

LEVER CHARLES JAMES

ARTHUR O'LEARY: HIS
WANDERINGS AND
PONDERINGS IN MANY
LANDS

Charles Lever

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And Ponderings In Many Lands**

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NOTICE, PRELIMINARY AND EXPLANATORY,

BY THE EDITOR

When some years ago we took the liberty, in a volume of our so-called “Confessions,” to introduce to our reader’s acquaintance the gentleman whose name figures in the title page, we subjoined a brief notice, by himself, intimating the intention he entertained of one day giving to the world a farther insight into his life and opinions, under the title of “Loiterings of Arthur O’Leary.”

It is more than probable that the garbled statement and incorrect expression of which we ourselves were guilty respecting our friend had piqued him into this declaration, which, on mature consideration, he thought fit to abandon. For, from that hour to the present one, nothing of the kind ever transpired, nor could we ascertain, by the strictest inquiry, that such a proposition of publication had ever been entertained in the West-End, or heard of in the “Row.”

The worthy traveller had wandered away to “pastures new,” heaven knows where! and, notwithstanding repeated little paragraphs in the second advertizing column of the “Times” newspaper, assuring, “A. O’L. that if he would inform his friends where a letter would reach, all would be forgiven,” &c. the mystery of his whereabouts remained unsolved, save by the chance mention of a north-west passage traveller, who speaks of a Mr. O’Leary as having presided at a grand bottle-nosed whale dinner in Behring’s Straits, some time in the autumn of 1840; and an allusion, in the second volume of the Chevalier de Bertonville’s Discoveries in Central Africa, to an “Irlandais bien original,” who acted as sponsor to the son and heir of King Bullanullaboo, in the Chieckhow territory. That either, or indeed, both, these individuals resolved themselves into our respected friend, we entertained no doubt whatever; nor did the information cause us any surprise, far less unquestionably, than had we heard of his ordering his boots from Hoby, or his coat from Stultz.

Meanwhile time rolled on – and whether Mr. O’Leary had died of the whale feast, or been eaten himself by his godson, no one could conjecture, and his name had probably been lost amid the rust of ages, if certain booksellers, in remote districts, had not chanced upon the announcement of his volume, and their “country orders” kept dropping in for these same “Loiterings,” of which the publishers were obliged to confess they knew nothing whatever.

Now, the season was a dull one; nothing stirring in the literary world; people had turned from books, to newspapers; a gloomy depression reigned over the land. The India news was depressing; the China worse; the French were more insolent than ever; the prices were falling under the new tariff; pigs looked down, and “Repealers” looked up. The only interesting news, was the frauds in pork, which turned out to be pickled negroes and potted squaws. What was to be done? A literary speculation at such a moment was preposterous; for although in an age of temperance, nothing prospered but “Punch.”

It occurred to us, “then pondering,” as Lord Brougham would say, that as these same “Loiterings” had been asked for more than once, and an actual order for two copies had been seen in the handwriting of a solvent individual, there was no reason why we should not write them ourselves. There would be little difficulty in imagining what a man like O’Leary would say, think, or do, in any-given situation. The peculiarities of his character might, perhaps, give point to what dramatic

people call “situations,” but yet were not of such a nature as to make their portraiture a matter of any difficulty.

We confess the thing savoured a good deal of book-making. What of that? We remember once in a row in Dublin, when the military were called out, that a sentinel happened to have an altercation with, an old woman of that class, for which the Irish metropolis used to have a patent, in all that regards street eloquence and repartee. The soldier, provoked beyond endurance, declared at last with an oath, “that if she didn’t go away, he’d drive his bayonet through her.” “Oh, then, the devil thank you for that same,” responded the hag, “sure, isn’t it your trade?” Make the application, dear reader, and forgive us for our authorship to order.

Besides, had we not before us the example of Alexandre Dumas, in France, whose practice it is to amuse the world by certain Souvenirs de “Voyage,” which he has never made, not even in imagination but which are only the dressed-up skeletons of other men’s rambles, and which he buys, exactly as the Jews do old uniforms and court suits, for exportation to the colonies. And thus while thousands of his readers are sympathizing with the suffering of the aforesaid Alexandre, in his perilous passage of the great desert, or his fearful encounter with Norwegian wolves, little know they that their hero is snugly established in his “entresol” of the “Rue d’Alger,” lying full length on a spring-cushioned sofa, with a Manilla weed on his lip, and George Sand’s last bulletin of wickedness, half cut before him. These “Souvenirs de Voyage” being nothing more than the adventures and incidents of Messrs. John Doe and Richard Doe, paragraphed, witticized, and spiced for public taste, by Alexandre Dumas, pretty much as cheap taverns give “gravy” and “ox-tail” – the smallest modicum of meat, to the most high-seasoned and hot-flavoured condiments.

If, then, we had scruples, here was a precedent to relieve our minds – here a case perfectly in point, at least so far as the legitimacy of the practice demanded. But, unhappily, it ended there: for although it may be, and indeed is, very practicable for Monsieur Dumas, by the perfection of his “cuisine,” to make the meat itself a secondary part of the matter; yet do we grievously fear that a tureen full of “O’Leary,” might not be an acceptable dish, because there was a bone of “Harry Lorrequer” in the bottom.

With all these *pros* and *cons* our vain-glorious boast to write the work in question stared us suddenly in the face; and, really, we felt as much shame as can reasonably be supposed to visit a man, whose countenance has been hawked about the streets, and sold in shilling numbers. What was to be done? There was the public, too; but, like Tony Lumpkin, we felt we might disappoint the company at the Three Jolly Pigeons – but could we disappoint ourselves?

Alas! there were some excellent reasons against such a consummation. So, respected reader, whatever liberties we might take with you, we had to look nearer home, and bethink us of ourselves. *After all* – and what a glorious charge to the jury of one’s conscience is your after all! – what a plenary indulgence against all your sins of commission and omission! – what a makepeace to self-accusation, and what a salve to heartfelt repinings! – after all, we did know a great deal about O’Leary: his life and opinions, his habits and haunts, his prejudices, pleasures, and predilections: and although we never performed Boz to his Johnson, still had we ample knowledge of him for all purposes of book-writing; and there was no reason why we should not assume his mantle, or rather his Macintosh, if the weather required it.

Having in some sort allayed our scruples in this fashion, and having satisfied our conscience by the resolve, that if we were not about to record the actual *res gesto* of Mr. O’Leary, neither would we set down anything which *might not* have been one of his adventures, nor put into his mouth any imaginary conversations which *he might not* have sustained; so that, in short, should the volume ever come under the eyes of the respected gentleman himself, considerable mystification would exist, as to whether he did not say, do, and think, exactly as we made him, and much doubt lie on his mind that he was not the author himself.

We wish particularly to lay stress on the honesty of these our intentions – the more, as subsequent events have interfered with their accomplishment; and we can only assure the world of what we would have done, had we been permitted. And here let us observe, *en passant*, that if other literary characters had been actuated by similarly honourable views, we should have been spared those very absurd speeches which Sallust attributes to his characters in the Catiline conspiracy; and another historian, with still greater daring, assumes the Prince of Orange *ought* to have spoken, at various epochs in the late Belgian revolution.

With such prospective hopes, then, did we engage in the mystery of these same “Loiterings,” and with a pleasure such as only men of the pen can appreciate, did we watch the bulky pile of MS. that was growing up before us, while the interest of the work had already taken hold of us; and whether we moved our puppets to the slow figure of a minuet, or rattled them along at the slap-dash, hurry-scurry, devil-may-care pace, for which our critics habitually give us credit, we felt that our foot beat time responsively to the measure, and that we actually began to enjoy the performance.

In this position stood matters, when early one morning in December the post brought us an ominous-looking epistle, which, even as we glanced our eye on the outside, conveyed an impression of fear and misgiving to our minds. If there are men in whose countenances, as Pitt remarked, “villany is so impressed, it were impiety not to believe it,” so are there certain letters whose very shape and colour, fold, seal, and superscription have something gloomy and threatening – something of menace and mischief about them. This was one of these: the paper was a greenish sickly-white, a kind of dyspeptic foolscap; the very mill that fabricated it might have had the shaking ague. The seal was of bottle-wax, the impression, a heavy thumb. The address ran, “To H. L.” The writing, a species of rustic paling, curiously interwoven and gnarled, to which the thickness of the ink lent a needless obscurity, giving to the whole the appearance of something like a child’s effort to draw a series of beetles and cockroaches with a blunt stick; but what most of all struck terror to our souls, was an abortive effort at the words “Arthur O’Leary” scrawled in the corner.

What! had he really then escaped the perils of blubber and black men? Was he alive, and had he come back to catch us, *in delicto*– in the very fact of editing him, of raising our exhausted exchequer at his cost, and replenishing our empty coffers under his credit? Our suspicions were but too true. We broke the seal and spelled as follows —

“Sir – A lately-arrived traveller in these parts brings me intelligence, that a work is announced for publication by you, under the title of ‘The Loiterings of Arthur O’Leary,’ containing his opinions, notions, dreamings, and doings during several years of his life, and in various countries. Now this must mean me, and I should like to know what are a man’s own, if his adventures are not? His ongoing, his ‘begebenheiten,’ as the Germans call them, are they not as much his, as his – what shall I say; his flannel waistcoat or his tobacco-pipe?

“If I have spent many years, and many pounds (of tobacco) in my explorings of other lands, is it for you to reap the benefit? If I have walked, smoked, laughed, and fattened from Trolhatten to Tehran, was it that you should have the profit? Was I to exhibit in ludicrous situations and extravagant incidents, with ‘illustrations by Phiz,’ because I happened to be fat, and fond of rambling? Or was it my name only that you pirated, so that Arthur O’Leary should be a type of something ludicrous, wherever he appeared in company? Or worse still, was it an attempt to extort money from me, as I understand you once before tried, by assuming for one of your heroes the name of a most respectable gentleman in private life? To which of these counts do you plead guilty?

“Whatever is your plan, here is mine: I have given instructions to my man of law to obtain an injunction from the Chancellor, restraining you or any other from publishing these ‘Loiterings.’ Yes; an order of the court will soon put an end to this most unwarrantable invasion of private rights. Let us see then if you’ll dare to persist in this nefarious scheme.

“The Swan-river for you, and the stocks for your publisher, may, perhaps, moderate your literary and publishing ardour – eh! Master Harry? Or do you contemplate adding your own

adventures beyond seas to the volume, and then make something of your 'Confessions of a Convict,' I must conclude at once: in my indignation this half hour, I have been swallowing all the smoke of my meerschaum, and I feel myself turning round and round like a smoke-jack. Once for all – stop! recall your announcement, burn your MS., and prostrate yourself in abject humility at my feet, and with many sighs, and two pounds of shag (to be had at No. 8, Francis-street, two doors from the lane), you may haply be forgiven by yours, in wrath,

“Arthur O'Leary.

“Address a line, if in penitence, to me here, where the lovely scenery, and the society remind me much of Siberia —

“Edenderry, 'The Pig and Pot-hooks.'”

Having carefully read and re-read this letter, and having laid it before those whose interests, like our own, were deeply involved, we really for a time became thoroughly nonplussed. To disclaim any or all of the intentions attributed to us in Mr. O'Leary's letter, would have been perfectly useless, so long as we held to our project of publishing anything under his name. Of no avail to assure him that our “Loiterings of Arthur O'Leary” were not his – that our hero was not himself. To little purpose should we adduce that our Alter Ego was the hero of a book by the Prebend of Lichfield, and “Charles Lever” given to the world as a socialist. He cared for nothing of all this; *tenax propositi*, he would listen to no explanation – unconditional, absolute, Chinese submission were his only terms, and with these we were obliged to comply. And yet how very ridiculous was the power he assumed. Was any thing more common in practice than to write the lives of distinguished men, even before their death, and who ever heard of the individual seeking legal redress against his biographer except for libel? “Come, come, Arthur,” said we to ourselves, “this threat affrights us not. Here we begin Chap. XIV. – ”

Just then we turned our eyes mechanically towards the pile of manuscript at our elbow, and could not help admiring the philosophy with which *he* spoke of condemning to the flames the fruit of *our* labour. Still it was evident, that Mr. O'Leary's was no *brutem fulmen*, but very respectable and downright thunder; and that in fact we should soon be, where, however interesting it may make a young lady, it by no means suits an elderly gentleman to be, viz. – in Chancery.

“What's to be done?” was the question, which like a tennis-ball we pitched at each other. “We have it,” said we. “We'll start at once for Edenderry, and bring this with us,” pointing to our manuscript. “We'll show O'Leary how near immortality he was, and may still be, if not loaded with obstinacy: We'll read him a bit of our droll, and some snatches of our pathetic passages. We'll show him how the 'Immortal George' intends to represent him. In a word, we'll enchant him with the fascinating position to which we mean to exalt him and before the evening ends, obtain his special permission to deal with him, as before now we have done with his betters, and – print him.”

Our mind made up, no time was to be lost. We took our place in the Grand Canal passage-boat for Edenderry; and wrapping ourselves up in our virtue, and another thin garment they call a Zephyr, began our journey.

We should have liked well, had our object permitted it, to have made some brief notes of our own “Loiterings.” But the goal of our wanderings, as well as of our thoughts, was ever before us, and we spent the day imagining to ourselves the various modes by which we should make our advances to the enemy, with most hope of success. Whether the company themselves did not afford any thing very remarkable, or our own preoccupation prevented our noticing it, certes, we jogged on, without any consciousness that we were not perfectly alone, and this for some twenty miles of the way. At last, however, the cabin became intolerably hot. Something like twenty-four souls were imprisoned in a space ten feet by three, which the humanity of the company of directors kindly limits to forty-eight, a number which no human ingenuity could pack into it, if living. The majority of the passengers were what by courtesy are called 'small farmers,' namely, individuals weighing from eighteen to six-and-twenty stone; priests, with backs like the gable of a chapel; and a sprinkling of elderly ladies from the bog towns along the bank, who actually resembled turf clamps in their proportions. We made an effort

to reach the door, and having at length succeeded, found to our sorrow that the rain was falling heavily. Notwithstanding this, we remained without, as long as we could venture, the oppressive heat within being far more intolerable than even the rain. At length, however, wet through and cold, we squeezed ourselves into a small corner near the door, and sat down. But what a change had our unpropitious presence evoked. We left our fellow-travellers, a noisy, jolly, semi-riotous party, disputing over the markets, censuring Sir Robert, abusing the poor-rates, and discussing various matters of foreign and domestic policy, from Shah Shoojah to subsoil ploughs. A dirty pack of cards, and even punch, were adding their fascinations to while away the tedious hours; but now the company sat in solemn silence. The ladies looked straight before them, without a muscle of their faces moving; the farmers had lifted the collars of their frieze coats, and concealed their hands within their sleeves, so as to be perfectly invisible; and the reverend fathers, putting on dark and dangerous looks, spoke only in monosyllables, no longer sipped their liquor in comfort, but rang the bell from time to time, and ordered "another beverage," a curious smoking compound, that to our un-Matthewed senses, savoured suspiciously of whiskey.

It was a dark night when we reached the "Pig and Pot-hooks," the hostelry whence Mr. O'Leary had addressed us; and although not yet eight o'clock, no appearance of light, nor any stir, announced that the family were about. After some little delay, our summons was answered by a bare-legged handmaiden, who, to our question if Mr. O'Leary stopped there, without further hesitation opened a small door to the left, and introduced us bodily into his august presence.

Our travelled friend was seated, "*more suo*," with his legs supported on two chairs, while he himself in chief occupied a third, his wig being on the arm of that one on which he reposed; a very imposing tankard, with a floating toast, smoked on the table, and a large collection of pipes of every grade, from the haughty hubble bubble, to the humble dudeen, hung around on the walls.

"Ha!" said he, as we closed the door behind us, and advanced into the room, "and so you are penitent. Well, Hal, I forgive you. It was a scurvy trick, though; but I remember it no longer. Here, take a pull at the pewter, and tell us all the Dublin news."

It is not our intention, dear reader, to indulge in the same mystification with you, that we practised on our friend Mr. O'Leary – or, in other words, to invent for your edification, as we confess to have done for his, all the events and circumstances which might have, but did not, take place in Dublin for the preceding month. It is enough to say that about eleven o'clock Mr. O'Leary was in the seventh heaven of conversational contentment, and in the ninth flagon of purl.

"Open it – let me see it. Come, Hal, divulge at once," said he, kicking the carpet-bag that contained our manuscript. We undid the lock, and emptied our papers before him. His eyes sparkled as the heavy folds fell over each other on the table, his mouth twitched with a movement of convulsive pleasure. "Ring the bell, my lad," said he; "the string is beside you. Send the master, Mary," continued he, as the maiden entered.

Peter Mahoon soon made his appearance, rather startled at being summoned from his bed, and evidencing in his toilette somewhat more of zeal than dandyism.

"Is the house insured, Peter?" said Mr. O'Leary.

"No, sir," rejoined he, with a searching look around the room, and a sniff of his nose, to discover if he could detect the smell of fire.

"What's the premises worth, Peter?"

"Sorrow one of me knows right, sir. Maybe a hundred and fifty, or it might bring two hundred pounds."

"All right," said O'Leary briskly, as seizing my manuscript with both hands he hurled it on the blazing turf fire; and then grasping the poker, stood guard over it, exclaiming as he did so, – "Touch it, and by the beard of the Prophet I'll brain you. Now, there it goes, blazing up the chimney. Look how it floats up there! I never expected to travel like that anyhow. Eh, Hal? Your work is a brilliant affair, isn't it? – and as well puffed as if you entertained every newspaper editor in the kingdom?"

And see,” cried he, as he stamped his foot upon the blaze, “the whole edition is exhausted already – not a copy to be had for any money.”

We threw ourselves back in our chair, and covered our face with our hands. The toil of many a long night, of many a bright hour of sun and wind, was lost to us for ever, and we may be pardoned if our grief was heavy.

“Cheer up, old fellow,” said he, as the last flicker of the burning paper expired. “You know the thing was bad: it couldn’t be other. That d – d fly-away harum-scarum style of yours is no more adapted to a work of real merit, than a Will-o’-the-wisp would be for a light-house. Another jug, Peter – bring two. The truth is, Hal, I was not so averse to the publication of my life as to the infernal mess you’d have made of it. You have no pathos, no tenderness – damn the bit.”

“Come, come,” said we: “it is enough to burn our manuscript, but, really, as to playing the critic in this fashion – ”

“Then,” continued he, “all that confounded folly you deal in, laughing at the priests – Lord bless you, man! they have more fun, those fellows, than you, and a score like you. There’s one Father Dolan here would tell two stories for your one; ay, better than ever you told.”

“We really have no ambition to enter the lists with your friend.”

“So much the better – you’d get the worst of it; and as to knowledge of character, see now, Peter Mahoon there would teach you human nature; and if I liked myself to appear in print – ”

“Well,” said we, bursting out into a fit of laughter, “that would certainly be amusing.”

“And so it would, whether you jest or no. There’s in that drawer there, the materials of as fine a work as ever appeared since Sir John Carr’s Travels; and the style is a happy union of Goldsmith and Jean Paul – simple yet aphoristic – profound and pleasing – sparkling like the can before me, but pungent and racy in its bitterness. Hand me that oak box, Hal. Which is the key? At this hour one’s sight becomes always defective. Ah, here it is look there!”

We obeyed the command, and truly our amazement was great, though possibly not for the reason that Mr. O’Leary could have desired; for instead of anything like a regular manuscript, we beheld a mass of small scraps of paper, backs of letters, newspapers, magazines, fly-leaves of books, old prints, &c., scrawled on, in the most uncouth fashion; and purporting from the numbers appended to be a continued narration of one kind or other.

“What’s all this?” said we.

“These,” said he, “are really ‘The Loiterings of Arthur O’Leary.’ Listen to this. Here’s a bit of Goldsmith for you —

“I was born of poor but respectable parents in the county – .’ What are you laughing at? Is it because I did’nt open with – ‘The sun was setting, on the 25th of June, in the year 1763, as two travellers were seen,’ &c., &c.,? Eh? That’s your way, not mine. A London fellow told me that my papers were worth five hundred pounds. Come, that’s what I call something. Now I’ll go over to the ‘Row.’”

“Stop a bit. Here seems something strange about the King of Holland.”

“You mustn’t read them, though. No, no. That’ll never do – no, Hal; no plagiarism. But, after all, I have been a little hasty with you, Perhaps I ought not to have burned that thing; you were not to know it was bad.”

“Eh! how?”

“Why, I say, you might not see how absurd it was; so here’s your health, Hal: either that tankard has been drugged, or a strange change has come over my feelings. Harry Lorrequer, I’ll make your fortune, or rather your son’s, for you are a wasteful creature, and will spend the proceeds as fast as you get them; but the everlastingly-called-for new editions will keep him in cash all his life. I’ll give you that box and its contents; yes, I repeat it, it is yours. I see you are overpowered; there, taste the pewter and you’ll get better presently. In that you’ll find – a little irregular and carelessly-written perhaps –

the sum of my experience and knowledge of life – all my correspondence, all my private notes, my opinions on literature, fine arts, politics, and the drama.”

But we will not follow our friend into the soaring realms of his imaginative flight, for it was quite evident that the tankard and the tobacco were alone responsible for the lofty promises of his production. In plain English, Mr. O'Leary was fuddled, and the only intelligible part of his discourse was, an assurance that his papers were entirely at our service; and that, as in some three weeks time, he hoped to be in Africa, having promised to spend the Christmas with Abd-el-Kader, we were left his sole literary executor, with full power to edit him in any shape it might please us, lopping, cutting, omitting – anything, even to adding, or interpolating.

Such were his last orders, and having given them, Mr. O'Leary refilled his pipe, closed his eyes, stretched out his legs to their fullest extent, and although he continued at long intervals to evolve a blue curl of smoke from the corner of his mouth, it was evident he was lost in the land of dreams.

In two hours afterwards we were on our way back to Dublin, bearing with us the oaken box, which, however, it is but justice to ourselves to say, we felt as a sad exchange for our own carefully-written manuscript. On reaching home, our first care was to examine these papers, and see if anything could be made of them, which might prove readable; unfortunately, however, the mass consisted of brief memoranda, setting forth how many miles Mr. O'Leary had walked on a certain day in the November of 1803, and how he had supped on camel's milk with an amiable family of Bedouins, who had just robbed a caravan in the desert. His correspondence, was for the most part an angry one with washerwomen and hotel-keepers, and some rather curious hieroglyphic replies to dinner invitations from certain people of rank in the Sandwich Islands. Occasionally, however, we chanced on little bits of narrative, fragments of stories, some of which his fellow-travellers had contributed, and brief sketches of places and people that were rather amusing; but so disjointed, broken up, and unconnected were they all, it was almost impossible to give them anything like an arrangement, much less anything like consecutive interest.

All that lay in our power was to select from the whole, certain portions, which, from their length, promised more of care than the mere fragments about them, and present them to our readers with this brief notice of the mode in which we obtained them – our only excuse for a most irregular and unprecedented liberty in the practice of literature. With this apology for the incompleteness and abruptness of “the O'Leary Papers” – which happily we are enabled to make freely, as our friend Arthur has taken his departure – we offer them to our readers, only adding, that in proof of their genuine origin, the manuscript can be seen by any one so desiring it, on application to our publishers; while, for all their follies, faults, and inaccuracies, we desire to plead our irresponsibility, as freely, as we wish to attribute any favour the world may show them, to their real author: and with this last assurance, we beg to remain, your ever devoted and obedient servant,

CHAPTER I. THE “ATTWOOD.”

Old Woodcock says, that if Providence had not made him a Justice of the Peace, he'd have been a vagabond himself. No such kind interference prevailed in my case. I was a vagabond from my cradle. I never could be sent to school, alone, like other children – they always had to see me there safe, and fetch me back again. The rambling bump monopolized my whole head. I'm sure my god-father must have been the wandering Jew, or a king's messenger. Here I am again, *en route*, and sorely puzzled to know whither? There's the fellow for my trunk.

“What packet, sir?”

“Eh? What packet? The vessel at the Tower stairs?”

“Yes, sir; there are two with the steam up, the Rotterdam and the Hamburg.”

“Which goes first?”

“Why, I think the Attwood, sir.”

“Well, then, shove aboard the Attwood. Where is she for?”

“She's for Rotterdam. – He's a queer cove too,” said the fellow under his teeth, as he moved out of the room, “and don't seem to care where he goes.”

A capital lesson in life may be learned from the few moments preceding departure from an inn. The surly waiter that always said “coming” when he was leaving the room, and never came, now grown smiling and smirking; the landlord expressing a hope to see you again, while he watches your upthrown eyebrows at the exorbitancy of his bill: the boots attentively looking from your feet to your face, and back again; the housemaid passing and repassing a dozen times, on her way, no where, with a look half saucy, half shy; the landlord's son, an abortion of two feet high, a kind of family chief remembrancer, that sits on a high stool in the bar, and always detects something you have had, that was not “put down in the bill” – two shillings for a cab, or a “brandy and water;” a curse upon them all; this poll-tax upon travellers is utter ruin; your bill, compared to its dependencies, is but Falstaff's “pennyworth of bread,” to all the score for sack.

Well, here I am at last. “Take care I say! you'll upset us. Shove off, Bill; ship your oar,” splash, splash. “Bear a hand. What a noise, they make,” bang, crash, buzz; what a crowd of men in pilot coats and caps; women in plaid shawls and big reticules, band-boxes, bags, and babies, and what higgling for sixpences with the wherry-men.

All the places round the companion are taken by pale ladies in black silk, with a thin man in spectacles beside them; the deck is littered with luggage, and little groups seated thereon; some very strange young gentlemen with many-coloured waistcoats are going to Greenwich, and one as far as Margate; a widow and daughters, rather prettyish girls, for Herne Bay; a thin, bilious-looking man of about fifty, with four outside coats, and a bearskin round his legs, reading beside the wheel, occasionally taking a sly look at the new arrivals. – I've seen him before; he is the Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople; and here's a jolly-looking, rosy-cheeked fellow, with a fat florid face, and two dashing-looking girls in black velvet. Eh! who's this? Sir Peter, the steward calls him; a London Alderman going up the Rhine for two months – he's got his courier, and a strong carriage, with the springs well corded for the *pavé*; – but they come too fast for counting: so now I'll have a look after my berth.

Alas! the cabin has been crowded all the while by some fifty others, wrangling, scolding, laughing, joking, complaining, and threatening, and not a berth to be had.

“You've put me next the tiller,” said one; “I'm over the boiler,” screamed another.

“I have the pleasure of speaking to Sir Willoughby Steward,” said the captain, to a tall, gray-headed, soldier-like figure, with a closely-buttoned blue, frock. “Sir Willoughby, your berth is No. 8.”

“Eh! that's the way they come it,” whispers a Cockney to his friend. “That ere chap gets a berth before us all.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” says the baronet mildly, “I took mine three days ago.”

“Oh! I didn’t mean anything,” stammers out the other, and sneaks off.

“Laura-Mariar – where’s Laurar?” calls out a shrill voice from the aft-cabin.

“Here, Ma,” replies a pretty girl, who is arranging her ringlets at a glass, much to the satisfaction of a young fellow in a braided frock, that stands gazing at her in the mirror with something very like a smile on his lip.

There’s no mistaking that pair of dark-eyed fellows with aquiline noses and black ill-shaven beards – Hamburgh or Dutch Jews, dealers in smuggled lace, cigars, and Geneva watches, and occasionally small money-lenders. How they scan the company, as if calculating the profit they might turn them to! The very smile they wear seems to say, ‘*Comment c’est doux de tromper les Chrétiens.*’ But, holloa! there was a splash! we are moving, and the river is now more amusing than the passengers.

I should like to see the man that ever saw London from the Thames; or any part of it, save the big dome of St. Paul’s, the top of the Monument, or the gable of the great black wharf inscribed with “Hodson’s Pale Ale.” What a devil of a row they do make. I thought we were into that fellow. See, here’s a wherry actually under our bow; where is she now? are they all lost already? No! there they go bobbing up and down, and looking after us, as if asking, why we didn’t sail over them. Ay! there comes an Indiaman, and that little black slug that ‘s towing her up against the stream, is one of the Tug Company’s craft; and see how all the others at anchor keep tossing and pitching about, as we pass by, like an awkward room full of company, rising at each new arrival.

There’s Greenwich! a fine thing Greenwich. I like the old fellows that the first lord always makes stand in front, without legs or arms; a cheery sight: and there’s a hulk, or an hospital ship, or something of that kind.

“That’s the Hexcellent,” saith a shrill voice behind me.

“Ah! I know her, she’s a revenue cruiser.”

Lord, what liars are the Cockneys! The plot thickens every moment; here come little bright green and gold things, shooting past, like dragon-flies skimming the water, steaming down to Gravesend. What a mob of parasols cover the deck, and what kissing of hands and waving of handkerchiefs to anonymous acquaintances nowhere. More steamers – here’s the “Boulogne boat,” followed by the Ostender, and there, rounding the reach, comes the Ramsgate; and a white funnel, they say, is the Cork packet; and yonder, with her steam escaping, is the Edinburgh, her deck crowded with soldiers.

“Port – port it is – steady there – steady.”

“Do you dine, sir!” quoth the steward to the pale gentleman. A faint “Yes,” “And the ladies too?” A more audible “No.”

“I say, steward,” cries Sir Peter, “what’s the hour for dinner?”

“Four o’clock, sir, after we pass Gravesend.”

“Bring me some brandy and water and a biscuit, then.”

“Lud, Pa!”

“To be sure, dear, we shall be sick in the pool. They say there’s a head wind.”

How crowded they are on the fore-part of the vessel! six carriages and eight horses; the latter belong to a Dutch dealer, who, by-the-by, seems a shrewd fellow, who, well knowing the extreme sympathy between horses and asses, leaves the care of his, to some Cockneys, who come down every half hour to look after the tarpaulins, inspect the coverings, see the knee-caps safe, find ask if they want “ay;” and all this, that to some others on board, they may appear as sporting characters, well versed in turf affairs, and quite up to stable management.

When the life and animation of the crowded river is passed, how vexatious it is to hear for the thousandth time the dissertation’s on English habits, customs, and constitution, delivered by some ill-informed, underbred fellow or other, to some eager German – a Frenchman happily is too self-sufficient ever to listen – who greedily swallows the farrago of absurdity, which, according to the

politics of his informant, represents the nation in a plethora of prosperity, or the last stage of inevitable ruin. I scarcely know which I detest the more: the insane toryism of the one, is about as sickening as the rabid radicalism of the other. The absurd misapprehensions foreigners entertain about us, are, in nine cases out of ten, communicated by our own people; and in this way, I have always remarked a far greater degree of ignorance about England and the English, to prevail among those who have passed some weeks in the country, than, among such, as had never visited our shores. With the former the Thames Tunnel is our national boast; raw beef and boxing our national predilections; the public sale of our wives a national practice.

“But what’s this? our paddles are backed. Anything wrong, steward?”

“No, sir, only another passenger coming aboard.” “How they pull, and there’s a stiff sea tunning too. A queer figure that is in the stern sheets; what a beard he has!”

I had just time for the observation, when a tall, athletic man, wrapped in a wide blue cloak, sprang on the deck – his eyes were shaded by large green spectacles and the broad brim of a very projecting hat; a black beard, a rabbi might have envied, descended from his chin, and hung down upon his bosom; he chucked a crown-piece to the boatman as he leaned over the bulwark, and then turning to the steward, called out – “Eh, Jem! all right?”

“Yes, sir, all right,” said the man, touching his hat respectfully! The tall figure immediately disappeared down the companion-ladder, leaving me in the most puzzling state of doubt as to what manner of man he could possibly be. Had the problem been more easy of solution I should scarcely have resolved it when he again emerged – but how changed! The broad beaver had given place to a blue cloth foraging cap with a gold band around it; the beard had disappeared totally, and left no successor save a well-rounded chin; the spectacles also had vanished, and a pair of sharp, intelligent, grey eyes, with a most uncommon degree of knowingness in their expression, shone forth; and a thin and most accurately-curved moustache graced his upper lip and gave a character of Vandykism to his features, which were really handsome. In person he was some six feet two, gracefully but strongly built; his costume, without anything approaching conceit, was the perfection of fashionable attire – even to his gloves there was nothing which D’Orsay could have criticised; while his walk was the very type of that mode of progression which is only learned thoroughly by a daily stroll down St. James Street, and the frequent practice of passing to and from Crockford’s, at all hours of the day and night.

The expression of his features was something so striking, I cannot help noting it: there was a jauntiness, an ease, no smirking, half-bred, self-satisfied look, such as a London linendraper might wear on his trip to Margate; but a consummate sense of his own personal attractions and great natural advantages, had given a character to his features which seemed to say – it’s quite clear there’s no coming up to *me*; don’t try it —*nascitur non fit*. His very voice implied it. The veriest commonplace fell from him with a look, a smile, a gesture, a something or other that made it tell; and men repeated his sayings without knowing, that his was a liquor, that was lost in decanting. The way he scanned the passengers, and it was done in a second, was the practised observance of one, who reads character at a glance. Over the Cockneys, and they were numerous, his eyes merely passed without bestowing any portion of attention; while to the lady part of the company his look was one of triumphant satisfaction, such as Louis XIV. might have bestowed when he gazed at the thousands in the garden of Versailles, and exclaimed, “*Oui! ces sont mes sujets.*” Such was the Honourable Jack Smallbranes, younger son of a peer, ex-captain in the Life Guards, winner of the Derby, but now the cleared-out man of fashion flying to the Continent to escape from the Fleet, and cautiously coming aboard in disguise below Gravesend, to escape the bore of a bailiff, and what he called the horror of bills “detested.”

We read a great deal about Cincinnatus cultivating his cabbages, and we hear of Washington’s retirement when the active period of his career had passed over, and a hundred similar instances are quoted for our admiration, of men, who could throw themselves at once from all the whirlwind excitement of great events, and seek, in the humblest and least obtrusive position, an occupation and an enjoyment. But I doubt very much if your ex-man of fashion, your *ci-devant* winner of the Derby

– the adored of Almack's – the *enfant chéri* of Crockford's and the Clarendon, whose equipage was a model, whose plate was perfection, for whom life seemed too short for all the fascinations wealth spread around him, and each day brought the one embarrassment how to enjoy enough. I repeat it, I doubt much if he, when the hour of his abdication arrives – and that it will arrive sooner or later not even himself entertains a doubt – when Holditch protests, and Bevan proceeds; when steeds are sold at Tattersall's, and pictures at Christie's; when the hounds pass over to the next new victim, and the favourite for the St. Léger, backed with mighty odds, is now entered under another name; when in lieu of the bright eyes and honied words that make life a fairy tale, his genii are black-whiskered bailiffs and auctioneers' appraisers – if he, when the tide of fortune sets in so strong against him, can not only sustain himself for a while against it, and when too powerful at last, can lie upon the current and float as gaily down, as ever he did joyously, up, the stream – then, say I, all your ancient and modern instances are far below him: all your warriors and statesmen are but poor pretenders compared to him, they have retired like rich shopkeepers, to live on the interest of their fortune, which is fame; while he, deprived of all the accessories which gave him rank, place, and power, must seek within his own resources for all the future springs of his pleasure, and be satisfied to stand spectator of the game, where he was once the principal player. A most admirable specimen of this philosophy was presented by our new passenger, who, as he lounged against the binnacle, and took a deliberate survey of his fellow-travellers, seemed the very ideal of unbroken ease and undisturbed enjoyment: he knew he was ruined; he knew he had neither house in town, or country; neither a steed, nor a yacht, nor a preserve; he was fully aware, that Storr and Mortimer, who would have given him a mountain of silver but yesterday, would not trust him with a mustard-pot today; that even the “legs” would laugh at him if he offered the odds on the Derby; and yet if you were bound on oath to select the happiest fellow on board, by the testimony of your eyes, the choice would not have taken you five minutes. His attitude was ease itself: his legs slightly crossed, perhaps the better to exhibit a very well-rounded instep, which shone forth in all the splendour of French varnish: his travelling cap jauntily thrown on one side, so as to display to better advantage his perfumed locks, that floated in a graceful manner somewhat lengthily on his neck; the shawl around his neck had so much of negligence, as to show that the splendid enamel pin that fastened it, was a thing of little moment to the wearer: all were in keeping with the *nonchalant* ease, and self-satisfaction of his look, as with half-drooping lids he surveyed the deck, caressing with his jewelled fingers the silky line of his moustache, and evidently enjoying in his inmost soul the triumphant scene of conquest his very appearance excited. Indeed, a less practised observer than himself could not fail to remark the unequivocal evidences the lady portion of the community bore to his success: the old ones looked boldly at him with that fearless intrepidity that characterizes conscious security – their property was insured, and they cared not how near the fire came to them; the very young participated in the sentiment from an opposite reason – theirs was the unconsciousness of danger; but there was a middle term, what Balzac calls, “*la femme de trente ans*,” and she either looked over the bulwarks, or at the funnel, or on her book, any where in short but at our friend, who appeared to watch this studied denial on her part, with the same kind of enjoyment the captain of a frigate would contemplate the destruction his broadsides were making on his enemy's rigging – and perhaps the latter never deemed his conquest more assured by the hauling down of he enemy's colours, than did the “Honourable Jack,” when a letdown veil convinced him that the lady could bear no more.

I should like to have watched the proceedings on deck, where, although no acquaintance had yet been formed, the indications of such were clearly visible: the Alderman's daughters evincing a decided preference for walking on that side where Jack was standing, he studiously performing some small act of courtesy from time to time as they passed, removing a seat, kicking any small fragment of rope, &c.; but the motion of the packet began to advertize me that note-taking was at an end, and the best thing I could do would be to compose myself.

“What's the number, sir?” said the steward, as I staggered down the companion.

“I have got no berth,” said I mournfully.

“A dark horse, not placed,” said the Honourable Jack, smiling pleasantly as he looked after me, while I threw myself on a sofa, and cursed the sea.

CHAPTER II. THE BOAR'S HEAD AT ROTTERDAM

If the noise and bustle which attend a wedding, like trumpets in a battle, are intended as provisions against reflection, so firmly do I feel, the tortures of sea-sickness, are meant as antagonists to all the terrors of drowning, and all the horrors of shipwreck.

Let him who has felt the agonies of that internal earthquake which the “pitch and toss” motion of a ship communicates – who knows what it is, to have his diaphragm vibrating between his ribs and the back of his throat, confess, how little to him was all the confusion which he listened to, over head! how poor the interest he took in the welfare of the craft wherein he was “only a lodger,” and how narrowed were all his sympathies within the small circle of bottled porter, and brandy and water, the steward’s infallibles in suffering.

I lay in my narrow crib, moody pondering over these things, now wondering within myself, what charms of travel could recompense such agonies as these; now muttering a curse, “not loud, but deep,” on the heavy gentleman, whose ponderous tread on the quarter-deck seemed to promenade up and down the surface of my own pericranium: the greasy steward, the jolly captain, the brown-faced, black-whiskered king’s messenger, who snored away on the sofa, all came in for a share of my maledictions, and took out my cares, in curses upon the whole party. Meanwhile I could distinguish, amid the other sounds, the elastic tread of certain light feet that pattered upon the quarter-deck; and I could not mistake the assured footstep which accompanied them, nor did I need the happy roar of laughter that mixed with the noise, to satisfy myself that the “Honourable Jack” was then cultivating the Alderman’s daughters, discoursing most eloquently upon the fascinations of those exclusive circles wherein he was wont to move, and explaining, on the clearest principles, what a frightful chasm his absence must create in the London world – how deplorably flat would the season go off, where he was no actor – and wondering, who, among the aspirants of high ambition, would venture to assume his line of character, and supply his place, either on the turf, or at the table.

But at length the stage of semi-stupor came over me; the noises became commixed in my head, and I lost all consciousness so completely, that, whether from brandy or sickness, I fancied I saw the steward flirting with the ladies, and the “Honourable Jack” skipping about with a white apron, uncorking porter bottles, and changing sixpences.

The same effect which the announcement of dinner produces on the stiff party in the drawing-room, is caused by the information of being alongside the quay, to the passengers of a packet. It is true the procession is not so formal in the latter as in the former case: the turbaned dowagers that take the lead in one, would, more than probably, be last in the other: but what is lost in decorum, is more than made up in hilarity. What hunting for carpet-bags! what opening and shutting of lockers! what researches into portmanteaus, to extricate certain seizable commodities, and stow them away upon the person of the owner, till at last he becomes an impersonation of smuggling, with lace in his boots, silk stockings in his hat, brandy under his waistcoat, and jewelry in the folds of his cravat. There is not an item in the tariff that might not be demonstrated in his anatomy: from his shoes to his night-cap, he is a living sarcasm upon the revenue. And, after all, what is the searching scrutiny of your Quarterly Reviewer, to the all-penetrating eye of an excise officer? He seems to look into the whole contents, of your wardrobe before you have unlocked the trunk “warranted solid leather,” and with a glance appears to distinguish the true man from the knave, knowing, as if by intuition, the precise number of cambric handkerchiefs that befits your condition in life, and whether you have transgressed the bounds of your station, by a single bottle.

What admirable training for a novelist would a year or two spent in such duties afford; what singular views of life; what strange people must he see; how much of narrative would even the narrow limits of a hat-box present to him; and how naturally would a story spring from the rosy-cheeked

old gentleman, paying his duty upon a “*pâté de fois-gras*” to his pretty daughter, endeavouring, by a smile, to diminish the tariff on her French bonnet, and actually captivate a custom-house officer by the charms of her “*robe a la Victorine*.”

The French “*douaniers*,” are droll fellows, and are the only ones I have ever met who descend from the important gravity of their profession, and venture upon a joke. I shall never forget entering Valenciennes late one night, with a large “Diligence” party, among which was a corpulent countryman of my own, making his first continental tour. It was in those days when a passport presented a written portrait of the bearer; when the shape of your nose, the colour of your hair, the cut of your beard, and the angle of incidence of your eyebrow, were all noted down and commented on, and a general summing up of the expression of your features, collectively, appended to the whole; and you went forth to the-world with an air “mild,” or “military;” “feeble,” “fascinating,” or “ferocious,” exactly as the foreign office deemed it. It was in those days, I say, when, on entering the fortress of Valenciennes, the door of the “Diligence” was rudely thrown open, and, by the dim nicker of a lamp, we beheld a moustached, stern-looking fellow, who rudely demanded our passports. My fat companion, suddenly awakened from his sleep, searched his various pockets with all the trepidation of a new traveller, and at length, produced his credentials, which he handed, with a polite bow, to the official. Whatever the nature of the description I cannot say, but it certainly produced the most striking effect on the passport officers, who laughed loud and long as they read it over.

“*Descendez, Monsieur*” said the chief of the party, in a tone of stern command.

“What does he say?” said the traveller, in a very decided western accent.

“You must get out, sir” said he.

“Tare-an-ages,” said Mr. Moriarty, “what’s wrong?”

After considerable squeezing, for he weighed about twenty stone, he disengaged himself from the body of the “Diligence,” and stood erect upon the ground. A second lantern was now produced, and while one of the officers stood on either side of him, with a light beside his face, a third read out the clauses of the passport, and compared the description with the original. Happily, Mr. Moriarty’s ignorance of French saved him from the penalty of listening to the comments which were passed upon his “*nez retroussé*” “*bouche ouverte*” &c.; but what was his surprise when, producing some yards of tape, they proceeded to measure him round the body, comparing the number of inches his circumference made, with the passport.

“*Quatre-vingt-dix pouces*,” said the measurer, looking at the document, “*Il en a plus*,” added he, rudely.

“What is he saying, sir, if I might be so bowld?” said Mr. Moriarty to me, imploringly.

“You measure more than is set down in your passport,” said I, endeavouring to suppress my laughter.

“Oh, murther! that dish of boiled beef and beet-root will be the ruin of me. Tell them, sir, I was like a greyhound before supper.”

As he said this, he held in his breath, and endeavoured, with all his might, to diminish his size; while the Frenchmen, as if anxious to strain a point in his favour, tightened the cord round him, till he almost became black in the face.

“*C’est ça*” said one of the officers, smiling blandly as he took off his hat; “*Monsieur peut continuer sa route*.”

“All right,” said I, “you may come in, Mr. Moriarty.”

“‘Tis civil people I always heard they wor,” said he; “but it’s a sthrange country where it’s against the laws to grow fatter.”

I like Holland; – it is the antipodes of France. No one is ever in a hurry here. Life moves on in a slow majestic stream, a little muddy and stagnant, perhaps, like one of their own canals, but you see no waves, no breakers – not an eddy, nor even a froth-bubble breaks the surface. Even a Dutch child, as he steals along to school, smoking his short pipe, has a mock air of thought about him. The

great fat horses, that wag along, trailing behind them some petty, insignificant truck, loaded with a little cask, not bigger than a life-guardsman's helmet, look as though Erasmus was performing duty as a quadruped, and walking about his own native city in harness. It must be a glorious country to be born in. No one is ever in a passion; and as to honesty, who has energy enough to turn robber? The eloquence, which in other lands might wind a man from his allegiance, would be tried in vain here. Ten minutes' talking would set any audience asleep, from Zetland to Antwerp. Smoking, beer-drinking, stupifying, and domino-playing, go on, in summer, before, in winter, within, the *cafés*, and every broad flat face that you look upon, with its watery eyes and muddy complexion, seems like a coloured chart of the country that gave it birth.

How all the industry, that has enriched them, is ever performed – how all the cleanliness, for which their houses are conspicuous, is ever effected, no one can tell. Who ever saw a Dutchman labour? Every thing in Holland seems typified by one of their own drawbridges, which rises as a boat approaches, by invisible agency, and then remains patiently aloft, till a sufficiency of passengers arrives to restore it to its place, and Dutch gravity seems the grand centre of all prosperity.

When, therefore, my fellow-passengers stormed and swore because they were not permitted to land their luggage; when they heard that until nine o'clock the following morning, no one would be astir to examine it; and that the Rhine steamer sailed at eight, and would not sail again for three days more, and cursed the louder thereat; I chuckled to myself that I was going no where, that I cared not how long I waited, nor where, and began to believe that something of very exalted philosophy must have been infused into my nature without my ever being aware of it.

For twenty minutes and more, Sir Peter abused the Dutch; he called them hard names in English, and some very strong epithets in bad French. Meanwhile, his courier busied himself in preparations for departure, and the "Honourable Jack" undertook to shawl the young ladies, a performance which, whether from the darkness of the night, or the intricacy of the muffling, took a most unmerciful time to accomplish.

"We shall never find the hotel at this hour," said Sir Peter, angrily.

"The house will certainly be closed," chimed in the young ladies.

"Take your five to two on the double event," replied Jack, slapping the Alderman on the shoulder, and preparing to book the wager.

I did not wait to see it accepted, but stepped over the side, and trudged along the "Boomjes," that long quay, with its tall elm trees, under whose shade many a burgomaster has strolled at eve, musing over the profits which his last venture from Batavia was to realize; and then, having crossed the narrow bridge at the end, I traversed the Erasmus Plata, and rang boldly, as an old acquaintance has a right to do, at the closed door of the "Schwein Kopf." My summons was not long unanswered, and following the many-petticoated handmaiden along the well-sanded passage, I asked, "Is the Holbein chamber unoccupied?" while I drew forth a florin from my purse.

"Ah, Mynheer knows it then," said she, smiling. "It is at your service. We have had no travellers for some days past, and you are aware, that, except greatly crowded, we never open it."

This I knew well, and having assured her that I was an *habitué* of the Schwein Kopf, in times long past, I persuaded her to fetch some dry wood and make me a cheerful fire, which, with a "krug of schiedam" and some "canastre," made me as happy as a king.

The "Holbeiner Kammer" owes its name, and any repute that it enjoys, to a strange, quaint portrait, of that master seated at a fire, with a fair headed, handsome child, sitting cross-legged on the hearth before him. A certain half resemblance seems to run through both faces, although the age and colouring are so different. But the same contemplative expression, the deep-set eye, the massive forehead and pointed chin, are to be seen in the child, as in the man.

This was Holbein and his nephew, Franz von Holbein, who in after years served with distinction in the army of Louis Quatorze. The background of the picture represents a room exactly like the chamber – a few highly-carved oak chairs, the Utrecht velvet-backs glowing with their scarlet

brilliancy, an old-fashioned Flemish bed, with groups of angels, neptunes, bacchanals, and dolphins, all mixed up confusedly in quaint carving; and a massive frame to a very small looking-glass, which hung in a leaning attitude over the fire-place, and made me think, as I gazed at it, that the plane of the room was on an angle of sixty-five, and that the least shove would send me clean into the stove.

“Mynheer wants nothing?” said the *Vrouw* with a courtesy.

“Nothing,” said I, with my most polite bow.

“Good night, then,” said she; “*schlaf wohl*, and don’t mind the ghost.”

“Ah, I know him of old,” replied I, striking the table three times with my cane. The woman, whose voice the moment before was in a tone of jest, suddenly grew pale, and, as she crossed herself devoutly, muttered – “*Nein! Nein!* don’t do that;” and shutting the door, hurried down stairs with all the speed she could muster.

I was in no hurry to bed, however. The “krug” was racy, the “canastre” excellent: so, placing the light where it should fall with good effect on the Holbein, I stretched out my legs to the blaze; and, as I looked upon the canvas, began to muse over the story with which it was associated, and which I may as well jot down here, for memory’s sake.

Frank Holbein, having more ambition and less industry than the rest of his family, resolved to seek his fortune; and early in the September of the year 1681, he found himself wandering in the streets of Paris, without a *liard* in his pocket, or any prospects of earning one. He was a fine-looking, handsome youth, of some eighteen or twenty years, with a sharp, piercing look, and that Spanish cast of face for which so many Dutch families are remarkable. He sat down, weary and hungry, on one of the benches of the Pont de la Cité, and looked about him wistfully, to see what piece of fortune might come to his succour. A loud shout, and the noise of people flying in every direction, attracted him. He jumped up, and saw persons running hither and thither to escape from a calèche, which a pair of runaway horses were tearing along at a frightful rate. Frank blessed himself, threw off his cloak, pressed his cap firmly upon his brow, and dashed forward. The affrighted animals slackened their speed as he stood before them, and endeavoured to pass by; but he sprang to their heads, and with one vigorous plunge, grasped the bridle; but though he held on manfully, they continued their way; and, notwithstanding his every effort, their mad speed scarcely felt his weight, as he was dragged along beside them. With one tremendous effort, however, he wrested the near horse’s head from the pole, and, thus compelling him to cross his fore-legs, the animal tripped, and came headlong to the ground with a smash, that sent poor Frank spinning some twenty yards before them. Frank soon got up again; and though his forehead was bleeding, and his hand severely cut, his greatest grief was, his torn doublet, which, threadbare before, now hung around him in ribbons.

“It was you who stopped them? – are you hurt?” said a tall, handsome man, plainly but well dressed, and in whose face the trace of agitation was clearly marked.

“Yes, sir,” said Frank, bowing respectfully. “I did it; and see how my poor doublet has suffered!”

“Nothing worse than that?” said the other, smiling blandly. “Well, well, that is not of so much moment. Take this,” said he, handing him his purse; “buy yourself a new doublet, and wait on me to-morrow by eleven.”

With these words the stranger disappeared in a calèche, which seemed to arrive at the moment, leaving Frank in a state of wonderment at the whole adventure.

“How droll he should never have told me where he lives!” said he, aloud, as the bystanders crowded about him, and showered questions upon him.

“It is Monsieur le Ministre, man – M. de Louvois himself, whose life you’ve saved. Your fortune is made for ever.”

The speech was a true one. Before three months from that eventful day, M. de Louvois, who had observed and noted down certain traits of acuteness in Frank’s character, sent for him to his *bureau*.

“Holbein,” said he, “I have seldom been deceived in my opinion of men – you can be secret, I think.”

Frank placed his hand upon his breast, and bowed in silence.

“Take the dress you will find on that chair: a carriage is now ready, waiting in the court-yard – get into it, and set out for Bâle. On your arrival there, which will be – mark me well – about eight o’clock on the morning of Thursday, you’ll leave the carriage, and send it into the town, while you must station yourself on the bridge over the Rhine, and take an exact note of everything that occurs, and every one that passes, till the cathedral clock strikes three. Then, the calèche will be in readiness for your return; and lose not a moment in repairing to Paris.”

It was an hour beyond midnight, in the early part of the following week, that a calèche, travel-stained and dirty, drove into the court of the minister’s hotel, and five minutes after, Frank, wearied and exhausted, was ushered into M. de Louvois’ presence.

“Well, Monsieur,” said he impatiently, “what have you seen?”

“This, may it please your Excellency,” said Frank, trembling, “is a note of it; but I am ashamed that so trivial an account – ”

“Let us see – let us see,” said the minister.

“In good truth, I dare scarcely venture to read such a puerile detail.”

“Read it at once, Monsieur,” was the stern command.

Frank’s face became deep-red with shame, as he began thus: —

“Nine o’clock. – I see an ass coming along, with a child leading him. The ass is blind of one eye. – A fat German sits on the balcony, and is spitting into the Rhine – ”

“Ten. – A livery servant from Bâle rides by, with a basket. An old peasant in a yellow doublet – ”

“Ah, what of him?”

“Nothing remarkable, save that he leans over the rails, and strikes three blows with his stick upon them.

“Enough, enough,” said M. de Louvois, gaily. “I must awake the king at once.”

The minister disappeared, leaving Frank in a state of bewilderment. In less than a quarter of an hour he entered the chamber, his face covered with smiles.

“Monsieur,” said he, “you have rendered his majesty good service. Here is your brevet of colonel. – The king has this instant signed it.”

In eight days after, was the news known in Paris, that Strasburg, then invested by the French army, had capitulated, and been reunited to the kingdom. The three strokes of the cane being the signal, which announced the success of the secret negotiation between the ministers of Louis XIV., and the magistrates of Strasburg.

This, was the Franz Holbein of the picture, and if the three *coups de bâton* are not attributable to his ghost, I can only say, I am totally at a loss to say where they should be charged; for my own part, I ought to add, I never heard them, conduct which I take it was the more ungracious on the ghost’s part, as I finished the schiedam, and passed my night on the hearth rug, leaving the feather-bed with its down coverlet quite at master Frank’s disposal.

Although the “Schwein Kopf” stands in one of the most prominent squares of Rotterdam, and nearly opposite the statue of Erasmus, it is comparatively little known to English travellers. The fashionable hotels which are near the quay of landing, anticipate the claims of this more primitive house; and yet, to any one desirous of observing the ordinary routine of a Dutch family, it is well worth a visit. The buxom Vrows who trudge about with short but voluminous petticoats, their heads ornamented by those gold or silver circlets, which no Dutch peasant seems ever to want, are exactly the very types of what you see in an Ostade or a Teniers. The very host himself, old Hoogendorp, is a study; scarcely five feet in height, he might measure nearly nine, in circumference, and in case of emergency could be used as a sluiceway, should any thing happen to the dykes. He was never to be seen before one o’clock in the day, but exactly as the clock tolled that hour, the massive soup-tureen, announcing the commencement of the *table d’hôte*, was borne in state before him, while with “solemn step and slow,” ladle in hand, and napkin round his neck, he followed after. His conduct at

table was a fine specimen of Dutch independence of character – he never thought of bestowing those petty attentions which might cultivate the good-will of his guests; he spoke little, he smiled never; a short nod of recognition bestowed upon a townsman, was about the extent of royal favour he was ever known to confer; or occasionally, when any remark made near him seemed to excite his approbation, a significant grunt of approval ratified the wisdom of the speech, and made a Solon of the speaker. His spoon descended into the soup, and emerged therefrom with the ponderous regularity of a crane into the hold of a ship. Every function of the table was performed with an unbroken monotony, and never, in the course of his forty years' sovereignty, was he known to distribute an undue quantity of fat, or an unseemly proportion of beet-root sauce, to any one guest in preference to another.

The *table d'hôte*, which began at one, concluded a little before three, during which time our host, when not helping others, was busily occupied in helping himself, and it was truly amazing to witness the steady perseverance with which he waded through every dish, making himself master in all its details of every portion of the dinner, from the greasy soup, to that *acmé* of Dutch epicurism – Utrecht cheese. About a quarter before three, the long dinner drew to its conclusion. Many of the guests, indeed, had disappeared long before that time, and were deep in all their wonted occupations of timber, tobacco, and train-oil. A few, however, lingered on to the last. A burly major of infantry, who, unbuttoning his undress frock, towards the close of the feast, would sit smoking, and sipping his coffee, as if unwilling to desert the field; a grave, long-haired professor; and, perhaps, an officer of the excise, waiting for the re-opening of the custom-house, would be the extent of the company. But even these dropped off at last, and, with a deep bow to mine host, passed away to their homes, or their haunts. Meanwhile, the waiters hurried hither and thither, the cloth was removed, in its place a fresh one was spread, and all the preliminaries for a new dinner were set about with the same activity as before. The napkins inclosed in their little horn cases, the decanters of beer, the small dishes of preserved fruit, without which no Dutchman dines, were all set forth, and the host, without stirring from his seat, sat watching the preparations with calm complacency. Were you to note him narrowly, you could perceive that his eyes alternately opened and shut, as if relieving guard, save which, he gave no other sign of life, nor even at last, when the mighty stroke of three rang out from the cathedral, and the hurrying sound of many feet proclaimed the arrival of the guests of the second table, did he ever exhibit the slightest show or mark of attention, but sat calm, and still, and motionless.

For the next two hours, it was merely a repetition of the performance which preceded it, in which the host's part was played with untiring energy, and all the items of soup, fish, *bouilli*, fowl, pork, and vegetables, had not to complain of any inattention to their merits, or any undue preference for their predecessors, of an hour before. If the traveller was astonished at his appetite during the first table, what would he say to his feats at the second? As for myself, I honestly confess I thought that some harlequin trick was concerned, and that mine host of the "Schwein Kopf" was not a real man, but some mechanical contrivance by which, with a trapdoor below him, a certain portion of the dinner was conveyed to the apartments beneath. I lived, however, to discover my error; and after four visits to Rotterdam, was at length so far distinguished as actually to receive an invitation to pass an evening with "Mynheer" in his own private den, which, I need scarcely say, I gladly accepted.

I have a note of that evening some where – ay, here it is – "Mynheer is waiting supper," said a waiter to me, as I sat smoking my cigar, one calm evening in autumn, in the porch of the "Schwein Kopf." I followed the man through a long passage, which, leading to the kitchen, emerged on the opposite side, and conducted us through a little garden to a small summer-house. The building, which was of wood, was painted in gaudy stripes of red, blue, and yellow, and made in some sort to resemble those Chinese pagodas, we see upon a saucer. Its situation was conceived in the most perfect Dutch taste – one side, flanked by the little garden of which I have spoken, displayed a rich bed of tulips and ranunculuses, in all the gorgeous luxuriance of perfect culture – it was a mass of blended beauty, and perfume, superior to any thing I have ever witnessed. On the other flank, lay the sluggish, green-coated surface, of a Dutch canal, from which rose the noxious vapours of a hot evening, and the

harsh croakings of ten thousand frogs, “fat, gorbellied knaves,” the very burgomasters of their race, who squatted along the banks, and who, except for the want of pipes, might have been mistaken for small Dutchmen enjoying an evening’s promenade. This building was denominated “Lust und Rust,” which, in letters of gold, was displayed on something resembling a sign-board, above the door, and intimated to the traveller, that the temple was dedicated to pleasure, and contentment. To a Dutchman, however, the sight of the portly figure, who sat smoking at the open window, was a far more intelligible illustration of the objects of the building, than any lettered inscription. Mynheer Hoogendorp, with his long Dutch pipe, and tall flagon, with its shining brass lid, looked the concentrated essence of a Hollander, and might have been hung out, as a sign of the country, from the steeple of Haarlem.

The interior was in perfect keeping with the designation of the building: every appliance that could suggest ease, if not sleep, was there; the chairs were deep, plethoric-looking, Dutch chairs, that seemed as if they had led a sedentary life, and throve upon it; the table was a short, thick-legged one, of dark oak, whose polished surface reflected the tall brass cups, and the ample features of Mynheer, and seemed to hob-nob with him when he lifted the capacious vessel to his lips; the walls were decorated with quaint pipes, whose large porcelain bowls bespoke them of home origin; and here and there a sea-fight, with a Dutch three-decker hurling destruction on the enemy. But the genius of the place was its owner, who, in a low fur cap and slippers, whose shape and size might have drawn tears of envy from the Ballast Board, sat gazing upon the canal in a state of Dutch rapture, very like apoplexy. He motioned me to a chair without speaking – he directed me to a pipe, by a long whiff of smoke from his own – he grunted out a welcome, and then, as if overcome by such unaccustomed exertion, he lay back in his chair, and sighed deeply.

We smoked till the sun went down, and a thicker haze, rising from the stagnant ditch, joined with the tobacco vapour, made an atmosphere, like mud reduced to gas. Through the mist, I saw a vision of soup tureens, hot meat, and smoking vegetables. I beheld as though Mynheer moved among the condiments, and I have a faint dreamy recollection of his performing some feat before me; but whether it was carving, or the sword exercise, I won’t be positive.

Now, though the schiedam was strong, a spell was upon me, and I could not speak; the great green eyes that glared on me through the haze, seemed to chill my very soul; and I drank, out of desperation, the deeper.

As the evening wore on, I waxed bolder: I had looked upon the Dutchman so long, that my awe of him began to subside, and I at last grew bold enough to address him.

I remember well, it was pretty much with that kind of energy, that semi-desperation, with which a man nerves himself to accost a spectre, that I ventured on addressing him: how or in what terms I did it, heaven knows! Some trite every-day observation about his great knowledge of life – his wonderful experience of the world, was all I could muster; and when I had made it, the sound of my own voice terrified me so much, that I finished the can at a draught, to reanimate my courage.

“Ja! Ja!” said Van Hoogendorp, in a cadence as solemn as the bell of the cathedral; “I have seen many strange things; I remember what few men living can remember: I mind well the time when the ‘Hollandische Vrow’ made her first voyage from Batavia, and brought back a paroquet for the burgomaster’s wife; the great trees upon the Boomjes were but saplings when I was a boy; they were not thicker than my waist;” here he looked down upon himself with as much complacency as though he were a sylph. “Ach Gott! they were brave times, schiedam cost only half a guilder the krug.”

I waited in hopes he would continue, but the glorious retrospect he had evoked, seemed to occupy all his thoughts, and he smoked away without ceasing.

“You remember the Austrians, then?” said I, by way of drawing him on.

“They were dogs!” said he, spitting out.

“Ah!” said I, “the French were better then?”

“Wolves!” ejaculated he, after glowing on me fearfully.

There was a long pause after this; I perceived that I had taken a wrong path to lead him into conversation, and he was too deeply overcome with indignation to speak. During this time, however, his anger took a thirsty form, and he swigged away at the schiedam most manfully.

The effect of his libations became at last evident, his great green stagnant eyes flashed and flared, his wide nostrils swelled and contracted, and his breathing became short and thick, like the convulsive sobs of a steam-engine when they open and shut the valves alternately; I watched these indications for some time, wondering what they might portend, when at length he withdrew his pipe from his mouth, and with such a tone of voice as he might have used, if confessing a bloody and atrocious murder, he said —

“I will tell you a story.”

Had the great stone figure of Erasmus beckoned to me across the marketplace, and asked me the news “on change,” I could not have been more amazed; and not venturing on the slightest interruption, I refilled my pipe, and nodded sententiously across the table, while he thus began.

CHAPTER III. VAN HOOGENDORP'S TALE

It was in the winter of the year 1806, the first week of December, the frost was setting in, and I resolved to pay a visit to my brother, whom I hadn't seen for forty years; he was burgomaster of Antwerp. It is a long voyage and a perilous one, but with the protection of Providence, our provisions held out, and on the fourth night after we sailed, a violent shock shook the vessel from stem to stern, and we found ourselves against the quay of Antwerp.

When I reached my brother's house I found him in bed, sick; the doctors said it was a dropsy, I don't know how that might be, for he drank more gin than any man in Holland, and hated water all his life. We were twins, but no one would have thought so, I looked so thin and meagre beside him.

Well, since I was there, I resolved to see the sights of the town; and the next morning, after breakfast, I set out by myself, and wandered about till evening. Now there were many things to be seen – very strange things too; the noise, and the din, and the bustle, addled and confused me; the people were running here and there, shouting as if they were mad, and there were great flags hanging out of the windows, and drums beating, and, stranger than all, I saw little soldiers with red breeches and red shoulder-knots, running about like monkeys.

“What is all this?” said I to a man near me.

“Methinks,” said he, “the burgomaster himself might well know what it is.”

“I am not the burgomaster,” quoth I, “I am his brother, and only came from Rotterdam yesterday.”

“Ah! then,” said another, with a strange grin, “you didn't know these preparations were meant to welcome your arrival.”

“No,” said I; “but they are very fine, and if there were not so much noise, I would like them well.”

And so, I sauntered on till I came to the great Platz, opposite the cathedral – that was a fine place – and there was a large man carved in cheese over one door, very wonderful to see; and there was a big fish, all gilt, where they sold herrings; but, in the town-hall there seemed something more than usual going on, for great crowds were there, and dragoons were galloping in and galloping out, and all was confusion.

“What's this?” said I. “Are the dykes open?”

But not one would mind me; and then suddenly I heard some one call out my name.

“Where is Van Hoogendorp?” said one; and then another cried, “Where is Van Hoogendorp?”

“Here am I,” said I; and the same moment two officers, covered with gold lace, came through the crowd, and took me by the arms.

“Come along with us, Monsieur de Hoogendorp,” said they, in French; “there is not a moment to lose; we have been looking for you every where.”

Now, though I understand that tongue, I cannot speak it myself, so I only said “Ja, Ja,” and followed them.

They led me up an oak stair, and through three or four large rooms, crowded with officers in fine uniforms, who all bowed as I passed, and some one went before us, calling out in a loud voice, “Monsieur de Hoogendorp!”

“This is too much honour,” said I, “far too much;” but as I spoke in Dutch, no one minded me. Suddenly, however, the wide folding-doors were flung open, and we were ushered into a large hall, where, although above a hundred people were assembled, you might have heard a pin drop; the few who spoke at all, did so, only in whispers.

“Monsieur de Hoogendorp!” shouted the man again.

“For shame,” said I; “don't disturb the company;” and I thought some of them laughed, but he only bawled the louder, “Monsieur de Hoogendorp!”

“Let him approach,” said a quick, sharp voice, from the fireplace.

“Ah!” thought I, “they are going to read me an address. I trust it may be in Dutch.”

They led me along in silence to the fire, before which, with his back turned towards it, stood a short man, with a sallow, stern countenance, and a great, broad forehead, his hair combed straight over it. He wore a green coat with white facings, and over that a grey surtout with fur. I am particular about all this, because this little man was a person of consequence.

“You are late, Monsieur de Hoogendorp,” said he, in French; “it is half-past four;” and so saying, he pulled out his watch, and held it up before me.

“Ja!” said I, taking out my own, “we are just the same time.”

At this he stamped upon the ground, and said something I thought was a curse.

“Where are the *Echevins*, monsieur?” said he.

“God knows,” said I; “most probably at dinner.”

“*Ventrebleu!*—”

“Don’t swear,” said I. “If I had you in Rotterdam, I’d fine you two guilders.”

“What does he say?” while his eyes flashed fire. “Tell *La grande morue*, to speak French.”

“Tell him I am not a cod fish,” said I.

“Who speaks Dutch here?” said he. “General de Ritter, ask him where are the *Echevins*, or, is the man a fool?”

“I have heard,” said the General, bowing obsequiously – “I have heard, your Majesty, that he is little better.”

“*Tonnerre de Dieu!*” said he; “and this is their chief magistrate! Maret, you must look to this to-morrow; and as it grows late now, let us see the citadel at once; he can show us the way thither, I suppose”; and with this he moved forward, followed by the rest, among whom I found myself hurried along, no one any longer paying me the slightest respect, or attention.

“To the citadel,” said one.

“To the citadel,” cried another.

“Come, Hoogendorp, lead the way,” cried several together; and so they pushed me to the front, and, notwithstanding all I said, that I did not know the citadel, from the Dome Church, they would listen to nothing, but only called the louder, “Step out, old *Grande culotte*,” and hurried me down the street, at the pace of a boar-hunt.

“Lead on,” cried one. “To the front,” said another. “Step out,” roared three or four together; and I found myself at the head of the procession, without the power to explain or confess my ignorance.

“As sure as my name is Peter van Hoogendorp, I’ll give you all a devil’s dance,” said I to myself; and with that, I grasped my staff, and set out as fast as I was able. Down, one narrow street we went, and up, another; sometimes we got into a *cul de sac*, where there was no exit, and had to turn back again; another time, we would ascend a huge flight of steps, and come plump into a tanner’s yard, or a place where they were curing fish, and so, we blundered on, till there wasn’t a blind alley, nor crooked lane, of Antwerp, that we didn’t wade through, and I was becoming foot-sore, and tired myself, with the exertion.

All this time the Emperor – for it was Napoleon – took no note of where we were going; he was too busy conversing with old General de Ritter, to mind anything else. At last, after traversing a long narrow street, we came down upon an arm of the Scheldt, and so overcome was I then, that I resolved I would go no further without a smoke, and I sat myself down on a butter firkin, and took out my pipe, and proceeded to strike a light with my flint. A titter of laughter from the officers now attracted the Emperor’s attention, and he stopped short, and stared at me as if I had been some wonderful beast.

“What is this?” said he. “Why don’t you move forward?”

“It’s impossible,” replied I, “I never walked so far, since I was born.”

“Where is the citadel?” cried he in a passion.

“In the devil’s keeping,” said I, “or we should have seen it long ago.”

“That must be it yonder,” said an aide-de-camp, pointing to a green, grassy eminence, at the other side of the Scheldt.

The Emperor took the telescope from his hand, and looked through it steadily for a couple of minutes.

“Yes,” said he, “that’s it: but why have we come all this round, the road lay yonder.”

“Ja!” said I, “so it did.”

“*Ventre bleu!*” roared he, while he stamped his foot upon the ground, “*ce gaillard se moque de nous.*”

“Ja!” said I again, without well knowing why.

“The citadel is there! It is yonder!” cried he, pointing with his finger.

“Ja!” said I once more.

“*En avant!* then,” shouted he, as he motioned me to descend the flight of steps which led down to the Scheldt; “if this be the road you take, *par Saint Denis!* you shall go first.”

Now the frost, as I have said, had only set in a few days before, and the ice on the Scheldt would scarcely have borne the weight of a drummer-boy; so I remonstrated at once, at first in Dutch, and then in French, as well as I was able, but nobody would mind me. I then endeavoured to show the danger his Majesty himself would incur; but they only laughed at this, and cried —

“*En avant, en avant toujours,*” and before I had time for another word, there was a corporal’s guard behind me, with fixed bayonets; the word “march” was given, and out I stepped.

I tried to say a prayer, but I could think of nothing but curses upon the fiends, whose shouts of laughter behind put all my piety to flight. When I came to the bottom step I turned round, and, putting my hand to my sides, endeavoured by signs to move their pity; but they only screamed the louder at this, and at a signal from an officer, a fellow touched me with a bayonet.

“That was an awful moment,” said old Hoogendorp, stopping short in his narrative, and seizing the can, which for half an hour he had not tasted. “I think I see the river before me still, with its flakes of ice, some thick and some thin, riding on each other; some whirling along in the rapid current of the stream; some lying like islands where the water was sluggish. I turned round, and I clenched my fist, and I shook it in the Emperor’s face, and I swore by the bones of the Stadtholder, that if I had but one grasp of his hand, I’d not perform that dance without a partner. Here I stood,” quoth he, “and the Scheldt might be, as it were, there. I lifted my foot thus, and came down upon a large piece of floating ice, which, the moment I touched it, slipped away, and shot out into the stream.”

At this moment Mynheer, who had been dramatizing this portion of his adventure, came down upon the waxed floor, with a plump, that shook the pagoda to its centre, while I, who had during the narrative been working double tides at the schiedam, was so interested at the catastrophe, that I thought he was really in the Scheldt, in the situation he was describing. The instincts of humanity were, I am proud to say, stronger in me than those of reason. I kicked off my shoes, threw away my coat, and plunged boldly after him. I remember well, catching him by the throat, and I remember too, feeling, what a dreadful thing was the grip of a drowning man; for both his hands were on my neck, and he squeezed me fearfully. Of what happened after, the waiters, or the Humane Society may know something: I only can tell, that I kept my bed, for four days, and when I next descended to the *table d’hôte*, I saw a large patch of black sticking-plaster across the bridge of old Hoogendorp’s nose – and I never was a guest in “Lust und Rust” afterwards.

The loud clanking of the *table d’hôte* bell aroused me, as I lay dreaming of Frank Holbein and the yellow doublet. I dressed hastily and descended to the *saal*; everything was exactly as I left it ten years before; even to the cherry-wood pipe-stick that projected from Mynheer’s breeches-pocket, nothing was changed. The clatter of post-horses, and the heavy rattle of wheels drew me to the window, in time to see the Alderman’s carriage with four posters, roll past; a kiss of the hand was thrown me from the rumble. It was the “Honourable Jack” himself, who somehow, had won their favour, and was already installed, their travelling companion.

“It is odd enough,” thought I, as I arranged my napkin across my knee, “what success lies in a well-curved whisker – particularly if the wearer be a fool.”

CHAPTER IV. MEMS. AND MORALIZINGS

He who expects to find these “Loiterings” of mine of any service as a “Guide Book” to the Continent, or a “Voyager’s Manual,” will be sorely disappointed; as well might he endeavour to devise a suit of clothes from the patches of cloth scattered about a tailor’s shop, there might be, indeed, wherewithal to repair an old garment, or make a pen-wiper, but no more.

My fragments, too, of every shape and colour – sometimes showy and flaunting, sometimes a piece of hodden-grey or linsey-wolsey – are all I have to present to my friends; whatever they be in shade or texture, whether fine or homespun, rich in Tyrian dye, or stained with russet brown, I can only say for them, they are all my own – I have never “cabbaged from any man’s cloth.” And now to abjure decimals, and talk like a unit of humanity: if you would know the exact distance between any two towns abroad – the best mode of reaching your destination – the most comfortable hotel to stop at, when you have got there – who built the cathedral – who painted the altar-piece – who demolished the town in the year fifteen hundred and – fiddlestick – then take into your confidence the immortal John Murray, he can tell you all these, and much more; how many kreutzers make a groschen, how many groschen make a gulden, reconciling you to all the difficulties of travel by historic associations, memoirs of people who lived before the flood, and learned dissertations on the etymology of the name of the town, which all your ingenuity can’t teach you how to pronounce.

Well, it’s a fine thing, to be sure, when your carriage breaks down in a *chaussée*, with holes large enough to bury a dog – it’s a great satisfaction to know, that some ten thousand years previous, this place, that seems for all the world like a mountain torrent, was a Roman way. If the inn you sleep in, be infested with every annoyance to which inns are liable – all that long catalogue of evils, from boors to bugs – never mind, there’s sure to be some delightful story of a bloody murder connected with its annals, which will amply repay you for all your suffering.

And now, in sober seriousness, what literary fame equals John Murray’s? What portmanteau, with two shirts and a night-cap, hasn’t got one “Hand-book?” What Englishman issues forth at morn, without one beneath his arm? How naturally, does he compare the voluble statement of his *valet-de-place*, with the testimony of the book. Does he not carry it with him to church, where, if the sermon be slow, he can read a description of the building? Is it not his guide at *table-d’hôte*, teaching him, when to eat, and where to abstain? Does he look upon a building, a statue, a picture, an old cabinet, or a manuscript, with whose eyes does he see it? With John Murray’s to be sure! Let John tell him, this town is famous for its mushrooms, why he’ll eat them, till he becomes half a fungus himself; let him hear that it is celebrated for its lace manufactory, or its iron work – its painting on glass, or its wigs; straightway he buys up all he can find, only to discover, on reaching home, that a London shopkeeper can undersell him in the same articles, by about fifty per cent.

In all this, however, John Murray is not to blame; on the contrary, it only shows his headlong popularity, and the implicit trust, with which is received, every statement he makes. I cannot conceive anything more frightful than the sudden appearance of a work which should contradict everything in the “Hand-book,” and convince English people that John Murray was wrong. National bankruptcy, a defeat at sea, the loss of the colonies, might all be borne up against; but if we awoke one morning to hear that the “Continent” was no longer the Continent we have been accustomed to believe it, what a terrific shock it would prove. Like the worthy alderman of London, who, hearing that Robinson Crusoe was only a fiction, confessed he had lost one of the greatest pleasures of his existence; so, should we discover that we have been robbed of an innocent and delightful illusion, for which no reality of cheating waiters and cursing Frenchmen, would ever repay us.

Of the implicit faith with which John and his “Manual” are received, I remember well, witnessing a pleasant instance a few years back on the Rhine.

On the deck of the steamer, amid that strange commingled mass of Cockneys and Dutchmen, Flemish boors, German barons, bankers and blacklegs, money-changers, cheese-mongers, quacks, and consuls, sat an elderly couple, who, as far apart from the rest of the company as circumstances would admit, were industriously occupied in comparing the Continent with the "Hand-book," or, in other words, were endeavouring to see, if nature had dared to dissent from the true type, they held in their hands.

"Andernach, formerly. Andemachium," read the old lady aloud. "Do you see it, my dear?"

"Yes," said the old gentleman, jumping up on the bench, and adjusting his pocket telescope – "yes," said he, "go on. I have it."

"Andernach," resumed she, "'is an ancient Roman town, and has twelve towers –"

"How many did you say?"

"Twelve, my dear –"

"Wait a bit, wait a bit," said the old gentleman; while, with outstretched finger, he began to count them, one, two, three, four, and so on till he reached eleven, when he came to a dead stop, and then dropping his voice to a tone of tremulous anxiety, he whispered, "There's one a-missing."

"You don't say so!" said the lady, "dearee me, try it again."

The old gentleman shook his head, frowned ominously, and recommenced the score.

"You missed the little one near the lime-kiln," interrupted the lady.

"No!" said he abruptly, "that's six, there's seven – eight – nine – ten – eleven – and see, not another."

Upon this, the old lady mounted beside him, and the enumeration began in duet fashion, but try it how they would, let them take them up hill, or down hill, along the Rhine first, or commence inland, it was no use, they could not make the dozen of them.

"It is shameful!" said the gentleman.

"Very disgraceful, indeed!" echoed the lady, as she closed the book, and crossed her hands before her; while her partner's indignation took a warmer turn, and he paced the deck in a state of violent agitation.

It was clear that no idea of questioning John Murray's accuracy had ever crossed their minds. Far from it – the "Handbook" had told them honestly what they were to have at Ander-nach – "twelve towers built by the Romans," was part of the bill of fare; and some rascally Duke of Hesse something, had evidently absconded with a stray castle; they were cheated, "bamboozled, and bit," inveigled out of their mother-country under false pretences, and they "wouldn't stand it for no one," and so they went about complaining to every passenger, and endeavouring, with all their eloquence, to make a national thing of it, and, determined to represent the case to the minister, the moment they reached Frankfort. And now, as the *a propos* reminds me, what a devil of a life an English minister has, in any part of the Continent, frequented by his countrymen.

Let John Bull, from his ignorance of the country, or its language, involve himself in a scrape with the authorities – let him lose his passport or his purse – let him forget his penknife or his portmanteau; straightway he repairs to the ambassador, who, in his eyes, is a cross between Lord Aberdeen and a Bow-street officer. The minister's functions are indeed multifarious – now, investigating the advantages of an international treaty; now, detecting the whereabouts of a missing cotton umbrella; now, assigning the limits of a territory; now, giving instructions on the ceremony of presentation to court; now, estimating the fiscal relations of the navigation of a river; now, appraising the price of the bridge of a waiter's nose; as these pleasant and harmless pursuits, so popular in London, of breaking lamps, wrenching off knockers, and thrashing the police, when practised abroad, require explanation at the hands of the minister, who hesitates not to account for them as national predilections, like the taste for strong ale and underdone beef.

He is a proud man, indeed, who puts his foot upon the Continent with that Aladdin's lamp – a letter to the ambassador. The credit of his banker is, in his eyes, very inferior to that all-

powerful document, which opens to his excited imagination the salons of royalty, the dinner table of the embassy, a private box at the opera, and the attentions of the whole fashionable world; and he revels in the expectation of crosses, cordons, stars, and decorations – private interviews with royalty, ministerial audiences, and all the thousand and one flatteries, which are heaped upon the highest of the land. If he is single, he doesn't know but he may marry a princess; if he be married, he may have a daughter for some German archduke, with three hussars for an army, and three acres of barren mountain for a territory – whose subjects are not so numerous as the hairs of his moustache, but whose quarterings go back to Noah; and an ark on a “field azure” figures in his escutcheon. Well, well! of all the expectations of mankind these are about the vainest. These foreign-office documents are but Bellerophon letters, – born to betray. Let not their possession dissuade you from making a weekly score with your hotel-keeper, under the pleasant delusion that you are to dine out, four days, out of the seven. Alas and alack! the ambassador doesn't keep open-house for his rapparee countrymen: his hôtel is no shelter for females, destitute of any correct idea as to where they are going, and why; and however strange it may seem, he actually seems to think his dwelling as much his own, as though it stood in Belgrave-square, or Piccadilly.

Now, John Bull has no notion of this – he pays for these people – they figure in the budget, and for a good round sum, too – and what do they do for it? John knows little of the daily work of diplomacy. A treaty, a tariff, a question of war, he can understand; but the red-tapery of office, he can make nothing of. Court gossip, royal marriages – how his Majesty smiled at the French envoy, and only grinned at the Austrian *chargé d'affaires* – how the queen spoke three minutes to the Danish minister's wife, and only said “*Bon jour, madame,*” to the Neapolitan's – how plum-pudding figured at the royal table, thus showing that English policy was in the ascendant; – all these signs of the times, are a Chaldee MS. to him. But that the ambassador should invite him and Mrs. Simpkins, and the three Misses and Master Gregory Simpkins, to take a bit of dinner in the family-way – should bully the landlord at the “Aigle,” and make a hard bargain with the “Lohn-Kutcher” for him at the “Sechwan” – should take care that he saw the sights, and wasn't more laughed at than was absolutely necessary; – all that, is comprehensible, and John expects it, as naturally as though it was set forth in his passport, and sworn to by the foreign secretary, before he left London.

Of all the strange anomalies of English character, I don't know one so thoroughly inexplicable as the mystery by which so really independent a fellow as John Bull ought to be – and as he, in nineteen cases out of twenty, is, should be a tuft hunter. The man who would scorn any pecuniary obligation, who would travel a hundred miles back, on his journey, to acquit a forgotten debt – who has not a thought that is not high-souled, lofty, and honourable, will stoop to any thing, to be where he has no pretension to be – to figure in a society, where he is any thing but at his ease – unnoticed, save by ridicule. Any one who has much experience of the Continent, must have been struck by this. There is no trouble too great, no expense too lavish, no intrigue too difficult, to obtain an invitation to court, or an embassy *soirée*.

These embassy *soirées*, too, are good things in their way – a kind of terrestrial *inferno*, where all ranks and conditions of men enter – stately Prussians, wily Frenchmen, roguish-looking Austrians, stupid Danes, haughty English, swarthy, mean-looking Spaniards, and here and there some “eternal swaggerer” from the States, with his hair “*en Kentuck,*” and “a very pretty considerable damned loud smell” of tobacco about him. Then there are the “*grandes dames,*” glittering in diamonds, and sitting in divan, and the ministers' ladies of every gradation, from plenipos' wives to *chargé d'affaires*, with their *cordons* of whiskered *attachés* about them – maids of honour, *aides-de-camp du roi*, Poles, *savans*, newspaper editors, and a Turk. Every rank has its place in the attention of the host: and he poises his civilities, as though a ray the more, one shade the less, would upset the balance of nations, and compromise the peace of Europe. In that respect, nothing ever surpassed the old Dutch embassy, at Dresden, where the *maître d'hôtel* had strict orders to serve coffee, to the ministers, *eau sucrée*, to the secretaries, and, nothing, to the *attachés*. No plea of heat, fatigue, or exhaustion, was ever suffered

to infringe a rule, founded on the broadest views of diplomatic rank. A cup of coffee thus became, like a cordon or a star, an honourable and a proud distinction; and the enviable possessor sipped his Mocha, and coquetted with the spoon, with a sense of dignity, ordinary men know nothing of in such circumstances; while the secretary's *eau sucrée* became a goal to the young aspirant in the career; which must have stirred his early ambition, and stimulated his ardour for success.

If, as some folk say, human intellect is never more conspicuous, than where a high order of mind can descend to some paltry, insignificant circumstance, and bring to its consideration all the force it possesses; certes diplomatic people must be of a no mean order of capacity.

From the question of a disputed frontier, to that of a place at dinner, there is but one spring from the course of a river towards the sea, and a procession to table, the practised mind bounds as naturally, as though it were a hop, and a step. A case in point occurred some short time since at Frankfort.

The etiquette in this city gives the president of the diet precedence of the different members of the *corps diplomatique*, who, however, all take rank before the rest of the diet.

The Austrian minister, who occupied the post of president, being absent, the Prussian envoy held the office *ad interim*, and believed that, with the duties, its privileges became his.

M. Anstett, the Russian envoy, having invited his colleagues to dinner, the grave question arose who was to go first? On one hand the dowager, was the Minister of France, who always preceded the others; on the other was the Prussian, a *pro tempore* president, and who showed no disposition to concede his pretensions.

The important moment arrived – the door was flung wide; and an imposing voice proclaimed – “*Madame la Baronne est servie.*” Scarce were the words spoken, when the Prussian sprang forward, and, offering his arm gallantly to Madame d’Anstett, led the way, before the Frenchman had time to look around him.

When the party were seated at table, M. d’Anstett looked about him in a state of embarrassment and uneasiness: then, suddenly rallying, he called out in a voice audible throughout the whole room – “Serve the soup to the Minister of France first!” The order was obeyed, and the French minister had lifted his third spoonful to his lips before the humbled Prussian had tasted his.

The next day saw couriers flying, extra post through all Europe, conveying the important intelligence; that when all other precedence failed, soup, might be resorted to, to test rank and supremacy.

And now enough for the present of ministers ordinary and extraordinary, envoys and plenipos; though I intend to come back to them at another opportunity.

CHAPTER V. ANTWERP – “THE FISCHER’S HAUS.”

It was through no veneration for the memory of Van Hoogen-dorp’s adventure, that I found myself one morning at Antwerp. I like the old town: I like its quaint, irregular streets, its glorious cathedral, the old “Place,” with its alleys of trees; I like the Flemish women, and their long-eared caps; and I like the *table d’hôte* at the “St. Antoine” – among other reasons, because, being at one o’clock, it affords a capital argument for a hot supper, at nine.

I do not know how other people may feel, but to me, I must confess, much of the pleasure the Continent affords me, is destroyed by the jargon of the “*Commissionnaires*,” and the cant of guidebooks. Why is not a man permitted to sit down before that great picture, “The Descent from the Cross,” and “gaze his fill” on it? Why may he not look till the whole scene becomes, as it were, acting before him, and all those faces of grief, of care, of horror, and despair, are graven in his memory, never to be erased again? Why, I say, may he not study this in tranquillity and peace, without some coarse, tobacco-reeking fellow, at his elbow, in a dirty blouse and wooden shoes, explaining, in *patois* French, the merits of a work, which he is as well fitted to paint, as to appreciate.

But I must not myself commit the very error I am reprobating. I will not attempt any description of a picture, which, to those who have seen it, could realize not one of the impressions the work itself afforded, and to those who have not, would convey nothing at all. I will not bore my reader with the tiresome cant of “effect.” “expression,” “force,” “depth,” and “relief,” but, instead of all this, will tell him a short story about the painting, which, if it has no other merit, has at least that of authenticity.

Rubens – who, among his other tastes, was a great florist – was very desirous to enlarge his garden, by adding to it a patch of ground adjoining. It chanced unfortunately, that this piece of land did not belong to an individual who could be tempted by a large price, but to a society or club called the “Arquebussiers,” one of those old Flemish guilds, which date their origin several centuries back. Insensible to every temptation of money, they resisted all the painter’s offers, and at length only consented to relinquish the land on condition that he would paint a picture for them, representing their patron saint, St. Christopher. To this, Rubens readily acceded, his only difficulty being to find out some incident in the good saint’s life, which might serve as a subject. What St. Christopher had to do with cross-bows or sharp-shooters, no one could tell him; and for many a long day he puzzled his mind, without ever being able to hit upon a solution of the difficulty. At last, in despair, the etymology of the word suggested a plan; and “christophoros,” or cross-bearer, afforded the hint on which he began his great picture of “The Descent.” For months long, he worked industriously at the painting, taking an interest in its details, such as he confesses never to have felt in any of his previous works. He knew it to be his *chef-d’oeuvre*, and looked forward, with a natural eagerness, to the moment when he should display it before its future possessors, and receive their congratulations on his success.

The day came; the “Arquebuss” men assembled, and repaired in a body to Rubens’ house; the large folding shutters which concealed the painting were opened, and the triumph of the painter’s genius was displayed before them: but not a word was spoken; no exclamation of admiration, or wonder, broke from the assembled throng; not a murmur of pleasure, or even surprise was there: on the contrary, the artist beheld nothing but faces expressive of disappointment, and dissatisfaction; and at length, after a considerable-pause, one question burst from every lip – “Where is St. Christopher?”

It was to no purpose he explained the object of his work: in vain he assured them, that the picture was the greatest he had ever painted, and far superior to what he had contracted to give them. They stood obdurate, and motionless: it was St. Christopher they wished for; it was for him they bargained, and him, they would have.

The altercation continued long, and earnest. Some of them, more moderate, hoping to conciliate both parties, suggested that, as there was a small space unemployd in the left of the painting, St. Christopher could be introduced, there, by making him somewhat diminutive. Rubens rejected

the proposal with disgust: his great work was not to be destroyed by such an anomaly as this: and so, breaking off the negotiation at once, he dismissed the “Arquebuss” men, and relinquished all pretension to the “promised land.”

Matters remained for some months thus, when the burgomaster, who was an ardent admirer of Rubens’ genius, came to hear the entire transaction; and, waiting on the painter, suggested an expedient by which every difficulty might be avoided, and both parties rest content. “Why not,” said he, “make a St. Christopher on the outside of the shutter? You have surely space enough there, and can make him of any size you like.” The artist caught at the proposal, seized his chalk, and in a few minutes sketched out, a gigantic saint, which the burgomaster at once pronounced suited to the occasion.

The “Arquebuss” men were again introduced; and, immediately on beholding their patron, professed themselves perfectly satisfied. The bargain was concluded, the land ceded, and the picture hung up in the great cathedral of Antwerp, where, with the exception of the short period that French spoliation carried it to the Louvre, it has remained ever since, a monument of the artist’s genius, the greatest and most finished of all his works. And now that I have done my story, I’ll try and find out that little quaint hotel they call the “Fischer’s Haus.”

Fifteen years ago, I remember losing my way one night in the streets of Antwerp. I couldn’t speak a word of Flemish: the few people I met couldn’t understand a word of French. I wandered about, for full two hours, and heard the old cathedral clock play a psalm tune, and the St. Joseph tried its hand on another. A watchman cried the hour through a cow’s horn, and set all the dogs a-barking; and then all was still again, and I plodded along, without the faintest idea of the points of the compass.

In this moody frame of mind I was, when the heavy clank of a pair of sabots, behind, apprised me that some one was following. I turned sharply about, and accosted him in French.

“English?” said he, in a thick, guttural tone.

“Yes, thank heaven” said I, “do you speak English?”

“Ja, Mynheer,” answered he. Though this reply didn’t promise very favourably, I immediately asked him to guide me to my hotel, upon which he shook his head gravely, and said nothing.

“Don’t you speak English?” said I.

“Ja!” said he once more.

“I’ve lost my way,” cried I; “I am a stranger.”

He looked at me doggedly for a minute or two, and then, with a stern gravity of manner, and a phlegm, I cannot attempt to convey, he said —

“D – n *my* eyes!”

“What!” said I, “do you mean?”

“Ja!” was the only reply.

“If you know English, why won’t you speak it?”

“D – n *his* eyes!” said he with a deep solemn tone.

“Is that all you know of the language?” cried I, stamping with impatience. “Can you say no more than that?”

“D – n *your* eyes!” ejaculated he, with as much composure, as though he were maintaining an earnest conversation.

When I had sufficiently recovered from the hearty fit of laughter this colloquy occasioned me, I began by signs, such as melodramatic people make to express sleep, placing my head in the hollow of my hand, snoring and yawning, to represent, that I stood in need of a bed.

“Ja!” cried my companion with more energy than before, and led the way down one narrow street and up another, traversing lanes, where two men could scarcely go abreast, until at length we reached a branch of the Scheldt, along which, we continued for above twenty minutes. Suddenly the sound of voices shouting a species of Dutch tune – for so its unspeakable words, and wooden turns, bespoke it – apprised me, that we were near a house where the people were yet astir.

“Ha!” said I, “this a hotel then.”

Another “Ja!”

“What do they call it?”

A shake of the head.

“That will do, good night,” said I, as I saw the bright lights gleaming from the small diamond panes of an old Flemish window; “I am much obliged to you.”

“D – n *your* eyes!” said my friend, taking off his hat politely, and making me a low bow, while he added something in Flemish, which I sincerely trust was of a more polite and complimentary import, than his parting benediction in English.

As I turned from the Fleming, I entered a narrow hall, which led by a low-arched door into a large room, along which, a number of tables were placed, each, crowded by its own party who clinked their cans and vociferated a chorus, which, from constant repetition, rings still in my memory —

“Wenn die wein ist in die maun,
Der weisdheid den iut in die kan.”

or in the vernacular —

“When the wine is in the man,
Then is the wisdom in the can.”

A sentiment, which a very brief observation of their faces, induced me perfectly to concur in. Over the chimney-piece, an inscription was painted in letters of about a foot long, “Hier verkoopt man Bier,” implying, what a very cursory observation might have conveyed to any one, even on the evidence of his nose, – that beer was a very attainable fluid in the establishment. The floor was sanded, and the walls white-washed, save where some pictorial illustrations of Flemish habits were displayed in black chalk, or the smoke of a candle.

As I stood, uncertain whether to advance or retreat, a large portly Fleming, with a great waistcoat, made of the skin of some beast, eyed me steadfastly from head to foot, and then, as if divining my embarrassment, beckoned me to approach, and pointed to a seat on the bench beside him. I was not long in availing myself of his politeness, and before a half an hour elapsed, found myself with a brass can of beer, about eighteen inches in height, before me; while I was smoking away as though I had been born within the “dykes,” and never knew the luxury of dry land.

Around the table sat some seven or eight others, whose phlegmatic look and sententious aspect, convinced me, they were Flemings. At the far end, however, was one, whose dark eyes, flashing beneath heavy shaggy eyebrows, huge whiskers, and bronzed complexion, distinguished him sufficiently from the rest. He appeared, too, to have something of respect paid him, inasmuch as the others invariably nodded to him, whenever they lifted their cans to their mouths. He wore a low fur cap on his head, and his dark blue frock was trimmed also with fur, and slashed with a species of braiding, like an undress uniform.

Unlike the rest, he spoke a great deal, not only to his own party, but maintaining a conversation with various others through the room – sometimes speaking French, then Dutch, and occasionally changing to German, or Italian, with all which tongues he appeared so familiar, that I was fairly puzzled to what country to attribute him.

I could mark at times that he stole a sly glance over, towards where I was sitting, and, more than once, I thought I observed him watching what effect his voluble powers as a linguist, was producing upon me. At last our eyes met, he smiled politely, and taking up the can before him, he bowed, saying, “A votre santé, monsieur.”

I acknowledged the compliment at once, and seizing the opportunity, begged to know, of what land so accomplished a linguist was a native. His face brightened up at once, a certain smile of self-satisfied triumph passed over his features, he smacked his lips, and then poured out a torrent of strange sounds, which, from their accent, I guessed to be Russian.

“Do you speak Slavonic?” said he in French; and as I nodded a negative, he added – “Spanish, – Portuguese?”

“Neither,” said I.

“Where do you come from then?” asked he, retorting my question.

“Ireland, if you may have heard of such a place.”

“Hurroo!” cried he, with a yell that made the room start with amazement. “By the powers! I thought so; come up my hearty, and give me a shake of your hand.”

If I were astonished before, need I say how I felt now.

“And are you really a countryman of mine?” said I, as I took my seat beside him.

“Faith, I believe so. Con O’Kelly, does not sound very like Italian, and that’s my name, any how; but wait a bit, they’re calling on me for a Dutch song, and when I’ve done, we’ll have a chat together.”

A very uproarious clattering of brass and pewter cans on the tables, announced that the company was becoming impatient for Mynheer O’Kelly’s performance, which he immediately began; but of either the words or air, I can render no possible account, I only know, there was a kind of *refrain* or chorus, in which, all, round each table, took hands, and danced a “grand round,” making the most diabolical clatter with wooden shoes, I ever listened to.

After which, the song seemed to subside into a low droning sound, implying sleep. The singer nodded his head, the company followed the example, and a long heavy note, like snoring, was heard through the room, when suddenly, with a hiccup, he awoke, the others also, and then the song broke out once more, in all its vigour, to end as before, in another dance, an exercise in which I certainly fared worse than my neighbours, who tramped on my corns without mercy, leaving it a very questionable fact how far his “pious, glorious, and immortal memory” was to be respected, who had despoiled my country of “wooden shoes” when walking off with its brass money.

The melody over, Mr. O’Kelly proceeded to question me somewhat minutely, as to how I had chanced upon this house, which was not known to many, even of the residents of Antwerp.

I briefly explained to him the circumstances which led me to my present asylum, at which he laughed heartily.

“You don’t know, then, where you are?” said he, looking at me, with a droll half-suspicious smile.

“No; it’s a Schenk Haus, I suppose,” replied I.

“Yes, to be sure, it is a Schenk Haus, but it’s the resort only of smugglers, and those connected with their traffic. Every man about you, and there are, as you see, some seventy or eighty, are all, either sea-faring folks, or landsmen associated with them, in contraband trade.”

“But how is this done so openly? the house is surely known to the police.”

“Of course, and they are well paid for taking no notice of it.”

“And you?”

“Me! Well, *I* do a little that way too, though it’s only a branch of my business. I’m only Dirk Hatteraik, when I come down to the coast: then you know a man doesn’t like to be idle; so that when I’m here, or on the Bretagny shore, I generally mount the red cap, and buckle on the cutlass, just to keep moving; as when I go inland, I take an occasional turn with the gypsy folk in Bohemia, or their brethren, in the Basque provinces. There’s nothing like being up to every thing – that’s *my* way.”

I confess I was a good deal surprised at my companion’s account of himself, and not over impressed with the rigour of his principles; but my curiosity to know more of him, became so much the stronger.

“Well,” said I, “you seem to have a jolly life of it; and, certainly a healthful one.”

“Aye, that it is,” replied he quickly. “I’ve more than once thought of going back to Kerry, and living quietly for the rest of my days, for I could afford it well enough; but, somehow, the thought of staying in one place, talking always to the same set of people, seeing every day the same sights, and hearing the same eternal little gossip about little things, and little folk, was too much for me, and so I stuck to the old trade, which I suppose I’ll not give up now as long as I live.”

“And what may that be?” asked I, curious to know how he filled up moments snatched from the agreeable pursuits he had already mentioned.

He eyed me with a shrewd, suspicious look, for above a minute, and then, laying his hand on my arm, said —

“Where do you put up at, here in Antwerp?”

“The St. Antoine.”

“Well, I’ll come over for you to-morrow evening about nine o’clock; you’re not engaged, are you?”

“No, I’ve no acquaintance here.”

“At nine, then, be ready, and you’ll come and take a bit of supper with me; and, in exchange for your news of the old country, I’ll tell you something of my career.”

I readily assented to a proposal which promised to make me better acquainted with one evidently a character; and after half an hour’s chatting, I arose.

“You’re not going away, are you?” said he. “Well, I can’t leave this yet; so I’ll just send a boy, to show you the way to the ‘St. Antoine.’”

With that, he beckoned to a lad at one of the tables, and addressing a few words in Flemish to him, he shook me warmly by the hand: the whole room rose respectfully as I took my leave, and I could see, that “Mr. O’Kelly’s friend,” stood in no small estimation with the company.

The day was just breaking when I reached my hotel; but I knew I could poach on the daylight for what the dark had robbed me; and, besides, my new acquaintance promised to repay the loss of a night’s sleep, should it even come to that.

Punctual to his appointment, my newly-made friend knocked at my door exactly as the cathedral was chiming for nine o’clock.

His dress was considerably smarter than on the preceding evening, and his whole air and bearing bespoke a degree of quiet decorum and reserve, very different from his free-and-easy carriage in the “Fischer’s Haus.” As I accompanied him through the *parte-cochère*, we passed the landlord, who saluted us with much politeness, shaking my companion, by the hand, like an old friend.

“You are acquainted here, I see,” said I.

“There are few landlords from Lubeck to Leghorn I don’t know by this time,” was the reply, and he smiled as he spoke.

A calèche with one horse, was waiting for us without, and into this we stepped. The driver had got his directions, and plying his whip briskly, we rattled over the paved streets, and passing through a considerable part of the town, arrived at last at one of the gates. Slowly crossing the draw-bridge at a walk, we set out again at a trot, and soon I could perceive, through the half light, that we had traversed the suburbs, and were entering the open country.

“We’ve not far to go now,” said my companion, who seemed to suspect that I was meditating over the length of the way; “where you see the lights yonder – that’s our ground.”

The noise of the wheels over the *pavé* soon after ceased, and I found we were passing across a grassy lawn in front of a large house, which, even by the twilight, I could detect was built in the old Flemish taste. A square tower flanked one extremity, and from the upper part of this, the light gleamed, to which my companion pointed.

We descended from the carriage, at the foot of a long terrace, which, though dilapidated and neglected, bore still some token of its ancient splendour. A stray statue here and there, remained, to

mark its former beauty, while, close by, the hissing splash of water told that a *jet d'eau* was playing away, unconscious that its river gods, dolphins, and tritons, had long since departed.

“A fine old place once,” said my new friend; “the old chateau of Overghem – one of the richest seignories of Flanders in its day – sadly changed now; but come, follow me.”

So saying, he led the way into the hall, where detaching a rude lantern that was hung against the wall, he ascended the broad oak stairs.

I could trace, by the fitful gleam of the light, that the walls had been painted in fresco, the architraves of the windows and doors being richly carved, in all the grotesque extravagance of old Flemish art; a gallery, which traversed the building, was hung with old pictures, apparently family portraits, but they were all either destroyed by damp or rotting with neglect; at the extremity of this, a narrow stair conducted us by a winding ascent to the upper story of the tower, where, for the first time, my companion had recourse to a key; with this, he opened a low, pointed door, and ushered me into an apartment, at which, I could scarcely help expressing my surprise, aloud, as I entered.

The room was of small dimensions, but seemed actually, the boudoir of a palace. Rich cabinets in buhl, graced the walls, brilliant in all the splendid costliness of tortoise-shell and silver inlaying; bronzes of the rarest kind; pictures; vases; curtains of gorgeous damask covered the windows; and a chimney-piece of carved black oak, representing a pilgrimage, presented a depth of perspective, and a beauty of design, beyond any thing I had ever witnessed. The floor was covered with an old tapestry of Ouden-arde, spread over a heavy Persian rug, into which the feet sank at every step, while a silver lamp, of antique mould, threw a soft, mellow light, around, revolving on an axis, whose machinery played a slow but soothing melody, delightfully in harmony with all about.

“You like this kind of thing,” said my companion, who watched, with evident satisfaction, the astonishment and admiration, with which I regarded every object around me. “That’s a pretty bit of carving there – that was done by Van Zoost, from a design of Schneider’s; see how the lobsters are crawling over the tangled sea-weed there, and look how the leaves seem to fall heavy and flaccid, as if wet with spray. This is good, too; it was painted by Gherard Dow: it is a portrait of himself; he is making a study of that little boy who stands there on the table; see how he has disposed the light, so as to fall on the little fellow’s side, tipping him from the yellow curls of his round bullet head, to the angle of his white sabot.

“Yes, you’re right, that is by Van Dyck; only a sketch to be sure, but has all his manner. I like the Velasquez yonder better, but they both possess the same excellence. *They*, could represent *birth*. Just see that dark fellow there, he’s no beauty you’ll say, but regard him closely, and tell me, if he’s one to take a liberty with; look at his thin, clenched lip, and that long thin, pointed chin, with its straight stiff beard – can there be a doubt he was a gentleman? Take care, gently, your elbow grazed it. That, is a specimen of the old Japan china – a lost art now, they cannot produce the blue colour, you see there, running into green. See, the flowers are laid on after the cup is baked, and the birds are a separate thing after all; but come, this is, perhaps, tiresome work to you, follow me.”

Notwithstanding my earnest entreaty to remain, he took me by the arm, and opening a small door, covered by a mirror, led me into another room, the walls and ceiling of which were in dark oak wainscot; a single picture occupied the space above the chimney, to which, however, I gave little attention, my eyes being fixed upon a most appetizing supper, which figured on a small table in the middle of the room. Not even the savoury odour of the good dishes, or my host’s entreaty to begin, could turn me from the contemplation of the antique silver covers, carved in the richest fashion. The handles of the knives were fashioned into representations of saints and angels, and the costly ruby glasses, of Venetian origin, were surrounded with cases of gold filagree, of the most delicate and beautiful character.

“We must be our own attendants,” said the host. “What have you there? Here are some Ostende oysters, *en matelot*; that is a small capon *truffé*; and, here are some cutlets *aux points d’asperge*, But let us begin, and explore as we proceed; a glass of Chablis, with your oysters; what a pity these Burgundy

wines are inaccessible to you in England! Chablis, scarcely bears the sea, of half a dozen bottles, one, is drinkable; the same of the red wines; and what is there so generous? not that we are to despise our old friend, Champagne; and now that you've helped yourself to *paté*, let's us have a bumper. By-the-bye, have they abandoned that absurd notion they used to have in England about Champagne? when I was there, they never served it during the first course. Now Champagne should come, immediately after your soup – your glass of Sherry or Madeira, is a holocaust offered up to bad cookery; for if the soup were safe, Chablis or Sauterne is your fluid. How is the capon? good, I'm glad of it. These countries excel in their *poulardes*.”

In this fashion my companion ran on, accompanying each plate with some commentary on its history, or concoction; a kind of dissertation, I must confess, I have no manner of objection to, especially, when delivered by a host who illustrates his theorem, not by “plates” but “dishes.”

Supper over, we wheeled the table to the wall; and drawing forward another, on which the wine and desert were already laid out, prepared to pass a pleasant and happy evening, in all form.

“Worse countries than Holland, Mr. O'Leary,” said my companion, as he sipped his Burgundy, and looked with ecstasy at the rich colour of the wine through the candle.

“When seen thus,” said I, “I don't know its equal.”

“Why, perhaps this is rather a favourable specimen of a smuggler's cave,” replied he, laughing. “Better than old Dirk's, eh? By-the-bye, do you know, Scott?”

“No; I am sorry to say that I am not acquainted with him.”

“What the devil could have led him into such a blunder as to make Hatteraik, a regular Dutchman, sing a German song? Why, ‘Ich Bin liederlich’ is good Hoch-Deutsch, and Saxon to boot. A Hollander, might just as well have chanted modern Greek, or Coptic. I'll wager you that Rubens there, over the chimney, against a crown-piece, you'll not find a Dutchman, from Dort to Nimegen, could repeat the lines, that he has made a regular national song of; and again, in Quentin Durward, he has made all the Liege folk speak German, That, was even, a worse mistake. Some of them speak French; but the nation, the people, are Walloons, and have as much idea of German as a Hottentot has, of the queen of hearts. Never mind, he's a glorious fellow for all that, and here's his health. When will Ireland have his equal, to chronicle her feats of field and flood, and make her land as classic, as Scott has done his own!”

While we rambled on, chatting of all that came uppermost, the wine passed freely across the narrow table, and the evening wore on. My curiosity to know more of one, who, on whatever he talked, seemed thoroughly informed, grew gradually more and more; and at last I ventured to remind him, that he had half promised me the previous evening, to let me hear something of his own history.

“No, no,” said he laughing; “story telling is poor work for the teller and the listener too; and when a man's tale has not even brought a moral to himself, it's scarcely likely, to be more generous towards his neighbour.”

“Of course,” said I, “I have no claim, as a stranger – ”

“Oh, as to that,” interrupted he, “somehow I feel as though we were longer acquainted. I've seen much of the world, and know by this time that some men begin to know each other from the starting post – others never do, though they travel a life long together; – so that on that score, no modesty. If you care for my story, fill your glass, and let's open another flask, and here it's for you, though I warn you beforehand the narrative is somewhat of the longest.”

CHAPTER VI. MR. O'KELLY'S TALE

"I can tell you but little about my family," said my host, stretching out his legs to the fire, and crossing his arms easily before him. "My grandfather was in the Austrian service, and killed in some old battle with the Turks. My father, Peter O'Kelly, was shot in a duel by an attorney from Youghal. Something about nailing his ear to the pump, I've heard tell was the cause of the row; for he came down to my father's, with a writ, or a process, or something of the kind. No matter – the thief had pluck in him; and when Peter – my father that was – told him, he'd make a gentleman of him, and fight him, if he'd give up the bill of costs; why the temptation was too strong to resist; he pitched the papers into the fire, went out the same morning, and faith he put in his bullet, as fair, as if he was used to the performance. I was only a child then, ten or eleven years old, and so I remember nothing of the particulars; but I was packed off the next day to an old aunt's, a sister of my father's, who resided in the town of Tralee.

"Well, to be sure, it was a great change for me, young as I was, from Castle O'Kelly to Aunt Judy's. At home, there was a stable full of horses, a big house, generally full of company, and the company as fall of fun; we had a pack of harriers, went out twice or thrice a week, plenty of snipe-shooting, and a beautiful race-course was made round the lawn: and though I wasn't quite of an age to join in these pleasures myself, I had a lively taste for them all, and relished the free-and-easy style of my father's house, without any unhappy forebodings, that the amusements there practised would end in leaving me a beggar.

"Now, my Aunt Judy lived in what might be called, a state of painfully elegant poverty. Her habitation was somewhat more capacious than a house in a toy-shop; but then it had all the usual attributes of a house. There was a hall-door, and two windows, and a chimney, and a brass knocker, and, I believe, a scraper; and within, there were three little rooms, about the dimensions of a mail-coach, each. I think I see the little parlour before me, now this minute; there was a miniature of my father in a red coat over the chimney, and two screens painted by my aunt – landscapes, I am told, they were once; but time and damp had made them look something like the moon seen through a bit of smoked glass; and there were fire-irons as bright as day, for they never performed any other duty than standing on guard beside the grate, – a kind of royal beef-eaters, kept for show; and there was a little table covered with shells and minerals, bits of coral, conchs, and cheap curiosities of that nature, and over them, again, was a stuffed macaw. Oh, dear! I see it all before me, and the little tea-service, that if the beverage had been vitriol, a cup full couldn't have harmed you. There were four chairs; – human ingenuity couldn't smuggle in a fifth. There was one for Father Donnellan, another for Mrs. Brown, the post mistress, another for the barrack-master, Captain Dwyer, the fourth for my aunt herself; but then no more were wanted. Nothing but real gentility, the 'ould Irish blood,' would be received by Miss Judy; and if the post-mistress wasn't fourteenth cousin to somebody, who was aunt to Phelim O'Brien, who was hanged for some humane practice towards the English in former times, the devil a cup of bohea she'd have tasted there! The priest was *ex officio*, but Captain Dwyer was a gentleman, born and bred. His great-grandfather had an estate; the last three generations had lived on the very reputation of its once being in the family: 'they weren't upstarts, no, sorrow bit of it; when they had it they spent it,' and so on, were the current expressions concerning them. Faith I will say, that in my time, in Ireland – I don't know how it may be now – the aroma of a good property stood to the descendants long after the substance had left them; and if they only stuck fast to the place where the family had once been great, it took at least a couple of generations before they need think of looking out for a livelihood.

"Aunt Judy's revenue was something like eighty pounds a year; but in Tralee she was not measured by the rule of the 'income tax.' 'Wasn't she own sister to Peter O'Kelly of the Castle; didn't Brien O'Kelly call at the house when he was canvassing for the member, and leave his card;' and

wasn't the card displayed on the little mahogany table every evening, and wiped and put by, every morning, for fifteen years; and sure the O'Kellys had their own burial ground, the 'O'Kelly's pound,' as it was called, being a square spot inclosed within a wall and employed for all 'trespassers' of the family, within death's domain. Here was gentility enough in all conscience, even had the reputation of her evening parties not been the talk of the town. These were certainly exclusive enough, and consisted as I have told you.

"Aunt Judy loved her rubber, and so did her friends; and eight o'clock every evening saw the little party assembled at a game of 'longs,' for penny points. It was no small compliment to the eyesight of the players, that they could distinguish the cards; for with long use they had become dimmed and indistinct. The queens, had contracted a very tatterdemalion look, and the knaves, had got a most vagabond expression for want of their noses, not to speak of other difficulties in dealing, which certainly required an expert hand, all the corners having long disappeared, leaving the operation something like playing at quoits.

"The discipline of such an establishment, I need scarcely say, was very distasteful to me. I was seldom suffered to go beyond the door, more rarely still, alone: my whole amusement consisted in hearing about the ancient grandeur of the O'Kellys, and listening to a very prosy history, of certain martyrs, not one of whom I didn't envy in my heart; while in the evening I slept beneath the whist-table, being too much afraid of ghosts to venture up stairs to bed.

"It was on one of those evenings, when the party were assembled as usual; some freak of mine – I fear I was a rebellious subject – was being discussed between the deals, it chanced that by some accident I was awake, and heard the colloquy.

"'Tis truth I'm telling you, ma'am,' quoth my aunt, 'you'd think he was mild as milk, and there isn't a name for the wickedness in him.'

"'When I was in the Buffs there was a fellow of the name of Clancy –'

"'Play a spade, captain,' said the priest, who had no common horror of the story, he had heard every evening for twenty years.

"'And did he really put the kitten into the oven?' inquired Mrs. Brown.

"'Worse than that – he brought in Healy's buck goat yesterday, and set him opposite the looking-glass, and the beast, thinking he saw another, opposite him, bolted straightforward, and, my dear, he stuck his horns through the middle of it. There isn't a piece as big as the ace of diamonds.'"

"'When I was in the Buffs —

"'Tis at *say* he ought to be – don't you think so, captain?' said the priest – 'them's trumps.'

"'I beg your pardon, Father Donellan, let me look at the trick. Well I'm sure I pity you, Miss O'Kelly.'

"'And why wouldn't you! his mother had a bad drop in her, 'tis easy seen. Sure Peter, that's gone, rest his soul in peace, he never harmed man nor beast; but that child there, has notions of wickedness, that would surprise you. My elegant cornelian necklace he's taken the stones out of, till it nearly chokes me to put it on.'

"'When I was in the Buffs, Miss O'Kelly, there was –'

"'Pay fourpence,' said the priest pettishly, and cut the cards. As I was saying, I'd send him to say, and if the stories be throe, I hear, he's not ill fitted for it; he does be the most of his time up there at the caves of Ballybunnion, with the smugglers.'

"My aunt crimsoned a little at this, as I could see from my place on the hearth rug: for it was only the day before, I had brought in a package of green tea, obtained from the quarter alluded to.

"'I'd send him to Banagher to-morrow,' said he, resolutely; 'I'd send him to school.'

"'There was one Clancy, I was saying, a great devil he was –'

"'And faix ould Martin will flog his tricks out of him, if birch will do it,' said the priest.

"'Tis only a fortnight since he put hot cinders in the letterbox, and burned half the Dublin bag,' said Mrs. Brown. 'The town will be well rid of him.'

“This was exactly the notion I was coming to myself, though differing widely as to the destination by which I was to manage my exchange out of it. The kind wishes of the party towards me, too, had another effect – it nerved me with a courage I never felt before – and when I took the first opportunity of a squabble at the whist-table, to make my escape from the room, I had so little fear of ghosts and goblins, that I opened the street door, and, although the way led under the wall of the church-yard, set out on my travels, in a direction which was to influence all my after life.

“I had not proceeded far, when I overtook some cars on their way to Tarbert, on one of which I succeeded in obtaining a seat; and, by daybreak, arrived at the Shannon, the object of my desires, and the goal of all my wishes.

“The worthy priest had not calumniated me, in saying, that my associates were smugglers. Indeed, for weeks past, I never missed any opportunity of my aunt leaving the house, without setting out to meet a party who frequented a small public-house, about three miles from Tralee, and with whom I made more than one excursion to the caves of Ballybunnion. It was owing to an accidental piece of information I afforded them – that the revenue force was on their track – that I first learned to know these fellows; and from that moment, I was a sworn friend of every man among them. To be sure they were a motley crew. The craft belonged to Flushing, and the skipper himself was a Fleming; the others were Kinsale fishermen, Ostenders, men from the coast of Bretagne, a Norwegian pilot, and a negro, who acted as cook. Their jovial style of life, the apparent good humour and good fellowship that subsisted among them, a dash of reckless devil-may-care spirit, resembling a school-boy's love of fun – all captivated me; and when I found myself on board the ‘Dart,’ as she lay at anchor under the shadow of the tall cliffs, and saw the crew burnishing up pistols and cutlasses, and making ready for a cruise, I had a proud heart when they told me, I might join, and be one among them, I suppose every boy has something in his nature that inclines him to adventure; it was strong enough in me, certainly.

“The hardy, weather-beaten faces of my companions – their strong muscular frames – their coarse uniform of striped Jersey wear, with black belts crossing on the chest – all attracted my admiration: and from the red bunting that floated at our gaff, to the brass swivels that peeped from our bows, the whole craft delighted me. I was not long in acquiring the rough habits and manners of my associates, and speedily became a favourite with every one on board. All the eccentricities of my venerable aunt, all the peculiarities of Father Donellan, were dished up by me for their amusement, and they never got tired laughing at the description of the whist-table. Besides, I was able to afford them much valuable information about the neighbouring gentry, all of whom I knew, either personally, or by name. I was at once, therefore, employed as a kind of diplomatic envoy to ascertain if Mr. Blennerhassett wouldn't like a hogshead of brandy, or the Knight of Glynn a pipe of claret, in addition to many minor embassies among the shebeen houses of the country, concerning nigger-heads of tobacco, packages of tea, smuggled lace, and silk handkerchiefs.

“Thus was my education begun; and an apter scholar, in all the art and mystery of smuggling, could scarcely have been found. I had a taste for picking up languages; and, before my first cruise was over, had got a very tolerable smattering of French, Dutch, and Norwegian, and some intimacy with the fashionable dialect used on the banks of the Niger. Other accomplishments followed these. I was a capital pistol-shot – no bad hand with the small swords – could reef and steer, and had not my equal on board in detecting a revenue officer, no matter how artfully disguised. Such were my professional – my social qualifications far exceeded these. I could play a little on the violin, and the guitar, and was able to throw into rude verse any striking incident of our wild career, and adapt an air to it, for the amusement of my companions. These I usually noted down in a book, accompanying them with pen illustrations and notes; and I assure you, however little literary reputation this volume might have acquired, ‘O'Kelly's Log,’ as it was called, formed the great delight, of ‘Saturday night at sea.’ These things were all too local and personal in their interest to amuse any one who didn't know the parties; but mayhap one day or other I'll give you a sight of the ‘log,’ and let you hear some of our songs.

“I won't stop to detail any of the adventures of my sea-faring life; strange and wild enough they were in all conscience: one night, staggering under close-reefed canvas beneath a lee-shore; another, carousing with a jolly set in a 'Schenk Hans' at Rotterdam, or Ostende – now, hiding in the dark caves of Ballybunnion, while the craft stood out to sea – now, disguised, taking a run up to Paris, and dining in the 'Café de L'Empire,' in all the voluptuous extravagance of the day. Adventure fast succeeding on adventure, escape upon escape, had given my life a character of wild excitement, which made me feel a single day's repose, a period of *ennui* and monotony.

“Smuggling, too, became only a part of my occupation. My knowledge of French, and my power of disguising my appearance, enabled me to mix in Parisian society, of a certain class, without any fear of detection. In this way I obtained, from time to time, information of the greatest consequence to our government; and once brought some documents from the war department of Napoleon, which obtained for me the honour of an interview with Mr. Pitt himself. This part of my career, however, would take me too far away from my story, were I to detail any of the many striking adventures which marked it; so I'll pass on, at once, to one of those eventful epochs of my life, two or three of which have changed, for the time, the current of my destiny.

“I was about eighteen: the war had just broke out with France, and the assembled camp at Boulogne threatened the invasion of England. The morning we left the French coast, the preparations for the embarkation of the troops, were in great forwardness, and certain particulars had reached us, which convinced me that Napoleon really intended an attempt, which many were disposed to believe, was a mere menace. In fact, an officer of the staff had given me such information as explained the mode of the descent, and the entire plan of the expedition. Before I could avail myself of this, however, we should land our cargo, an unusually rich one, on the west coast of Ireland, for my companions knew nothing all this time of the system of 'spionage' I had established, and little suspected that one of their crew was in relation with the Prime Minister of England.

“I have said I was about eighteen. My wild life, if it had made me feel older than my years, had given a hardihood and enterprise to my character, which heightened for me the enjoyment of every bold adventure, and made me feel a kind of ecstasy in every emergency, where danger and difficulty were present. I longed to be the skipper of my own craft, sweeping the seas at my own will; a bold buccaneer, caring less for gain than glory, until my name should win for itself its own meed of fame, and my feats be spoken of in awe and astonishment.

“Van Brock, our captain, was a hardy Fleming, but all his energy of character, all his daring, were directed to the one object – gain. For this, there was nothing he wouldn't attempt, nothing he wouldn't risk. Now, our present voyage was one in which he had embarked all his capital; the outbreak of a war warned him that his trade must speedily be abandoned – he could no longer hope to escape the cruisers of every country, that already filled the channel. This one voyage, however, if successful, would give him an ample competence for life, and he determined to hazard everything upon it.

“It was a dark and stormy night in November, when we made the first light on the west coast of Ireland. Part of our cargo was destined for Ballybunnion; the remainder, and most valuable portion, was to be landed in the Bay of Galway. It blew a whole gale from the southward and westward, and the sea ran mountains high, not the short joggle of a land-locked channel, but the heavy roll of the great Atlantic, – dark and frowning, swelling to an enormous height, and thundering away on the iron-bound coast to leeward, with a crash, that made our hearts quiver. The 'Dart' was a good sea-boat, but the waves swept her from stem to stern, and though nothing but a close-reefed topsail was bent, we went spinning through the water, at twelve knots. The hatchways were battened down, and every preparation made for a rough night, for as the darkness increased, so did the gale.

“The smuggler's fate is a dark and gloomy one. Let the breeze fall, let the blue sky and fleecy clouds lie mirrored on the glassy deep, and straight a boat is seen, sweeping along with sixteen oars, springing with every jerk of the strong arms, to his capture. And when the white waves rise like mountains, and the lowering storm descends, sending tons of water across his decks, and wetting

his highest rigging with the fleecy drift he dares not cry for help; the signal that would speak of his distress, would be the knell, to toll his ruin. We knew this well. We felt that come what would, from others, there was nothing to be hoped. It was then, with agonizing suspense we watched the little craft, as she worked in the stormy sea; we saw that with every tack, we were losing. The strong land current that set in shore, told upon us, at every reach; and when we went about, the dark and beetling cliffs seemed actually toppling over us, and the wild cries of the sea-fowl, rang, like a dirge in our ears. The small storm-jib we were obliged to set, sunk us by the head, and at every pitch the little vessel seemed threatening to go down, bow foremost.

“Our great endeavour was to round the headland, which forms the southern shore of the Shannon’s mouth. There is a small sound there, between this point and the rocks, they call the ‘Blasquets,’ and for this we were making with all our might. Thus passed our night, and when day broke, a cheer of joy burst from our little crew, as we beheld the Blasquets on our weather bow, and saw that the sound lay straight before us. Scarce had the shout died away, when a man in the rigging cried out —

“‘A sail to windward:’ and the instant after added — ‘a man-of-war brig.’

“The skipper sprang on the bulwark, and setting his glass in the shrouds, examined the object, which, to the naked eye, was barely a haze in the horizon.

“‘She carries eighteen guns,’ said he slowly, ‘and is steering our course. I say, O’Kelly, there’s no use in running in shore, to be pinioned, — what’s to be done?’

“The thought of the information I was in possession of, flashed across me. Life was never so dear before, but I could not speak. I knew the old man’s all, was on the venture, I knew, too, if we were attacked, his resolve was to fight her to the last spar that floated.

“‘Come,’ said he again, ‘there’s a point more south’ard in the wind; we might haul her close, and make for Galway Bay. Two hours would land the cargo, at least enough of it, and if the craft must go — ’

“A heavy squall struck us as he spoke; the vessel reeled over, till she laid her channels in the sea. A snap like the report of a shot was heard, and the topmast came tumbling down upon the deck, the topsail falling to leeward, and hanging by the bolt-ropes over our gunwale. The little craft immediately fell off from the wind, and plunged deeper than ever in the boiling surf; at the same instant a booming sound swept across the water, and a shot striking the sea near, ricocheted over the bowsprit, and passed on, dipping and bounding, towards the shore.

“‘She’s one of their newly-built ones,’ said the second-mate, an Irishman, who chewed his quid of tobacco as he gazed at her, as coolly, as if he was in a dock-yard. ‘I know the ring of her brass guns.’

“A second and a third flash, followed by two reports, came almost together, but this time they fell short of us, and passed away in our wake.

“We cut away the fallen rigging, and seeing nothing for it, now, but to look to our own safety, we resolved to run the vessel up the bay, and try if we could not manage to conceal some portions of the cargo, before the man-o’-war could overtake us. The caves along the shore were all well known to us, every one of them had served either as a store, or a place of concealment. The wind, however, freshened every minute; the storm jib was all we could carry, and this, instead of aiding, dipped us heavily by the head, while the large ship gained momentarily on us, and now, her tall masts and white sails lowered close in our wake.

“‘Shall we stave these puncheons?’ said the mate in a whisper to the skipper; ‘she’ll be aboard of us in no time.’

“The old man made no reply, but his eyes turned from the man-o’-war to shore, and back again, and his mouth quivered slightly.

“‘They’d better get the hatches open, and heave over that tobacco,’ said the mate, endeavouring to obtain an answer.

“She’s hauled down her signal for us to lie to,’ observed the skipper, ‘and see there, her bow ports are open – here it comes.’

“A bright flash burst out as he spoke, and one blended report was heard, as the shots skimmed the sea beside us.

“Run that long gun aft,’ cried the old fellow, as his eyes flashed and his colour mounted. ‘I’ll rake their after-deck for them, or I’m mistaken.

“For the first time the command was not obeyed at once. The men looked at each other in hesitation, and as if not determined what part to take.

“What do you stare at there,’ cried he in a voice of passion, ‘O’Kelly, up with the old bunting, and let them see who they’ve got to deal with.’

“A brown flag, with a Dutch lion in the centre, was run up the signal-halliards, and the next minute floated out bravely from our gaff.

“A cheer burst from the man-of-war’s crew, as they beheld the signal of defiance. Its answer was a smashing discharge from our long swivel, that tore along their decks, cutting the standing rigging, and wounding several as it went. The triumph was short-lived for us. Shot after shot poured in from the brig, which, already to windward, swept our entire decks; while an incessant roll of small arms, showed that our challenge was accepted to the death.

“Down, helm,’ said the old man in a whisper to the sailor at the wheel – ‘down, helm;’ while already the spitting waves that danced half a mile ahead, betokened a reef of rocks, over which at low water a row boat could not float.

“I know it, I know it well,’ was the skipper’s reply to the muttered answer of the helmsman.

“By this, time the brig was slackening sail, and still his fire was maintained as hotly as ever. The distance between us increased at each moment, and, had we sea-room, it was possible for us yet to escape.

“Our long gun was worked without ceasing, and we could see from time to time, that a bustle on the deck, denoted the destruction it was dealing; when suddenly a wild shout burst from one of our men – ‘the man-of-war’s aground, her topsails are aback,’ A mad cheer – the frantic cry of rage and desperation – broke from us; when, at the instant, a reeling shock shook us from stem to stern. The little vessel trembled like a living thing; and then, with a crash like thunder, the hatchways sprang from their fastenings, and the white sea leaped up, and swept along the deck. One drowning cry, one last mad yell burst forth.

“Three cheers, my boys!’ cried the skipper, raising his cap above his head.

“Already, she was settling in the sea – the death notes rang out high over the storm; a wave swept me overboard at the minute, and my latest consciousness was seeing the old skipper clinging to the bow-sprit, while his long grey hair was floating wildly behind: but the swooping sea rolled over and over me. A kind of despairing energy nerved me, and after being above an hour in the water, I was taken up, still swimming, by one of the shore boats, which, as the storm abated, had ventured out to the assistance of the sloop; and thus was I shipwrecked, within a few hundred yards of the spot, where first I had ventured on the sea – the only one saved of all the crew. Of the ‘Dart,’ not a spar reached shore; the breaking sea tore her to atoms.

“The ‘Hornet’ scarcely fared better. She landed eight of her crew, badly wounded; one man was killed, and she herself was floated only after months of labour, and never, I believe, went to sea afterwards.

“The sympathy which in Ireland is never refused to misfortune, no matter how incurred, stood me in stead now; for although every effort was made by the authorities to discover if any of the smuggler’s crew had reached shore alive, and large rewards were offered, no one would betray me; and I lay as safely concealed beneath the thatch of an humble cabin, as though the proud walls of a baronial castle afforded me their protection.

“From day to day I used to hear of the hot and eager inquiry going forward to trace out, by any means, something of the wrecked vessel; and, at last, news reached me, that a celebrated thief-taker from Dublin had arrived in the neighbourhood, to assist in the search.

“There was no time to be lost now. Discovery would not only have perilled my own life, but also have involved those of my kind protectors. How to leave the village was, however, the difficulty, Revenue and man-of-war boats, abounded on the Shannon, since the day of the wreck; the Ennis road was beset by police, who scrutinized every traveller that passed on the west coast. The alarm was sounded, and no chance of escape presented itself in that quarter. In this dilemma, fortune, which so often stood my friend, did not desert me. It chanced that a strolling company of actors, who had been performing for some weeks past in Kilrush, were about to set off to Ennistymon, where they were to give several representations. Nothing could be easier than to avoid detection in such company; and I soon managed to be included in the corps, by accepting an engagement as a ‘walking gentleman,’ at a low salary, and on the next morning found myself seated on the ‘van,’ among a very motley crew of associates, in whose ways and habits I very soon contrived to familiarize myself, becoming, before we had gone many miles, somewhat of a favourite in the party.

“I will not weary you with any account of my strolling life. Every one knows something of the difficulties which beset the humble drama; and ours was of the humblest. Joe Hume himself could not have questioned one solitary item in our budget: and I defy the veriest quibbler on a grand jury to ‘traverse,’ a spangle on a pair of our theatrical smallclothes.

“Our scenes were two in number: one represented a cottage interior – pots, kettles, a dresser, and a large fire, being depicted in smoke-coloured traits thereon – this, with two chairs and a table, was convertible into a parlour in a private house; and again, by a red-covered arm-chair, and an old banner, became a baronial hall, or the saloon in a palace: the second, represented two houses on the flat, with an open country between them, a mill, a mountain, a stream, and a rustic bridge inclusive. This, then, was either a Street in a town, a wood, a garden, or any other out-of-door place of resort, for light comedy people, lovers, passionate fathers, waiting-maids, robbers, or chorus singers.

“The chiefs of our corps were Mr. and Mrs. M’Elwain, who, as their names bespoke, came from the north of Ireland, somewhere near Coleraine, I fancy, but cannot pretend to accuracy; but I know it was on the borders of ‘Darry.’

“How, or what, had ever induced a pair of as common-place, matter-of-fact folk, as ever lived, to take to the Thespian art, heaven can tell. Had Mr. Mac been a bailiff, and madam a green-groceress, nature would seem to have dealt fairly with them; he, being a stout, red-faced, black-bearded tyke, with a thatch of straight black hair, cut in semicircles over his ears, so as to permit character wigs without inconvenience, heavy in step, and plodding in gait. She, a tall, raw-boned woman, of some five-and-forty, with piercing grey eyes, and a shrill harsh voice, that would have shamed the veriest whistle that ever piped through a key-hole. Such were the Macbeth and the Lady Macbeth – the Romeo and Juliet – the Hamlet and Ophelia of the company; but their appearance was a trifle to the manner and deportment of their style. Imagine Juliet with a tattered Leghorn bonnet, a Scotch shawl, and a pair of brown boots, declaiming somewhat in this guise —

“ Come, *gantle* night, come loving black-browed night,
Gie me my *Romo!* and when he shall *dee*,
Tak him, and cut him into *leetle* stars,
And he will *mak’* the face of heaven *sae* fine,
That *a’* the *warld* will be in *lo’e* with him.’

“With these people I was not destined long to continue. The splendid delusion of success was soon dispelled; and the golden harvest I was to reap, settled down into something like four shillings

a week, out of which came stoppages of so many kinds and shapes, that my salary might have been refused at any moment, under the plea, that there was no coin of the realm, in which to pay it.

“One by one, every article of my wardrobe went to supply the wants of my stomach; and I remember well my great coat, preserved with the tenacity with which a shipwrecked-mariner hoards up his last biscuit, was converted into mutton, to regale Messrs. Iago, Mercutio, and Cassius, with Mesdames Ophelia, Jessica, Desdemona, and Co. It would make the fortune of an artist, could he only have witnessed the preparations for our entertainment.

“The festival was in honour, of what, the manager was pleased by a singular figure of speech to call, my ‘benefit;’ the only profit accruing to me from the aforesaid benefit, being, any satisfaction I might feel in seeing my name in capitals, and the pleasure of waiting on the enlightened inhabitants of Kilrush, to solicit their patronage.

“There was something to me of indescribable melancholy in that morning’s perambulation, for independent of the fact, that I was threatened by one with the stocks, as a vagabond, another, set a policeman to dog me, as a suspicious character, and a third, mistook me for, a rat-catcher; the butcher, with whom I negotiated for the quarter of mutton, came gravely up, and examined the texture of my raiment, calling in a jury of his friends to decide, if he wasn’t making a bad bargain.

“Night came, and I saw myself dressed for Petrucio, the character in which I was to bring down thunders of applause, and fill the treasury to overflowing. What a conflict of feelings was mine – now rating Catherine in good round phrase, before the audience – now slipping behind the flats to witness the progress of the ‘cuisine,’ for which I longed, with the appetite of starvation, – how the potatoes split their jackets with laughing, as they bubbled up and down, in the helmet of Coriolanus, for such I grieve to say was the vessel used on the occasion; the roasting mutton was presided over by ‘a gentleman of Padua,’ and Christopher Sly was employed in concocting some punch, which, true to his name, he tasted so frequently, it was impossible to awake him, towards the last act.

“It was in the first scene of the fourth act, in which, with the feelings of a famished wolf, I was obliged to assist at a mock supper on the stage, with wooden beef, parchment fowls, wax pomegranates, and gilt goblets, in which only the air prevented a vacuum. Just as I came to the passage

‘Come, Kate, sit down – I know you have a stomach,
Will you give thanks, sweet Kate, or else shall I?
What is this – mutton?’

“At that very moment, as I flung the ‘pine-saddle,’ from one end of the stage to the other, a savoury odour reached my nose; the clatter of knives, the crash of plates, the sounds of laughter and merriment, fell upon my ears – the wretches were at supper! Even the ‘first servant,’ who should have responded to my wrath, bolted from the stage like a shot, leaving his place without a moment’s warning; and ‘Catherine, the sweetest Kate in Christendom, my dainty Kate,’ assured me with her mouth full, ‘the meat was well, if I were so contented.’ Determined to satisfy myself on the point – regardless of every thing but my hunger, I rushed off the stage, and descended like a vulture, in the midst of the supper party; threats, denunciations, entreaties, were of no use, I wouldn’t go back; and let the house storm and rage, I had helped myself to a slice of the joint, and cared for nobody. It was in vain they told me, that the revenue officer and his family were outrageous with passion; and as to the apothecary in the stage box, he had paid for six tickets in ‘senna mixture;’ but heaven knows, I wasn’t a case for such a regimen.

“All persuasions failing, Mr. M’Elwain, armed all in proof, rushed at me with a tin scimitar, while Madame, more violent still, capsized the helmet and its scalding contents over my person, and nearly flayed me alive. With frantic energy I seized the joint, and, fighting my way through the whole company, rushed from the spot.

'Romans,' 'countrymen,' and 'lovers,' 'Dukes,' 'duennas,' 'demigods,' and 'dancers,' with a loud yell, joined in the pursuit. Across the stage we went, amid an uproar, that would have done credit to Pandemonium. I was 'nimblest of foot,' however, and having forced my way through an 'impracticable' door, I jumped clean through the wood, and having tripped up an 'angel' that was close on my heels, I seized a candle, 'thirty-six to the pound,' and applying it to the edge of the kitchen aforementioned, bounded madly on, leaving the whole concern wrapped in flames. Down the street I went, as if bloodhounds were behind me, and never stopped my wild career until I reached a little eminence at the end of the town; then I drew my breath, and turned one last look upon the 'Theatre Royal.' It was a glorious spectacle to a revengeful spirit – amid the volumes of flame and smoke that rose to heaven, (for the entire building was now enveloped,) might be seen the discordant mass of actors and audience, mixed up madly together – Turks, tailors, tumblers, and tidewaiters, grandees and grocers, imps and innkeepers; there they were all screaming, in concert, while the light material of the 'property-room' was ascending in myriads of sparks. Castles and forests, baronial halls and robbers' caves, were mounting to mid-heaven, amid the flash of blue lights, and the report of stage combustibles.

"You may be sure, that however gratifying to my feelings this last scene of the drama was, I did not permit myself much leisure to contemplate its a very palpable conviction staring me full in the face, that such a spectacle might not exactly redound to my 'benefit,' I, therefore, addressed myself to the road, moralizing as I went, somewhat in this fashion: I have lost a respectable, but homely suit of apparel; and instead, I have acquired a green doublet, leathern hose, jack boots, a douched hat and a feather. Had I played out my part, by this time I should have been strewing the stage with a mock supper. Now, I was consoling my feelings with real mutton, which, however, wanting its ordinary accompaniments, was a delicacy of no common order to me. I had not it is true, the vociferous applause of a delighted audience to aid my digestion as Petrucio. But the pleasant whisper of a good conscience, was a more flattering reward to Con O'Kelly. This balanced the account in my favour; and I stepped out with that light heart, which is so unequivocal an evidence of an innocent and happy disposition.

"Towards day-break, I had advanced some miles on the road to Killaloe; when before me I perceived a drove of horses, coupled together with all manner of strange tackle, halters, and hay ropes. Two or three country lads were mounted among them, endeavouring as well as they were able, to keep them quiet; while a thick, short, red-faced fellow, in dirty 'tops,' and a faded green frock led the way, and seemed to preside over the procession. As I drew near, my appearance caused no common commotion; the drivers fixing their eyes on me, could mind nothing else; the cattle, participating in the sentiments, started, capered, plunged, and neighed fearfully. While the leader of the corps, furious at the disorder he witnessed, swore like a trooper, as with a tremendous cutting whip he dashed here and there through the crowd, slashing men and horses, with a most praiseworthy impartiality. At last, his eyes fell upon me, and for a moment, I was full sure my fate was sealed; as he gripped his saddle closer, tightened his curb-rein, and grasped his powerful whip with redoubled energy.

"The instincts of an art are very powerful; for seeing the attitude of the man, and beholding the savage expression of his features, I threw myself into a stage position, slapped down my beaver with one hand, and drawing my sword with the other, called out in a rich melodramatic howl – 'Come on, Macduff!' my look, my gesture, my costume, and above all my voice, convinced my antagonist that I was insane; and, as quickly the hard unfeeling character of his face relaxed, and an expression of rude pity passed across it.

"'Tis Billy Muldoon, sir, I'm sure,' cried one of the boys, as with difficulty he sat the plunging beast under him.

"No, sir,' shouted another, 'he's bigger nor Billy, but he has a look of Hogan about the eyes.'

"'Hould your prate,' cried the master. 'Sure Hogan was hanged at the summer assizes.'

"'I know he was, sir,' was the answer, given as coolly, as though no contradiction arose on that score.

“Who are you,’ cried the leader? ‘where do you come from?’

“From Ephesus, my lord,’ said I, bowing with stage solemnity, and replacing my sword within my scabbard.

“Where?’ shouted he, with his hand to his ear.

“From Kilrush, most potent,’ replied I, approaching near enough to converse without being overheard by the others: while in a few words I explained, that my costume and appearance were only professional symbols, which a hasty departure from my friends prevented my changing.

“And where are you going now?’ was the next query.

“May I ask you the same,’ said I.

“Me, why I’m for Killaloe – for the fair tomorrow.’

“That’s exactly my destination,’ said I.

“And how do you mean to go?’ retorted he, ‘It’s forty miles from here.’

“I have a notion,’ replied I, ‘that the dark chesnut there, with the white fetlock, will have the honour of conveying me.’

“A very peculiar grin, which I did not half admire, was the reply to this speech.

“There’s many a one I wouldn’t take under five shillings from, for the day,’ said I; ‘but the times are bad, and somehow I like the look of you. Is it a bargain?’

“Faix, I’m half inclined to let you try the same horse,’ said he. ‘It would be teaching you something, any how. Did ye ever hear of the Playboy?’

“To be sure I did. Is that he?’

“He nodded.

“And you’re Dan Moone,’ said I.

“The same,’ cried he, in astonishment.

“Come, Dan, turn about is fair play. I’ll ride the horse for you to-morrow – where you like, and over, what you like – and in reward, you’ll let me mount one of the others as far as Killaloe: we’ll dine together at the cross roads.’ – Here I slipped the mutton from under the tail of my coat. – ‘Do you say done?’

“Get upon the gray pony,’ was the short rejoinder; and the next moment I was seated on the back of as likely a cob as I ever bestrode.

“My first care was to make myself master of my companion’s character, which I did in a very short time, while affecting to disclose my own, watching, with a sharp eye, how each portion of my history told upon him. I saw that he appreciated, with a true horse-dealer’s ‘onction,’ any thing that smacked of trick or stratagem; in fact, he looked upon all mankind as so many ‘screws,’ he being the cleverest fellow who could detect their imperfections, and unveil their unsoundness. In proportion as I recounted to him the pranks and rogueries of my boyish life, his esteem for me rose higher and higher; and, before the day was over, I had won so much of his confidence, that he told me the peculiar vice and iniquity of every horse he had, describing with great satisfaction the class of purchasers, he had determined to meet with.

“There is little Paul there,’ said he, ‘that brown cob, with the cropped ears, there isn’t such a trotter in Ireland; but somehow, though you can see his knees from the saddle when he’s moving, he’ll come slap down with you, as if he was shot, the moment you touch his flank with the spur, and then there’s no getting him up again, till you brush his ear with the whip – the least thing does it – he’s on his legs in a minute, and not a bit the worse of his performance.’

“Among all the narratives he told, this made the deepest impression on me. That the animal had been taught the accomplishment, there could be no doubt; and I began to puzzle my brain in what way it might best be turned to advantage. It was of great consequence to me to impress my friend at once with a high notion of my powers; and here was an admirable occasion for their exercise, if I only could hit on a plan.

“The conversation turned on various subjects, and at last, as we neared Killaloe, my companion began to ponder over the most probable mode I could be of service to him, on the following day. It was at last agreed upon, that, on reaching town, I should exchange my Petrucio costume for that of a ‘squireen,’ or half gentleman; and repair to the ordinary at the ‘Green-man,’ where nearly all the buyers put up, and all the talk on sporting matters went forward. This suited me perfectly, I was delighted to perform a new part, particularly when the filling up was left to my own discretion. Before an hour elapsed after our arrival, I saw myself attired in a very imposing suit – blue coat, cords and tops, that would have fitted me for a very high range of character in my late profession. O’Kelly was a name, as Pistol says, ‘of good report,’ and there was no need to change it; so I took my place at the supper-table, among some forty others, comprising a very fair average of the raffs and raps, of the county. The mysteries of horse-flesh, were, of course, the only subject of conversation; and before the punch made its appearance, I astonished the company by the extent of my information, and the acuteness of my remarks.

“I improvised steeple-chases over impossible countries, invented pedigrees for horses yet unfoaled, and threw out such a fund of anecdote about the ‘turf’ and the ‘chace,’ that I silenced the old established authorities of the place, and a general buzz went round the table of, ‘Who can he be, at all – where did he come from?’

“As the evening wore apace, my eloquence grew warm – I described my stud and my kennel, told some very curious instances of my hunting experience, and when at last a member of the party, piqued at my monopoly of the conversation, endeavoured to turn my flank by an allusion to grouse-shooting, I stopped him at once, by asserting with vehemence, that no man deserved the name of sportsman who shot over dogs – a sudden silence pervaded the company, while the last speaker turning towards me with a malicious grin, begged to know how I bagged my game, for that, in *his* county, they were ignorant enough to follow the old method.

“‘With a pony of course,’ said I, finishing my glass.

“‘A pony!’ cried one after the other – how do you mean?’

“‘Why,’ resumed I, ‘that I have a pony sets every species of game, as true as the best pointer that ever ‘stopped.’

“A hearty roar of laughing followed this declaration, and a less courageous spirit than mine would have feared that all his acquired popularity was in danger.

“‘You have him with you, I suppose,’ said a sly old fellow from the end of the table.

“‘Yes,’ said I carelessly – ‘I brought him over here to take a couple of days’ shooting, if there is any to be had.

“‘You would have no objection,’ said another insinuatingly, ‘to let us look at the beast?’

“‘Not the least,’ said I.

“‘Maybe you’d take a bet on it,’ said a third.

“‘I fear I couldn’t,’ said I, – ‘the thing is too sure – the wager would be an unfair one.’

“‘Oh! as to that,’ cried three or four together, ‘we’ll take our chance, for even if we were to lose, it’s well worth paying for.’

“The more I expressed my dislike to bet, the more warmly they pressed me, and I could perceive that a general impression was spreading that my pony was about as apocryphal as many of my previous stories.

“‘Ten pounds with you, he doesn’t do it,’ said an old hard-featured squire.

“‘The same from me,’ cried another.

“‘Two to one in fifties,’ shouted a third, until every man at table had proffered his wager, and I gravely called for pen, ink, and paper, and booked them, with all due form.

“‘Now, when is it to come off?’ was the question of some half dozen.

“‘Now, if you like it – the night seems fine.’

“No, no,’ said they, laughing, ‘there’s no such hurry as that; to-morrow we are going to draw Westenra’s cover – what do you say if you meet us there, by eight o’clock – and we’ll decide the bet.’

“Agreed,’ said I; and shaking hands with the whole party, I folded up my paper, placed it in my pocket, and wished them good night.

“Sleep was, however, the last thing in my thoughts; repairing to the little public-house where I left my friend Dan, I asked him if he knew any one well acquainted with the country, and who could tell, at a moment, where a hare, or a covey was to be found. “‘To be sure,’ said he at once; ‘there’s a boy below knows every puss and every bird in the country. Tim Daly would bring you, dark as the night is, to the very spot where you’d find one.’

“In a few minutes I had made Mr. Tim’s acquaintance, and arranged with him to meet me at the cover on the following morning, a code of signals being established between us, by which, he was to convey to me the information of where a hare was lying, or a covey to be sprung.

“A little before eight I was standing beside ‘Paul’ on the appointed spot, the centre of an admiring circle, who, whatever their misgivings as to his boasted skill, had only one opinion about his shapes and qualities.

“‘Splendid forehead’ – ‘what legs’ – ‘look at his quarters’ – ‘and so deep in the heart’ – were the exclamations heard on every side – till a rosy-cheeked fat little fellow growing impatient at the delay, cried out —

“‘Come, Mr. O’Kelly, mount if you please, and come along.’

“I tightened my girth – sprang into the saddle – my only care being, to keep my toes in as straight a line as I could, with my feet. Before we proceeded half a mile, I saw Tim seated on a stile, scratching his head in a very knowing manner; upon which, I rode out from the party, and looking intently at the furze cover in front, called out —

“‘Keep back the dogs there – call them off – hush, not a word.’

“The hounds were called in, the party reined back their horses, and all sat silent spectators of my movements.

“When suddenly I touched ‘Paul’ in both flanks, down he dropped, like a parish clerk, stiff and motionless as a statue.

“‘What’s that?’ cried two or three behind.

“‘He’s setting,’ said I, in a whisper.

“‘What is it, though?’ said one.

“‘A hare!’ said I, and at the same instant I shouted to lay on the dogs, and tipping Paul’s ears, forward I went. Out bolted puss, and away we started across the country, I leading, and taking all before me.

“We killed in half an hour, and found ourselves not far from the first cover; my friend Tim, being as before in advance, making the same signal as at first. The same performance was now repeated. ‘Paul’ went through his part to perfection; and notwithstanding the losses, a general cheer saluted us as we sprung to our legs, and dashed after the dogs.

“Of course I didn’t spare him: everything now depended on my sustaining our united fame; and there was nothing too high or too wide for me, that morning.

“‘What will you take for him, Mr. O’Kelly?’ was the question of each man, as he came up to the last field.

“‘Would you like any further proof?’ said I. ‘Is any gentleman dissatisfied?’

“A general ‘No’ was the answer; and again the offers were received from every quarter, while they produced the bank-notes, and settled their bets. It was no part of my game, however, to sell him; the trick might be discovered before I left the country, and if so, there wouldn’t be a whole bone remaining in my skin.

“My refusal evidently heightened both *my* value and *his*, and I sincerely believe there was no story I could tell, on our ride back to town, which would not have met credence that morning; and, indeed, to do myself justice, I tried my popularity to its utmost.

“By way of a short cut back, as the fair was to begin at noon, we took a different route, which led across some grass fields, and a small river. In traversing this, I unfortunately was in the middle of some miraculous anecdote, and entirely forgot my pony and his acquirements; and as he stopped to drink, without thinking of what I was doing, with the common instinct of a rider, I touched him with the spur. Scarcely had the rowel reached his side, when down he fell, sending me head foremost over his neck into the water. For a second or two the strength of the current carried me along, and it was only after a devil of a scramble I gained my legs, and reached the bank wet through, and heartily ashamed of myself.

“Eh, O’Kelly, what the deuce was that?’ cried one of the party, as a roar of laughter broke from amongst them.

“Ah!’ said I, mournfully, ‘I wasn’t quick enough/

“Quick enough!’ cried they. ‘Egad, I never saw anything like it. Why, man, you were shot off like an arrow.’

“Leaped off, if you please,’ said I, with an air of an offended dignity – ‘leaped off – didn’t you see it?’

“See what?’

“The salmon, to be sure. A twelve-pounder, as sure as my name’s O’Kelly. He “set” it.’

“Set a salmon!’ shouted twenty voices in a breath. ‘The thing’s impossible.’

“Would you like a bet on it?’ asked I drily.

“No, no – damn it; no more bets; but surely – ’

“Too provoking, after all,’ muttered I, ‘to have lost so fine a fish, and get such a ducking’; and with that I mounted my barb, and, waving my hand, wished them a good-bye, and galloped into Killaloe.

“This story I have only related, because, insignificant as it was, it became in a manner the pivot of my then fate in life. The jockey at once made me an offer of partnership in his traffic, displaying before me the numerous advantages of such a proposal. I was a disengaged man – my prospects not peculiarly brilliant – the state of my exchequer by no means encouraging the favourite nostrum of a return to cash payments, and so I acceded, and entered at once upon my new profession with all the enthusiasm I was always able to command, no matter what line of life solicited my adoption.

“But it’s near one o’clock, and so now, Mr. O’Leary, if you’ve no objection, we’ll have a grill and a glass of Madeira, and then, if you can keep awake an hour or so longer, I’ll try and finish my adventures.”

CHAPTER VII. O'KELLY'S TALE. – CONTINUED

“I left off at that flattering portion of my history where I became a horse-dealer; in this capacity I travelled over a considerable portion of Ireland, now larking it in the West – jollifying in the South – and occasionally suffering a penance for both enjoyments, by a stray trip to Ulster. In these rambles I contrived to make acquaintance with most of the resident gentry, who, by the special freemasonry that attends my calling, scrupled not to treat me on terms of half equality, and even invite me to their houses – a piece of condescension on their part, which they well knew was paid for, in more solid advantages.

“In a word, Mr. O'Leary, I became a kind of moral amphibia, with powers to sustain life in two distinct and opposite elements – now brushing my way among frieze-coated farmers, trainers, dealers, sharpers, and stablemen; now floating on the surface of a politer world, where the topics of conversation took a different range, and were couched in a very different vocabulary.

“My knowledge of French, and my acquaintance with Parisian life, at least as seen in that class in which I used to mix, added to a kind of natural tact, made me, as far as manners and ‘usage’ were concerned, fully the equal of those with whom I associated; and I managed matters so well, that the circumstance of my being seen in the morning with cords and tops of jockey cut, showing off a ‘screw,’ or extolling the symmetry of a spavined hackney, never interfered with the pretensions I put forward at night, when, arranged in suit of accurate black, I turned over the last new opera, or delivered a very scientific criticism on the new ‘ballet’ in London, or the latest fashion imported from the Continent.

“Were I to trace back this part of my career, I might perhaps amuse you more by the incidents it contained, than by any other portion of my life; nothing indeed is so suggestive of adventure, as that anomaly which the French denominate so significantly – ‘a false position.’ The man who – come, come, don't be afraid, though that sounds very like Joseph Surface, I'm not going to moralize – the man, I say, who endeavours to sustain two distinct lines in life, is very likely to fail in both, and so I felt it, for while my advantages all inclined to one side, my taste and predilections leaned to the other; I could never adopt knavery as a profession – as an amateur I gloried in it: roguery, without risk, was a poor pettifogging policy that I spurned; but a practical joke that involved life or limb, a hearty laugh, or a heavy reckoning, was a temptation I never could resist. The more I mixed in society, the greater my intimacy with persons of education and refinement, the stronger became my repugnance to my actual condition, and the line of life I had adopted. While my position in society was apparently more fixed, I became in reality more nervously anxious for its stability. The fascinations which in the better walks of life are thrown around the man of humble condition, but high aspirings, are strong and sore temptations, while he measures and finds himself not inferior to others, to whom the race is open, and the course is free, and yet feels in his own heart, that there is a bar upon his escutcheon which excludes him from the lists. I began now to experience this in all its poignancy. Among the acquaintances I had formed, one of my most intimate was a young baronet, who had just succeeded to a large estate in the county Kilkenny. Sir Harvey Blundell was an Anglo-Irishman in more than one sense: from his English father he had inherited certain staid and quiet notions of propriety, certain conventional ideas regarding the observance of etiquette, which are less valued in Ireland; while, from his mother, he succeeded to an appreciation of native fun and drollery, of all the whims and oddities of Irish life, which, strange enough, are as well understood by the Anglo-Irishman, as by one ‘to the manner born.’

“I met Sir Harvey at a supper party in College. Some song I had sung of my own composing, or some story of my inventing, I forget which, tickled his fancy: he begged to be introduced to me, drew his chair over to my side of the table, and ended by giving an invitation to his house for the partridge-shooting, which was to begin in a few days; I readily assented – it was a season in which I had nothing to do, my friend Dan had gone over to the Highlands to make a purchase of some ponies;

I was rather flush of cash, and consequently in good spirits. It was arranged, then, that I should drive him down in my drag, a turn-out with four spanking greys, of whose match and colour, shape and action, I was not a little vain.

“We posted to Carlow, to which place I had sent on my horses, and arrived the same evening at Sir Harvey’s house, in time for dinner. This was the first acquaintance I had made, independent of my profession. Sir Harvey knew me, as Mr. O’Kelly whom he met at an old friend’s chambers in College; and he introduced me thus to his company, adding to his intimates in a whisper I could overhear – ‘devilish fast fellow, up to every thing – knows life at home, and abroad, and has such a team!’ Here were requisites enough, in all conscience, to win favour among any set of young country-gentlemen, and I soon found myself surrounded by a circle, who listened to my opinions on every subject, and recorded my judgments, with the most implicit faith in their wisdom, no matter on what I talked, women, wine, the drama, play, sporting, debts, duns, or duels, my word was law.

“Two circumstances considerably aided me in my present supremacy: first, Sir Harvey’s friends were all young men from Oxford, who knew little of the world, and less of that part of it called Ireland; and secondly, they were all strangers to me, and consequently my liberty of speech was untrammelled by any unpleasant reminiscences of dealing, in fairs or auctions.

“The establishment was presided over by Sir Harvey’s sister, at least, nominally so – her presence being a reason for having ladies at his parties; and although she was only nineteen, she gave a tone and character to the habits of the house, which, without her, it never could have possessed. Miss Blundell was a very charming person, combining in herself two qualities which, added to beauty, made a very irresistible *ensemble*: she had the greatest flow of spirits, with a retiring and almost timidly bashful disposition: courage for any thing, and a delicacy that shrunk abashed from all that bordered on display, or bore the slightest semblance of effrontery. I shall say no more, than that before I was a week in the house, I was over head and ears in love with her; my whole thoughts centred in her; my whole endeavour, to show myself in such a light as might win her favour.

“Every accomplishment I possessed – every art and power of amusing, urged to the utmost by the desire to succeed, I exerted in her service; and at last perceived, that she was not indifferent to me. Then, and then for the first time, came the thought – who was I, that dared to do this – what had I of station, rank, or wealth, to entitle me to sue – perhaps to gain, the affections, of one placed like her? The whole duplicity of my conduct started up before me, and I saw for the first time, how the mere ardour of pursuit had led me on and on – how the daring to surmount a difficulty, had stirred my heart, at first to win, and then to worship her: and the bitterness of my self-reproach at that moment became a punishment, which, even now, I remember with a shudder. It is too true! The great misfortunes of life form more endurable subjects for memory in old age, than the instances, however trivial, where we have acted amiss, and where conscience rebukes us. I have had my share of calamity, one way or other – my life has been more than once in peril – and in such peril as might well shake the nerve of the boldest: but I can think on all these, and do think on them, often, without fear or heart-failing; but never can I face the hours, when my own immediate self-love and vanity brought their own penalty on me, without a sense of self-abasement, as vivid as the moment I first experienced it. But I must hasten over this. I had been now about six weeks in Sir Harvey’s house, day after day determining on my departure, and invariably yielding when the time came, to some new request to stay for something or other – now, a day’s fishing on the Nore – now, another morning at the partridge – then, there was – a boat-race, or a music-party, or a pic-nic, in fact each day led on to another, and I found myself lingering on, unable to tear myself from where, I felt, my remaining was ruin.

“At last I made up my mind, and determined, come what would, to take my leave, never to return. I mentioned to Sir Harvey in the morning that some matter of importance required my presence in town, and, by a half promise to spend my Christmas with him, obtained his consent to my departure.

“We were returning from an evening walk – Miss Blundell was leaning on my arm – we were the last of the party who, by some chance or other, had gone forward, leaving us to follow alone. For some time neither of us spoke: what were her thoughts, I cannot guess: mine were, I acknowledge, entirely fixed upon the hour I was to see her for the last time, while I balanced whether I should speak of my approaching departure, or leave her without even a ‘good-bye.’

“I did not know at the time so well as I now do, how much of the interest I had excited in her heart depended on the mystery of my life. The stray hints I now and then dropped – the stories into which I was occasionally led – the wild scenes and wilder adventures, in which I bore my part – had done more than stimulate her curiosity concerning me. This, I repeat, I knew not at the time, and the secret of my career weighed like a crime upon my conscience. I hesitated long whether I should not disclose every circumstance of my life, and, by the avowal of my utter un-worthiness, repair, as far as might be, the injury I had done her. Then came that fatal ‘*amour-propre*’ that involved me originally in the pursuit, and I was silent. We had not been many minutes thus, when a servant came from the house to inform Miss Blundell that her cousin, Captain Douglas, had arrived. As she nodded her head in reply, I perceived the colour mounted to her cheek, and an expression of agitation passed over her features.

“‘Who is Captain Douglas?’ said I, without, however, venturing to look more fully at her.

“‘Oh! a cousin, a second or third cousin, I believe; but a great friend of Harvey’s.’

“‘And of his sister’s too, if I might presume so far?’

“‘Quite wrong for once,’ said she, with an effort to seem at ease: ‘he’s not the least a favourite of mine, although –’

“‘*You* are of his!’ I added quickly. ‘Well, well, I really beg pardon for this boldness of mine.’ How I was about to continue, I know not, when her brother’s voice, calling her aloud, broke off all further conversation.

“‘Come, Fanny,’ said he, ‘here’s Harry Douglas, just come with all the London gossip – he’s been to Windsor too, and has been dining with the Prince. O’Kelly, you must know Douglas, you are just the men to suit each other. – He’s got a heavy book on the Derby, and will be delighted to have a chat with you about the turf.’

“As I followed Miss Blundell into the drawing-room, my heart was heavy and depressed.

“Few of the misfortunes in life come on us without foreboding. The clouds that usher in the storm, cast their shadows on the earth before they break; and so it is with our fate. A gloomy sense of coming evil, presages the blow about to fall, and he who would not be stunned by the stroke, must not neglect the warning.

“The room was full of people – the ordinary buzz and chit-chat of an evening-party was going forward, and an hundred pleasant projects were forming for the next day’s amusement, among which, I heard my name bandied about, on every side.

“‘O’Kelly will arrange this,’ cried one – ‘leave it all to O’Kelly – he must decide it;’ and so on, when suddenly Blundell called out —

“‘O’Kelly, come up here,’ and then taking me by the arm, he led me to the end of the room, where with his back turned towards us, a tall fashionable-looking man was talking to his sister.

“‘Harry,’ cried the host, as he touched his elbow, ‘let me introduce a very particular friend of mine – Mr. O’Kelly.’

“Captain Douglas wheeled sharply round, and, fixing on me a pair of dark eyes, overshadowed with heavy beetling brows, looked at me sternly without speaking. A cold thrill ran through me from head to foot as I met his gaze; the last time we had seen each other was in a square of the Royal Barracks, where *he*, was purchasing a remount for his troop, and *I*, was the horse-dealer.

“‘*Your* friend, Mr. O’Kelly!’ said he, as he fixed his glass in his eye, and a most insulting curl, half smile, half sneer, played about his mouth.

“How very absurd you are, Harry,” said Miss Blundell, endeavouring by an allusion to something they were speaking of, to relieve the excessive awkwardness of the moment.

“Yes, to be sure, *my friend*,” chimed in Sir Harvey, “and a devilish good fellow too, and the best judge of horse-flesh.”

“I haven’t a doubt of it,” was the dry remark of the Captain; “but how did he get here?”

“Sir,” said I, in a voice scarce audible with passion, “whatever, or whoever I am, by birth at least I am fully your equal.”

“D – n your pedigree,” said he coolly.

“Why, Harry, interrupted Blundell: ‘what are you thinking of? Mr. O’Kelly is –’

“A jockey – a horse-dealer, if you will, and the best hand at passing off a screw, I’ve met for some time. I say, sir,” continued he in a louder tone, “that roan charger hasn’t answered his warranty – he stands at Dycer’s for you.”

“Had a thunderbolt fallen in the midst of us, the consternation could not have been greater – as for me, everything around bore a look of mockery and scorn: derision and contempt sat on every feature, and a wild uncertainty of purpose, like coming insanity, flitted through my brain: what I said, or how I quitted the spot, I am unable to say; my last remembrance of that accursed moment was the burst of horrid laughter that filled my ears, as I rushed out. I almost think that I hear it still, like the yell of the furies; its very cadence was torture. I ran from the house – I crossed the fields without a thought of whither I was going – escape, concealment, my only object. I sought to hide myself for ever from the eyes of those who had looked upon me with such withering contempt; and I would have been thankful to him who would have given me refuge, beneath the dank grass of the churchyard.

“Never did a guilty man fly from the scene of his crime with more precipitate haste, than did I from the spot which had witnessed my shame, and degradation. At every step, I thought of the cruel speeches, the harsh railings, and the bitter irony, of all, before whom, but one hour ago, I stood chief and pre-eminent; and although I vowed to myself never to meet any of them again, I could not pluck from my heart the innate sense of my despicable condition, and how low I must now stand in the estimation of the very lowest, I had so late looked down upon. And here let me passingly remark, that while we often hold lightly the praise of those, upon whose powers of judgment and reach of information we place little value, by some strange contrariety we feel most bitterly the censure of these very people, whenever any trivial circumstance, any small or petty observance with which they are acquainted, gives them, for the time, the power of an opinion. The mere fact of our contempt for them adds a poignancy to their condemnation, and I question much if we do not bear up better against the censure of the wise, than the scoff of the ignorant.

“On I went, and on, never even turning my head; for though I had left all the little wealth I possessed in the world, I would gladly have given it, ten times told, to have blotted out even a particle of the shame that rested on my character. Scarcely had I reached the high road, when I heard the quick tramp of horses, and the rattle of wheels behind me; and, so strong were the instincts of my fear, that I scarcely dared to look back; at length I did so, and beheld the mail-coach coming towards me at a rapid pace. As it neared, I hailed the coachman, and without an inquiry as to where it was going, I sprung up to a place on the roof, thankful that ere long I should leave miles between me, and my torturers.

“The same evening we arrived in Cork; during the journey I made acquaintance with a sergeant of a light dragoon regiment, who was proceeding in charge of three recruits, to the depot at Cove. With the quick eye of his calling, the fellow saw something in my dispirited state that promised success to his wishes; and he immediately began the thousand-times-told tale of the happiness of a soldier’s life. I stopped him short at once, for my mind was already made up, and before the day broke, I had enlisted in his Majesty’s Twelfth Light Dragoons, at that time serving in America.

“If I have spared you the recital of many passages in my life, whose painful memory would hurt me to call up, I shall also pass over this portion of my career, which, though not marked by

any distinct feature of calamity, was, perhaps, the most painful I ever knew. He who thinks that in joining the ranks or an army, his only trials will be the severity of an unaccustomed discipline, and the common hardship of a soldier's life, takes but a very shallow view of what is before him. Coarse and vulgar associates – depraved tastes and brutal habits – the ribald jest of the barrack-room – the comrade spirit of a class, the very lowest and meanest – these are the trials, the almost insupportable trials, of him who has known better days.

“As hour by hour, he finds himself yielding to the gradual pressure of his fate, and feels his mind assuming, one by one, the prejudices of those about him, his self-esteem falls with his condition, and he sees that the time is not distant, when all inequality between him and his fellows shall cease, and every trait of his former self be washed away, for ever.

“After four months of such endurance as I dare not even now suffer myself to dwell upon, orders arrived at Cove for the recruits of the different regiments at once to proceed to Chatham, whence they were to be forwarded to their respective corps. I believe in my heart, had this order not come, I should have deserted; so unendurable had my life become. The thought of active service, the prospect of advancement, however remote, cheered my spirits, and, for the first time since I joined, my heart was light on the morning when the old ‘Northumberland’ transport anchored in the harbour, and the signal for embarking the troops floated from the mast-head. A motley crew we were – frieze-coated, red-coated, and no-coated; some, ruddy-cheeked farmer's boys, sturdy good-humoured fellows, with the bloom of country life upon their faces; some, the pale, sickly, inhabitants of towns, whose sharpened features and quick penetrating eyes, betokened how much their wits had contributed to their maintenance. A few there were, like myself, drawn from a better class, but already scarce distinguishable amid the herd. We were nearly five hundred in number, one feature of equality pervading all – none of us had any arms. Some instances of revolt and mutiny that had occurred, a short time previous, on board troop-ships, had induced the Horse Guards to adopt this resolution, and a general order was issued, that the recruits should not receive arms before their arrival at Chatham. At last we weighed anchor, and, with a light easy wind stood out to sea; it was the first time I had been afloat for many a long day, and as I leaned over the bulwark, and heard the light rustle of the waves as they broke on the cut-water, and watched the white foam as it rippled past, I thought on the old days of my smuggling life, when I trod the plank of my little craft, with a step as light and a heart as free, as ever did the proudest admiral on the poop-deck of his three-decker; and as I remembered what I then had been, and thought of what I now was, a growing melancholy settled on me, and I sat apart and spoke to none.

“On the third night after we sailed, the breeze, which had set in at sunset, increased considerably, and a heavy sea rolled in from the westward. Now, although the weather was not such as to endanger the safety of a good ship with an able crew, yet was it by no means a matter of indifference in an old rotten craft like the ‘Northumberland,’ condemned half a dozen years before, and barely able to make her voyage in light winds and fine weather. Our skipper knew this well, and I could see by the agitation of his features, and the altered tones of his voice, how little he liked the freshening gale, and the low moaning sound that swept along the sea, and threatened a storm. The pumps had been at work for some hours, and it was clear that the most we could do, was to keep the water from gaining on us. A chance observation of mine had attracted the skipper's attention, and after a few minutes' conversation he saw that I was a seaman, not only better informed, but more habituated to danger than himself; he was, therefore, glad to take counsel from me, and at my suggestion a spare sail was bent, and passed under the ship's bottom, which soon succeeded in arresting the progress of the leak, and, at the same time, assisted the vessel's sailing. Meanwhile the storm was increasing, and it now blew what the sailors call ‘great guns.’

“We were staggering along under light canvas, when the lookout-a-head announced a light on the weather-bow; it was evidently coming towards us, and scarce half a mile distant; we had no more than time to hang out a lantern in the tops and put up the helm, when a large ship, whose sides rose

several feet above our own, swept by us, and so close, that her yard-arms actually touched our rigging as she yawed over in the sea. A muttered thanksgiving for our escape, for such it was, broke from every lip; and hardly was it uttered, when again a voice cried out, 'here she comes to leeward,' and sure enough the dark shadow of the large mass moving at a speed far greater than ours, passed under our lee, while a harsh summons was shouted out to know who we were, and whither bound. 'The Northumberland,' with troops, was the answer; and before the words were well out, a banging noise was heard – the ports of the stranger ship were flung open, a bright flash, like a line of flame, ran her entire length, and a raking broadside was poured into us. The old transport reeled over and trembled like a thing of life, – her shattered sides and torn bulwarks let in the water as she heeled to the shock, and for an instant, as she bent beneath the storm, I thought she was settling, to go down by the head. I had little time, however, for thought: one wild cheer broke from the attacking ship – its answer was the faint, sad cry, of the wounded and dying on our deck. The next moment the grapples were thrown into us, and the vessel was boarded from stem to stern. The noise of the cannonade, and the voices on deck, brought all our men from below, who came tumbling up the hatches, believing we had struck.

"Then began a scene, such as all I have ever witnessed of carnage and slaughter cannot equal. The Frenchmen, for such they were, rushed down upon us as we stood defenceless, and unarmed; a deadly roll of musketry swept our thick and trembling masses. The cutlass and the boarding-pike made fearful havoc among us, and an unresisted slaughter tore along our deck, till the heaps of dead and dying made the only barrier for the few remaining.

"A chance word in French, and a sign of masonry, rescued me from the fate of my comrades, and my only injury was a slight sabre-wound in the fore-arm, which I received in warding off a cut intended for my head. The carnage lasted scarce fifteen minutes; but in that time, of all the crew that manned our craft – what between those who leaped overboard in wild despair, and those who fell beneath fire and steel – scarce twenty remained, appalled and trembling, the only ones rescued from this horrible slaughter.

"A sudden cry of 'she's sinking!' burst from the strange ship, and in a moment the Frenchmen clambered up their bulwarks, the grapples were cast off, the dark mass darted onwards on her course, and we, drifted away to leeward – a moving sepulchre!

"As the clouds flew past, the moon shone out and threw a pale sickly light on the scene of slaughter, where the dead and dying lay in indiscriminate heaps together – so frightful a spectacle never did eye rest upon! The few who, like myself, survived, stood trembling, half stunned by the shock, not daring to assist the wretched men as they writhed in agony before us. I was the first to recover from this stupor, and turning to the others, I made signs to clear the decks of the dead bodies – speak I could not. It was some time before they could be made to understand me; unhappily, not a single sailor had escaped the carnage; a few raw recruits were the only survivors of that dreadful night.

"After a little they rallied so far as to obey me, and I, taking the wheel, assumed the command of the vessel, and endeavoured to steer a course for any port on the west coast of England.

"Day broke at length, but a wide waste of waters lay around us: the wind had abated considerably, but still the sea ran high; and although our foresail and trysail remained bent, as before the attack, we laboured heavily, and made little way through the water. Our decks were quite covered with the dying, whose heart-rending cries, mingled with the wilder shouts of madness, were too horrible to bear. But I cannot dwell on such a picture. Of the little party who survived, scarcely three were serviceable: some sat cold and speechless from terror, and seemed insensible to every threat or entreaty; some sternly refused to obey my orders, and prowled about between decks in search of spirits; and one, maddened by the horrors he beheld, sprang with a scream into the sea, and never was seen more.

"Towards evening we heard a hail, and on looking put saw a pilot-boat making for us, and in a short time we were boarded by a pilot, who, with some of his crew, took the vessel into their hands, and before sunset we anchored in Milford.

“Immediately on landing, I was sent up to London under a strong escort, to give an account of the whole affair to the Admiralty. For eight days my examination was continued during several hours every day, and at last I was dismissed, with promotion to the rank of sergeant, for my conduct in saving the ship, and appointed to the fortieth foot, then under orders for Quebec.

“Once more at sea and in good spirits, I sailed for Quebec on a fine morning in April, on board the ‘Abercrombie.’ Nothing could be more delightful than the voyage: the weather was clear, with a fair fresh breeze and a smooth sea; and at the third week we dropped our lead on the green bank of Newfoundland, and brought up again a cod fish, every time we heaved it. We now entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and began anxiously to look for land.

“On the third morning after we made the ‘Gulf,’ a heavy snow-storm came on, which prevented our seeing a cable’s length ahead of us. It was so cold too, that few remained on deck; for although the first of May, it was about as severe a day as I remember. Anxious to see something of the country, I remained with the lookout-a-head, straining my eyes to catch a glimpse of the land through the dense snow-drift. All I could distinguish, however, was the dim outline of distant mountains, apparently covered with snow; but, as the day wore on, we came in sight of the long low island of Anticosti, which, though considerably more than a hundred miles in length, is not, in any part, more than fifteen feet above the level of the water.

“Towards evening the land became much clearer to view; and now I could perceive tall, peaked mountains some thousand feet in height, their bases clad with stunted pine-trees – their white summits stretching away into the clouds. As I looked, my astonishment was great, to find that the vast gulf, which at day-break was some sixty miles in width, seemed now diminished to about eight or ten, and continued to narrow rapidly, as we proceeded on our course.

“The skipper, who had only made the voyage once before, seemed himself confused, and endeavoured to explain our apparent vicinity to the land, as some mere optical delusion – now, attributing it to something in the refraction of the light; now, the snow: but although he spoke with all the assurance of knowledge, it was evident to me, that he was by no means satisfied in his own mind, of the facts he presented to ours.

“As the snow-storm abated, we could see that the mountains which lay on either side of us, met each other in front, forming a vast amphitheatre without any exit.

“This surely is not the Gulf of St. Lawrence?” said I to an old sailor who sat leisurely chewing tobacco with his back to the capstern.

“No, that it ain’t,” said he coolly; ‘it’s Gaspé Bay, and I shouldn’t wish to be in a worse place.’

“What could have brought us here then? the skipper surely doesn’t know where we are?”

“I’ll tell you what has brought us here. There’s a current from the Gulf stream sets in to this bay, at seven, or eight knots the hour, and brings in all the floating ice along with it—There, am I right? do you hear that?”

“As he spoke, a tremendous crash, almost as loud as thunder, was heard at our bow; and as I rushed to the bulwark and looked over, I beheld vast fragments of ice more than a foot thick, encrusted with frozen snow, flying past us in circling eddies; while further on, the large flakes were mounting, one above the other, clattering, and crashing, as the waves broke among them. Heaven knows how much farther our mulish Cumberland skipper would have pursued his voyage of discovery, had not the soundings proclaimed but five fathom water. Our sails were now backed; but as the current continued to bear us along, a boat was got out, and an anchor put in readiness to warp us astern; but by an unhappy accident the anchor slipped in lowering over the side, stove in the boat, and of the four poor fellows who were under it, one was carried under the ice, and never seen again. This was a sad beginning, and matters now appeared each moment more threatening. As we still continued to drift with the current, a bower-anchor was dropped where we were, and the vessel afterwards swung round, head to wind, while the ice came crashing upon the cut-water, and on the sides, with a noise that

made all else inaudible. It was found by this time that the water was shoaling, and this gave new cause for fear; for if the ship were to touch the ground; it was clear, all chance of saving her was at an end.

“After a number of different opinions given and canvassed, it was determined that four men should be sent ashore in the yawl, to find out some one who knew the pilotage of the bay; for we could descry several log-huts along the shore, at short distances from each other. With my officer's permission, I obtained leave to make one of this party, and I soon found myself tugging away at the bow-oar through a heavy surf, whose difficulty was tenfold increased by the fragments of ice that floated past. After rowing about an hour, the twilight began to fall, and we could but faintly perceive the outline of the ship, while the log-huts on shore seemed scarcely nearer than at the moment when we quitted the vessel. By this time, large fields of ice were about us on every side; rowing was no longer possible, and we groped along with our boat-hooks, finding a channel, where we could avoid the floating masses.

“The peril of this proceeding grew with every moment; sometimes our frail boat would be struck with such force as threatened to stave in every plank; sometimes was she driven high upon a piece of ice, which took all our efforts to extricate her from, while, as we advanced, no passage presented itself before us, but flake upon flake of frozen matter, among which were fragments of wrecks, and branches of trees, mixed up together. The sailors, who had undertaken the enterprise against their will, now resolved they would venture no further, but make their way back to the ship while it was yet possible. I alone opposed this plan – to return, without at least having reached the shore, I told them, would be a disgrace, the safety of all on board was in a manner committed to our efforts; and I endeavoured by every argument to induce them to proceed. To no purpose did I tell them this; of no use was it that I pointed out the lights on shore, which we could now see moving from place to place, as though we had been perceived, and that some preparations were making for our rescue. I was outvoted, however: back they would go; and one of them as he pushed the boat's head round, jeeringly said to me —

“Why, with such jolly good foot-way, don't you go yourself? you'll have all the honour, you know.’

“The taunt stung me to the quick, the more as it called forth a laugh from the rest. I made no answer, but seizing a boat-hook, sprang over the side upon a large mass of ice. The action drove the boat from me. I heard them call to me to come back; but come what would, my mind was made up. I never turned my head, but with my eyes fixed on the shore-lights, I dashed on, glad to find that with every stroke of the sea the ice was borne onwards towards the land. At length the sound of the breakers ahead, made me fearful of venturing farther; for as the darkness fell, I had to trust entirely to my hearing as my guide. I stood then rooted to the spot, and as the wind whistled past, and the snow-drift was borne in eddying currents by me, I drove my boat-hook into the ice, and held on firmly by it. Suddenly, through the gloom a bright flash flared out, and then I could see it flitting along, and at last, I thought I could mark it, directing its course towards the ship; I strained my eyes to their utmost, and in an ecstasy of joy I shouted aloud, as I beheld a canoe manned by Indians, with a pine torch blazing in the prow. The red light of the burning wood lit up their wild figures as they came along – now carrying their light bark over the fields of ice; now launching it into the boiling surf, and thus, alternately walking, and sailing, they came at a speed almost inconceivable. They soon heard my shouts, and directed their course to where I stood; but the excitement of my danger, the dreadful alternations of hope and fear thus suddenly ceasing, so stunned me that I could not speak, as they took me in their arms and placed me in the bottom of the canoe. Of our course back to shore I remember little: the intense cold, added to the stupefaction of my mind, brought on a state resembling sleep; and even when they lifted me on land, the drowsy lethargy clung to me; and only when I found myself beside the blaze of a wood-fire, did my faculties begin to revive, and, like a seal under the rays of the sun, did I warm into life, once more. The first thing I did, when morning broke, was to spring from my resting-place beside the fire, and rush out, to look for the ship. The sun was shining

brilliantly – the bay lay calm as a mirror before me, reflecting the tall mountains and the taper pines: but the ship was gone, not a sail appeared in sight; and I now learned, that when the tide began to make, and she was enabled to float, a land breeze sprung up which carried her gently out to sea, and that she was in all likelihood, by that time, some thirty miles in her course up the St. Lawrence. For a moment, my joy at the deliverance of my companions was unchecked by any thought of my own desolate condition; the next minute, I remembered myself, and sat down upon a stone, and gazed out upon the wide waters with a sad and sinking heart.”

CHAPTER VIII. MR. O'KELLY'S TALE. – CONCLUDED

“Life had presented too many vicissitudes before me, to make much difference in my temperament, whatever came uppermost. Like the gambler, who if he lose to-day, goes off consoling himself, that he may be a winner to-morrow, I had learned never to feel very acutely any misfortune, provided only that I could see some prospect of its not being permanent: – and how many are there who go through the world in this fashion, getting the credit all the while of being such true philosophers, so much elevated above the chances and changes of fortune, and who, after all, only apply to the game of life the same rule of action they practise at the ‘*rouge et noir*’ table.

“The worthy folks among whom my lot was now cast, were a tribe of red men, called the Gaspé Indians, who, among other pastimes peculiar to themselves, followed the respectable and ancient trade, of wreckers, in which occupation the months of October and November usually supplied them with as much as they could do – after that, the ice closed in, on the bay and no vessel could pass up or down the St. Lawrence, before the following spring.

“It was for some time to me a puzzle, how people so completely barbarous as they were, possessed such comfortable and well-appointed dwellings, for not only had they log-huts well jointed, and carefully put together, but many of the comforts of civilized life were to be seen in the internal decorations. The reason I at length learned, from the chief, in whose house I dwelt, and with whom I had already succeeded in establishing a sworn friendship. About fifteen years previous, this bay was selected by a party of emigrants, as the *locale* of a settlement. They had been wrecked on the island of Anticosti themselves, and made their escape to Gaspé, with such remnants of their effects as they could rescue from the wreck. There, they built houses for themselves, made clearings in the forest, and established a little colony, with rules and regulations for its government. Happily for them, they possessed within their number almost every description of artificer requisite for such an undertaking, their original intention being to found a settlement in Canada, and thus carpenters, shoe-makers, weavers, tailors, mill-wrights, being all ready to contribute their aid and assistance to each other, the colony made rapid progress, and soon assumed the appearance of a thriving and prosperous place. The forest abounded in wild deer and bears, the bay not less rich in fish, while the ground, which they sowed with potatoes and Indian-corn, yielded most successful crops, and as the creek was never visited by sickness, nothing could surpass the success that waited on their labours.

“Thus they lived, till in the fall of the year, a detachment of the Gaspé Indians, who came down every autumn for the herring-fishery, discovered that their territory was occupied, and that an invading force were in possession of their hunting-grounds. The result could not be doubted; the red men returned home to their friends with the news, and speedily came back again with reinforcements of the whole tribe, and made an attack on the settlement. The colonists, though not prepared, soon assembled, and being better armed, for their fire-arms and cutlasses had all been saved, repelled the assailants, and having killed and wounded several of them, drove them back into the forest. The victory, however complete, was the first day of their misfortunes; from that hour they were never safe; sometimes a marauding party of red men would dash into the village at nightfall, and carry away some of the children before their cries could warn their parents. Instead of venturing as before into the ‘bush’ whenever they pleased, and in small numbers, they were now obliged to go with the greatest circumspection and caution, stationing scouts here and there, and, above all, leaving a strong garrison to protect the settlement against attack in their absence. Fear and distrust prevailed everywhere, and instead of the peace and prosperity that attended the first year of their labours, the land now remained but half tilled; the hunting yielded scarcely any benefit; and all their efforts were directed to their safety, and their time consumed in erecting outworks and forts to protect the village.

“While matters were in this state, a large timber ship, bound for England, struck on a reef of rocks at the entrance of the bay. The sea ran high, and a storm of wind from the north-west soon rent

her in fragments. The colonists, who knew every portion of the bay well, put out, the first moment they could venture, to the wreck, not, however, to save the lives and rescue the poor fellows who yet clung to the rigging, but to pillage the ship ere she went to pieces. The expedition succeeded far beyond their most ardent hopes, and a rich harvest of plunder resulted from this venture, casks of powder, flour, pork, and rum, were landed by every tide at their doors, and once more, the sounds of merriment and rejoicing, were heard in the village. But how different from before was it! Then, they were happy and contented settlers, living like one united family in brotherly affection and kind goodwill; now, it was but the bond of crime that bound, and the wild madness of intoxication, that excited them. Their hunting grounds were no longer cared for; the fields, with so much labour rescued from the forest, were neglected; the fishing was abandoned; and a life given up to the most intemperate abandonment, succeeded to days of peaceful labour and content. Not satisfied with mere defence, they now carried the war into the Indian settlements, and cruelties the most frightful ensued in their savage reprisals.

“In this dangerous coast a winter never passed without several wrecks occurring, and as they now practised every device, by false signals and fires, to lure vessels to their ruin, their infamous traffic succeeded perfectly, and wrecking became a mode of subsistence, far more plentiful than their former habits of quiet industry.

“One long reef of rocks that ran from the most southerly point of the bay, and called by the Indians ‘the Teeth,’ was the most fatal spot of the whole coast, for while these rocks stretched for above a mile, to sea, and were only covered at high water, a strong land current drew vessels towards them, which, with the wind on shore, it was impossible to resist.

“To this fatal spot, each eye was turned at day-break, to see if some ill-starred vessel had not struck during the night. This, was the last point each look was bent on, as the darkness was falling; and when the wind howled, and the sea ran mountains high, and dashed its white foam over their little huts, then, was every one astir in the village. Many an anxious gaze pierced through the mist, hoping some white sail might gleam through the storm, or some bending spar show where a perishing crew yet cried for help. The little shore would then present a busy scene, boats were got out, coils of rope, and oars strewed on every side, lanterns flitted rapidly from place to place. With what energy and earnestness they moved, how their eyes gleamed with excitement, and how their voices rung out, in accents of hoarse command. Oh! how horrible to think that the same features of a manly nature – the bold and daring courage that fears not the rushing wave, nor the sweeping storm, the heroic daring that can breast the wild breakers as they splash on the dark rocks, can arise from impulses so opposite; and that humanity the fairest, and crime the blackest, have but the same machinery to work with.

“It was on a dark November night – the heavy sough of a coming storm sent large and sullen waves on shore, where they broke with that low hollow cadence, that seamen recognise as boding ill. A dense, thick fog, obscured all objects sea-ward, and though many scouts were out upon the hills, they could detect nothing; still, as the night grew more and more threatening, the wreckers felt assured a gale was coming, and already their preparation was made for the approaching time. Hour after hour passed by, but though the gale increased, and blew with violence on the shore, nothing could be seen. Towards midnight, however, a scout came in to say, that he thought he could detect at intervals, through the dense mist, and spray, a gleaming light in the direction of ‘the Teeth.’ The drift was too great to make it clearly perceptible, but still, he persisted he had seen something.

“A party was soon assembled on the beach, their eyes turned towards the fatal rocks, which at low water rose some twelve or fifteen feet above the surface. They gazed long and anxiously, but nothing could they make out, till, as they were turning away, one cried out, ‘Ay, see there – there it is now;’ and as he spoke, a red-forked flame shot up through the drifting spray, and threw a lurid flash upon the dark sea. It died away almost as quickly, and though seen at intervals again, it seemed ever to wax fainter, and fainter. ‘She’s on fire,’ cried one. ‘No, no; it’s a distress signal,’ said another. ‘One

thing is certain,' cried a third, 'the craft that's on the "Teeth" on such a night as this, won't get off very readily; and so, lads, be alive and run out the boats.'

"The little colony was soon astir. It was a race of avarice too; for, latterly, the settlement had been broken up by feuds and jealousies, into different factions; and each strove to overreach the other. In less than half an hour, eight boats were out, and breasting the white breakers, headed out to sea. All, save the old and decrepit, the women, and children, were away, and even they, stood watching on the shore, following with their eyes the boats in which they felt most interested.

"At last they disappeared in the gloom – not a trace could be seen of them, nor did the wind carry back their voices, over which the raging storm was now howling. A few still remained straining their eye-balls towards the spot where the light was seen, the others had returned towards the village; when all of a sudden a frightful yell, a long sustained and terrible cry arose from the huts, and the same instant a blaze burst forth, and rose into a red column towards the sky. The Indians were upon them. The war shout – that dreadful sound they knew too well – resounded on every side. Then began a massacre, which nothing in description can convey. The dreadful rage of the vengeful savage – long pent up – long provoked – had now its time for vengeance. The tomahawk and the scalping knife ran red with blood, as women and infants rushed madly hither and thither in the flight. Old men lay weltering in their gore beside their daughters, and grandchildren; while the wild red men, unsated with slaughter, tore the mangled corpses as they lay, and bathed themselves in blood. But not there did it end. The flame that gleamed from the 'Teeth' rocks, was but an Indian device, to draw the wreckers out to sea. A pine-wood fire had been lighted on the tallest cliff at low water, to attract their attention, by some savages in canoes, and left to burn away slowly during the night.

"Deceived and baffled, the wreckers made towards shore, to which already their eyes were turned in terror, for the red blaze of the burning huts was seen, miles off, in the bay. Scarcely had the first boat neared the shore, when a volley of fire-arms poured in upon her – while the war-cry that rose above it, told them their hour was come. The Indians were several hundred in number, armed to the teeth; the others few, and without a single weapon. Contest, it was none. The slaughter scarce lasted many minutes, for ere the flame from the distant rock subsided, the last white man lay a corpse on the bloody strand. Such was the terrible retribution that followed on crime, and at the very moment too, when their cruel hearts were bent on its perpetration.

"This tale, which was told me in a broken jargon, between Canadian-French and English, concluded with words, which were not to me, at the time, the least shocking part of the story; as the narrator, with glistening eyes, and in a voice whose guttural tones seemed almost too thick for utterance said, 'It was I, that planned it!'

"You will ask me, by what chance did I escape with life among such a tribe. An accident – the merest accident – saved me. When a smuggler, as I have already told you I was, I once, when becalmed in the Bay of Biscay, got one of the sailors to tattoo my arm with gunpowder, a very common practice at sea. The operator had been in the North American trade, and had passed ten years as a prisoner among the Indians, and brought away with him innumerable recollections of their habits and customs. Among others, their strange idols had made a great impression on his mind; and, as I gave him a discretionary power as to the frescos he was to adorn me with, he painted a most American-looking savage with two faces on his head – his body all stuck over with arrows and spear-points, while he, apparently unmoved by such visitors, was skipping about, in something that might be a war-dance.

"This, with all its appropriate colours – for as the heraldry folk say, 'It was proper' – was a very conspicuous object on my arm, and no sooner seen by the chief, than he immediately knelt down beside me, dressed my wounds and tended me; while the rest of the tribe, recognising me as one whose existence was charmed, showed me every manner of respect, and even devotion. Indeed, I soon felt my popularity to be my greatest difficulty; for whatever great event was going forward among the tribe, it became the etiquette to consult me on it, as a species of soothsayer, and never was a prophet more sorely tested. Sometimes, it was a question of the whale-fishery – whether 'bottle

noses,' or 'sulphur bottoms,' were coming up the bay, and whether, in the then season, it was safe, or not, to strike the 'calf whales' first. Now, it was a disputed point as to the condition of bears; or worse than either, a little marauding party would be undertaken into a neighbour's premises, where I was expected to perform a very leading part, which, not having the same strong convictions of my invulnerable nature, as my worthy associates, I undertook with as few feelings of satisfaction as you may imagine. But these were not all; offers of marriage from many noble families pressed me on every side; and though polygamy to any extent was permissible, I never could persuade myself, to make my fortune in this manner. The ladies too, I am bound to say, were not so seductive as to endanger my principles: flattened heads, bent-down noses and lip stones, are very strong antidotes to the tender passion. And I was obliged to declare, that I was compelled, by a vow, not to marry for three moons. I dared not venture on a longer period of amnesty, lest I should excite suspicion of any insult to them, on a point where their vengeance never forgives; and I hoped, ere that time elapsed, that I should be able to make my escape – though how, or when, or where to, were points I could not possibly guess at.

“Before the half of my probation had expired, we were visited by an old Indian of a distant tribe – a strange old fellow he was, clothed in goats' skins, and wearing strong leather boots and rackets (snow shoes), a felt hat, and a kind of leather sack strapped on his back, and secured by a lock. This singular-looking fellow was, 'the post.' He travelled once a year from a small settlement near Miramichi, to Quebec, and back, carrying the letters to and from these places, a distance of something like seven hundred miles, which he accomplished entirely on foot, great part of it through dense forests and over wild uninhabited prairies, passing through the hunting-grounds of several hostile tribes, fording rivers and climbing mountains, and all, for the moderate payment of ten pounds a year, half of which he spent in rum before he left Quebec, and while waiting for the return mail; and strangest of all, though for forty years he had continued to perform this journey, not only no accident had ever occurred to the letters, but he himself was never known to be behind his appointed time at his destination.

“‘Tahata,' for such was his name, was, however, a character of great interest; even to the barbarous tribes through whose territories he passed. He was a species of savage newspaper, recounting various details respecting the hunting and fishing seasons, – the price of skins at Quebec or Montreal, – what was the peltry most in request, and how it would bring its best price. Cautiously abstaining from the local politics of these small states, his information only bore on such topics as are generally useful and interesting, and never for a moment partook of any partisan character; besides, he had ever some petty commission or other, from the squaws, to discharge at Quebec. There was an amber bead, or a tin ornament, a bit of red ribbon or a glass button, or some such valuable, everywhere he went; and his coming was an event as much longed and looked for, as any other that marked their monotonous existence.

“He rested for a few days at our village, when I learned these few particulars of his life, and at once resolved, come what might, to make my escape with him, and, if possible, reach Quebec. An opportunity, fortunately, soon offered for my doing so with facility. The day of the courier's departure was fixed for a great fishing excursion, on which the tribe were to be absent for several days. Affecting illness, I remained on shore, and never stirred from the wigwam till the last canoe had disappeared from sight: then I slowly sauntered out, and telling the squaws that I would stroll about, for an hour or so, to breathe the air, I followed the track which was pointed out to me by the courier, who had departed early on the same morning. Before sunset I came up with my friend, and with a heart overflowing with delight, sat down to partake of the little supper he had provided for our first day's journey; after that, each day was to take care of itself.

“Then began a series of adventures, to which all I have hitherto told you, are, as nothing. It was the wild life of the prairies in companionship with one, who felt as much at home in the recesses of a pine forest, as ever I did in the snug corner of mine inn. Now, it was a night spent under the starry sky, beside some clear river's bank, where the fish lay motionless beneath the red glare of

our watch-fire; now, we bivouacked in a gloomy forest, planting stockades around to keep off the wild beasts; then, we would chance upon some small Indian settlement, where we were regaled with hospitality, and spent half the night listening to the low chant of a red man's song, as he deplored the downfall of his nation, and the loss of their hunting-grounds. Through all, my guide preserved the steady equability of one who was travelling a well-worn path – some notched tree, some small stone heap, some fissured rock, being his guide through wastes, where, it seemed to me, no human foot had ever trod. He lightened the road with many a song and many a story, the latter always displaying some curious trait of his people, whose high sense of truth and unswerving fidelity to their word, once pledged, appeared to be an invariable feature in every narrative; and though he could well account for the feeling that makes a man more attached to his own nation, he more than once half expressed his surprise, how, having lived among the simple-minded children of the forest, I could ever return to the haunts of the plotting, and designing white men.

“This story of mine,” continued Mr. O’Kelly, “has somehow spun itself out far more than I intended. My desire was, to show you briefly, in what strange and dissimilar situations I have been thrown in life – how, I have lived among every rank, and class, at home and abroad, in comparative affluence – in narrow poverty; how, I have looked on, at the world, in all its gala dress of wealth, and rank, and beauty – of power, of station, and command of intellect; and how I have seen it poor, and mean, and naked – the companion of gloomy solitudes, and the denizen of pathless forests; and yet found the same human passions, the same love, and hate, the same jealousy, and fear, courage, and daring – the same desire for power, and the same wish to govern, in the red Indian of the prairie, as in the starred noble of Europe. The proudest rank of civilized life has no higher boast, than in the practice of such virtues as I have seen rife among the wild dwellers in the dark forest. Long habit of moving thus among my fellow men, has worn off much of that conventional reverence for class, which forms the standing point of all our education at home. The tarred and weather-beaten sailor, if he be but a pleasant fellow, and has seen life, is to me as agreeable a companion as the greatest admiral that ever trod a quarter-deck. My delight has been thus, for many a year back, to ramble through the world, and look on its game, like one who sits before the curtain, and has no concern with the actors, save, in so far as they amuse him.

“There is no cynicism in this. No one enjoys life more than I do. Music is a passion with me – in painting, I take the greatest delight, and beauty, has still her charm for me. Society, never was a greater pleasure. Scenery, can give me a sense of happiness, which none but solitary men ever feel – yet, it is less as one identified with these, than as a mere spectator. All this is selfish, and egotistical, you will say – and so it is. But then, think what chance has one like me of any other pleasure! To how many annoyances should I expose myself, if I adopted a different career: think of the thousand inquiries, of, – who is he? what is his family? where did he come from? what are his means? and all such queries, which would beset me, were I the respectable denizen of one of your cities. Without some position, some rank, some settled place in society, you give a man nothing – he can neither have friend, nor home. Now, I am a wanderer – my choice of life, happily took a humble turn. I have placed myself in a good situation for seeing the game – and I am not too fastidious, if I get somewhat crushed by the company about me. But now, to finish this long story, for I see the day is breaking, and I must leave Antwerp by ten o’clock.

“At last, then, we reached Quebec. It was on a bright, clear, frosty day in December, when all the world was astir – sledges flying here and there – men slipping along in rackets – women, wrapped up in furs, sitting snugly in chairs, and pushed along the ice some ten or twelve miles the hour – all gay, all lively, and all merry-looking – while I and my Indian friend bustled our way through the crowd towards the post-office. He was a well-known character, and many a friendly nod, and a knowing shake of the head welcomed him as he passed along. I, however, was an object of no common astonishment, even in a town where every variety of costume, from full dress to almost nakedness, was to be met with daily. Still, something remained as a novelty, and it would seem I had hit on

it. Imagine, then, an old and ill-used foraging-cap, drawn down over a red night-cap, from beneath which my hair descended straight, somewhere about a foot in length – beard and moustaches to match – a red uniform coat, patched with brown seal-skin, and surmounted by a kind of blanket of buffalo hide – a pair of wampum shorts, decorated with tin and copper, after the manner of a marquetric table – gray stockings, gartered with fish skin – and moccasins made after the fashion of high-lows, an invention of my own, which I trust are still known as ‘O’Kellies,’ among my friends the red men.

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