

VARIOUS

HALF-HOURS WITH
GREAT STORY-TELLERS

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Various Half-Hours with Great Story-Tellers / Artemus Ward, George Macdonald, Max Adeler, Samuel Lover, and Others

GREY DOLPHIN

"He won't—won't he? Then bring me my boots," said the Baron.

Consternation was at its height in the castle of Shurland—a catiff had dared to disobey the Baron; and—the Baron had called for his boots!

A thunderbolt in the great hall had been a *bagatelle* to it.

A few days before, a notable miracle had been wrought in the neighborhood; and in those times miracles were not so common as they are now; no royal balloons, no steam, no railroads,—while the few saints who took the trouble to walk with their heads under their arms, or to pull the Devil by the nose, scarcely appeared above once in a century:—so the affair made the greatest sensation.

The clock had done striking twelve, and the Clerk of Chatham was untrussing his points preparatory to seeking his truckle-bed; a half-emptied tankard of mild ale stood at his elbow, the roasted crab yet floating on its surface. Midnight had surprised the worthy functionary while occupied in discussing it, and with his task yet unaccomplished. He meditated a mighty draft: one hand was fumbling with his tags, while the other was extended in the act of grasping the jorum, when a knock on the portal, solemn and sonorous, arrested his fingers. It was repeated thrice ere Emmanuel Saddleton had presence of mind sufficient to inquire who sought admittance at that untimeous hour.

"Open! open! good Clerk of St. Bridget's," said a female voice, small yet distinct and sweet,—an excellent thing in woman.

The Clerk arose, crossed to the doorway, and undid the latchet.

On the threshold stood a lady of surpassing beauty: her robes were rich, and large, and full; and a diadem, sparkling with gems that shed a halo around, crowned her brow: she beckoned the Clerk as he stood in astonishment before her.

"Emmanuel!" said the lady; and her tones sounded like those of a silver flute. "Emmanuel Saddleton, truss up your points, and follow me!"

The worthy Clerk stared aghast at the vision; the purple robe, the cymar, the coronet,—above all, the smile; no, there was no mistaking her; it was the blessed St. Bridget herself!

And what could have brought the sainted lady out of her warm shrine at such a time of night? and on such a night? for it was dark as pitch, and metaphorically speaking, 'rained cats and dogs.'

Emmanuel could not speak, so he looked the question.

"No matter for that," said the saint, answering to his thought. "No matter for that, Emmanuel Saddleton; only follow me, and you'll see!"

The Clerk turned a wistful eye at the corner cupboard.

"Oh! never mind the lantern, Emmanuel; you'll not want it; but you may bring a mattock and a shovel." As she spoke, the beautiful apparition held up her delicate hand. From the tip of each of her long taper fingers issued a lambent flame of such surpassing brilliancy as would have plunged a whole gas company into despair—it was a 'Hand of Glory,' [Footnote: One of the uses to which this mystic chandelier was put, was the protection of secreted treasure. Blow out all the fingers at one puff, and you had the money.] such a one as tradition tells us yet burns in Rochester Castle every St.

Mark's Eve. Many are the daring individuals who have watched in Gundulph's Tower, hoping to find it, and the treasure it guards; but none of them ever did.

"This way, Emmanuel!" and a flame of peculiar radiance streamed from her little finger as it pointed to the pathway leading to the churchyard.

Saddleton shouldered his tools and followed in silence.

The cemetery of St. Bridget's was some half-mile distant from the Clerk's domicile, and adjoined a chapel dedicated to that illustrious lady, who, after leading but a so-so life, had died in the odor of sanctity. Emmanuel Saddleton was fat and scant of breath, the mattock was heavy, and the Saint walked too fast for him: he paused to take second wind at the end of the first furlong.

"Emmanuel," said the holy lady, good-humoredly, for she heard him puffing: "rest awhile Emmanuel, and I'll tell you what I want with you."

Her auditor wiped his brow with the back of his hand, and looked all attention and obedience.

"Emmanuel," continued she "what did you and Father Fothergill, and the rest of you, mean yesterday by burying that drowned man so close to me? He died in mortal sin, Emmanuel; no shrift, no unction, no absolution: why he might as well have been excommunicated. He plagues me with his grinning, and I can't have any peace in my shrine. You must howk him up again, Emmanuel."

"To be sure, madame,—my lady,—that is, your holiness," stammered Saddleton, trembling at the thought of the task assigned him. "To be sure, your ladyship; only—that is—"

"Emmanuel," said the saint, "you'll do my bidding; or it would be better you had!" and her eye changed from a dove's eye to that of a hawk, and a flash came from it as bright as the one from her little finger. The Clerk shook in his shoes; and, again dashing the cold perspiration from his brow, followed the footsteps of his mysterious guide.

The next morning all Chatham was in an uproar. The Clerk of St. Bridget's had found himself at home at daybreak, seated in his own armchair, the fire out,—and—the tankard of ale out too! Who had drunk it?—where had he been?—how had he got home?—all was mystery!—he remembered "a mass of things, but nothing distinctly;" all was fog and fantasy. What he could clearly recollect was, that he had dug up the Grinning Sailor, and that the Saint had helped to throw him into the river again. All was thenceforth wonderment and devotion. Masses were sung, tapers were kindled, bells were tolled; the monks of St. Romuald had a solemn procession, the abbot at their head, the sacristan at their tail, and the holy breeches of St. Thomas a Becket in the centre; —Father Fothergill brewed a XXX puncheon of holy water. The Rood of Gillingham was deserted; the chapel of Rainham forsaken; every one who had a soul to be saved, flocked with his offering to St. Bridget's shrine, and Emmanuel Saddleton gathered more fees from the promiscuous piety of that one week, than he had pocketed during the twelve preceding months.

Meanwhile, the corpse of the ejected reprobate oscillated like a pendulum between Sheerness and Gillingham Reach. Now borne by the Medway into the Western Swale,—now carried by the refluent tide back to the vicinity of its old quarters,—it seemed as though the River god and Neptune were amusing themselves with a game of subaqueous battledore, and had chosen this unfortunate carcass as a marine shuttlecock. For some time the alternation was kept up with great spirit, till Boreas, interfering in the shape of a stiffish "Nor'-wester," drifted the bone (and flesh) of contention ashore on the Shurland domain, where it lay in all the majesty of mud. It was soon discovered by the retainers, and dragged from its oozy bed, grinning worse than ever. Tidings of the godsend were of course carried instantly to the castle; for the Baron was a very great man; and if a dun cow had flown across his property unannounced by the warder, the Baron would have pecked him, the said warder, from the topmost battlement into the bottommost ditch,—a descent of peril, and one which "Ludwig the Leaper," or the illustrious Trenck himself, might well have shrunk from encountering.

"An't please your lordship—" said Peter Periwinkle.

"No, villain! it does not please!" roared the Baron.

His lordship was deeply engaged with a peck of Faversham oysters,—he doted on shellfish, hated interruption at meals, and had not yet despatched more than twenty dozen of the "natives."

"There's a body, my lord, washed ashore in the lower creek," said the seneschal.

The Baron was going to throw the shells at his head; but paused in the act, and said with much dignity,

"Turn out the fellow's pockets!"

But the defunct had before been subjected to the double scrutiny of Father Fothergill and the Clerk of St. Bridget's. It was ill gleaning after such hands; there was not a single maravedi.

We have already said that Sir Robert de Shurland, Lord of the Isle of Sheppey, and of many a fair manor on the main land, was a man of worship. He had rights of free-warren, saccage and sockage, cuisage and jambage, fosse and fork, infang theofe and outfang theofe; and all waifs and strays belonged to him in fee simple.

"Turn out his pockets!" said the knight.

"An't please you, my lord, I must say as how they was turned afore, and the devil a rap's left."

"Then bury the blackguard!"

"Please your lordship, he had been buried once."

"Then bury him again, and be—" The Baron bestowed a benediction.

The seneschal bowed low as he left the room and the Baron went on with his oysters.

"Scarcely ten dozen more had vanished, when Periwinkle reappeared.

"An't please you, my lord, Father Fothergill says as how it's the Grinning Sailor, and he won't bury him anyhow."

"Oh! he won't—won't he?" said the Baron. Can it be wondered at that he called for his boots?

Sir Robert de Shurland, Lord of Shurland and Minster, Baron of Sheppey in *comitatu* Kent, was, as has been before hinted, a very great man. He was also a very little man; that is, he was relatively great, and relatively little—or physically little, and metaphorically great—like Sir Sidney Smith and the late Mr. Buonaparte. To the frame of a dwarf, he united the soul of a giant, and the valor of a gamecock. Then, for so small a man, his strength was prodigious; his fist would fell an ox, and his kick!—oh! his kick was tremendous, and, when he had his boots on, would—to use an expression of his own, which he had picked up in the holy wars—would "send a man from Jericho to June." He was bull-necked and bandy-legged; his chest was broad and deep, his head large and uncommonly thick, his eyes a little bloodshot, and his nose *retrouse* with a remarkably red tip. Strictly speaking, the Baron could not be called handsome; but his *tout ensemble* was singularly impressive; and when he called for his boots, everybody trembled and dreaded the worst.

"Periwinkle," said the Baron, as he encased his better leg, "let the grave be twenty feet deep!"

"Your lordship's command is law."

"And, Perwinkle"—Sir Robert stamped his left heel into it's receptacle—"and, Periwinkle, see that it be wide enough to hold not exceeding two!"

"Ye—ye—yes, my lord."

"And, Periwinkle—tell Father Fothergill I would fain speak with his Reverence."

"Ye—ye—yes, my lord."

The Baron's beard was peaked; and his mustache, stiff and stumpy, projected horizontally like those of a Tom Cat; he twirled the one, he stroked the other, he drew the buckle of his surcingle a thought tighter, and strode down the great staircase three steps at a stride.

The vassals were assembled in the great hall of Shurland Castle; every cheek was pale, every tongue was mute, expectation and perplexity were visible on every brow. What would his lordship do? Were the recusant anybody else, gyves to the heels and hemp to the throat were but too good for him; but it was Father Fothergill who had said "I won't;" and though the Baron was a very great

man, the Pope was a greater, and the Pope was Father Fothergill's great friend—some people said he was his uncle.

Father Fothergill was busy in the refectory trying conclusions with a venison pasty, when he received the summons of his patron to attend him in the chapel cemetery. Of course he lost no time in obeying it, for obedience was the general rule in Shurland Castle. If anybody ever said "I won't" it was the exception; and, like all other exceptions, only proved the rule the stronger. The Father was a friar of the Augustine persuasion; a brotherhood which, having been planted in Kent some few centuries earlier, had taken very kindly to the soil, and overspread the county much as hops did some few centuries later. He was plump and portly, a little thick-winded, especially after dinner, stood five feet four in his sandals, and weighed hard upon eighteen stone. He was, moreover, a personage of singular piety; and the iron girdle, which, he said, he wore under his cassock to mortify withal, might have been well mistaken for the tire of a cart-wheel. When he arrived, Sir Robert was pacing up and down by the side of a newly opened grave.

"*Benedecite!* fair son"—(the Baron was brown as a cigar)—"*Benedecite!*" said the Chaplain.

The Baron was too angry to stand upon compliment. "Bury me that grinning caitiff there!" he, pointing to the defunct.

"It may not be, fair son," said the friar, "he hath perished without absolution."

"Bury the body!" roared Sir Robert.

"Water and earth alike reject him," returned the Chaplain; "holy St.

Bridget herself—"

"Bridget me no Bridgets!—do me thine office quickly, Sir Shaveling! or by the Piper that played before Moses—" The oath was a fearful one; and whenever the Baron swore to do mischief, he was never known to perjure himself. He was playing with the hilt of his sword. "Do me thine office, I say. Give him his passport to heaven."

"He is already gone to Hell!" stammered the Friar.

"Then do you go after him!" thundered the Lord of Shurland.

His sword half leaped from its scabbard. No!—the trenchant blade, that had cut Suleiman Ben Malek Ben Buckskin from helmet to chin, disdained to daub itself with the cerebellum of a miserable monk;—it leaped back again;—and as the Chaplain, scared at its flash, turned him in terror, the Baron gave him a kick!—one kick!—it was but one!—but such a one! Despite its obesity, up flew his holy body in an angle of forty-five degrees; then having reached its highest point of elevation, sunk headlong into the open grave that yawned to receive it. If the reverend gentleman had possessed such a thing as a neck, he had infallibly broken it! as he did not, he only dislocated his vertebrae—but that did quite as well. He was as dead as ditch-water!

"In with the other rascal!" said the baron—and he was obeyed; for there he stood in his boots. Mattock and shovel made short work of it; twenty feet of superincumbent mould pressed down alike the saint and the sinner. "Now sing a requiem who list!" said the Baron, and his lordship went back to his oysters.

The vassals at Castle Shurland were astounded, or, as the Seneschal Hugh better expressed it, "perfectly conglomerated," by this event. What! murder a monk in the odor of sanctity—and on consecrated ground too! They trembled for the health of the Baron's soul. To the unsophisticated many, it seemed that matters could not have been much worse had he shot a bishop's coach-horse—all looked for some signal judgment. The melancholy catastrophe of their neighbors at Canterbury was yet rife in their memories; no two centuries had elapsed since those miserable sinners had cut off the tail of the blessed St. Thomas's mule. The tail of the mule, it was well known, had been forthwith affixed to that of the Mayor; and rumor said it had since been hereditary in the corporation. The least that could be expected was, that Sir Robert should have a friar tacked on to his for the term of his natural life! Some bolder spirits there were, 'tis true, who viewed the matter in various lights, according to their different temperaments and dispositions; for perfect unanimity existed not even

in the good old time. The verderer, roistering Hob Roebuck, swore roundly, "'Twere as good a deed as to eat, to kick down the chapel as well as the monk." Hob had stood there in a white sheet for kissing Giles Miller's daughter. On the other hand, Simpkin Agnew, the bell-ringer, doubted if the devil's cellar, which runs under the bottomless abyss, were quite deep enough for the delinquent, and speculated on the probability of a hole being dug in it for his especial accommodation. The philosophers and economists thought, with Saunders McBullock, the Baron's bagpiper, that a 'feckless monk more or less was nae great subject for a clamjamphrey,' especially as 'the supply exceeded the demand;' while Malthouse, the tapster, was arguing to Dame Martin that a murder now and then was a seasonable check to population, without which the isle of Sheppey would in time be devoured, like a mouldy cheese, by inhabitants of its own producing. Meanwhile the Baron ate his oysters and thought no more of the matter.

But this tranquillity of his lordship was not to last. A couple of Saints had been seriously offended; and we have all of us read at school that celestial minds are by no means insensible to the provocations of anger. There were those who expected that St. Bridget would come in person, and have the friar up again, as she did the sailor; but perhaps her ladyship did not care to trust herself within the walls of Shurland Castle. To say the truth, it was scarcely a decent house for a female saint to be seen in. The Baron's gallantries, since he became a widower had been but too notorious; and her own reputation was a little blown upon in the earlier days of her earthly pilgrimage; then things were so apt to be misrepresented—in short, she would leave the whole affair to St. Austin, who being a gentleman, could interfere with propriety, avenge her affront as well as his own, and leave no loop-hole for scandal. St. Austin himself seems to have had his scruples, though of their precise nature it would be difficult to determine, for it were idle to suppose him at all afraid of the Baron's boots. Be this as it may, the mode which he adopted was at once prudent and efficacious. As an ecclesiastic, he could not well call the Baron out—had his boots been out of the question; so he resolved to have recourse to the law. Instead of Shurland Castle, therefore, he repaired forthwith to his own magnificent monastery, situate just without the walls of Canterbury, and presented himself in a vision to its abbot. No one who has ever visited that ancient city can fail to recollect the splendid gateway which terminates the vista of St. Paul's street, and stands there yet in all its pristine beauty. The tiny train of miniature artillery which now adorns its battlements is, it is true, an ornament of a later date; and is said to have been added some centuries after by a learned but jealous proprietor, for the purpose of shooting any wiser man than himself, who might chance to come that way. Tradition is silent as to any discharge having taken place, nor can the oldest inhabitant of modern days recollect any such occurrence. [Footnote: Since the appearance of the first edition of this Legend "the guns" have been dismounted. Rumor hints at some alarm on the part of the Town Council.] Here it was, in a handsome chamber, immediately over the lofty archway, that the Superior of the monastery lay buried in a brief slumber, snatched from his accustomed vigils. His mitre—for he was a mitred Abbot, and had a seat in parliament—rested on a table beside him: near it stood a silver flagon of Gascony wine, ready, no doubt, for the pious uses of the morrow. Fasting and watching had made him more than usually somnolent, than which nothing could have been better for the purpose of the Saint, who now appeared to him radiant in all the colors of the rainbow.

"Anselm!" said the beatific vision,—"Anselm! are you not a pretty fellow to lie snoring there when your brethren are being knocked at head, and Mother Church herself is menaced?—It is a sin and a shame, Anselm!"

"What's the matter?—Who are you?" cried the Abbot, rubbing his eyes, which the celestial splendour of his visitor had set a-winking. "Ave Maria! St. Austin himself! Speak, *Beatissime!* what would you with the humblest of your votaries?"

"Anselm!" said the saint, a "brother of our order, whose soul Heaven assoilzie! hath been foully murdered. He had been ignominiously kicked to the death, Anselm; and there he lieth check-by-

jowl with a wretched carcass, which our sister Bridget has turned out of her cemetery for unseemly grinning. Arouse thee, Anselm!"

"Ay, so please you, *Sanctissime!*" said the Abbot. "I will order forthwith that thirty masses be said, thirty *Paters*, and thirty *Aves*."

"Thirty fools' heads!" interrupted his patron, who was a little peppery.

"I will send for bell, book, and candle—"

"Send for an inkhorn, Anselm. Write me now a letter to his Holiness the Pope in good round terms, and another to the Sheriff, and seize me the never-enough-to-be anathematized villain who hath done this deed! Hang him as high as Haman, Anselm!—up with him!—down with his dwelling place, root and branch, hearth-stone and roof-tree,—down with it all, and sow the site with salt and sawdust."

St. Austin, it will perceived, was a radical reformer.

"Marry will I," quoth the Abbot, warming with the Saint's eloquence: "ay, marry will I, and that *instantly*. But there is one thing you have forgotten most Beatified—the name of the culprit."

"Robert de Shurland."

"The Lord of Sheppey! Bless me!" said the Abbot, crossing himself, "won't that be rather inconvenient? Sir Robert is a bold baron, and a powerful: blows will come and go, and crowns will be cracked and—"

"What is that to you, since yours will not be of the number?"

"Very true, *Beatissime!*—I will don me with speed and do your bidding."

"Do so, Anselm!—fail not to hang the Baron, burn his castle, confiscate his estate, and buy me two large wax candles for my own particular shrine out of your share of the property."

With this solemn injunction, the vision began to fade.

"One thing more!" cried the Abbot, grasping his rosary.

"What is that?" asked the Saint.

"*O Beate Augustine, ora pro nobis!*"

"Of course I shall," said St. Austin. "*Pax vo-biscum!*"—and Abbot

Anselm was left alone.

Within an hour all Canterbury was in commotion. A friar had been murdered,—two friars—ten, twenty; a whole convent had been assaulted, sacked, burnt,—all the monks had been killed, and all the nuns had been kissed! Murder! fire! sacrilege! Never was city in such an uproar. From St. George's gate to St. Dunstan's suburb, from the Donjon to the borough of Staplegate, it was noise and hubbub. "Where was it?"—"When was it?"—"How was it?" The Mayor caught up his chain, the Aldermen donned their furred gowns, the Town Clerk put on his spectacles. "Who was he?"—"What was he?"—"Where was he?"—He should be hanged,—he should be burned,—he should be broiled,—he should be fried,—he should be scraped to death with red-hot-oyster-shells! "Who was he?"—"What was his name?"

The Abbot's Apparitor drew forth his roll and read aloud:—'Sir Robert de Shurland, Knight banneret, Baron of Shurland and Minster, and Lord of Sheppey.

The Mayor put his chain in his pocket, the Aldermen took off their gowns, the Town Clerk put his pen behind his ear. It was a county business altogether;—the Sheriff had better call out the *posse comitatus*.

While saints and sinners were thus leaning against him, the Baron de Shurland was quietly eating his breakfast. He had passed a tranquil night, undisturbed by dreams of cowl or capuchin; nor was his appetite more affected than his conscience. On the contrary, he sat rather longer over his meal than usual; luncheon-time came, and he was ready as ever for his oysters: but scarcely had Dame Martin opened his first half-dozen when the warder's horn was heard from the barbican.

"Who the devil's that?" said Sir Robert. "I'm not at home, Periwinkle.

I hate to be disturbed at meals, and I won't be at home to anybody."

"An't please your lordship," answered the Seneschal, "Paul Prior hath given notice that there is a body—"

"Another body!" roared the Baron. "Am I to be everlastingly plagued with bodies? No time allowed me to swallow a morsel. Throw it into the moat!"

"So please you my lord, it is a body of horse,—and—and Paul says there is a still large body of foot behind it; and he thinks, my lord— that is, he does not know, but he thinks—and we all think, my lord, that they are coming to—to besiege the castle!"

"Besiege the castle! Who? What? What for?"

"Paul says, my lord, that he can see the banner of St. Austin, and the bleeding heart of Hamo de Crevecoeur, the Abbot's chief vassal; and there is John de Northwood, the sheriff, with his red cross engrailed; and Hever, and Leybourne, and Heaven knows how many more: and they are all coming on as fast as ever they can."

"Periwinkle," said the Baron, "up with the draw-bridge; down with the portcullis; bring me a cup of canary, and my nightcap. I won't be bothered with them. I shall go to bed."

"To bed, my lord!" cried Periwinkle, with a look that seemed to say,

"He's crazy!"

At this moment the shrill tones of a trumpet were heard to sound thrice from the champaign. It was the signal for parley; the Baron changed his mind; instead of going to bed, he went to the ramparts.

"Well, rapsallions! and what now?" said the Baron.

A herald, two pursuivants, and a trumpeter, occupied the foreground of the scene; behind them, some three hundred paces off, upon a rising ground, was drawn up in battle-array the main body of the ecclesiastical forces.

"Hear you, Robert de Shurland, Knight, Baron of Shurland and Minster, and Lord of Sheppey, and know all men, by these presents, that I do hereby attach you, said Robert, of murder and sacrilege, now, or of the late, done and committed by you, the said Robert, contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, his crown and dignity: and I do hereby require and charge you, the said Robert, to forthwith surrender and give up your own proper person, together with the castle of Shurland aforesaid, in order that the same may be duly dealt with according to law. And here standeth John de Northwood, Esquire, good man and true, sheriff of this his Majesty's most loyal county of Kent, to enforce the same if need be, with his *posse comitatus*—"

"His what?" said the Baron.

"His *posse comitatus*, and—" "Go to Bath!" said the Baron.

A defiance so contemptuous roused the ire of the adverse commanders. A volley of missiles rattled about the Baron's ears. Nightcaps avail little against contusions. He left the walls, and returned to the great hall. "Let them pelt away," quoth the Baron; "there are no windows to break, and they can't get in." So he took his afternoon nap, and the siege went on.

Towards evening his lordship awoke, and grew tired of the din. Guy Pearson, too, had got a black eye from a brick bat, and the assailants were clambering over the outer wall. So the Baron called for his Sunday hauberk of Milan steel, and his great two-handed sword with the terrible name:—it was the fashion in feudal times to give names to swords: King Arthur's was christened Excalibar; the Baron called his Tickletohy, and whenever he took it in hand, it was no joke.

"Up with the portcullis! down with the bridge!" said Sir Robert; and out he sallied followed by the *elite* of his retainers. Then there was a pretty to-do. Heads flew one way—arms and legs another; round went Tickletohy, and, wherever it alighted, down came horse and man, the Baron excelled himself that day. All that he had done in Palestine faded in the comparison; he had fought for fun there, but now it was for life and lands. Away went John de Northwood; away went William of Hever, and Roger of Leybourne. Hamo de Crevecoeur, with the church vassals and the banner of St. Austin, had been gone some time. The siege was raised, and the Lord of Sheppey was left alone in his glory.

But, brave as the Baron undoubtedly was, and total as had been the defeat of his enemies, it cannot be supposed that *La Stoccata* would be allowed to carry it away thus. It has before been hinted that Abbot Anselm had written to the Pope, and Boniface the Eight piqued himself on his punctuality as a correspondent in all matters connected with church discipline. He sent back an answer by return of post; and by it all Christian people were strictly enjoined to aid in exterminating the offender, on pain of the greater excommunication in this world and a million of years of purgatory in the next. But then, again, Boniface the Eight was rather at a discount in England just then. He had affronted Longshanks, as the royal lieges had nicknamed their monarch; and Longshanks had been rather sharp upon the clergy in consequence. If the Baron de Shurland could but get the King's pardon for what, in his cooler moments, he admitted to be a peccadillo, he might sniff at the Pope, and bid him 'to do his devilmost.'

Fortune, who as the poet says, delights to favor the bold, stood his friend on this occasion. Edward had been for some time collecting a large force on the coast of Kent, to carry on his French wars for the recovery of Guienne; he was expected shortly to review it in person; but, then, the troops lay principally in cantonments about the mouth of the Thames, and his majesty was to come down by water. What was to be done?—the royal barge was in sight, and John de Norwood and Hamo de Crevecoeur had broken up all the boats to boil their camp-kettles. A truly great mind is never without resources.

"Bring me my boots!" said the Baron.

They brought him his boots, and his dapple-grey steed along with them.

Such a courser; all blood and bone, short-backed, broad-chested, and—

but that he was a little ewe-necked—faultless in form and figure. The

Baron sprang upon his back, and dashed at once into the river.

The barge which carried Edward Longshanks and his fortunes had by this time nearly reached the Nore; the stream was broad and the current strong, but Sir Robert and his steed were almost as broad, and a great deal stronger. After breasting the tide gallantly for a couple of miles, the knight was near enough to hail the steersman.

"What have we got here?" said the King. "It's a mermaid," said one. "It's a grampus," said another. "It's the devil," said a third. But they were all wrong; It was only Robert de Shurland. "Gramercy" said the King, "that fellow was never born to be drowned!"

It has been said before that the Baron had fought in the Holy Wars; in fact, he had accompanied Longshanks, when only heir-apparent, in his expedition twenty-five years before, although his name is unaccountably omitted by Sir Harris Nicolas in his list of crusaders. He had been present at Acre when Amirand of Joppa stabbed the prince with a poisoned dagger, and had lent Princess Eleanor his own tooth-brush after she had sucked out the venom from the wound. He had slain certain Saracens, contented himself with his own plunder, and never dunned the commissariat for arrears of pay. Of course he ranked high in Edward's good graces, and had received the honor of knighthood at his hands on the field of battle.

In one so circumstanced, it cannot be supposed that such a trifle as the killing of a frowsy friar would be much resented, even had he not taken so bold a measure to obtain his pardon. His petition was granted, of course, as soon as asked; and so it would have been had the indictment drawn up by the Canterbury town-clerk, viz., "That he, the said Robert de Shurland, &c., had then and there, with several, to wit, one thousand pairs of boots, given sundry, to wit, two thousand kicks, and therewith and thereby killed divers, to wit, ten thousand, Austin friars," been true to the letter.

Thrice did the gallant grey circumnavigate the barge, while Robert de Winchelsey, the chancellor and archbishop to boot, was making out, albeit with great reluctance, the royal pardon. The interval was sufficiently long to enable his Majesty, who, gracious as he was, had always an eye to business, just to hint that the gratitude he felt towards the Baron was not unmixed with a lively sense of services to come; and that, if life were now spared him, common decency must oblige him

to make himself useful. Before the archbishop, who had scalded his fingers with the wax in affixing the great seal, had time to take them out of his mouth, all was settled, and the Baron de Shurland had pledged himself to be forthwith in readiness, *cum suis*, to accompany his liege lord to Guienne.

With the royal pardon secured in his vest, boldly did his lordship turn again to the shore; and as boldly did his courser oppose his breadth of chest to the stream. It was a work of no common difficulty or danger; a steed of less "mettle and bone" had long since sunk in the effort; as it was, the Baron's boots were full of water, and Grey Dolphin's chamfrain more than once dipped beneath the wave. The convulsive snorts of the noble animal showed his distress; each instant they became more loud and frequent; when his hoof touched the strand, "the horse and his rider" stood once again in safety on the shore.

Rapidly dismounting the Baron was loosening the girths of his demi- pique, to give the panting animal breath, when he was aware of as ugly an old woman as he ever clapped eyes upon, peeping at him under the horse's belly.

"Make much of your steed, Robert Shurland! Make much of your steed!" cried the hag, shaking at him her long and bony finger. "Groom to the hide, and corn to the manger! He has saved your life, Robert Shurland, for the nonce? but he shall yet be the means of your losing it for all that!"

The Baron started: "What's that you say, you old faggot!" He ran round by his horse's tail; the woman was gone!

The Baron paused: his great soul was not to be shaken by trifles! he looked around him, and solemnly ejaculated the word "Humbug!" then slinging the bridle across his arm, walked slowly on in the direction of the castle.

The appearance, and still more, the disappearance of the crone, had, however, made an impression; "'Twould be deuced provoking, though, if he should break my neck after all." He turned and gazed at Dolphin with the eye of a veterinary surgeon. "I'll be shot if he is not groggy!" said the Baron.

With his lordship, like another great commander, "Once to be in doubt, was once to be resolved:" it would never do to go to the wars on a ricketty prad. He dropped the rein, drew forth Tickletohy, and, as the enfranchised Dolphin, good easy horse, stretched out his ewe-neck to the herbage, struck off his head at a single blow. "There, you lying old beldame!" said the Baron; "now take him away to the knacker's."

Three years were come and gone. King Edward's French wars were over; both parties having fought till they came to a standstill, shook hands, and the quarrel, as usual, was patched up by a royal marriage. This happy event gave his majesty leisure to turn his attention to Scotland, where things, through the intervention of William Wallace, were looking rather queerish. As his reconciliation with Philip now allowed of his fighting the Scotch in peace and quietness, the monarch lost no time in marching his long legs across the border, and the short ones of the Baron followed him of course. At Falkirk, Tickletohy was in great request; and in the year following, we find a contemporary poet hinting at his master's prowess under the walls of Caerlaverock—

A quatrain which Mr. Simpkinson translates,

Ovec ens fu achiminez
Li beau Robert de Shurland
Ri kant seoit sur le cheval
Ne sembloit home ke someille.

With them was marching
The good Robert de Shurland,
Who, when seated on horseback,
Does not resemble a man asleep!

So thoroughly awake, indeed, does he seem to have proved himself, that the bard subsequently exclaims in an ecstasy of admiration,

Si ie estoie une pucellete
Je li dourie ceur et cors
Tant est de lu bons li reeors.

If I were a young maiden,
I would give my heart and perso
So great is his fame!

Fortunately the poet was a tough old monk of Exeter; since such a present to a nobleman, now in his grand climacteric, would hardly have been worth the carriage. With the reduction of this stronghold of the Maxwellsse, em to have concluded the Baron's military services; as on the very first day of the fourteenth century we find him once more landed on his native shore, and marching, with such of his retainers as the wars had left him, towards the hospitable shelter of Shurland Castle. It was then, upon that very beach, some hundred yards distant from high-water mark, that his eye fell upon something like an ugly woman in a red cloak. She was seated on what seemed to be a large stone, in an interesting attitude, with her elbows resting upon her knees, and her chin upon her thumbs. The Baron started; the remembrance of his interview with a similar personage in the same place, some three years since, flashed upon his recollection. He rushed towards the spot, but the form was gone:—nothing remained but the seat it had appeared to occupy. This, on examination, turned out to be no stone, but the whitened skull of a dead horse! A tender remembrance of the deceased Grey Dolphin shot a momentary pang into the Baron's bosom: he drew the back of his hand across his face; the thought of the hag's prediction in an instant rose, and banished all softer emotions. In utter contempt of his own weakness, yet with a tremor that deprived his redoubtable kick of half its wonted force, he spurned the relic with his foot. One word alone issued from his lips, elucidatory of what was passing in his mind—it long remained imprinted on the memory of his faithful followers—that word was "Gammon!" The skull bounded across the beach till it reached the very margin of the stream:—one instant more and it would be engulfed for ever. At that moment a loud "Ha! ha! ha!" was distinctly heard by the whole train to issue from its bleached and toothless jaws: it sank beneath the flood in a horselaugh.

Meanwhile Sir Robert de Shurland felt an odd sort of sensation in his right foot. His boots had suffered in the wars. Great pains had been taken for their preservation. They had been "soled" and "heeled" more than once:—had they been "goloshed," their owner might have defied Fate! Well has it been said that "there is no such a thing as a trifle." A nobleman's life depended upon a question of ninepence.

The Baron marched on: the uneasiness in his foot increased. He plucked off his boot; a horse's tooth was sticking in his great toe!

The result may be anticipated. Lame as he was, his lordship, with characteristic decision, would hobble on to Shurland; his walk increased the inflammation; a flagon of *aqua vitae* did not mend matters. He was in a high fever; he took to his bed. Next morning the toe presented the appearance of a Bedfordshire carrot; by dinner time it had deepened to beet-root; and when Bargrave, the leech, at last sliced it off, the gangrene was too confirmed to admit of remedy. Dame Martin thought it high time to send for Miss Margaret, who, ever since her mother's death, had been living with her maternal aunt, the abbess, in the Ursuline convent at Greenwich. The young lady came, and with her came one Master Ingoldsby, her cousin-german by the mother's side; but the Baron was too far gone in the dead-thraw to recognize either. He died as he lived, unconquered and unconquerable. His last

words were—"tell the old hag she may go to—." Whither remains a secret. He expired without fully articulating the place of her destination.

But who and what *was* the crone who prophesied the catastrophe? Ay, "that is the mystery of this wonderful history."—Some say it was Dame Fothergill, the late confessor's mamma; others, St. Bridget herself; others thought it was nobody at all, but only a phantom conjured up by conscience. As we do not know, we decline giving an opinion.

And what became of the Clerk of Chatham? Mr. Simkinson avers that he lived to a good old age, and was at last hanged by Jack Cade, with his inkhorn about his neck, for "setting boys copies." In support of this he adduces his name "Emmanuel," and refers to the historian Shakespeare. Mr. Peters, on the contrary, considers this to be what he calls one of Simkinson's "Anacreonisms," inasmuch as, at the introduction of Mr. Cade's reform measure, the Clerk, if alive, would have been hard upon two hundred years old. The probability is that the unfortunate alluded to was his great grandson.

Margaret Shurland in due course became Margaret Ingoldsby: her portrait still hangs in the gallery at Tappington. The features are handsome, but shrewdish, betraying, as it were, a touch of the old Baron's temperament; but we never could learn that she actually kicked her husband. She brought him a very pretty fortune in chains, watches, and Saracen ear-rings; the barony, being a male fief, reverted to the Crown.

In the Abbey-church at Minster may yet be seen the tomb of a recumbent warrior, clad in the chain-mail of the 13th century. His hands are clasped in prayer; his legs, crossed in that position so prized by Templars in ancient, and tailors in modern days, bespeak him a soldier of the faith in Palestine. Close behind his dexter calf lies sculptured in bold relief a horse's head: and a respectable elderly lady, as she shows the monument, fails not to read her auditors a fine moral lesson on the sin of ingratitude, or to claim a sympathizing tear to the memory of poor "Grey Dolphin!"

RICHARD HARRIS BARHAM.

MOSES, THE SASSY; OR, THE DISGUISED DUKE

CHAPTER I ELIZY

My story opens in the classic presinks of Bostin. In the parler of the bloated aristocratic mansion on Bacon street sits a luvly young lady, whose hair is covered ore with the frosts of between 17 Summers. She had just sot down to the pianny, and is warblin the popler ballad called "Smells of the Notion," in which she tells how with pensiv thought, she wandered by a C beat shore. The son is settin in its horizon, and its gorjus light pores in a golden meller flud through the winders, and makes the young lady twice as beautiful nor what she was before, which is onnecessary. She is magnificently dressed up in a Berage basque, with poplin trimmins, More Antique, Ball Morals and 3 ply carpeting. Also, considerable guaze. Her dress contains 16 flounders and her shoes is red morocker, with gold spangles onto them. Presently she jumps up with a wild snort, and pressin her hands to her brow, she exclaims, "Methinks I see a voice!"

A noble youth of 27 summers enters. He is attired in a red shirt and black trowis, which last air turned up over his boots; his hat, which is a plug, being cockt onto one side of his classial hed. In sooth, he was a heroic lookin person, with a fine shape. Grease, in its barmiest days near projuced a more hefty cavileer. Gazin upon him admirinly for a spell, Elizy (for that was her name) organized herself into a tabloo, and stated as follers:

"Ha! do me eyes deceive me earsight? No, I reckon not! That frame! them store close! those nose! Yes, it is me own, me only Moses!"

He (Moses) folded her to his hart, with the remark that he was a "hunkey boy."

CHAPTER II

WAS MOSES OF NOBLE BIRTH?

Moses was foreman of Engine Co. No. 40. Forty's fellers had just bin having an annual reunion with Fifty's fellers, on the day I intorjuce Moses to my readers, and Moses had his arms full of trofees, to wit: 4 scalps, 5 eyes, 3 fingers, 7 ears (which he chawed off), and several half and quarter sections of noses. When the fair Elizy recovered from her delight at meetin Moses, she said:—"How hast the battle gonest? Tell me!"

"We chawed 'em up—that's what we did!" said the bold Moses.

"I thank the gods!" said the fair Elizy. "Thou did'st excellent well. And Moses," she continued, layin her hed confidinly again his weskit, "dost know I sumtimes think thou istest of noble birth?"

"No!" said he, wildly ketchin hold of hisself. "You don't say so!"

"Indeed do I! Your dead grandfather's sperrit comest to me the tother night."

"Oh no, I guess it's a mistake," sed Moses.

"I'll bet two dollars and a quarter he did!" replied Elizy. "He said:

'Moses is a Disguised Juke.'"

"You mean Duke," said Moses.

"Dost not the actors all call it Juke?" said she. That settled the matter.

"I hev thought of this thing afore," said Moses abstractedly. "If it is so, then thus it must be! 2 B or not 2 B! Which? Sow, sow! But enuff. O life! life!—*you're too many for me!*" He tore out some of his pretty yeller hair, stamp on the floor several times, and was gone.

CHAPTER III

THE PIRUT FOILED

Sixteen long and weary years has elapsed since the scene narrated in the last chapter took place. A noble ship, the Sary Jane, is a-sailin from France to Ameriky via the Wabash Canal. The pirut ship is in hot pursuit of the Sary. The pirut captin isn't a man of much principle, and intends to kill all the people on board the Sary and confiscate the walleables. The captin of the S. J. is on the point of givin in, when a fine lookin feller in russet boots and a buffalo overcoat rushes forward and observes:

"Old man! go down stairs! Retire to the starboard bulk-head! I'll take charge of this Bote!"

"Owdashus cuss!" yelled the captin, "away with thee or I shall do murder-r-r!"

"Skurcely," observed the stranger, and he drew a diamond-hilted-fish-knife and cut off the captin's head. He expired shortly, his last words being, "We are governed too much."

"People!" said the stranger, "I'm the Juke de Moses!"

"Old hoss!" said a passenger, "methinks thou art blowin!" whereupon the Juke cut off his head also.

"Oh that I should live to see myself a dead body!" screamed the unfortunate man. "But don't print any verses about my death in the newspapers, for if you do I'll haunt ye!"

"People!" said the Juke, "I alone can save you from yon bloody pirut! Ho! a peck of oats!" The oats were brought, and the Juke, boldly mounting the jibboom, threw them onto the towpath. The pirut rapidly approached, chuckling with fiendish delight at the idea of increasing his ill-gotten gains. But the leading hoss of the pirut ship stopped suddenly on coming to the oats, and commencing to devour them. In vain the piruts swore and threw stones and bottles at the hoss—he wouldn't budge an inch. Meanwhile the Sary Jane, her hosses on the full jump, was fast leaving the pirut ship!

"Onct again do I escape death!" said the Juke between his clenched teeth, still on the jibboom.

CHAPTER IV

THE WANDERER'S RETURN

The Juke was the Sassy! Yes, it was!

He had bin to France and now he was home agin in Bostin, which gave birth to a Bunker Hill!! He had some trouble in getting hisself acknowledged as Juke in France, as the Orleans Dienasty and Borebones were fernest him, he finely conkered. Elizy knowed him right off, as one of his ears and a part of his nose had bin chawed off in his fights with opposition firemen durin boyhood's sunny hours. They lived to a green old age, beloved by all, both grate and small. Their children, of which they have numerous, often go up onto the Common and see the Fountain squirt.

This is my 1st attempt at writin a Tail & it is far from bein perfeck, but if I have indoosed folks to see that in 9 cases out of 10 they can either make Life as barren as the Dessert of Sarah, or as joyus as the flower garding, my objeck will have bin accomplished, and more too.

ARTEMUS WARD.

MR. COLUMBUS CORIANDER'S GORILLA

My article on the Origin of the Human Species had been months in preparation. Much of the fame which I have since secured by its publication in that widely circulated magazine, the *Interoceanic Monthly*, is due to the fact that I spent weeks in deep investigations in ethnological science, comparing results, and especially examining the points of resemblance which exist in the brute creation and the nobler race of man. To say that I utterly overthrew the Darwinian theory, and quite demolished the tribe of pretenders who have since attempted to imitate that great apostle of error, may not be strictly in accordance with modesty, but hosts of candid friends will admit that it is strictly true. I know very well that, though my untiring labors in the cause of science are not yet thoroughly appreciated, an admiring posterity will dwell with delight on the name of Samuel Simcox as the benefactor of his race, who showed where that race had its birth and from what primitive elements it sprang. For further particulars, see the *Interoceanic Monthly* for June, 18—.

My favorite haunt during the progress of this article was Coriander's Menagerie; having resolved that this should be the masterpiece of my life, I spared neither labor nor expense upon it, and actually procured a season ticket to the menagerie, and passed many pleasant hours in watching the wild animals, studying their habits, and drawing many valuable conclusions from their points of resemblance and difference. Consequently, though the apes and monkeys had furnished me with an inexhaustible fund of amusement and interest, I was delighted beyond measure when it was announced that Coriander had secured a live gorilla for his collection of wild beasts. An agent had been dispatched to Africa, and had sent home, with great secrecy, a real live specimen of this dreadful beast; and so well had all the negotiations been kept that nobody knew of what was being done, until the monster was fairly caged and on exhibition at Coriander's Menagerie. I entered with zest upon a study of the creature's habits and peculiarities; and while the idle curiosity of mere wonder-mongers kept a vast crowd about the cage wherein the furious beast was confined, calmly I surveyed it from a safe distance and made my scientific observations for the benefit of mankind. And when vulgar wonder at the strange beast had somewhat subsided, and I could get nearer the cage and watch the gorilla, I was more and more impressed with the human traits which I discovered in the extraordinary animal. His manner of reclining was, though impish, half human; and his grotesque gait, as he sprang from side to side of the narrow prison, was suggestive of his supposititious congener-man; even his terrible howl, which rent the air of the museum constantly, had a human shade of sound.

One rainy day, when the great hall of the museum was unusually vacant of visitors, I almost leaned against the cage in my eager watch of the movements of the gorilla. I fancied him roaming his native African jungles, the terror of every living thing, or rearing, with a strange grotesque solicitude, his young family. I wondered how much akin to human love and hate were the passions that raged beneath that hairy breast, and how much of real feeling was in the loud and anguished howl that occasionally burst from those fanglike jaws. Thus speculating, I drew incautiously near the bars of the cage where the monster restlessly paced up and down, and was inexpressibly startled at feeling his hot breath on my cheek, while from his huge, hairy lips came the sound—"Sam!" I actually jumped with astonishment, whereupon the creature beseechingly said: "Hush, hush, for Heaven's sake do not leave me!" I mustered courage enough to ask what all this meant. The gorilla answered: "I am your old friend, Jack Gale; don't leave me."

So Coriander's famous gorilla was no other than my old crony, Jack Gale.

And this is how Jack happened to be a gorilla:

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