold-blooded ferocity with which he said this sent a shudder through even the stout and most hard-hearted of those who heard him, for they knew how slow and cruel his revenge could be when once he had his victim in his power.

There was one who heard him and determined to put Dick on his guard. He knew it would have to be done secretly, for the flaxen-haired Netherlands, Hans Strinitz, was aware that if Heinrich ever suspected him, he would be no more safe from the skipper's fury than the mostes of the crew.

"A gallant lad—a hero," Hans thought, "and my heart kindled towards him as he stood there making his own life for his friend, and he shall not be entrapped to his doom if I can save him."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

NEW YORK. DAVID NELSON.

It was a mystery to David Sherlock how Captain Lindrake and Dick could have found their way to the cavern, but he was enlightened on that point before the eventful night was over. The revenue officer was singularly thoughtful and reserved to the landlord of the "Albatross." He could not forget that Sherlock had tried to save his life when he was first in peril, but it grieved him to feel that the man he had always treated with respect and liking, belonged to the smuggler's gang, and was so bad as any of them, if not worse.

"That reckons know that he had been discovered, he soon regained his natural hardness. He did not at first like to meet the glance of the gallant boy who called him uncle, but that was a short-lived feeling, and passed away, as many a regret and good intention had done before.

"You had better come into my room and have a drink, captain," he said. "After the excitement you have been through you must want one."

"Will it be drugged, like that you gave me not long ago?" asked Lindrake with stern significance.

"You found that out, did you?" Sherlock said, with a grim laugh. "Well, I did that for your own sake, and that do—" Lindrake assured me it would only make you sleep."

"I almost wish had been poison, and I had taken it," said Lindrake.

"Captain?" said Dick, reproachfully.

"Do not think me ungrateful, Dick. You saved my life, but you have broken my heart. I have betrayed my trust. Neglected my duty. I am no longer fit to remain in the king's service. I shall resign."

"Then the king will lose a good officer, and so will I," said Sherlock said. "Come, captain. Why not let this night's work sink into oblivion. You can start now with a clean sheet, and more experience than you had before."

"I shall resign," Lindrake said, with great resolution. "If we ever meet again it will not be while I am a revenue officer. But my name shall be such a terror to the smugglers, that they would rather have Satan in their midst."

"No need to be a goner," Sherlock said. "Come, captain. Why not let this night's work sink into oblivion. You can start now with a clean sheet, and more experience than you had before."

"I shall resign," Lindrake said, with great resolution. "If we ever meet again it will not be while I am a revenue officer. But my name shall be such a terror to the smugglers, that they would rather have Satan in their midst."

"Yes," was the firm reply; "my own sense of honour was so keen till I was ill-used and degraded. I did not become a smuggler from choice, Captain Lindrake. They stole my friends more than once, and did me many a kindness when I was poor and in trouble, and so I drifted into it after a time, because of them, and have had

much reason to be sorry for it; but I had given it up for years—ever since that boy there, Dick, was left to my care."

"It does not look like it after what I saw last night."

"That was Vandergriit; he is the only one who kept a hold on me, and though I no longer take an active part in their proceedings, I cannot quite turn against them or betray them, and I did my best for you, captain."

"Too much," said the officer, gloomily; "but for the obligation you placed me under, I could make a clean sweep of the whole gang."

"And you can't do it, at your own time; when, for instance, he comes to unship that cargo next week."

"That would be to break my word, and I would not do that over to such a villain as Vandergriit. No, Sherlock, my mind is made up—I cannot remain in the service, having once been untrue to my duty."

"What do you think of doing?"

"I have not yet decided; but I shall try to find my way into some career where I can redeem my honour, and serve my king and country."

Sherlock saw that further persuasion would be useless.

"Well," he said, "if ever you want help, remember that you have a friend in me. I am not without a few handfuls of money—but I should like to know how you found your way to the cavern as you did."

"That is easily told. I was on the alert, and your attempt to drug me convinced me that you were in with them. You made no secret I was asleep that you took no precautions, and when you let Vandergriit and his men in I saw the way you took them."

"That accounts for you," said Sherlock, "but how did Dick manage to be there as well?"

"I have not yet decided; but I shall try to find my way into some career where I can redeem my honour, and serve my king and country."

"I know you made me feel proud of you," said David, with a glance of affectionate admiration at him. "Very few men, even of twice your age, would have behaved with such ready nerve and daring; you will make your way in the world, Dick, whatever you undertake."

"I shall try to find my way into some career where I can redeem my honour, and serve my king and country."

"You need not be in a hurry to leave me, Dick," Sherlock said, reproachfully.

"I shall be better away," said Dick. "I am old enough to let the world see what I am made of, but we need not talk of it at present. I will say good-night, as I have gone through quite enough for one day."

He shook hands with them both, and the captain retiring soon afterwards, Sherlock was left alone.

"If the boy and Lindrake had not found me out," he thought with a grim smile, "it would not be such a bad day's work. A seller full of gold which I was not obliged to give up if I could find a way of keeping it, and I think I owe, as for Dick, he will not leave me when it comes to the point. The lad is sensitive and proud, and he is ashamed of me as his uncle, but that will soon pass away."

In this he was mistaken; though Dick was apt to act on impulse he had extraordinary steadfastness of purpose, and the events of that night had strengthened a resolution which had been in his mind from the first. If he were not so true forming, he would have felt that he was selling away his sign at Vandergriit, and he had all a high-spirited youth's heroic longing to distinguish himself in the world, but he had not yet decided upon his career, and he would not consult his uncle now. He was not without friends to advise him. He had Captain Lindrake, Sir Heron Penrose, and Marsduke, who still remained at Trevelion. When he awoke late in the morning, after a long and troubled sleep, Marsduke was waiting for him.

The baronet's reply was so satisfactory that he had the best of his appetite, and he was willing to

accept the hospitality that was offered him at the "Albatross." His own unaffected manner, and his friendship for Dick, ensured him a welcome.

"I thought you were such a sorry rascal!" he said when Dick made his appearance.

"I am generally," replied Dick; "but I did not have much rest last night."

"Then you are too tired to come out for a row this morning?"

"Not a bit, it's the very thing I want."

"You have missed a grand sight if you have only just come down," said Marsduke.

"You are right, but the sun has passed in full sail, and one cannot see a shadow just as I got here."

"We will go and see what it is like," said Dick.

"Better not," suggested Sherlock; "they might ask you on board, and they would not easily let you go again. You would find yourselves on the ship's books in no time."

"They would not dare to keep me," said Dick.

"I would not leave Dick behind."

"You had better not be too sure of what they would or would not do," said David, "and the best way to keep out of trouble is not to go into it. It might be an opening for Dick," he added, with a smile, "he is burning to begin his career, but I hardly think he would care to commence a common seaman impressed to serve before the mast."

"I would not care," said Dick, "they should never make me do anything against my will."

"Many lads and men have said that before," Sherlock observed, "but they have had to serve all the same."

"Because they gave in," Dick said. "I have heard you say that a pressed man is not obliged to serve till he is entered on the ship's books by his own consent."

"Strictly speaking, he is not obliged to serve, nor does he by right come under the articles of war till he has signed the service, but they have a way of making him glad to do it."

"How can they?"

"Well, he is pushed and slipped, kicked and sworn at for being in creakybody's way. He is provoked till he retaliates, and there had up before the captain, who wins at what has been done to him, and sends him to the hold in breeches and a blanket, and the water of the vessel. He is left there in darkness and hunger, with the bilge water up to his knees and the rats swarming over him."

"Nonsense," said Dick.

"It is done every day, my boy, and when he is down there they act as if they had forgotten him till he begs to be released; then they tell him they must keep him there till they can put him ashore, and that there is no room on deck except for the sailors. If he likes to volunteer, have his name put on the books, and go to his duty willingly they will see what can be done."

"And, of course, he volunteers," said Marsduke. "I should, under the circumstances, but I should not value an oath so extorted from me, and I should comply at the first opportunity."

"To be captured and dragged, or shot as a deserter," Sherlock said. "No, my lad, take my advice, and if ever you find yourself in that predicament, make the best of it."

"Or prepare for it," said Dick, "by carrying a pair of pistols, and I shall do that in future, as I think Captain Van—"

He stopped suddenly, remembering that Marsduke knew nothing of Captain Vandergriit, and there was no need of the warning lock Sherlock gave him.

"Who is Captain Van?" Duke enquired.

"Oh, a rough kind of fellow I had a few words with yesterday," Dick said, carelessly, "and he might do me an ill turn if he got the chance. Are you ready for the boat?"

"Quite."

Duke sprang to his feet, and Dick, who had made a good breakfast while talking, went out with him, and the light craft was soon hoisted down to the beach. Here they saw Captain Lindrake, thoughtful and sad, pacing to and fro with a telescope under his arm.

"Did you see those ships this morning, Captain?" Duke asked him.

(To be continued.)

## ALL IN THE FUN.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

CONTINUED.

"Who brought this note?" Mr. Straddle asked, with a look of astonishment.

"Duggle himself, sir. He's a-waitin' below," replied Parker.

"Tell him to call again."

"I did, sir; but he said if you know how important his business was you'd see him at once."

"I suppose I must," remarked Mr. Straddle with a sigh. "Boys, I am called away for a short time, and I beg that you will be quiet."

They were so near the doors closed, when a perfect deluge of tongues arose.

"Who looked in the tea-kettle, and then in the copper for Adam Clump?" jeered Barnacle Bob. "Cheers for Billy Blump, the amateur detective."

"You can't look anywhere without wearing a pair of telescopes," Billy retorted. "Go on old gooseberry eyes. Any old sheep would be ashamed of them."

"Say that again and I'll punch your head."

"What said it?"

Bob displayed a pair of fists.

"They ran away from Theodorus Nabbs," sneered Billy. "Call them fists? They're nose like my potatoes."

"Take care, and see how you like it raw," Bob gasped, in a hurry.

It was not a very severe blow, but it took effect on Billy's nose and shed his gore and dyed his innocent face and spotless collar.

Billy leaped lively over the desk and overturned Bob on his back.

Then a resolute and exciting pummeling match took place, during which an inkstand by some means was upset.

This put an end to the combat.

The two youths were studied in black and red, and Tom Merry advised a hasty departure to the duty-room for change of attire and general repairs. They went out jostling each other, and shaking their fists, and ironical cheers and shouts of laughter.

Mr. Straddle heard the uproar, but could not quell it, as he had invited Billy Duggle to the study.

The beadle was full of emotion, and commenced by shedding a copious flow of tears.

"What are you crying about?" Mr. Straddle demanded.

"Give me a little time, sir," Duggle replied. "There are moments in our lives when the strings of our hearts come to mournful music, and just now I feel as if I should burst."

"You will be kind enough not to do it in my presence," said the schoolmaster. "I am very busy, you will oblige me by telling me what you want."

Billy Duggle took a long slip of ruled paper from his pocket.

"I've come," he said, "to ask you to subscribe to a good cause. Mister Blowstick has promised a tanner—I mean sixpence—Grogan to down for horseplay and a bunch of tongue, Beattie to give to read a set of chinged jugs, and I've guaranteed to do what you will only head the list."

"But what is it all about, and on whose behalf is the subscription set up for?"

"He's a man," replied Duggle, "which if you take him for all and all he's uni-good, and I may say pictures-que. He's a man, sir, as have walked through foul weather and fire for Hemstead, 'ome, and booty. I allude, sir, to Marcus Rimment."

"The record?" cried Mr. Straddle. "What is the matter with him?"

"Need you ask, sir?" Duggle rejoined, in a reproachful tone of voice. "When pails of water fly about like parbed peas in a fire shovd w'a's more likely to give a man a cold in his 'ead and a severe chill under his veins?"

"And dared he to ask you to call on me?"

"I took it on my own responsibility," Duggle said. "Yes, sir, on my own responsibility. He did not throw himself on the neck list, nor on his club, but he's been werry bad and he looks to you for redress."

"Then in one word I tell you he must not get it?"

"Hoh!" said Duggle. "Well, I must say I didn't expect such a rebuff."

"I sent for Rimment," Mr. Straddle continued, "and he came here in a beasty state of intoxication. He muddled his head with my sherry, grew insolent and pugacious."

"He hoves that he has dropped in at the 'Crob and Bates' 'oe' to tell Paddle that his clock was five minutes slow. But don't be hard on a man as 'ad to go on his beat as drenched as baby's sop. Give him sunset, sir, for Old Lancy Sign?"

"I will do nothing of the kind. Go, please—leave me, Duggle, as Mr. Stimme has left me, and I am very busy."

But Duggle seemed to be in no hurry to go away.

He sat perfectly still and rubbed his knees thoughtfully, and then all of a sudden he closed his eyes and began to snore.

"Bless my heart!" said Mr. Straddle, "the man has gone to sleep. What am I to do with him? This is really a very distressing state of things. Duggle, wake up—wake up, I say!"

But the beadle showed no signs of activity.

The slip of paper fell from his hand, his head sank heavily on his breast, and he snored louder than ever.

"I have no wish to have another scene in my house," sneered Mr. Straddle, "and I suppose I had better leave him here. I will dismiss the school and call on Mr. Banger."

He hastened to carry this resolution into effect, and telling Parker to keep watch over the study, left the house.

Parker was in high glee.

"I've somethin' else to do besides lookin' after a beasty beadle," he said; "I'll just give Master Merry the tip, and then go about my own business."

This he did; and what was more natural than that Tom and his clumps should at once be to the bowery. Duggle had chosen to dream sweetly on.

Billy Blump forgot that his nose was twice its ordinary size; and Boh was oblivious for the time of the fact that his lips looked like two polities.

"I'll run an' get my colour-box," said Thaddeus Nabbs; "and if I don't turn Duggle out a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, never believe me again."

While Nabbs was on his mission, Tom cut a sheet of paper into an enormous rick-rolls, and gummed it to the side of Duggle's list.

St. Clair wrote on the sleeping one's back with a crayon, "The 5th of November is coming, boys!" and Billy Blump added to it, "An old score (not Puddle) chalked off."

By this time Thaddeus Nabbs had returned.

First he painted the spacious tip of Duggle's nose a bright blue, then broad green rounded his eyes, and beland his cheeks plentifully with vermilion.

"Now," said Tom, "I think we can wake him up. Slowtack, bellow like a bull into his ear, and then follow us to the playground. Come along, boys. Don't laugh until we are outside, or Duggle may wake up."

Slowtack was just the youth for the task.

He had lungs of leather when he liked to use them, and no sooner was he left alone with the slumberer than he gave vent to a roar which might have been mistaken for a foghorn.

Duggle's eyes flew open, and he jerked out his legs and arms as if a galvanic battery had been used to rouse him to consciousness.

"Where 'ave I wandered to?" he gasped. "This ain't Puddle's parlour. Lor! 'a' werry. I remember all about it. Phraps Mister Straddle's gone for assistance to check me out, but I'll go of my lown second."

Unconscious of the spectacle he presented, he rose, and stepped slowly down the staircase.

"Hallo!" cried Parker, suddenly confronting him. "What are you doin' here?"

"I want to get hot," Duggle replied. "I've been in a kind of trance. This is the fourth one I've had this week, and I'm going to see the doctor for advice."

"You can't go out this way," Parker said. "Follow us, and I'll show you out by a side door."

Billy Duggle was not particular which way he got out, so long as he was allowed to depart in peace.

But imagine his horror and amazement when he found himself in the playground, and instantly surrounded by a crowd of boys.

"This," said Tom Merry, "must be the king of the Cornish Islands. Boys, down on your knees to him!"

"You have made a mistake," cried Billy Blump. "He is second cousin to the Emperor of China's grandmother's sister's aunt."

Billy Duggle smiled a kind of sickly smile.

"I like a good joke as well as any man breathin'," he said, "but I haven't time to 'preciate one now. Let me pass, if you please!"

At this very moment Mr. Stratford Straddle and Mr. Banger passed through the gates.

At the sight of the beadle both gentlemen stopped as if they had run against a brick wall.

"Bless my heart!" said Mr. Banger; "what is this? It must be some wild animal hitherto unknown to natural history."

"It is nothing of the kind," roared Mr. Straddle. "It is your confounded beadle."

Mr. Banger forthwith pointed on the unfortunate beadle, thumped his head, pulled his ears, and smacked his face.

The attack was so sudden and unexpected that Billy Duggle stood perfectly still and stared all he knew out of his hideously-painted eyes.

Mr. Banger was going for him again, when Duggle, who probably thought that he had had quite enough of being converted into a punching machine, turned the tables by hitting Banger in the region where he kept his stock of wad.

It was never a great stock at any time.

Mr. Banger's hands flew up, and his head performed the postman's knock on the cut, hard ground.

(To be continued.)



**HANDSOME PRESENT**For a **CHUM.****VOLUME III.****THE STANDARD  
JOURNAL,**

PRICE SIXPENCE,

CONSISTING OF

**192 PAGES**

OF

**ENTERTAINING READING.**

Profusely Illustrated Throughout.

Containing the following Stories:

**THE FATAL BRAND.**

THE HAUNTED MILL.

THE DOCTOR'S FIRST PATIENT.

THE SPECIAL TRAIN.

**ONLY A FACTORY LAD.**

A NIGHT AT CANTLEY.

AN OLD SAILOR'S STORY.

**ROBERT MACAIRE, THE FRENCH  
BANDIT.**

CHASED BY A PIRATE

NOTED EXECUTIONS.

**FAITHFUL JACK.**

THE LEGEND OF GLASTONDELL

PADDY THE PIPERS' LEGS.

STANDARD BITS, &amp;c., &amp;c.

**Volumes I. and II.**

ALSO TO BE HAD.

Order through your Newsgate these splendid  
Volumes, as the postage is 3d.CHARLES FOX, 6, Red Lion Court, Fleet  
Street, London, E.C.

Now Ready. Price Sixpence.

(Only Half the Original Cost.)

**VOLUME I.**

OF

**TURNPIKE  
DICK,****The Star of the Road,**Containing 192 Pages of this  
Splendid Romance and Beautifully  
Illustrated.**READ ABOUT**CHASED BY BLOODHOUNDS,  
BLACK JACK THE HIGHWAYMAN,  
AT THE WITCHES' TOWER,  
MOTHER CLAPPERS,  
TURNPIKE DICK ON GUARD,  
THE FORCED MARRIAGE,  
A NIGHT ON THE ROAD,  
THE WOLF AND THE LAMB,  
THE LEAP INTO THE QUARRY,  
A DESPERATE LOVE SCENE,  
A DUEL IN THE MOONLIGHT,  
JESSIE'S PERIL,  
IN THE PRISON,  
THE FANCY BALL, &c., &c., &c.

Now Ready. Price 6d.

**VOL. I.****TURNPIKE  
DICK,****The Star of the Road.**Order this Monster Sixpenny  
Volume of your Agent, or post free  
from—CHARLES FOX, 6, Red Lion Court, Fleet  
Street, London, E.C.**HANDSOME PRESENT**For a **CHUM.****VOLUME IV.**

OF

**THE STANDARD  
JOURNAL,**

PRICE SIXPENCE,

CONSISTING OF

**192 PAGES**

OF

**ENTERTAINING READING,**

Profusely Illustrated Throughout.

Containing the following Stories:

**ALL IN THE FUN,**  
A Jolly School Story.THE CAPTURE OF THE PRESIDENT,  
FROM A SAILOR'S JOURNAL OF HIS FIRST CRUISE.

THE SPECIAL TRAIN.

**TIMOTHY TATTERS;**  
or, From Beggar to Baronet.

A TALE OF THE BANDITTL

A WONDERFUL SECRET.

**CLAUDE DUVAL,**

The Ladies' Highwayman.

A RACE FOR A SCALP.

**A LEAF FROM A SCHOOLBOY'S  
DIARY.**

THE HAUNTED MILL.

THE DOCTOR'S FIRST PATIENT.

**THE FATAL BRAND.**AN AFTERNOON IN A DOG-CART WITH  
AN AMATEUR DRIVER.**ONLY A FACTORY LAD.**

STANDARD BITS, &amp;c., &amp;c.

**Volumes I., II., and III.**

ALSO TO BE HAD.

Order through your Newsgate these splendid  
Volumes, as the postage is 3d.CHARLES FOX, 6, Red Lion Court, Fleet  
Street, London, E.C.