

**ФРЕДЕРИК
МАРРИЕТ**

JACOB

FAITHFUL

Фредерик Марриет

Jacob Faithful

«Public Domain»

Марриет Ф.

Jacob Faithful / Ф. Марриет — «Public Domain»,

© Марриет Ф.
© Public Domain

Содержание

Chapter One	5
Chapter Two	10
Chapter Three	15
Chapter Four	19
Chapter Five	24
Chapter Six	30
Chapter Seven	35
Chapter Eight	39
Chapter Nine	45
Chapter Ten	50
Chapter Eleven	56
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	60

Frederick Marryat

Jacob Faithful

Chapter One

My Birth, Parentage, and Family Pretensions—Unfortunately I prove to be a Detrimental or Younger Son, which is remedied by a trifling accident—I hardly receive the first elements of science from my Father, when the elements conspire against me, and I am left an Orphan

Gentle reader, I was born upon the water—not upon the salt and angry ocean, but upon the fresh and rapid-flowing river. It was in a floating sort of box, called a lighter, and upon the river Thames, at low water, when I first smelt the mud. This lighter was manned (an expression amounting to bullism, if not construed *kind-ly*) by my father, my mother, and your humble servant. My father had the sole charge—he was monarch of the deck: my mother, of course, was queen, and I was the heir-apparent.

Before I say one word about myself, allow me dutifully to describe my parents. First, then, I will portray my queen mother. Report says, that when she first came on board of the lighter, a lighter figure and a lighter step never pressed a plank; but as far as I can tax my recollection, she was always a fat, unwieldy woman. Locomotion was not to her taste—*gin* was. She seldom quitted the cabin—never quitted the lighter: a pair of shoes may have lasted her for five years for the wear and tear she took out of them. Being of this domestic habit, as all married women ought to be, she was always to be found when wanted; but although always at hand, she was not always on her feet. Towards the close of the day, she lay down upon her bed—a wise precaution when a person can no longer stand. The fact was, that my honoured mother, although her virtue was unimpeachable, was frequently seduced by liquor; and although constant to my father, was debauched and to be found in bed with that insidious assailer of female uprightness—*gin*. The lighter, which might have been compared to another garden of Eden, of which my mother was the Eve, and my father the Adam to consort with, was entered by this serpent who tempted her; and if she did not eat, she drank, which was even worse. At first, indeed—and I may mention it to prove how the enemy always gains admittance under a specious form—she drank it only to keep the cold out of her stomach, which the humid atmosphere from the surrounding water appeared to warrant. My father took his pipe for the same reason; but, at the time that I was born, he smoked and she drank from morning to night, because habit had rendered it almost necessary to their existence. The pipe was always to his lip, the glass incessantly to hers. I would have defied any cold ever to have penetrated into their stomachs;—but I have said enough of my mother for the present; I will now pass on to my father.

My father was a puffy, round-bellied, long-armed, little man, admirably calculated for his station in, or rather out of, society. He could manage a lighter as well as anybody; but he could do no more. He had been brought up to it from his infancy. He went on shore for my mother, and came on board again—the only remarkable event in his life. His whole amusement was his pipe; and, as there is a certain indefinable link between smoking and philosophy, my father, by dint of smoking, had become a perfect philosopher. It is no less strange than true, that we can puff away our cares with tobacco, when, without it, they remain a burden to existence. There is no composing draught like the draught through the tube of a pipe. The savage warriors of North America enjoyed the blessing before we did; and to the pipe is to be ascribed the wisdom of their councils and the laconic delivery of their sentiments. It would be well introduced into our own legislative assembly. Ladies, indeed,

would no longer peep down through the ventilator; but we should have more sense and fewer words. It is also to tobacco that is to be ascribed the stoical firmness of those American warriors, who, satisfied with the pipes in their mouths, submitted with perfect indifference to the torture of their enemies. From the well-known virtues of this weed arose that peculiar expression when you irritate another, that you “put his pipe out.”

My father’s pipe, literally and metaphorically, was never put out. He had a few apophthegms which brought every disaster to a happy conclusion; and as he seldom or never indulged in words, these sayings were deeply impressed upon my infant memory. One was, “*It’s no use crying; what’s done can’t be helped.*” When once these words escaped his lips, the subject was never renewed. Nothing appeared to move him: the abjurations of those employed in the other lighters, barges, vessels, and boats of every description, who were contending with us for the extra foot of water, as we drifted up or down with the tide, affected him not, further than an extra column or two of smoke rising from the bowl of his pipe. To my mother he used but one expression, “*Take it coolly;*” but it always had the contrary effect with my mother, as it put her more in a passion. It was like pouring oil upon flame; nevertheless, the advice was good, had it ever been followed. Another favourite expression of my father’s when anything went wrong, and which was of the same pattern as the rest of his philosophy, was, “*Better luck next time.*” These aphorisms were deeply impressed upon my memory; I continually recalled them to mind, and thus I became a philosopher long before my wise teeth were in embryo, or I had even shed the first set with which kind Nature presents us, that in the petticoat age we may fearlessly indulge in lollipop.

My father’s education had been neglected. He could neither write nor read; but although he did not exactly, like Cadmus, invent letters, he had accustomed himself to certain hieroglyphics, generally speaking sufficient for his purposes, and which might be considered as an artificial memory. “I can’t write nor read, Jacob,” he would say; “I wish I could; but look, boy, I means this mark for three quarters of a bushel. Mind you recollects it when I axes you, or I’ll be blowed if I don’t wallop you.” But it was only a case of peculiar difficulty which would require a new hieroglyphic, or extract such a long speech from my father. I was well acquainted with his usual scratches and dots, and having a good memory, could put him right when he was puzzled with some misshapen *x* or *z*, representing some unknown quantity, like the same letters in algebra.

I have said that I was heir-apparent, but I did not say that I was the only child born to my father in his wedlock. My honoured mother had had two more children; but the first, who was a girl, had been provided for by a fit of the measles; and the second, my elder brother, by stumbling over the stern of the lighter when he was three years old. At the time of the accident my mother had retired to her bed, a little the worse for liquor; my father was on deck forward, leaning against the windlass, soberly smoking his evening pipe. “What was that?” exclaimed my father, taking his pipe out of his mouth, and listening; “I shouldn’t wonder if that wasn’t Joe.” And my father put in his pipe again, and smoked away as before.

My father was correct in his surmises. It *was* Joe who had made the splash which roused him from his meditations, for the next morning Joe was nowhere to be found. He was, however, found some days afterwards; but, as the newspapers say, and as may well be imagined, the vital spark was extinct; and, moreover, the eels and chubs had eaten off his nose and a portion of his chubby face, so that, as my father said, “he was of no use to nobody.” The morning after the accident my father was up early, and had missed poor little Joe. He went into the cabin, smoked his pipe, and said nothing. As my brother did not appear as usual for his breakfast, my mother called out for him in a harsh voice; but Joe was out of hearing, and as mute as a fish. Joe opened not his mouth in reply, neither did my father. My mother then quitted the cabin, and walked round the lighter, looked into the dog-kennel to ascertain if he was asleep with the great mastiff—but Joe was nowhere to be found.

“Why, what can have become of Joe?” cried my mother, with maternal alarm in her countenance, appealing to my father, as she hastened back to the cabin. My father spoke not, but

taking the pipe out of his mouth, dropped the bowl of it in a perpendicular direction till it landed softly on the deck, then put it into his mouth again, and puffed mournfully. “Why, you don’t mean to say he is overboard?” screamed my mother.

My father nodded his head, and puffed away at an accumulated rate. A torrent of tears, exclamations, and revilings succeeded to this characteristic announcement. My father allowed my mother to exhaust herself. By the time when she had finished, so was his pipe; he then knocked out the ashes, and quietly observed, “It’s no use crying; what’s done can’t be helped,” and proceeded to refill the bowl.

“Can’t be helped!” cried my mother; “but it might have been helped.”

“Take it coolly,” replied my father.

“Take it coolly!” replied my mother in a rage—“take it coolly! Yes, you’re for taking everything coolly: I presume, if I fell overboard you would be taking it coolly.”

“You would be taking it coolly, at all events,” replied my imperturbable father.

“O dear! O dear!” cried my poor mother; “two poor children, and lost them both!”

“Better luck next time,” rejoined my father; “so, Sall, say no more about it.”

My father continued for some time to smoke his pipe, and my mother to pipe her eye, until at last my father, who was really a kind-hearted man, rose from the chest upon which he was seated, went to the cupboard, poured out a teacupful of *gin*, and handed it to my mother. It was kindly done of him, and my mother was to be won by kindness. It was a pure offering in the spirit, and taken in the spirit in which it was offered. After a few repetitions, which were rendered necessary from its potency being diluted with her tears, grief and recollection were drowned together, and disappeared like two lovers who sink down entwined in each other’s arms.

With this beautiful metaphor, I shall wind up the episode of my unfortunate brother Joe.

It was about a year after the loss of my brother that I was ushered into the world, without any other assistants or spectators than my father and Dame Nature, who I believe to be a very clever midwife if not interfered with. My father, who had some faint ideas of Christianity, performed the baptismal rites by crossing me on the forehead with the end of his pipe, and calling me Jacob: as for my mother being churched, she had never been but once to church in her life. In fact, my father and mother never quitted the lighter, unless when the former was called out by the superintendent or proprietor, at the delivery or shipment of a cargo, or was once a month for a few minutes on shore to purchase necessaries. I cannot recall much of my infancy; but I recollect that the lighter was often very brilliant with blue and red paint, and that my mother used to point it out to me as “so pretty,” to keep me quiet. I shall therefore pass it over, and commence at the age of five years, at which early period I was of some little use to my father. Indeed I was almost as forward as some boys at ten. This may appear strange; but the fact is, that my ideas although bounded, were concentrated. The lighter, its equipments, and its destination were the microcosm of my infant imagination; and my ideas and thoughts being directed to so few objects, these objects were deeply impressed, and their value fully understood. Up to the time that I quitted the lighter, at eleven years old, the banks of the river were the boundaries of my speculations. I certainly comprehended something of the nature of trees and houses; but I do not think that I was aware that the former *grew*. From the time that I could recollect them on the banks of the river, they appeared to be exactly of the same size as they were when first I saw them, and I asked no questions. But by the time that I was ten years old, I knew the name of the reach of the river, and every point—the depth of water, and the shallows, the drift of the current, and the ebb and flow of the tide itself. I was able to manage the lighter as it floated down with the tide; for what I lacked in strength I made up with dexterity arising from constant practice.

It was at the age of eleven years that a catastrophe took place which changed my prospects in life, and I must, therefore, say a little more about my father and mother, bringing up their history to that period. The propensity of my mother to ardent spirits had, as always is the case, greatly increased upon her, and her corpulence had increased in the same ratio. She was now a most unwieldy, bloated

mountain of flesh, such a form as I have never since beheld, although, at the time, she did not appear to me to be disgusting, accustomed to witness imperceptibly her increase, and not seeing any other females, except at a distance. For the last two years she had seldom quitted her bed—certainly she did not crawl out of the cabin more than five minutes during the week—indeed, her obesity and habitual intoxication rendered her incapable. My father went on shore for a quarter of an hour once a month, to purchase gin, tobacco, red herrings, and decayed ship-biscuits;—the latter was my principal fare, except when I could catch a fish over the sides, as we lay at anchor. I was, therefore, a great water-drinker, not altogether from choice, but from the salt nature of my food, and because my mother had still sense enough left to discern that “Gin wasn’t good for little boys.” But a great change had taken place in my father. I was now left almost altogether in charge of the deck, my father seldom coming up except to assist me in shooting the bridges, or when it required more than my exertions to steer clear of the crowds of vessels which we encountered when between them. In fact, as I grew more capable, my father became more incapable, and passed most of his time in the cabin, assisting my mother in emptying the great stone bottle. The woman had prevailed upon the man, and now both were guilty in partaking of the forbidden fruit of the Juniper Tree. Such was the state of affairs in our little kingdom when the catastrophe occurred which I am now about to relate.

One fine summer’s evening we were floating up with the tide, deeply laden with coals, to be delivered at the proprietor’s wharf, some distance above Putney Bridge; a strong breeze sprang up and checked our progress, and we could not, as we expected, gain the wharf that night. We were about a mile and a half above the bridge when the tide turned against us, and we dropped our anchor. My father who, expecting to arrive that evening, had very unwillingly remained sober, waiting until the lighter had swung to the stream, and then saying to me, “Remember, Jacob, we must be at the wharf early tomorrow morning, so keep alive,” went into the cabin to indulge in his potations, leaving me in possession of the deck, and also of my supper, which I never ate below, the little cabin being so unpleasantly close. Indeed, I took all my meals *al fresco*, and, unless the nights were intensely cold, slept on deck, in the capacious dog-kennel abaft, which had once been tenanted by the large mastiff; but he had been dead some years, was thrown overboard, and, in all probability, had been converted into savoury sausages at 1 shilling per pound weight. Some time after his decease, I had taken possession of his apartment and had performed his duty. I had finished my supper, which was washed down with a considerable portion of Thames water, for I always drank more when above the bridges, having an idea that it tasted more pure and fresh. I had walked forward and looked at the cable to see if all was right, and then, having nothing more to do, I lay down on the deck, and indulged in the profound speculations of a boy of eleven years old. I was watching the stars above me, which twinkled faintly, and appeared to me ever and anon to be extinguished and then relighted. I was wondering what they could be made of, and how they came there, when of a sudden I was interrupted in my reveries by a loud shriek, and perceived a strong smell of something burning. The shrieks were renewed again and again, and I had hardly time to get upon my legs when my father burst up from the cabin, rushed over the side of the lighter, and disappeared under the water. I caught a glimpse of his features as he passed me, and observed fright and intoxication blended together. I ran to the side where he had disappeared, but could see nothing but a few eddying circles as the tide rushed quickly past. For a few seconds I remained staggered and stupefied at his sudden disappearance and evident death, but I was recalled to recollection by the smoke which encompassed me, and the shrieks of my mother, which were now fainter and fainter, and I hastened to her assistance.

A strong, empyreumatic, thick smoke ascended from the hatchway of the cabin, and, as it had now fallen calm, it mounted straight up the air in a dense column. I attempted to go in, but so soon as I encountered the smoke I found that it was impossible; it would have suffocated me in half a minute. I did what most children would have done in such a situation of excitement and distress—I sat down and cried bitterly. In about ten minutes I moved my hands, with which I had covered up my face, and looked at the cabin hatch. The smoke had disappeared, and all was silent. I went to the

hatchway, and although the smell was still overpowering, I found that I could bear it. I descended the little ladder of three steps, and called “Mother!” but there was no answer. The lamp fixed against the after bulk-head, with a glass before it, was still alight, and I could see plainly to every corner of the cabin. Nothing was burning—not even the curtains to my mother’s bed appeared to be singed. I was astonished—breathless with fear, with a trembling voice, I again called out “Mother!” I remained more than a minute panting for breath, and then ventured to draw back the curtains of the bed—my mother was not there! but there appeared to be a black mass in the centre of the bed. I put my hand fearfully upon it—it was a sort of unctuous, pitchy cinder. I screamed with horror—my little senses reeled—I staggered from the cabin and fell down on the deck in a state amounting almost to insanity: it was followed by a sort of stupor, which lasted for many hours.

As the reader may be in some doubt as to the occasion of my mother’s death, I must inform him that she perished in that very peculiar and dreadful manner, which does sometimes, although rarely, occur, to those who indulge in an immoderate use of spirituous liquors. Cases of this kind do, indeed, present themselves but once in a century, but the occurrence of them is too well authenticated. She perished from what is termed *spontaneous combustion*, an inflammation of the gases generated from the spirits absorbed into the system. It is to be presumed that the flames issuing from my mother’s body completely frightened out of his senses my father, who had been drinking freely; and thus did I lose both my parents, one by fire and the other by water, at one and the same time.

Chapter Two

**I fulfil the last injunctions of my Father, and I am embarked upon a new element
—First bargain in my life very profitable—First parting with old friends very
painful—First introduction into civilised life very unsatisfactory to all parties**

It was broad daylight when I awoke from my state of bodily and mental imbecility. For some time I could not recall to my mind all that had happened: the weight which pressed upon my feelings told me that it was something dreadful. At length, the cabin hatch, still open, caught my eye; I recalled all the horrors of the preceding evening, and recollected that I was left alone in the lighter. I got up and stood on my feet in mute despair. I looked around me—the mist of the morning was hanging over the river, and the objects on shore were with difficulty to be distinguished. I was chilled from lying all night in the heavy dew, and, perhaps, still more from previous and extraordinary excitement. Venture to go down into the cabin I dare not. I had an indescribable awe, a degree of horror at what I had seen, that made it impossible; still I was unsatisfied, and would have given worlds, if I had had them, to explain the mystery. I turned my eyes from the cabin hatch to the water, thought of my father, and then, for more than half an hour, watched the tide as it ran up—my mind in a state of vacancy. As the sun rose, the mist gradually cleared away; trees, houses, and green fields, other barges coming up with the tide, boats passing and repassing, the barking of dogs, the smoke issuing from the various chimneys, all broke upon me by degrees; and I was recalled to the sense that I was in a busy world, and had my own task to perform. The last words of my father—and his injunctions had ever been a law to me—were, “Mind, Jacob, we must be up at the wharf early to-morrow morning.” I prepared to obey him. Purchase the anchor I could not; I therefore slipped the cable, lashing a broken sweep to the end of it, as a buoy-rope, and once more the lighter was at the mercy of the stream, guided by a boy of eleven years old. In about two hours I was within a hundred yards of the wharf, and well in-shore, I hailed for assistance, and two men, who were on board of the lighters moored at the wharf, pushed off in a skiff to know what it was that I wanted. I told them that I was alone in the lighter, without anchor or cable, and requested them to secure her. They came on board, and in a few minutes the lighter was safe alongside of the others. As soon as the lashings were passed, they interrogated me as to what had happened, but although the fulfilling of my father’s last injunctions had borne up my spirits, now that they were obeyed a reaction took place. I could not answer them; I threw myself down on the deck in a paroxysm of grief, and cried as if my heart would break.

The men, who were astonished, not only at my conduct but at finding me alone in the lighter, went on shore to the clerk, and stated the circumstances. He returned with them, and would have interrogated me, but my paroxysm was not yet over, and my replies, broken my sobs, were unintelligible. The clerk and the two men went down into the cabin, returned hastily, and quitted the lighter. In about a quarter of an hour I was sent for, and conducted to the house of the proprietor—the first time in my life that I had ever put my foot on *terra firma*. I was led into the parlour, where I found the proprietor at breakfast with his wife and his daughter, a little girl nine years old. By this time I had recovered myself, and on being interrogated, told my story clearly and succinctly, while the big tears coursed each other down my dirty face.

“How strange and how horrible!” said the lady to her husband; “I cannot understand it even now.”

“Nor can I; but still it is true, from what Johnson the clerk has witnessed.”

In the meantime my eyes were directed to every part of the room, which appeared to my ignorance as a Golcondo of wealth and luxury. There were few things which I had seen before, but I

had an innate idea that they were of value. The silver tea-pot, the hissing urn, the spoons, the pictures in their frames, every article of furniture caught my wondering eye, and for a short time I had forgotten my father and my mother; but I was recalled from my musing speculations by the proprietor inquiring how far I had brought the lighter without assistance.

“Have you any friends, my poor boy?” inquired the lady.

“No.”

“What! no relations onshore?”

“I never was on shore before in my life.”

“Do you know that you are a destitute orphan?”

“What’s that?”

“That you have no father or mother,” said the little girl.

“Well,” replied I, in my father’s words, having no answer more appropriate, “it’s no use crying; what’s done can’t be helped.”

“But what do you intend to do now?” inquired the proprietor, looking hard at me after my previous answer.

“Don’t know, I’m sure. Take, it coolly,” replied I, whimpering.

“What a very odd child!” observed the lady. “Is he aware of the extent of his misfortune?”

“Better luck next time, missus,” replied I, wiping my eyes with the back of my hand.

“What strange answers from a child who has shown so much feeling,” observed the proprietor to his wife. “What is your name.”

“Jacob Faithful.”

“Can you write or read?”

“No,” replied I, again using my father’s words: “No, I can’t—I wish I could.”

“Very well, my poor boy, we’ll see what’s to be done,” said the proprietor.

“I know what’s to be done,” rejoined I; “you must send a couple of hands to get the anchor and cable, afore they cut the buoy adrift.”

“You are right, my lad, that must be done immediately,” said the proprietor; “but now you had better go down with Sarah into the kitchen; cook will take care of you. Sarah, my love, take him down to cook.”

The little girl beckoned me to follow her. I was astonished at the length and variety of the *companion-ladders*, for such I considered the stairs, and was at last landed below, when little Sarah, giving cook the injunction to take care of me, again tripped lightly up to her mother.

I found the signification of “take care of any one” very different on shore from what it was on the river, where taking care of you means getting out of your way, and giving you a wide berth; and I found the shore reading much more agreeable. Cook did take care of me; she was a kind-hearted, fat woman who melted at a tale of woe, although the fire made no impression on her. I not only beheld, but I devoured, such things as never before entered into my mouth or my imagination. Grief had not taken away my appetite. I stopped occasionally to cry a little, wiped my eyes, and sat down again. It was more than two hours before I laid down my knife, and not until strong symptoms of suffocation played round the regions of my trachea did I cry out, “Hold, enough.” Somebody has made an epigram about the vast ideas which a miser’s horse must have had of corn. I doubt, if such ideas were existent, whether they were at all equal to my astonishment at a leg of mutton. I never had seen such a piece of meat before, and wondered if it were fresh or otherwise. After such reflection I naturally felt inclined to sleep; in a few minutes I was snoring upon two chairs, cook having covered me up with her apron to keep away the flies. Thus was I fairly embarked upon a new element to me—my mother earth; and it may be just as well to examine now into the capital I possessed for my novel enterprise. In person I was well-looking; I was well-made, strong, and active. Of my habiliments the less said the better; I had a pair of trousers with no seat to them; but this defect, when I stood up, was hid by my jacket, composed of an old waistcoat of my father’s, which reached down as low as the morning frocks worn

in those days. A shirt of coarse duck, and a fur cap, which was as rough and ragged as if it had been the hide of a cat pulled to pieces by dogs, completed my attire. Shoes and stockings I had none; these supernumerary appendages had never confined the action of my feet. My mental acquisitions were not much more valuable; they consisted of a tolerable knowledge of the depth of water, names of points and reaches in the River Thames, all of which was not very available on dry land—of a few hieroglyphics of my father's, which, as the crier says sometimes, winding up his oration, were of "no use to nobody but the owner." Add to the above the three favourite maxims of my taciturn father, which were indelibly imprinted upon my memory, and you have the whole inventory of my stock-in-trade. These three maxims were, I may say, incorporated into my very system, so continually had they been quoted to me during my life; and before I went to sleep that night they were again conned over. "What's done can't be helped," consoled me for the mishaps of my life; "Better luck next time," made me look forward with hope and, "Take it coolly," was a subject of great reflection, until I fell into a deep sleep; for I had sufficient penetration to observe that my father had lost his life by not adhering to his own principles; and this perception only rendered my belief in the infallibility of these maxims to be even still more steadfast.

I have stated what was my father's legacy, and the reader will suppose that from the maternal side the acquisition was *nil*. Directly such was the case, but indirectly she proved a very good mother to me, and that was by the very extraordinary way in which she had quitted the world. Had she met with a common death, she would have been worth nothing. Burke himself would not have been able to dispose of her; but dying as she did, her ashes were the source of wealth. The bed, with her remains lying in the centre, even the curtains of the bed, were all brought on shore, and locked up in an outhouse. The coroner came down in a post-chaise and four, charged to the country; the jury was empanelled, my evidence was taken, surgeons and apothecaries attended from far and near to give their opinions, and after much examination, much arguing, and much disagreement, the verdict was brought in that she died through "the visitation of God." As this, in other phraseology, implies that "God only knows how she died," it was agreed to *nemine contradicente*, and gave universal satisfaction. But the extraordinary circumstance was spread everywhere, with all due amplifications, and thousands flocked to the wharfinger's yard to witness the effects of spontaneous combustion. The proprietor immediately perceived that he could avail himself of the public curiosity to my advantage. A plate, with some silver and gold, was placed at the foot of my poor mother's flock mattress, with, "For the benefit of the orphan," in capital text, placarded above it; and many were the shillings, half-crowns, and even larger sums which were dropped into it by the spectators, who shuddered as they turned away from this awful specimen of the effects of habitual intoxication. For many days did the exhibition continue, during which time I was domiciled with the cook, who employed me in scouring her saucepans, and any other employment in which my slender services might be useful, little thinking at the time that my poor mother was holding her levée for my advantage. On the eleventh day the exhibition was closed, and I was summoned upstairs by the proprietor, whom I found in company with a little gentleman in black. This was a surgeon who had offered a sum of money for my mother's remains, bed and curtains, in a lot. The proprietor was willing to get rid of them in so advantageous a manner, but did not conceive that he was justified in taking this step, although for my benefit, without first consulting me, as heir-at-law.

"Jacob," said he, "this gentleman offers 20 pounds, which is a great deal of money, for the ashes of your poor mother. Have you any objection to let him have them?"

"What do you want 'em for?" inquired I.

"I wish to keep them, and take great care of them," answered he.

"Well," replied I, after a little consideration, "if you'll take care of the old woman, you may have her,"—and the bargain was concluded. Singular that the first bargain I ever made in my life should be that of selling my own mother. The proceeds of the exhibition and sale amounted to 47 pounds odd, which the worthy proprietor of the lighter, after deducting for a suit of clothes, laid up for my

use. Thus ends the history of my mother's remains, which proved more valuable to me than ever she did when living. In her career she somewhat reversed the case of Semele, who was first visited in a shower of gold, and eventually perished in the fiery embraces of the god: whereas my poor mother perished first by the same element, and the shower of gold descended to her only son. But this is easily explained. Semele was very lovely and did not drink gin—my mother was her complete antithesis.

When I was summoned to my master's presence to arrange the contract with the surgeon, I had taken off the waistcoat which I wore as a garment over all, that I might be more at my ease in chopping some wood for the cook, and the servant led me up at once, without giving me time to put it on. After I had given my consent, I turned away to go downstairs again, when having, as I before observed, no seat to my trousers, the solution of continuity was observed by a little spaniel, who jumped from the sofa, and arriving at a certain distance, stood at bay, and barked most furiously at the exposure. He had been bred among respectable people, and had never seen such an exposé. Mr Drummond, the proprietor, observed the defect pointed out by the dog, and forthwith I was ordered to be suited with a new suit—certainly not before they were required. In twenty-four hours I was thrust into a new garment by a bandy-legged tailor, assisted by my friend the cook, and turn or twist whichever way I pleased, decency was never violated. A new suit of clothes is generally an object of ambition, and flatters the vanity of young and old; but with me it was far otherwise. Encumbered with my novel apparel, I experienced at once feelings of restraint and sorrow. My shoes hurt me, my worsted stockings irritated the skin, and as I had been accustomed to hereditarily succeed to my father's cast-off skins, which were a world too wide for my shanks, having but few ideas, it appeared to me as if I had swelled out to the size of the clothes which I had been accustomed to wear, not that they had been reduced to my dimensions. I fancied myself a man, but was very much embarrassed with my manhood. Every step that I took I felt as if I was checked back by strings. I could not swing my arms as I was wont to do, and tottered in my shoes like a rickety child. My old apparel had been consigned to the dust-hole by cook, and often during the day would I pass, casting a longing eye at it, wishing that I dare recover it, and exchange it for that which I wore. I knew the value of it, and, like the magician in Aladdin's tale, would have offered new lamps for old ones, cheerfully submitting to ridicule, that I might have repossessed my treasure.

With the kitchen and its apparatus I was now quite at home: but at every other part of the house and furniture I was completely puzzled. Everything appeared to me foreign, strange, and unnatural, and Prince Le Boo, or any other savage, never stared or wondered more than I did. Of most things I knew not the use, of many not even the names. I was literally a savage, but still a kind and docile one. The day after my new clothes had been put on, I was summoned into the parlour. Mr Drummond and his wife surveyed me in my altered habiliments, and amused themselves at my awkwardness, at the same time that they admired my well-knit, compact, and straight figure, set off by a fit, in my opinion much too straight. Their little daughter Sarah, who often spoke to me, went up and whispered to her mother. "You must ask papa," was the reply. Another whisper, and a kiss, and Mr Drummond told me I should dine with them. In a few minutes I followed them into the dining-room and for the first time I was seated to a repast which could boast of some of the supernumerary comforts of civilised life. There I sat, perched on a chair with my feet swinging close to the carpet, glowing with heat from the compression of my clothes and the novelty of my situation, and all that was around me. Mr Drummond helped me to some scalding soup, a silver spoon was put into my hand, which I twisted round and round, looking at my face reflected in miniature on its polish.

"Now, Jacob, you must eat the soup with the spoon," said little Sarah, laughing; "we shall all be done. Be quick."

"Take it coolly," replied I, digging my spoon into the burning preparation, and tossing it into my mouth. It burst forth from my tortured throat in a diverging shower, accompanied with a howl of pain.

"The poor boy has scalded his mouth," cried the lady, pouring out a tumbler of water.

"It's no use crying," replied I, blubbering with all my might; "what's done can't be helped."

“Better that you had not been helped,” observed Mr Drummond, wiping off his share of my liberal spargification from his coat and waistcoat.

“The poor boy has been shamefully neglected,” observed the good-natured Mrs Drummond. “Come, Jacob, sit down and try it again; it will not burn you now.”

“Better luck next time,” said I, shoving in a portion of it, with a great deal of tremulous hesitation, and spilling one-half of it in its transit. It was now cool, but I did not get on very fast; I held my spoon awry, and soiled my clothes.

Mrs Drummond interfered, and kindly showed me how to proceed; when Mr Drummond said, “Let the boy eat it after his own fashion, my dear—only be quick, Jacob, for we are waiting.”

“Then I see no good losing so much of it, taking it in tale,” observed I, “when I can ship it all in bulk in a minute.” I laid down my spoon, and stooping my head, applied my mouth to the edge of the plate, and sucked the remainder down my throat without spilling a drop. I looked up for approbation, and was very much astonished to hear Mrs Drummond quietly observe, “That is not the way to eat soup.”

I made so many blunders during the meal that little Sarah was in a continued roar of laughter; and I felt so miserable, that I heartily wished myself again in my dog-kennel on board of the lighter, gnawing biscuit in all the happiness of content and dignity of simplicity. For the first time I felt the pangs of humiliation. Ignorance is not always debasing. On board of the lighter, I was sufficient for myself, my company, and my duties. I felt an elasticity of mind, a respect for myself, and a consciousness of power, as the immense mass was guided through the waters by my single arm. There, without being able to analyse my feelings, I was a spirit guiding a little world; and now, at this table, and in company with rational and well-informed beings, I felt humiliated and degraded; my heart was overflowing with shame, and at one unusual loud laugh of the little Sarah, the heaped up measure of my anguish overflowed, and I burst into a passion of tears. As I lay with my head upon the tablecloth, regardless of those decencies I had so much feared, and awake only to a deep sense of wounded pride, each sob coming from the very core of my heart, I felt a soft breathing warm upon my cheek, that caused me to look up timidly, and I beheld the glowing and beautiful face of little Sarah, her eyes filled with tears, looking so softly and beseechingly at me, that I felt at once I was of some value, and panted to be of more.

“I won’t laugh at you any more,” said she; “so don’t cry, Jacob.”

“No more I will,” replied I, cheering up. She remained standing by me, and I felt grateful. “The first time I get a piece of wood,” whispered I, “I’ll cut you out a barge.”

“That boy has a heart,” said Mr Drummond to his wife.

“But will it swim, Jacob?” inquired the little girl.

“Yes, and if it’s *lopsided*, call me a lubber.”

“What’s lopsided, and what’s a lubber?” replied Sarah.

“Why, don’t you know?” cried I; and I felt my confidence return when I found that in this little instance I knew more than she did.

Chapter Three

I am sent to a Charity School, where the Boys do not consider Charity as a Part of their Education—The Peculiarities of the Master, and the Magical Effect of a Blow of the Nose—A Disquisition upon the Letter A, from which I find all my Previous Learning thrown away

Before I quitted the room, Sarah and I were in deep converse at the window, and Mr and Mrs Drummond employed likewise at the table. The result of the conversation between Sarah and me was the intimacy of children; that of Mr and Mrs Drummond, that the sooner I was disposed of, the more it would be for my own advantage. Having some interest with the governors of a charity school near Brentford, Mr Drummond lost no time in procuring me admission; and before I had quite spoiled my new clothes, having worn them nearly three weeks, I was suited afresh in a formal attire—a long coat of pepper and salt, yellow leather breeches tied at the knees, a worsted cap with a tuft on the top of it, stockings and shoes to match, and a large pewter plate upon my breast, marked with Number 63, which, as I was the last entered boy, indicated the sum total of the school. It was with regret that I left the abode of the Drummonds, who did not think it advisable to wait for the completion of the barge, much to the annoyance of Miss Drummond, and before we arrived met them all out walking. I was put into the ranks, received a little good advice from my worthy patron, who then walked away one way, while we walked another, looking like a regiment of yellow-thighed field-fares straightened in human perpendiculars. Behold, then, the last scion of the Faithfuls, peppered, salted, and plated, that all the world might know that he was a charity-boy, and that there was charity in this world. But if heroes, kings, great and grave men, must yield to destiny, lighter-boys cannot be expected to escape; and I was doomed to receive an education, board, lodging, raiment, etcetera, free, gratis, and for nothing.

Every society has it chief; and I was about to observe that every circle has it centre, which certainly would have been true enough, but the comparison is of no use to me, as our circle had two centres, or, to follow up the first idea, had two chiefs—the chief schoolmaster and the chief domestic—the chief masculine and the chief feminine—the chief with the ferula, and the chief with the brimstone and treacle—the master and the matron, each of whom had their appendages—the one in the usher, the other in the assistant housemaid. But of this quartette, the master was not only the most important, but the most worthy of description; and as he will often appear in the pages of my narrative, long after my education was complete, I shall be very particular in my description of Dominie Dobiensis, as he delighted to be called, or Dreary Dobs, as his dutiful scholars delighted to call him. As in our school it was necessary that we should be instructed in reading, writing, and ciphering, the governors had selected the Dominie as the most fitting person that had offered for the employment, because he had, in the first place, written a work that nobody could understand upon the Greek particles; secondly, he had proved himself a great mathematician, having, it is said, squared the circle by algebraical false quantities, but would never show the operation for fear of losing the honour by treachery. He had also discovered as many errors in the demonstrations of Euclid as ever did Joey Hume in army and navy estimates, and with as much benefit to the country at large. He was a man who breathed certainly in the present age, but the half of his life was spent in antiquity or algebra. Once carried away by a problem, or a Greek reminiscence, he passed away, as it were, from his present existence, and everything was unheeded. His body remained, and breathed on his desk, but his soul was absent. This peculiarity was well known to the boys, who used to say, “Dominie is in his dreams, and talks in his sleep.”

Dominie Dobiensis left reading and writing to the usher, contrary to the regulations of the school, putting the boys, if possible, into mathematics, Latin, and Greek. The usher was not over competent to teach the two first; the boys not over willing to learn the latter. The master was too clever, the usher too ignorant; hence the scholars profited little. The Dominie was grave and irascible, but he possessed a fund of drollery and the kindest heart. His features could not laugh, but his trachea did. The chuckle rose no higher than the rings of the wind-pipe, and then it was vigorously thrust back again by the impulse of gravity into the region of his heart, and gladdened it with hidden mirth in its dark centre. The Dominie loved a pun; whether it was let off in English, Greek, or Latin. The last two were made by nobody but himself, and not being understood, were, of course, relished by himself alone. But his love of a pun was a serious attachment: he loved it with a solemn affection—with him it was no laughing matter.

In person Dominie Dobiensis was above six feet, all bone and sinews. His face was long and his lineaments large; but his predominant feature was his nose, which, large as were the others, bore them down into insignificance. It was a prodigy—a ridicule; but he consoled himself—Ovid was called Naso. It was not an aquiline nose, nor was it an aquiline nose reversed. It was not a nose snubbed at the extremity, gross, heavy, or carbuncled, or fluting. In all its magnitude of proportions, it was an intellectual nose. It was thin, horny, transparent, and sonorous. Its snuffle was consequential and its sneeze oracular. The very sight of it was impressive; its sound, when blown in school hours, was ominous. But the scholars loved the nose for the warning which it gave: like the rattle of the dreaded snake, which announces its presence, so did the nose indicate to the scholars that they were to be on their guard. The Dominie would attend to this world and its duties for an hour or two, and then forget his scholars and his school-room, while he took a journey into the world of Greek or algebra. Then, when he marked x , y , and z , in his calculations, the boys knew that he was safe, and their studies were neglected.

Reader, did you ever witness the magic effects of a drum in a small village, when the recruiting party, with many-coloured ribbons, rouse it up with a spirit-stirring tattoo? Matrons leave their domestic cares, and run to the cottage door: peeping over their shoulders, the maidens admire and fear. The shuffling clowns raise up their heads gradually, until they stand erect and proud; the slouch in the back is taken out, their heavy walk is changed to a firm yet elastic tread, every muscle appears more braced, every nerve, by degrees, new strung; the blood circulates rapidly: pulses quicken, hearts throb, eyes brighten, and as the martial sound pervades their rustic frames, the Cimons of the plough are converted, as if by magic, into incipient heroes for the field;—and all this is produced by beating the skin of the most gentle, most harmless animal of creation.

Not having at hand the simile synthetical, we have resorted to the antithetical. The blowing of the Dominie's nose produced the very contrary effects. It was a signal that he had returned from his intellectual journal, and was once more in his school-room—that the master had finished with his x , y , z 's, and it was time for scholars to mind their p 's and q 's. At this note of warning, like the minute-roll among the troops, every one fell into his place; half-munched apples were thrust into the first pocket—popguns disappeared—battles were left to be decided elsewhere—books were opened, and eyes directed to them—forms that were fidgeting and twisting in all directions, now took one regimental inclined position over the desk—silence was restored, order resumed her reign, and Mr Knapps, the usher, who always availed himself of these interregnums, as well as the scholars, by deserting to the matron's room, warned by the well-known sound, hastened to the desk of toil; such were the astonishing effects of a blow from Dominie Dobiensis' sonorous and peace-restoring nose.

“Jacob Faithful, draw near,” were the first words which struck upon my tympanum the next morning, when I had taken my seat at the further end of the school-room. I rose and threaded my way through two lines of boys, who put out their legs to trip me up in my passage through their ranks; and surmounting all difficulties, found myself within three feet of the master's high desk, or pulpit, from which he looked down upon me like the Olympian Jupiter upon mortals, in ancient time.

“Jacob Faithful, canst thou read?”

“No, I can’t,” replied I; “I wish I could.”

“A well-disposed answer, Jacob; thy wishes shall be gratified. Knowest thou thine alphabet?”

“I don’t know what that is.”

“Then thou knowest it not. Mr Knapps shall forthwith instruct thee. Thou shall forthwith go to Mr Knapps, who inculcatheth the rudiments. *Levior Puer*, lighter-boy, thou hast a *crafty* look.” And then I heard a noise in his throat that resembled the “cluck, cluck” when my poor mother poured the gin out of the great stone bottle.

“My little navilculator,” continued he, “thou art a weed washed on shore, one of Father Thames’ cast-up wrecks. *Fluviorum rex Eridanus*,’ (Chuck, cluck.) To thy studies; be thyself—that is, be Faithful. Mr Knapps, let the Cadmean art proceed forthwith.” So saying, Dominie Dobiensis thrust his large hand into his right coat pocket, in which he kept his snuff loose, and taking a large pinch (the major part of which, the stock being low, was composed of hair and cotton abrasions which had collected in the corners of his pocket), he called up the first class, while Mr Knapps called me to my first lesson.

Mr Knapps was a thin, hectic-looking young man, apparently nineteen or twenty years of age, very small in all his proportions, red ferret eyes, and without the least sign of incipient manhood; but he was very savage, nevertheless. Not being permitted to pummel the boys when the Dominie was in the school-room, he played the tyrant most effectually when he was left commanding officer. The noise and hubbub certainly warranted his interference—the respect paid to him was positively *nil*. His practice was to select the most glaring delinquent, and let fly his ruler at him, with immediate orders to bring it back. These orders were complied with for more than one reason; in the first place, was the offender hit, he was glad that another should have his turn; in the second, Mr Knapps being a very bad shot (never having drove a Kamschatdale team of dogs), he generally missed the one he aimed at, and hit some other, who, if he did not exactly deserve it at that moment, certainly did for previous, or would for subsequent, delinquencies. In the latter case, the ruler was brought back to him because there was no injury inflicted, although intended. However, be it as it may, the ruler was always returned to him; and thus did Mr Knapps pelt the boys as if they were cocks on Shrove Tuesday, to the great risk of their heads and limbs. I have little further to say of Mr Knapps, except that he wore a black shalloon loose coat; on the left sleeve of which he wiped his pen, and upon the right, but too often, his ever-snivelling nose.

“What is that, boy?” said Mr Knapps, pointing to the letter A.

I looked attentively, and recognising, as I thought, one of my father’s hieroglyphics, replied, “That’s half-a-bushel;” and I was certainly warranted in my supposition.

“Half-a-bushel! You’re more than half a fool. That’s the letter A.”

“No; it’s half-a-bushel; father told me so.”

“Then your father was as big a fool as yourself.”

“Father knew what half-a-bushel was, and so do I: that’s half-a-bushel.”

“I tell you it’s the letter A,” cried Mr Knapps, in a rage.

“It’s half-a-bushel,” replied I, doggedly. I persisted in my assertion: and Mr Knapps, who dared not punish me while the Dominie was present, descended his throne of one step, and led me up to the master.

“I can do nothing with this boy, sir,” said he, red as fire; “he denies the first letter in the alphabet, and insists upon it that the letter A is not A, but half-a-bushel.”

“Dost thou, in thine ignorance, pretend to teach when thou comest here to learn, Jacob Faithful?”

“Father always told me that that thing there meant half-a-bushel.”

“Thy father might, perhaps, have used that letter to signify the measure which thou speakest of, in the same way as I, in my mathematics, use divers letters for known and unknown quantities; but thou must forget that which thy father taught thee, and commence *de novo*. Dost thou understand?”

“No, I don’t.”

“Then, little Jacob, that represents the letter A, and whatever else Mr Knapps may tell thee, thou wilt believe. Return, Jacob, and be docile.”

Chapter Four

Sleight-of-hand at the Expense of my Feet—Filling a Man’s Pockets as Great an Offence as picking them, and punished accordingly—A Turn out, a Turn up, and a Turn in—Early Impressions removed, and Redundancy of Feeling corrected by a Spell of the Rattan

I did not quit Mr Knapps until I had run through the alphabet, and then returned to my place, that I might con it over at my leisure, puzzling myself with the strange complexity of forms of which the alphabet was composed. I felt heated and annoyed by the constraint of my shoes, always an object of aversion from the time I had put them on. I drew my foot out of one, then out of the other, and thought no more of them for some time. In the meanwhile the boys next me had passed them on with their feet to the others, and thus were they shuffled along until they were right up to the master’s desk. I missed them, and perceiving that there was mirth at my expense, I narrowly and quietly watched up and down till I perceived one of the head boys of the school, who sat nearest the Dominie, catch up one of my shoes, and the Dominie being then in an absent fit, drop it into his coat-pocket. A short time afterwards he got up, went to Mr Knapps, put a question to him, and while it was being answered, he dropped the other into the pocket of the usher, and tittering to the other boys, returned to his seat. I said nothing; but when the hours of school were over, the Dominie looked at his watch, blew his nose, which made the whole of the boys pop up their heads, like the clansmen of Roderick Dhu, when summoned by his horn, folded up his large pocket-hankerchief slowly and reverently, as if it were a banner, put it into his pocket, and uttered in a solemn tone, “*Tempus est ludendi.*” As this Latin phrase was used every day at the same hour, every boy in the school understood so much Latin. A rush from all the desks ensued, and amidst shouting, yelling, and leaping every soul disappeared except myself, who remained fixed to my form. The Dominie rose from his pulpit and descended, the usher did the same, and both approached me on their way to their respective apartments.

“Jacob Faithful, why still porest thou over thy book—didst thou not understand that the hours of recreation had arrived? Why risest thou not upon thy feet like the others?”

“Cause I’ve got no shoes.”

“And where are thy shoes, Jacob?”

“One’s in your pocket,” replied I “and t’other’s in his’n.”

Each party placed their hands behind, and felt the truth of the assertion.

“Expound, Jacob,” said the Dominie, “who hath done this?”

“The big boy with the red hair, and a face pickled all over with holes like the strainers in master’s kitchen,” replied I.

“Mr Knapps, it would be *infra dig* on my part, and also on yours, to suffer this disrespect to pass unnoticed. Ring in the boys.”

The boys were rung in, and I was desired to point out the offender, which I immediately did, and who as stoutly denied the offence; but he had abstracted my shoe-strings, and put them into his own shoes. I recognised them and it was sufficient.

“Barnaby Bracegirdle,” said the Dominie, “thou art convicted, not only of disrespect towards me and Mr Knapps, but further of the grievous sin of lying. Simon Swapps, let him be hoisted.”

He was hoisted: his nether garments descended, and then the birch descend with all the vigour of the Dominie’s muscular arm. Barnaby Bracegirdle showed every symptom of his disapproval of the measures taken; but Simon Swapps held fast, and the Dominie flogged fast. After a minute’s flagellation, Barnaby was let down, his yellow tights pulled up, and the boys dismissed. Barnaby’s face

was red, but the antipodes were redder. The Dominie departed, leaving us together,—he adjusting his inexpressibles, I putting in my shoe-strings. By the time Barnaby had buttoned up and wiped his eyes, I had succeeded in standing in my shoes. There we were *tête-à-tête*.

“Now, then,” said Barnaby, holding one fist to my face, while, with the other open hand he rubbed behind, “come out in the play-ground, Mr *Cinderella*, and see if I won’t drub you within an inch of your life.”

“It’s no use crying,” said I, soothingly: for I had not wished him to be flogged. “What’s done can’t be helped. Did it hurt you much?”

This intended consolation was taken for sarcasm. Barnaby stormed.

“Take it coolly,” observed I.

Barnaby waxed even more wroth.

“Better luck next time,” continued I, trying to soothe him.

Barnaby was outrageous—he shook his fist and ran into the play-ground, daring me to follow him. His threats had no weight with me; not wishing to remain indoors, I followed him in a minute or two, when I found him surrounded by the other boys, to whom he was in loud and vehement harangue.

“Cinderella, where’s your glass slippers?” cried the boys, as I made my appearance.

“Come out, you water-rat,” cried Barnaby, “you son of a cinder!”

“Come out and fight him, or else you’re a coward!” exclaimed the whole host, from Number 1 to Number 62, inclusive.

“He has had beating enough already to my mind,” replied I; “but he had better not touch me—I can use my arms.”

A ring was formed, in the centre of which I found Barnaby and myself. He took off his clothes, and I did the same. He was much older and stronger than I, and knew something about fighting. One boy came forward as my second. Barnaby advanced and held out his hand, which I shook heartily, thinking it was all over: but immediately received a right and left on the face, which sent me reeling backwards. This was a complete mystery, but it raised my bile, and I returned it with interest. I was very strong in my arms, as may be supposed; and I threw them about like sails of a windmill, never hitting straight out, but with semicircular blows, which descended on or about his ears. On the contrary, his blows were all received straightforward, and my nose and face were soon covered with blood. As I warmed with pain and rage I flung out my arms at random, and Barnaby gave me a knock-down blow. I was picked up and sat upon my second’s knee, who whispered to me as I spat the blood out of my mouth, “Take it coolly, and make sure when you hit.”

My own—my father’s maxim—coming from another, it struck with double force, and I never forgot it during the remainder of the fight. Again we were standing up face to face; again I received it right and left, and returned it upon his right and left ears. Barnaby rushed in—I was down again.

“Better luck next time,” said I to my second, as cool as a cucumber.

A third and a fourth round succeeded, all apparently in Barnaby’s favour, but really in mine. My face was beat to a mummy, but he was what is termed groggy, from the constant return of blows on the side of the head. Again we stood up panting and exhausted. Barnaby rushed at me, and I avoided him: before he could return to the attack I had again planted two severe blows upon his ears, and he reeled. He shook his head, and with his fists in the attitude of defence, asked me whether I had had enough.

“*He has*,” said my second; “stick to him now, Jacob, and you’ll beat him.”

I did stick to him; three or four more blows applied to the same part finished him, and he fell senseless on the ground.

“You’ve settled him,” cried my second.

“What’s done can’t be helped,” replied I. “Is he dead?”

“What’s all this?” cried Mr Knapps, pressing his way through the crowd, followed by the matron.

“Barnaby and Cinderella having it out, sir,” said one of the elder boys.

The matron, who had already taken a liking for me, because I was good-looking, and because I had been recommended to her care by Mrs Drummond, ran to me.

“Well,” says she, “if the Dominie don’t punish that big brute for this, I’ll see whether I’m anybody or not;” and taking me by the hand, she led me away. In the meantime Mr Knapps surveyed Barnaby, who was still senseless; and desired the other boys to bring him in and lay him on his bed. He breathed hard, but still remained senseless, and a surgeon was sent for, who found it necessary to bleed him copiously. He then, at the request of the matron, came to me; my features were indistinguishable, but elsewhere I was all right. As I stripped he examined my arms.

“It seemed strange,” observed he, “that the bigger boy should be so severely punished; but this boy’s arms are like little *sledge-hammers*. I recommend you,” said he to the other boys, “not to fight with him, for some day or other he’ll kill one of you.”

This piece of advice was not forgotten by the other boys, and from that day I was the cock of the school. The name of Cinderella, given me by Barnaby, in ridicule of my mother’s death, was immediately abandoned, and I suffered no more persecution. It was the custom of the Dominie, whenever two boys fought, to flog them both; but in this instance it was not followed up, because I was not the aggressor, and my adversary narrowly escaped with his life. I was under the matron’s care for a week, and Barnaby under the surgeon’s hands for about the same time.

Neither was I less successful in my studies. I learnt rapidly, after I had conquered the first rudiments; but I had another difficulty to conquer, which was my habit of construing everything according to my refined ideas; the force of association had become so strong that I could not overcome it for a considerable length of time. Mr Knapps continually complained of my being obstinate, when, in fact, I was anxious to please as well as to learn. For instance, in spelling, the first syllable always produced the association with something connected with my former way of life. I recollect the Dominie once, and only once, gave me a caning, about a fortnight after I went to the school.

I had been brought up by Mr Knapps as contumelious.

“Jacob Faithful, how is this? thine head is good yet wilt thou refuse learning. Tell me now, what does *c-a-t* spell?”

It was the pitch-pipe to *cat-head*, and answered I accordingly.

“Nay, Jacob, it spells *cat*; take care of thy head on the next reply. Understand me, head is not understood. Jacob, thy head is in jeopardy. Now, Jacob, what does *m-a-t* spell?”

“*Chafing-mat*,” replied I.

“It spells mat only, silly boy; the chafing will be on my part directly. Now, Jacob, what does *d-o-g* spell?”

“Dog-kennel.”

“Dog, Jacob, without the kennel. Thou art very contumelious, and deservest to be rolled in the kennel. Now, Jacob, this is the last time that thou triflest with me; what does *h-a-t* spell?”

“Fur cap,” replied I, after some hesitation.

“Jacob, I feel the wrath rising within me, yet would I fain spare thee; if *h-a-t* spell fur-cap, pray advise me, what doth *c-a-p* spell, then?”

“*Capstern*.”

“Indeed, Jacob, thy stern as well as thy head are in danger; and I suppose, then, *w-i-n-d* spells windlass, does it not?”

“Yes, sir,” replied I, pleased to find that he agreed with me.

“Upon the same principle, what does *r-a-t* spell?”

“*Rat*, sir,” replied I.

“Nay, Jacob, *r-a-t* must spell *rattan*, and as thou hast missed thine own mode of spelling, thou shalt not miss the cane.” The Dominie then applied it to my shoulders with considerable unction, much to the delight of Mr Knapps, who thought the punishment was much too small for the offence. But I soon extricated myself from these associations as my ideas extended, and was considered by

the Dominie as the cleverest boy in the school. Whether it were from natural intellect, or from my brain having lain fallow, as it were, for so many years, or probably from the two causes combined, I certainly learned almost by instinct. I read my lessons once over and laid my book aside, for I knew it all. I had not been six months at the school before I discovered that, in a thousand instances, the affection of a father appeared towards me under the rough crust of the Dominie. I think it was on the third day of the seventh month that I afforded him a day of triumph and warming of his heart, when he took me for the first time into his little study, and put the Latin Accidence into my hands. I learnt my first lesson in a quarter of an hour; and I remember well how that unsmiling, grave man looked into my smiling eyes, parting the chestnut curls, which the matron would not cut off, from my brows, and saying, "*Bene fecisti, Jacobe.*" Many times afterwards, when the lesson was over, he would fix his eyes upon me, fall back on his chair, and make me recount all I could remember of my former life, which was really nothing but a record of perceptions and feelings. He *could* attend to *me*, and as I related some early and singular impression, some conjecture of what I saw, yet could not comprehend, on the shore which I had never touched, he would rub his hands with enthusiasm, and exclaim, "I have found a new book—an album, whereon I may write the deeds of heroes and the words of sages. *Carissime Jacobe!* how happy shall we be when we get into Virgil!" I hardly need say that I loved him—I did so from my heart, and learned with avidity to please him. I felt that I was of consequence—my confidence in myself was unbounded. I walked proudly, yet I was not vain. My school-fellows hated me, but they feared me as much for my own prowess as my interest with the master; but still many were the bitter gibes and innuendoes which I was obliged to hear as I sat down with them to our meals. At other times I held communion with the Dominie, the worthy old matron, and my books. We walked out every day, at first attended by Mr Knapps the usher. The boys would not walk with me without they were ordered, and if ordered, most unwillingly. Yet I had given no cause of offence. The matron found it out, told the Dominie, and after that the Dominie attended the boys and led me by the hand.

This was of the greatest advantage to me, as he answered all my questions, which were not few, and each day I advanced in every variety of knowledge. Before I had been eighteen months at school, the Dominie was unhappy without my company, and I was equally anxious for his presence. He was a father to me, and I loved him as a son should love a father, and as it will hereafter prove, he was my guide through life.

But although the victory over Barnaby Bracegirdle, and the idea of my prowess procured me an enforced respect, still the Dominie's goodwill towards me was the occasion of a settled hostility. Affront me, or attack me openly, they dare not; but supported as the boys were by Mr Knapps the usher, who was equally jealous of my favour, and equally mean in spirit, they caballed to ruin me, if possible, in the good opinion of my master. Barnaby Bracegirdle had a talent for caricature, which was well-known to all but the Dominie. His first attempt against me was a caricature of my mother's death, in which she was represented as a lamp supplied from a gin-bottle, and giving flame out of her mouth. This was told to me, but I did not see it. It was given by Barnaby to Mr Knapps, who highly commended it, and put it into his desk. After which, Barnaby made an oft-repeated caricature of the Dominie, with a vast nose, which he shewed to the usher as *my* performance. The usher understood what Barnaby was at, and put it into his desk without comment. Several other ludicrous caricatures were made of the Dominie and of the matron, all of which were consigned to Mr Knapps by the boys as being the productions of my pencil; but this was not sufficient—it was necessary I should be more clearly identified. It so happened that one evening, when sitting with the Dominie at my Latin, the matron and Mr Knapps being in the adjoining room, the light, which had burned close down, fell in the socket and went out. The Dominie rose to get another; the matron also got up to fetch away the candlestick with the same intent. They met in the dark, and ran their heads together pretty hard. As this event was only known to Mr Knapps and myself, he communicated it to Barnaby, wondering whether I should not make it a subject of one of my caricatures. Barnaby took the hint; in

the course of a few hours this caricature was added to the others. Mr Knapps, to further his views, took an opportunity to mention with encomium my talent for drawing, added that he had seen several of my performances. “The boy hath talent,” replied the Dominie; “he is a rich mine, from which much precious metal is to be obtained.”

“I hear that thou hast the talent for drawing, Jacob,” said he to me, a day or two afterwards.

“I never had in my life, sir,” replied I.

“Nay, Jacob; I like modesty but modesty should never lead to a denial of the truth. Remember, Jacob, that thou do not repeat the fault.”

I made no answer, as I felt convinced that I was not in fault; but that evening I requested the Dominie to lend me a pencil, as I wished to try and draw. For some days, various scraps of my performances were produced, and received commendation. “The boy draweth well,” observed the Dominie to Mr Knapps, as he examined my performance through his spectacles.

“Why should he have denied his being able to draw?” observed the usher.

“It was a fault arising from modesty or want of confidence—even a virtue, carried to excess, may lead us into error.”

The next attempt of Barnaby was to obtain the Cornelius Nepos which I then studied. This was effected by Mr Knapps, who took it out of the Dominie’s study, and put it into Barnaby’s possession, who drew on the fly-leaf, on which was my name, a caricature head of the Dominie; and under my own name, which I had written on the leaf, added, in my hand, *fecit*, so that it appeared, Jacob Faithful *fecit*. Having done this, the leaf was torn out of the book, and consigned to the usher with the rest. The plot was now ripe; and the explosion soon ensued. Mr Knapps told the Dominie that I drew caricatures of my school-fellows. The Dominie taxed me, and I denied it. “So you denied drawing,” observed the usher.

A few days passed away, when Mr Knapps informed the Dominie that I had been caricaturing him and Mrs Bately, the matron, and that he had proofs of it. I had then gone to bed; the Dominie was much surprised, and thought it impossible that I could be so ungrateful. Mr Knapps said that should make the charge openly, and prove it the next morning in the school-room; and wound up the wrong by describing me in several points, as a cunning, good-for-nothing, although clever boy.

Chapter Five

Mr Knapps thinks to catch me napping, but the Plot is discovered, and Barnaby Bracegirdle is obliged to loosen his Braces for the Second Time on my Account —Drawing Caricatures ends in drawing Blood—The Usher is ushered out of the School, and I am nearly ushered into the next World, but instead of being bound on so long a Journey, I am bound “Prentice to a Waterman.”

Ignorant of what had passed, I slept soundly; and the next morning found the matron very grave with me, which I did not comprehend. The Dominie also took no notice of my morning salute: but supposing him to be wrapt in Euclid at the time, I thought little of it. The breakfast passed over, and the bell rang for school. We were all assembled; the Dominie walked in with a very magisterial air, followed by Mr Knapps, who, instead of parting company when he arrived at his own desk, continued his course with the Dominie to his pulpit. We all knew that there was something in the wind; but of all, perhaps, I was the least alarmed. The Dominie unfolded his large handkerchief, waved it, and blew his nose, and the school was into profound silence. “Jacob Faithful, draw near,” said he, in a tone which proved that the affair was serious. I drew near, wondering. “Thou hast been accused by Mr Knapps of caricaturing, and holding up to the ridicule of the school, me—thy master. Upon any other boy such disrespect should be visited severely; but from thee, Jacob, I must add in the words of Caesar, ‘*Et tu Brute,*’ I expected, I had a right to expect, otherwise. *In se animi ingrati crimen vitia omnia condit.* Thou understandest me, Jacob—guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty, sir,” replied I, firmly.

“He pleadeth net guilty, Mr Knapps; proceed, then, to prove thy charge.”

Mr Knapps then went to his desk, and brought out the drawings with which he had been supplied by Barnaby Bracegirdle and the other boys. “These drawings, sir, which you will please to look over, have all been given up to me as the performance of Jacob Faithful. At first I could not believe it to be true; but you will perceive, at once, that they are all by the same hand.”

“That I acknowledge,” said the Dominie; “and all reflect upon my nose. It is true that my nose is of large dimensions, but it was the will of Heaven that I should be so endowed; yet are the noses of these figures even larger than mine own could warrant, if the limner were correct, and not malicious. Still have they merit,” continued the Dominie, looking at some of them; and I heard a gentle *cluck, cluck*, in his throat, as he laughed at his own mis-representations. “*Artis adumbratae meruit cum sedula laudem*, as Prudentius hath it. I have no time to finish the quotation.”

“Here is one drawing, sir,” continued Mr Knapps, “which proves to me that Jacob Faithful is the party; in which you and Mrs Bately are shown up to ridicule. Who would have been aware that the candle went out in your study, except Jacob Faithful?”

“I perceive,” replied the Dominie, looking at it through his spectacles, when put into his hand, “the arcana of the study have been violated.”

“But, sir,” continued Mr Knapps, “here is a more convincing proof. You observe this caricature of yourself, with his own name put to it—his own handwriting. I recognised it immediately; and happening to turn over his Cornelius Nepos, observed the first blank leaf torn out. Here it is, sir, and you will observe that it fits on to the remainder of the leaf in the book exactly.”

“I perceive that it doth; and am grieved to find that such is the case. Jacob Faithful, thou are convicted of disrespect and of falsehood. Where is Simon Swapps?”

“If you please, sir, may I not defend myself?” replied I. “Am I to be flogged unheard?”

“Nay, that were an injustice,” replied the Dominie; “but what defence canst thou offer? *O puer infelix et sceleratus!*”

“May I look at those caricatures, sir?” said I.

The Dominie handed them to me in silence. I looked them all over, and immediately knew them to be drawn by Barnaby Bracegirdle. The last particularly struck me. I had felt confounded and frightened with the strong evidence brought against me; but this re-assured me, and I spoke boldly. “These drawings are by Barnaby Bracegirdle, sir, and not by me. I never drew a caricature in my life.”

“So didst thou assert that thou couldst not draw, and afterwards provedst by thy pencil to the contrary, Jacob Faithful.”

“I knew not that I was able to draw when I said so; but I wished to draw when you supposed I was able—I did not like that you should give me credit for what I could not do. It was to please you, sir, that I asked for the pencil.”

“I wish it were as thou statest, Jacob—I wish from my inmost soul that thou wert not guilty.”

“Will you ask Mr Knapps from whom he had these drawings, and at what time? There are a great many of them.”

“Answer, Mr Knapps, to the questions of Jacob Faithful.”

“They have been given to me by the boys at different times during this last month.”

“Well, Mr Knapps, point out the boys who gave them.”

Mr Knapps called out eight or ten boys, who came forward. “Did Barnaby Bracegirdle give you none of them, Mr Knapps?” said I, perceiving that Barnaby was not summoned.

“No,” replied Mr Knapps.

“If you please, sir,” said I to the Dominie, “with respect to the leaf out of my *Nepos*, the Jacob Faithful was written on it by me on the day that you gave it to me; but the *fecit*, and the caricature of yourself, is not mine. How it came there I don’t know.”

“Thou hast disproved nothing, Jacob,” replied the Dominie.

“But I have proved something, sir. On what day was it that I asked you for the pencil to draw with? Was it not on a Saturday?”

“Last Saturday week, I think it was.”

“Well, then, sir, Mr Knapps told you the day before that I could draw?”

“He did; and thou deniedst it.”

“How, then, does Mr Knapps account for not producing those caricatures of mine, which he says he has collected for a whole month? Why didn’t he give them to you before?”

“Thou putttest it shrewdly,” replied the Dominie. “Answer, Mr Knapps, why didst thou, for a fortnight at the least, conceal thy knowledge of his offence?”

“I wished to have more proofs,” replied the usher.

“Thou hearest, Jacob Faithful.”

“Pray, sir, did you ever hear me speak of my poor mother but with kindness?”

“Never, Jacob, thou hast ever appeared dutiful.”

“Please, sir, to call up John Williams.”

“John, Number 37, draw near.”

“Williams,” said I, “did you not tell me that Barnaby Bracegirdle had drawn my mother flaming at the mouth?”

“Yes, I did.”

My indignation now found vent in a torrent of tears. “Now, sir,” cried I, “if you believe that I drew the caricatures of you and Mrs Bately—did I draw this, which is by the same person?” And I handed up to the Dominie the caricature of my mother, which Mr Knapps had inadvertently produced at the bottom of the rest. Mr Knapps turned white as a sheet.

The Dominie looked at the caricature, and was silent for some time. At last he turned to the usher.

“From whom didst thou obtain this, Mr Knapps?”

Mr Knapps replied in his confusion, “From Barnaby Bracegirdle.”

“It was but this moment thou didst state that thou hadst received none from Barnaby Bracegirdle. Thou hast contradicted thyself, Mr Knapps. Jacob did not draw his mother; and the pencil is the same as that which drew the rest—ergo, he did not, I really believe, draw one of them. *Ite procul fraudes*. God, I thank thee, that the innocent have been protected. Narrowly hast thou escaped these toils, O Jacob—*Cum populo et duce fraudulentio*. And now for punishment. Barnaby Bracegirdle, thou gavest this caricature to Mr Knapps; from whence hadst thou it? Lie not.”

Barnaby turned red and white, and then acknowledged that the drawing was his own.

“You boys,” cried the Dominie, waving his rod which he had seized, “you gave these drawings to Mr Knapps; tell me from whom they came.”

The boys, frightened at the Dominie’s looks, immediately replied in a breath, “From Barnaby Bracegirdle.”

“Then, Barnaby Bracegirdle, from whom didst thou receive them?” inquired the Dominie. Barnaby was dumbfounded.

“Tell the truth; didst thou not draw them thyself, since thou didst not receive them from other people?”

Barnaby fell upon his knees, and related the whole circumstances, particularly the way in which the Cornelius Nepos had been obtained through the medium of Mr Knapps. The indignation of the Dominie was now beyond all bounds. I never had seen him so moved before. He appeared to rise at least a foot more in stature, his eyes sparkled, his great nose turned red, his nostrils dilated, and his mouth was more than half open, to give vent to the ponderous breathing from his chest. His whole appearance was withering to the culprits.

“For thee, thou base, degraded, empty-headed, and venomous little abortion of a man, I have no words to signify my contempt. By the governors of this charity I leave thy conduct to be judged; but until they meet, thou shalt not pollute and contaminate the air of this school by thy presence. If thou hast one spark of good feeling in thy petty frame, beg pardon of this poor boy, whom thou wouldst have ruined by thy treachery. If not, hasten to depart, lest in my wrath I apply to the teacher the punishment intended for the scholar, but of which thou art more deserving than even Barnaby Bracegirdle.”

Mr Knapps said nothing, hastened out of the school, and that evening quitted his domicile. When the governors met he was expelled with ignominy. “Simon Swapps, hoist up Barnaby Bracegirdle.” Most strenuously and most indefatigably was the birch applied to Barnaby, a second time, through me. Barnaby howled and kicked, howled and kicked, and kicked again. At last the Dominie was tired. “*Consonat omne nemus strepitu*” (for *nemus* read schoolroom), exclaimed the Dominie, laying down the rod, and pulling out his handkerchief to wipe his face. “*Calcitrat, ardescunt germani coede bimembres*, that last quotation is happy.” (cluck, cluck.) He then blew his nose, addressed the boys in a long oration—paid me a handsome compliment upon my able defence—proved to all those who chose to listen to him that innocence would always confound guilt—intimated to Barnaby that he must leave the school, and then finding himself worn out with exhaustion, gave the boys a holiday, that they might reflect upon what had passed, and which they duly profited by in playing at marbles and peg in the ring. He then dismissed the school, took me by the hand, and led me into his study, where he gave vent to his strong and affectionate feelings towards me, until the matron came to tell us that dinner was ready.

After this everything went on well. The Dominie’s kindness and attention were unremitting, and no one ever thought of caballing against me. My progress became most rapid; I had conquered Virgil, taken Tacitus by storm, and was reading the Odes of Horace. I had passed triumphantly through decimals, and was busily employed in mensuration of solids, when one evening I was seized with a giddiness in my head. I complained to the matron; she felt my hands, pronounced me feverish, and

ordered me to bed. I passed a restless night the next morning I attempted to rise, but a heavy burning ball rolled as it were in my head, and I fell back on my pillow. The matron came, was alarmed at my state, and sent for the surgeon, who pronounced that I had caught the typhus fever, then raging through the vicinity. This was the first time in my life that I had known a day's sickness—it was a lesson I had yet to learn. The surgeon bled me, and giving directions to the matron, promised to call again. In a few hours I was quite delirious—my senses ran wild. One moment I thought I was with little Sarah Drummond, walking in green fields, holding her by the hand. I turned round, and she was no longer there, but I was in the lighter, and my hand grasped the cinders of my mother; my father stood before me, again jumped overboard and disappeared; again the dark black column ascended from the cabin, and I was prostrate on the deck. Then I was once more alone on the placid and noble Thames, the moon shining bright, and the sweep in my hand, tiding up the reach, and admiring the foliage which hung in dark shadows over the banks. I saw the slopes of green, so pure and so fresh by that sweet light, and in the distance counted the numerous spires of the great monster city, and beheld the various bridges spanning over the water. The faint ripple of the tide was harmony, the reflection of the moon, beauty; I felt happiness in my heart; I was no longer the charity-boy, but the pilot of the barge. Then, as I would survey the scene, there was something that invariably presented itself between my eyes and the object of my scrutiny; whichever way I looked, it stood in my way, and I could not remove it. It was like a cloud, yet transparent, and with a certain undefined shape. I tried for some time, but in vain, to decipher it, but could not. At last it appeared to cohere into a form—it was the Dominie's great nose, magnified into that of the Scripture, "As the tower which looketh towards Damascus." My temples throbbed with agony—I burned all over. I had no exact notions of death in bed, except that of my poor mother, and I thought that I was to die like her; the horrible fear seized me that all this burning was but prefatory to bursting out into flame and consuming into ashes. The dread hung about my young heart and turned that to ice, while the rest of my body was on fire. This was my last recollection, and then all was blank. For many days I lay unconscious of either pain or existence: when I awoke from my stupor, my wandering senses gradually returning, I opened my eyes, and dimly perceived something before me that cut across my vision in a diagonal line. As the mist cleared away, and I recovered myself, I made out that it was the nose of Dominie Dobiensis, who was kneeling at the bed-side, his nose adumbrating the coverlid of my bed, his spectacles dimmed with tears, and his long grey locks falling on each side, and shadowing his eyes. I was not frightened, but I was too weak to stir or speak. His prayer-book was in his hand, and he still remained on his knees. He had been praying for me. Supposing me still insensible, he broke out in the following soliloquy:—

"*Naviculator larvus pallidus*—how beautiful even in death! My poor lighter-boy, that hath mastered the rudiments, and triumphed over the Accident—but to die! *Levior puer*, a puerile conceit, yet I love it, as I do thee. How my heart bleeds for thee! The icy breath of death hath whitened thee, as the hoar-frost whitens the autumnal rose. Why wert thou transplanted from thine own element? Young prince of the stream—lord of the lighter—'*Ratis rex et magister*'—heir apparent to the tiller—betrothed to the sweep—wedded to the deck—how art thou laid low! Where is the blooming cheek, ruddy with the browning air? where the bright and swimming eye? Alas where? '*Tum breviter dirae mortis aperta via est,*' as sweet Tibullus hath it;" and the Dominie sobbed anew. "Had this stroke fallen upon me, the aged, the ridiculed, the little regarded, the ripe one for the sickle, it would have been well—yet fain would I have instructed thee still more before I quitted the scene—fain have left thee the mantle of learning. Thou knowest, Lord, that I walk wearily, as in the desert, that I am heavily burdened, and that my infirmities are many. Must I then mourn over thee, thou promising one—must I say with the epigrammatist—

"Hoc jacet in tumulo, raptus puerilibus annis,
Jacob Faithful domini cura, doloroque sui?"

“True, most true. Thou hast quitted the element thou so joyously controlledst, thou hast come upon the terra firma for thy grave?

“Sis licet inde sibi tellus placata, levisque,
Artifices levior non potes esse manu.’

“Earth, lay light upon the lighter-boy—the lotus, the water-lily, that hath been cast on shore to die. Hadst thou lived, Jacob, I would have taught thee the Humanities; we would have conferred pleasantly together. I would have poured out my learning to thee, my Absalom, my son!”

He rose and stood over me; the tears coursed down his long nose from both his eyes, and from the point of it poured out like a little rain-gutter upon the coverlid. I understood not all his words, but I understood the spirit of them—it was love. I feebly stretched forth my arms, and articulated “Dominie!”

The old man clasped his hands, looked upwards, and said, “O God, I thank thee—he will live. Hush, hush, my sweet one, thou must not prate;” and he retired on tiptoe, and I heard him mutter triumphantly, as he walked away, “He called me ‘Dominie!’”

From that hour I rapidly recovered, and in three weeks was again at my duties. I was now within six months of being fourteen years old, and Mr Drummond, who had occasionally called to ascertain my progress, came to confer with the Dominie upon my future prospects. “All that I can do for him, Mr Dobbs,” said my former master, “is to bind him apprentice to serve his time on the River Thames, and that cannot be done until he is fourteen. Will the rules of the school permit his remaining?”

“The regulations do not exactly, but I will,” replied the Dominie. “I have asked nothing for my long services, and the governors will not refuse me such a slight favour; should they, I will charge myself with him, that he may not lose his precious time. What sayest thou, Jacob, dost thou feel inclined to return to thy father Thames?”

I replied in the affirmative, for the recollections of my former life were those of independence and activity.

“Thou hast decided well, Jacob—the tailor at his needle, the shoemaker at his last, the serving boy to an exacting mistress, and all those apprenticed to the various trades, have no time for improvement; but afloat there are moments of quiet and peace—the still night for reflection, the watch for meditation; and even the adverse wind or tide leaves moments of leisure which may be employed to advantage. Then wilt thou call to mind the stores of learning which I have laid up in thy garner, and wilt add to them by perseverance and industry. Thou hast yet six months to profit by, and, with the blessing of God, those six months shall not be thrown away.”

Mr Drummond having received my consent to be bound apprentice, wished me farewell, and departed. During the six months the Dominie pressed me hard, almost too hard, but I worked for *love*, and to please him I was most diligent. At last the time had flown away, the six months had more than expired, and Mr Drummond made his appearance, with a servant carrying a bundle under his arm. I slipped off my pepper-and-salt, my yellows and badge, dressed myself in a neat blue jacket and trousers, and with many exhortations from the Dominie, and kind wishes from the matron, I bade farewell to them and to the charity-school, and in an hour was once more under the roof of the kind Mrs Drummond.

But how different were my sensations to those which oppressed me when I had before entered. I was no longer a little savage, uneducated and confused in my ideas. On the contrary, I was full of imagination, confident in myself, and in my own powers, cultivated in mind, and proud of my success. The finer feelings of my nature had been called into play. I felt gratitude, humility, and love, at the same time that I was aware of my own capabilities. In person I had much improved, as well as much increased in stature. I walked confident and elastic, joying in the world, hoping, anticipating, and kindly disposed towards my fellow-creatures. I knew, I felt my improvement, my total change of

character, and it was with sparkling eyes that I looked up at the window, where I saw Mrs Drummond and little Sarah watching my return and reappearance after an absence of three years.

Mrs Drummond had been prepared by her husband to find a great change; but still she looked for a second or two with wonder as I entered the door, with my hat in my hand, and paid my obeisance. She extended her hand to me, which I took respectfully.

“I should not have known you, Jacob; you have grown quite a man,” said she, smiling. Sarah held back, looking at me with pleased astonishment; but I went up to her, and she timidly accepted my hand. I had left her as my superior—I returned, and she soon perceived that I had a legitimate right to the command. It was some time before she would converse, and much longer before she would become intimate; but when she did so, it was no longer the little girl encouraging the untutored boy by kindness, or laughing at his absurdities, but looking up to him with respect and affection, and taking his opinion as a guide for her own. I had gained the *power of knowledge*.

By the regulations of the Waterman’s Company, it is necessary that every one who wishes to ply on the river on his own account should serve as an apprentice from the age of fourteen to twenty-one; at all events, he must serve an apprenticeship for seven years, and be fourteen years old before he signs the articles. This apprenticeship may be served in any description of vessel which sails or works on the river, whether it be barge, lighter, fishing smack, or a boat of larger dimensions, and it is not until that apprenticeship is served that he can work on his own account, either in a wherry or any other craft. Mr Drummond offered to article me on board of one of his own lighters free of all expense, leaving me at liberty to change into any other vessel that I might think proper. I gratefully accepted the proposal, went with him to Watermen’s Hall, signed the papers, and thus was, at the age of fourteen, “*Bound ’prentice to a Waterman.*”

Chapter Six

I am recommended to learn to swim, and I take a friendly advice —Heavy suspicion on board of the Lighter, and a Mystery, out of which Mrs Radcliffe would have made a romance

“Jacob, this is Marables, who has charge of the Polly barge,” said Mr Drummond, who had sent for me into his office, a few days after my arrival at his house. “Marables,” continued my protector, addressing the man, “I have told you that this lad is bound ’prentice to the Polly; I expect you will look after him, and treat him kindly. No blows or ill treatment. If he does not conduct himself well (but well I’m sure he will), let me know when you come back from your trip.”

During this speech I was scrutinising the outward man of my future controller. He was stout and well-built, inclining to corpulence, his features remarkably good, although his eyes were not large. His mouth was very small, and there was a good-natured smile on his lips as he answered, “I never treated a cat ill, master.”

“I believe not,” replied Mr Drummond; “but I am anxious that Jacob should do well in the world, and therefore let you know that he will always have my protection, so long as he conducts himself properly.”

“We shall be very good friends, sir, I’ll answer for it, if I may judge from the cut of his jib,” replied Marables, extending to me an immense hand, as broad as it was long.

After this introduction, Mr Drummond gave him some directions, and left us together.

“Come and see the craft, boy,” said Marables and I followed him to the barge, which was one of those fitted with a mast which lowered down and hauled up again, as required. She plied up and down the river as far as the Nore, sometimes extending her voyage still farther: but that was only in the summer months. She had a large cabin abaft, and a cuddy forward. The cabin was locked, and I could not examine it.

“This will be your berth,” said Marables, pointing to the cuddy-hatch forward; “you will have it all to yourself. The other man and I sleep abaft.”

“Have you another man, then?”

“Yes, I have, Jacob,” replied he; and then muttering to himself, “I wish I had not—I wish the barge was only between us, Jacob, or that you had not been sent on board,” continued he, gravely. “It would have been better—much better.” And he walked aft, whistling in a low tone, looking down sadly on the deck.

“Is your cabin large?” inquired I, as he came forward.

“Yes, large enough; but I cannot show it to you now—he has the key.”

“What, the other man under you?”

“Yes,” replied Marables, hastily. “I’ve been thinking, Jacob, that you may as well remain on shore till we start. You can be of no use here.”

To this I had no objection; but I often went on board during the fortnight that the barge remained, and soon became very partial to Marables. There was a kindness about him that won me, and I was distressed to perceive that he was often very melancholy. What surprised me most was to find that during the first week the cabin was constantly locked, and that Marables had not the key; it appeared so strange that he, as master of the barge, should be locked out of his own cabin by his inferior.

One day I went early on board, and found not only the cabin doors open, but the other man belonging to her walking up and down the deck with Marables. He was a well-looking, tall, active

young man, apparently not thirty, with a general boldness of countenance strongly contrasted with a furtive glance of the eye. He had a sort of blue smock-frock over-all, and the trousers which appeared below were of a finer texture than those usually worn by people of his condition.

“This is the lad who is bound to the barge,” said Marables. “Jacob, this is Fleming.”

“So, younker,” said Fleming, after casting an inquiring eye upon me, “you are to sail with us, are you? It’s my opinion that your room would be better than your company. However, if you keep your eyes open, I’d advise you to keep your mouth shut. When I don’t like people’s company, I sometimes give them a hoist into the stream—so keep a sharp look out, my joker.”

Not very well pleased with this address, I answered, “I thought Marables had charge of the craft, and that I was to look to him for orders.”

“Did you, indeed!” replied Fleming, with a sneer. “I say, my lad, can you swim?”

“No, I can’t,” replied I—“I wish I could.”

“Well, then, take my advice—learn to swim as fast as you can for I have a strong notion that one day or other I shall take you by the scruff of the neck, and send you to look after your father.”

“Fleming! Fleming! pray be quiet!” said Marables, who had several times pulled him by the sleeve. “He’s only joking, Jacob,” continued Marables to me, as, indignant at the mention of my father’s death, I was walking away to the shore, over the other lighters.

“Well,” replied I, turning round, “if I am to be tossed overboard, it’s just as well to let Mr Drummond know, that if I’m missing he may guess what’s become of me.”

“Pooh! nonsense!” said Fleming, immediately altering his manner, and coming to me where I stood in the barge next to them. “Give us your hand, my boy; I was only trying what stuff you were made of. Come, shake hands; I wasn’t in earnest.”

I took the proffered hand, and went on shore. “Nevertheless,” thought I, “I’ll learn to swim; for I rather think he was in earnest.” And I took my first lesson that day; and by dint of practice soon acquired that very necessary art. Had it not been for the threat of Fleming, I probably should not have thought of it; but it occurred to me that I might tumble, even if I were not thrown overboard, and that a knowledge of swimming would do no harm.

The day before the barge was to proceed down the river to Sheerness, with a cargo of bricks, I called upon my worthy old master, Dominie Dobiensis.

“*Salve puer!*” cried the old man, who was sitting in his study. “Verily, Jacob, thou art come in good time. I am at leisure, and will give thee a lesson. Sit down, my child.”

The Dominie opened the Aeneid of Virgil, and commenced forthwith. I was fortunate enough to please him with my off-hand translation; and as he closed the book, I told him that I had called to bid him farewell, as we started at daylight the next morning.

“Jacob,” said he, “thou hast profited well by the lessons which I have bestowed upon thee: now take heed of that advice which I am now about to offer to thee. There are many who will tell thee that thy knowledge is of no use, for what avail can the Latin tongue be to a boy on board of a lighter. Others may think that I have done wrong thus to instruct thee, as thy knowledge may render thee vain—*nil exactius eruditiusque est*—or discontented with thy situation in life. Such is too often the case, I grant; but it is because education is not as general as it ought to be. Were all educated, the superiority acquired or presumed upon by education would be lost, and the nation would not only be wiser but happier. It would judge more rightly, would not condemn the measures of its rulers, which at present it cannot understand, and would not be led away by the clamour and misrepresentation of the disaffected. But I must not digress, as time is short. Jacob, I feel that thou wilt not be spoilt by the knowledge instilled into thee; but mark me, parade it not, for it will be vanity, and make thee enemies. Cultivate thyself as much as thou canst, but in due season—thy duties to thy employer must be first attended to—but treasure up what thou hast, and lay up more when thou canst. Consider it as hidden wealth, which may hereafter be advantageously employed. Thou art now but an apprentice in

a barge; but what mayest thou not be, Jacob, if thou art diligent—if thou fear God, and be honest? I will now call to my mind some examples to stimulate thee in thy career.”

Here the Dominie brought forward about forty or fifty instances from history, in which people from nothing had risen to the highest rank and consideration; but although I listened to them very attentively, the reader will probably not regret the omission of the Dominie’s catalogue. Having concluded, the Dominie gave me a Latin Testament, the Whole Duty of Man, and his blessing. The matron added to them a large slice of seed-cake and by the time that I had returned to Mr Drummond’s, both the Dominie’s precepts and the matron’s considerate addition had been well digested.

It was six o’clock the next morning that we cast off our fastenings and pulled into the stream. The day was lovely, the sun had risen above the trees, which feathered their boughs down on the sloping lawns in front of the many beautiful retreats of the nobility and gentry which border the river; and the lamp of day poured a flood of light upon the smooth and rapidly ebbing river. The heavy dew which had fallen during the night studded the sides of the barge, and glittered like necklaces of diamonds; the mist and the fog had ascended, except here and there, where it partially concealed the landscape; boats laden with the produce of the market-gardens in the vicinity were hastening down with the tide to supply the metropolis; the watermen were in their wherries, cleaning and mopping them out, ready for their fares; the smoke of the chimneys ascended in a straight line to heaven; and the distant chirping of the birds in the trees added to the hilarity and lightness of heart with which I now commenced my career as an apprentice.

I was forward, looking down the river, when Marables called me to take the helm, while they went to breakfast. He commenced giving me instructions; but I cut them short by proving to him that I knew the river as well as he did. Pleased at the information, he joined Fleming, who was preparing the breakfast in the cabin, and I was left on the deck by myself. There, as we glided by every object which for years I had not seen, but which was immediately recognised and welcomed as an old friend, with what rapidity did former scenes connected with them flash into my memory! There was the inn at the water-side, where my father used to replenish the stone bottle; it was just where the barge now was that I had hooked and pulled up the largest chub I had ever caught. Now I arrived at the spot where we had ran foul of another craft; and my father, with his pipe in his mouth and his “Take it coolly,” which so exasperated the other parties, stood as alive before me. Here—yes, it was here—exactly here—where we anchored on that fatal night when I was left an orphan—it was here that my father disappeared; and as I looked down at the water, I almost thought I could perceive it again close over him, as it eddied by: and it was here that the black smoke—The whole scene came fresh to my memory, my eyes filled with tears, and, for a little while, I could not see to steer. But I soon recovered myself; the freshness of the air, the bright sky overhead, the busy scene before me, and the necessity of attending to my duty, chased away my painful remembrances; and when I had passed the spot I was again cheerful and content.

In half-an-hour I had shot Putney Bridge, and was sweeping clear of the shallows on the reach below, when Marables and Fleming came up. “How!” exclaimed Marables; “have we passed the bridge? Why did you not call us?”

“I have shot it without help many and many a time,” replied I, “when I was but ten years old. Why should I call you from your breakfast? But the tides are high now, and the stream rapid; you had better get a sweep out on the bow, or we may tail on the bank.”

“Well!” replied Fleming, with astonishment; “I had no idea that he would have been any help to us; but so much the better.” He then spoke in a low tone to Marables.

Marables shook his head. “Don’t try it Fleming, it will never do.”

“So you said once about yourself,” replied Fleming, laughing.

“I did—I did!” replied Marables, clenching both his hands, which at the time were crossed on his breast, with a look of painful emotion; “but I say again, don’t try it; nay, I say more, you *shall* not.”

“Shall not?” replied Fleming, haughtily.

“Yes,” replied Marables, coolly; “I say shall not, and I’ll stand by my words. Now, Jacob, give me the helm, and get your breakfast.”

I gave up the helm to Marables, and was about to enter the cabin, when Fleming caught me by the arm, and *slew* me round. “I say, my joker, we may just as well begin as we leave off. Understand me, that into that cabin you never enter; and understand further, that if ever I find you in that cabin, by day or night, I’ll break every bone in your body. Your berth is forward; and as for your meals, you may either take them down there or you may eat them on deck.”

From what I had already witnessed, I knew that for some reason or other, Fleming had the control over Marables; nevertheless I replied, “If Mr Marables says it is to be so, well and good; but he has charge of this barge.” Marables made no reply; he coloured up, seemed very much annoyed, and then looked up to the sky.

“You’ll find,” continued Fleming, addressing me in a low voice, “that I command here—so be wise. Perhaps the day may come when you may walk in and out the cabin as you please, but that depends upon yourself. By-and-by, when we know more of each other—”

“Never, Fleming, never!” interrupted Marables, in a firm and loud tone. “It *shall* not be.”

Fleming muttered what I could not hear, and going into the cabin, brought me out my breakfast which I despatched with good appetite; and soon afterwards I offered to take the helm; which offer was accepted by Marables, who retired to the cabin with Fleming, where I heard them converse for a long while in a low tone.

The tide was about three-quarters ebb when the barge arrived abreast of Millbank. Marables came on deck, and taking the helm, desired me to go forward and see the anchor clear for letting go.

“Anchor clear!” said I. “Why, we have a good hour more before we meet the flood.”

“I know that, Jacob, as well as you do; but we shall not go farther to-night. Be smart, and see all clear.”

Whether Fleming thought that it was necessary to blind me, or whether it was true that they were only obeying their orders, he said to Marables in my hearing, “Will you go on shore and give the letters to Mr Drummond’s correspondent, or shall I go for you?”

“You had better go,” replied Marables, carelessly; and shortly after they went to dinner in the cabin, Fleming bringing me mine out on deck.

The flood tide now made, and we rode to the stream. Having nothing to do, and Marables as well as Fleming appearing to avoid me, I brought the Dominie’s Latin Testament, and amused myself with reading it. About a quarter of an hour before dusk, Fleming made his appearance to go on shore. He was genteelly, I may say fashionably, dressed in a suit of black, with a white neckcloth. At first I did not recognise him, so surprised was I at his alteration; and my thoughts, as soon as my surprise was over, naturally turned upon the singularity of a man who worked in a barge under another now assuming the dress and appearance of a gentleman. Marables hauled up the little skiff which lay astern. Fleming jumped in and shoved off. I watched him till I perceived him land at the stairs, and then turned round to Marables: “I can’t understand all this,” observed I.

“I don’t suppose you can,” replied Marables: “but still I could explain it if you will promise me faithfully not to say a word about it.”

“I will make that promise if you satisfy me that all is right,” answered I.

“As to all being right, Jacob, that’s as may be; but if I prove to you that there is no harm done to our master, I suppose you will keep the secret. However, I must not allow you to think worse of it than it really is; no, I’ll trust to your good nature. You wouldn’t harm me, Jacob?” Marables then told me that Fleming had once been well-to-do in the world, and during the long illness and subsequent death of Marables’ wife, had lent him money; that Fleming had been very imprudent, and had run up a great many debts, and that the bailiffs were after him. On this emergency he had applied to Marables to help him, and that, in consequence, he had received him on board of the barge, where

they never would think of looking for him; that Fleming had friends, and contrived to go on shore at night to see them, and get what assistance he could from them in money: in the meantime his relations were trying what they could do to arrange with his creditors. “Now,” said Marables, after this narration, “how could I help assisting one who has been so kind to me? And what harm does it do Mr Drummond? If Fleming can’t do his work, or won’t, when we unload, he pays another man himself; so Mr Drummond is not hurt by it.”

“That may be all true,” replied I; “but I cannot imagine why I am not to enter the cabin, and why he orders about here as master.”

“Why, you see, Jacob, I owe him money, and he allows me so much per week for the cabin, by which means I pay it off. Do you understand now?”

“Yes, I understand what you have said,” replied I.

“Well, then, Jacob, I hope you’ll say nothing about it. It would only harm me, and do no good.”

“That depends upon Fleming’s behaviour towards me,” replied I. “I will not be bullied and made uncomfortable by him, depend upon it; he has no business on board the barge, that’s clear, and I am bound ’prentice to her. I don’t wish to hurt you; and as I suppose Fleming won’t be long on board, I shall say nothing unless he treats me ill.”

Marables then left me, and I reflected upon what he had said. It appeared all very probable; but still I was not satisfied. I resolved to watch narrowly, and if anything occurred which excited more suspicions, to inform Mr Drummond upon our return. Shortly afterwards Marables came out again, and told me I might go to bed, and he would keep the deck till Fleming’s return. I assented, and went down to the cuddy; but I did not much like this permission. It appeared to me as if he wanted to get rid of me, and I laid awake, turning over in my mind all that I had heard and seen. About two o’clock in the morning I heard the sound of oars, and the skiff strike the side of the barge. I did not go up, but I put my head up the scuttle to see what was going on. It was broad moonlight, and almost as clear as day. Fleming threw up the painter of the skiff to Marables, and, as he held it, lifted out of the boat a blue bag, apparently well filled. The contents jingled as it was landed on the deck. He then put out a yellow silk handkerchief full of something else, and having gained the deck, Marables walked aft with the painter in his hand until the skiff had dropped astern, where he made it fast, and returned to Fleming, who stood close to the blue bag. I heard Fleming ask Marables, in a low voice, if I were in bed, and an answer given in the affirmative. I dropped my head immediately, that I might not be discovered, and turned into my bed-place. I was restless for a long while; thought upon thought, surmise upon surmise, conjecture upon conjecture, and doubt upon doubt, occupied my brain, until at last I went fast asleep—so fast, that I did not wake until summoned by Fleming. I rose, and when I came on deck found that the anchor had been weighed more than two hours, and that we were past all the bridges. “Why, Jacob, my man, you’ve had a famous nap,” said Fleming, with apparent good humour; “now go aft, and get your breakfast, it has been waiting for you this half-hour.” By the manner of Fleming I took it for granted that Marables had acquainted him with our conversation, and, indeed, from that time, during our whole trip, Fleming treated me with kindness and familiarity. The veto had not, however, been taken off the cabin, which I never attempted to enter.

Chapter Seven

The Mystery becomes more and more interesting, and I determine to find it out.—Prying after things locked up, I am locked up myself.—Fleming proves to me that his advice was good when he recommended me to learn to swim

On our arrival off the Medway, I had just gone down to bed and was undressing, when I heard Fleming come on deck and haul up the boat. I looked up the hatchway; it was very dark, but I could perceive Marables hand him the bag and handkerchief, with which he pulled on shore. He did not return until the next morning at daylight, when I met him as he came up the side. “Well, Jacob,” said he, “you’ve caught me, I’ve been on shore to see my sweetheart; but you boys ought to know nothing about these things. Make the boat fast, there’s a good lad.”

When we were one night discharging our cargo, which was for government, I heard voices alongside. From habit, the least noise now awoke me: a boat striking the side was certain so to do. It was then about twelve o’clock. I looked up the hatchway, perceived two men come on board and enter the cabin with packages. They remained there about ten minutes, and then, escorted to the side by Fleming, left the barge. When the barge was cleared, we hauled off to return, and in three days were again alongside of Mr Drummond’s wharf. The kindness both of Marables and of Fleming had been very great. They lived in a style very superior to what they could be expected to do, and I fared well in consequence.

On our arrival at the wharf, Marables came up to me, and said, “Now, Jacob, as I have honestly told you the secret, I hope you won’t ruin me by saying a word to Mr Drummond.” I had before made up my mind to say nothing to my master until my suspicions were confirmed, and I therefore gave my promise; but I had also resolved to impart my suspicions, as well as what I had seen, to the old Dominie. On the third day after our arrival I walked out to the school, and acquainted him with all that had passed, and asked him for his advice.

“Jacob,” said he, “thou hast done well, but thou mightest have done better; hadst thou not given thy promise, which is sacred, I would have taken thee to Mr Drummond, that thou mightest impart the whole, instanter. I like it not. Evil deeds are done in darkness. *Noctem peccatis et fraudibus objice nubem*. Still, as thou sayest, nought is yet proved. Watch, therefore, Jacob—watch carefully over thy master’s interests, and the interests of society at large. It is thy duty, I may say, *Vigilare noctesque diesque*. It may be as Marables hath said—and all may be accounted for; still, I say, be careful, and be honest.”

I followed the suggestions of the Dominie: we were soon laden with another cargo of bricks, to be delivered at the same place, and proceeded on our voyage. Marables and Fleming, finding that I had not said a word to Mr Drummond, treated me with every kindness. Fleming once offered me money, which I refused, saying that I had no use for it. I was on the best terms with them, at the same time that I took notice of all that passed, without offering a remark to excite their suspicions. But not to be too prolix, it will suffice to say that we made many trips during several months, and that during that time I made the following observations:— that Fleming went on shore at night at certain places, taking with him bags and bundles; that he generally returned with others, which were taken into the cabin; that sometimes people came off at night, and remained some time in the cabin with him; and that all this took place when it was supposed that I was asleep. The cabin was invariably locked when the barge was lying at the wharfs, if Fleming was on shore, and at no time was I permitted to enter it. Marables was a complete cipher in Fleming’s hands, who ordered everything as he pleased; and in the conversations which took place before me, with much less restraint than at first, there appeared to

be no idea of Fleming's leaving us. As I felt convinced that there was no chance of discovery without further efforts on my part, and my suspicions increasing daily, I resolved upon running some hazard. My chief wish was to get into the cabin and examine its contents; but this was not easy, and would, in all probability, be a dangerous attempt. One night I came on deck in my shirt. We were at anchor off Rotherhithe: it was a dark night, with a drizzling rain. I was hastening below, when I perceived a light still burning in the cabin, and heard the voices of Marables and Fleming. I thought this a good opportunity, and having no shoes, walked softly on the wet deck to the cabin-door, which opened forward, and peeped through the crevices. Marables and Fleming were sitting opposite each other at the little table. There were some papers before them, and they were dividing some money. Marables expostulated at his share not being sufficient, and Fleming laughed and told him he had earned no more. Fearful of being discovered, I made a silent retreat, and gained my bed. It was well that I had made the resolution; for just as I was putting my head below the hatch, and drawing it over the scuttle, the door was thrown open and Fleming came out, I pondered over this circumstance, and the remark of Fleming that Marables had not earned any more, and I felt convinced that the story told me by Marables relative to Fleming was all false. This conviction stimulated me more than ever to discover the secret, and many and many a night did I watch, with a hope of being able to examine the cabin; but it was to no purpose, either Fleming or Marables was always on board. I continued to report to the Dominie all I had discovered, and he agreed at last that it was better that I should not say anything to Mr Drummond until there was the fullest proof of the nature of their proceedings.

The cabin was now the sole object of my thoughts, and many were the schemes resolved in my mind to obtain an entrance. Fatima never coveted admission to the dreadful chamber of Bluebeard as I did to ascertain the secrets of this hidden receptacle. One night Fleming had quitted the barge, and I ascended from my dormitory. Marables was on deck, sitting upon the water-cask, with his elbow resting on the gunwale, his hand supporting his head, as if in deep thought. The cabin-doors were closed, but the light still remained in it. I watched for some time, and perceiving that Marables did not move, walked gently up to him. He was fast asleep; I waited for some little time alongside of him. At last he snored. It was an opportunity not to be lost. I crept to the cabin-door; it was not locked. Although I did not fear the wrath of Marables, in case of discovery, as I did that of Fleming, it was still with a beating heart and a tremulous hand that I gently opened the door, pausing before I entered, to ascertain if Marables were disturbed. He moved not, and I entered, closing the door after me. I caught up the light, and held it in my hand as I hung over the table. On each side were the two bed-places of Marables and Fleming, which I had before then had many a partial glimpse of. In front of the two bed-places were two lockers to sit down upon. I tried them—they were not fast—they contained their clothes. At the after part of the cabin were three cupboards; I opened the centre one; it contained crockery, glass, and knives and forks. I tried the one on the starboard side; it was locked, but the key was in it. I turned it gently, but being a good lock, it snapped loud. I paused in fear—but Marables still slept. The cupboard had three shelves, and every shelf was loaded with silver spoons, forks, and every variety of plate, mixed with watches, bracelets, and ornaments of every description. There was, I perceived, a label on each, with a peculiar mark. Wishing to have an accurate survey, and encouraged by my discovery, I turned to the cupboard opposite, on the larboard side, and I opened it. It contained silk handkerchiefs in every variety, lace veils, and various other articles of value; on the lower shelf were laid three pairs of pistols. I was now satisfied, and closing the last cupboard, which had not been locked, was about to retreat, when I recollected that I had not re-locked the first cupboard, and that they might not, by finding it open, suspect my visit, I turned the key. It made a louder snap than before. I heard Marables start from his slumber on deck; in a moment I blew out the lamp, and remained quiet. Marables got up, took a turn or two, looked at the cabin doors, which were shut, and opened them a little. Perceiving that the lamp had, as he thought, gone out, he shut them again, and, to my consternation, turned the key. There I was, locked up, until the arrival of Fleming—then to be left to his mercy. I hardly knew how to act: at last I resolved upon calling to Marables, as

I dreaded his anger less than Fleming's. Then it occurred to me that Marables might come in, feel for the lamp to re-light it, and that, as he came in on one side of the cabin, I might, in the dark, escape by the other. This all but forlorn hope prevented me for some time from applying to him. At last I made up my mind that I would, and ran from the locker to call through the door, when I heard the sound of oars. I paused again—loitered—the boat was alongside, and I heard Fleming jump upon the deck.

“Quick,” said he to Marables, as he came to the cabin-door, and tried to open it; “We've no time to lose—we must get up the sacks and sink everything. Two of them have 'peached, and the fence will be discovered.”

He took the keys from Marables and opened the door; I had replaced the lamp upon the table. Fleming entered, took a seat on the locker on the larboard side, and felt for the lamp. Marables followed him, and sat down on the starboard locker;—escape was impossible. With a throbbing heart I sat in silence, watching my fate. In the meantime, Fleming had taken out of his pocket his phosphorus match box. I heard the tin top pulled open—even the slight rustling of the one match selected was perceived. Another second it was withdrawn from the bottle, and a wild flame of light illumined the deck cabin, and discovered me to their view. Staggered at my appearance, the match fell from Fleming's hand, and all was dark as before; but there was no more to be gained by darkness—I had been discovered.

“Jacob!” cried Marables.

“Will not live to tell the tale,” added Fleming, with a firm voice, as he put another match into the bottle, and then relighted the lamp. “Come,” said Fleming, fiercely; “out of the cabin immediately.”

I prepared to obey him. Fleming went out, and I was following him round his side of the table, when Marables interposed.

“Stop: Fleming, what is that you mean to do?”

“Silence him!” retorted Fleming.

“But not murder him, surely?” cried Marables, trembling from head to foot. “You will not, dare not, do that.”

“What is it that I dare not do, Marables? but it is useless to talk; it is now his life or mine. One must be sacrificed, and I will not die yet to please him.”

“You shall not—by God, Fleming, you shall not!” cried Marables, seizing hold of my other arm, and holding me tight.

I added my resistance to that of Marables; when Fleming, perceiving that we should be masters, took a pistol from his pocket, and struck Marables a blow on the head, which rendered him senseless. Throwing away the pistol, he dragged me out of the cabin. I was strong, but he was very powerful; my resistance availed me nothing: by degrees he forced me to the side of the barge, and lifting me in his arms, dashed me into the dark and rapidly flowing water. It was fortunate for me that the threat of Fleming, upon our first meeting, had induced me to practise swimming, and still more fortunate that I was not encumbered with any other clothes than my shirt, in which I had come on deck. As it was, I was carried away by the tide for some time before I could rise, and at such a distance that Fleming, who probably watched, did not perceive that I came up again. Still, I had but little hopes of saving myself in a dark night, and at nearly a quarter of a mile from shore. I struggled to keep myself afloat, when I heard the sound of oars; a second or two more and I saw them over my head. I grasped at and seized the last, as the others passed me, crying “Help!”

“What the devil! Oars, my men; here's somebody overboard,” cried the man, whose oar I had seized.

They stopped pulling; he dragged in his oar till he could lay hold of me, and then they hauled me into the boat. I was exhausted with cold and my energetic struggles in the water; and it was not until they had wrapped me up in a great-coat, and poured some spirits down my throat; that I could speak. They inquired to which of the craft I belonged.

“The Folly barge.”

“The very one we are searching for. Where about is she, my lad?”

I directed them: the boat was a large wherry, pulling six oars, belonging to the river police. The officer in the stern sheets, who steered her, then said, “How came you overboard?”

“I was thrown overboard,” replied I, “by a man called Fleming.”

“The name he goes by,” cried the officer. “Give way, my lads. There’s murder, it appears, as well as other charges.”

In a quarter of an hour we were alongside—the officer and four men sprang out of the boat, leaving the other two with directions for me to remain in the boat. Cold and miserable as I was, I was too much interested in the scene not to rise up from the stern sheets, and pay attention to what passed. When the officer and his men gained the deck, they were met by Fleming in the advance, and Marables about a yard or two behind.

“What’s all this?” cried Fleming, boldly. “Are you river pirates, come to plunder us?”

“Not exactly,” replied the officer; “but we are just come to overhaul you. Deliver up the key of your cabin,” continued he, after trying the door and finding it locked.

“With all my heart, if you prove yourselves authorised to search,” replied Fleming; “but you’ll find no smuggled spirits here, I can tell you. Marables, hand them the key; I see that they belong to the river guard.”

Marables, who had never spoken, handed the key to the officer, who, opening a dark lanthorn, went down into the cabin and proceeded in his search, leaving two of the men to take charge of Fleming and Marables. But his search was in vain; he could find nothing, and he came out on deck.

“Well,” said Fleming, sarcastically, “have you made a seizure?”

“Wait a little,” said the officer; “how many men have you in this barge?”

“You see them,” replied Fleming.

“Yes; but you have a boy; where is he?”

“We have no boy,” replied Fleming; “two men are quite enough for this craft.”

“Still I ask you, what has become of the boy? for a boy was on your decks this afternoon.”

“If there was one, I presume he has gone on shore again.”

“Answer me another question; which of you threw him overboard?”

At this query of the officer, Fleming started, while Marables cried out, “It was not I; I would have saved him. O that the boy were here to prove it!”

“I am here, Marables,” said I, coming on deck, “and I am witness that you tried to save me, until you were struck senseless by that ruffian, Fleming, who threw me overboard, that I might not give evidence as to the silver and gold which I found in the cabin; and which I overheard him tell you must be put into sacks and sunk, as two of the men had ’peached.”

Fleming, when he saw me, turned round, as if not to look at me. His face I could not see; but after remaining a few seconds in that position, he held out his hands in silence for the handcuffs, which the officer had already taken out of his pocket. Marables, on the contrary, sprang forward as soon as I had finished speaking, and caught me in his arms.

“My fine, honest boy! I thank God—I thank God! All that he has said is true, sir. You will find the goods sunk astern, and the buoy-rope to them fastened to the lower pintle of the rudder. Jacob, thank God, you are safe! I little thought to see you again. There, sir,” continued he to the officer, holding out his hands, “I deserve it all. I had not strength of mind enough to be honest.”

The handcuffs were put on Marables as well as on Fleming, and the officer, allowing me time to go down and put on my clothes, hauled up the sacks containing the valuables, and leaving two hands in charge of the barge, rowed ashore with us all in the boat. It was then about three o’clock in the morning, and I was very glad when we arrived at the receiving-house, and I was permitted to warm myself before the fire. As soon as I was comfortable, I laid down on the bench and fell fast asleep.

Chapter Eight

One of the ups and downs of Life.—Up before the magistrates, then down the River again in the Lighter.—The Toms.—A light heart upon two sticks.—Receive my first Lesson in singing.—Our Lighter well-manned with two boys and a fraction

I did not awake the next morning till roused by the police, who brought us up before the magistrates. The crowd that followed appeared to make no distinction between the prisoners and the witness, and remarks not very complimentary, and to me very annoying, were liberally made. "He's a young hand for such work," cried one. "There's gallows marked in his face," observed another, to whom, when I turned round to look at him, I certainly could have returned the compliment. The station was not far from the magistrates' office, and we soon arrived. The principal officer went into the inner room, and communicated with the magistrates before they came out and took their seats on the bench.

"Where is Jacob Faithful? My lad, do you know the nature of an oath?"

I answered in the affirmative; the oath was administered, and my evidence taken down. It was then read over to the prisoners, who were asked if they had anything to say in their defence. Fleming, who had sent for his lawyer, was advised to make no answer. Marables quietly replied, that all the boy had said was quite true.

"Recollect," said the magistrate, "we cannot accept you as king's evidence; that of the boy is considered sufficient."

"I did not intend that you should," replied Marables. "I only want to ease my conscience, not to try for my pardon."

They were then committed for trial, and led away to prison. I could not help going up to Marables and shaking his hand, before he was led away. He lifted up his two arms, for he was still handcuffed, and wiped his eyes, saying, "Let this be a warning to you, Jacob—not that I think you need it; but still I once was honest as yourself—and look at me now." And he cast his eyes down sorrowfully upon his fettered wrists. They quitted the room, Fleming giving me a look which was very significant of what my chance would be if ever I fell into his clutches.

"We must detain you, my lad," observed one of the magistrates, "without you can procure a sufficient bail for your appearance as witness on the trial."

I replied that I knew of no one except my master, Mr Drummond, and my schoolmaster; and had no means of letting them know of my situation.

The magistrate then directed the officer to go down by the first Brentford coach, acquaint Mr Drummond with what had passed, and that the lighter would remain in charge of the river police until he could send hands on board of her; and I was allowed to sit down on the bench behind the bar. It was not until past noon that Mr Drummond, accompanied by the Dominie, made his appearance. To save time, the magistrates gave them my deposition to read; they put in bail, and I was permitted to leave the court. We went down by the coach, but as they went inside and I was out, I had not many questions asked until my arrival at Mr Drummond's house, when I gave them a detailed account of all that had happened.

"Proh! Deus!" exclaimed the Dominie, when I had finished my story. "What an escape! How narrowly, as Propertius hath it femininely, *'Eripitur nobis jumpridem carus puer.'* Well was it that thou hadst learnt to swim—verily thou must have struggled lustily. *'Pugnat in adversas ire natator aquas,'* yea, lustily for thy life, child. Now, God be praised!"

But Mr Drummond was anxious that the lighter should be brought back to the wharf; he therefore gave me my dinner, for I had eaten nothing that day, and then despatched me in a boat with two men, to bring her up the river. The next morning we arrived; and Mr Drummond, not having yet selected any other person to take her in charge, I was again some days on shore, dividing my time between the Dominie and Mr Drummond's, where I was always kindly treated, not only by him, but also by his wife and his little daughter Sarah.

A master for the lighter was soon found; and as I passed a considerable time under his orders, I must describe him particularly. He had served the best part of his life on board a man-of-war, had been in many general and single actions, and, at the battle of Trafalgar, had wound up his servitude with the loss of both his legs and an out-pension from the Greenwich Hospital, which he preferred to being received upon the establishment, as he had a wife and child. Since that time he had worked on the river. He was very active, and broad-shouldered, and had probably, before he lost his legs, been a man of at least five feet eleven or six feet high; but as he found that he could keep his balance better upon short stumps than long ones, he had reduced his wooden legs to about eight inches in length, which, with his square body, gave him the appearance of a huge dwarf. He bore, and I will say most deservedly, an excellent character. His temper was always cheerful, and he was a little inclined to drink: but the principal feature in him was lightness of heart; he was always singing. His voice was very fine and powerful. When in the service he used to be summoned to sing to the captain and officers, and was the delight of the fore-castle. His memory was retentive, and his stock of songs incredible, at the same time, he seldom or ever sang more than one or two stanzas of a song in the way of quotation, or if apt to what was going on, often altering the words to suit the occasion. He was accompanied by his son Tom, a lad of my own age, as merry as his father, and who had a good treble voice and a good deal of humour; he would often take the song up from his father, with words of his own putting in, with ready wit and good tune. We three composed the crew of the lighter; and, as there had already been considerable loss from demurrage, were embarked as soon as they arrived. The name of the father was Tom Beazeley, but he was always known on the river as "old Tom" or, as some more learned wag had christened him, "*the Mermaid on two sticks.*" As soon as we had put our traps on board, as old Tom called them, he received his orders, and we cast off from the wharf. The wind was favourable. Young Tom was as active as a monkey, and as full of tricks. His father took the helm, while we two, assisted by a dog of the small Newfoundland breed, which Tom had taught to take a rope in his teeth, and be of no small service to two boys in bowsing on a tackle, made sail upon the lighter, and away we went, while old Tom's strain might be heard from either shore.

"Loose, loose every sail to the breeze,
The course of the vessel improve,
I've done with the toil of the seas,
Ye sailors, I'm bound to my love.

"Tom, you beggar, is the bundle ready for your mother? We must drop the skiff, Jacob, at Battersea reach, and send the clothes on shore for the old woman to wash, or there'll be no clean shirts for Sunday. Shove in your shirts, Jacob; the old woman won't mind that. She used to wash for the mess. Clap on, both of you, and get another pull at those haulyards. That'll do, my bantams.

"Hoist, hoist, every sail to the breeze,
Come, shipmates, and join in the song,
Let's drink while the barge cuts the seas,
To the gale that may drive her along.

“Tom, where’s my pot of tea? Come, my boy, we must pipe to breakfast. Jacob, there’s a rope towing overboard. Now, Tom, hand me my tea, and I’ll steer her with one hand, drink with the other, and as for the legs, the less we say about them the better.

“No glory I covet, no riches I want,
Ambition is nothing to me.
But one thing I beg of kind Heaven to grant—”

Tom’s treble chimed in, handing him the pot—

“For *breakfast a good cup of tea.*

“Silence, you sea-cook! how dare you shove in your penny whistle! How’s tide, Tom?”

“Three quarters ebb.”

“No, it a’n’t, you thief; how is it Jacob?”

“About half, I think.”

“And you’re right.”

“What water have we down here on the side?”

“You must give the point a wide berth,” replied I; “the shoals runs out.”

“Thanky, boy, so I thought, but wasn’t sure.” and then old Tom burst out in a beautiful air:

“Trust not too much your own opinion,
When your vessel’s under weigh,
Let good advice still bear dominion;
That’s a compass will not stray.”

“Old Tom, is that you?” hallooed a man from another barge.

“Yes; what’s left of me, my hearty.”

“You’ll not fetch the bridges this tide—there’s a strong breeze right up the reaches below.”

“Never mind, we’ll do all we can.

“If unassailed by squall or shower,
Wafted by the gentle gales
Let’s not lose the favouring hour,
While success attends our sails.”

“Bravo, old Tom! why don’t the boys get the lines out, for all the fishes are listening for you,” cried the man, as the barges were parted by the wind and tide.

“I did once belong to a small craft called the Anon,” observed old Tom, “and they say as how the story was, that that chap could make the fish follow him just when he pleased. I know that when we were in the North Sea the shoals of seals would follow the ship if you whistled; but these brutes have ears—now fish hav’n’t got none.

“Oh well do I remember that cold dreary land,
here the northern light,
In the winter’s night,
Shone bright on its snowy strand.

“Jacob, have you finished your breakfast? Here, take the helm, while I and Tom put the craft a little into apple-pie order.”

Old Tom then stumped forward, followed by his son and the Newfoundland dog, who appeared to consider himself as one of the most useful personages on board. After coiling down the ropes, and sweeping the decks, they went into the cabin to make their little arrangements.

“A good lock that, Tom,” cried the father, turning the key of the cupboard. (I recollected it, and that its snapping so loud was the occasion of my being tossed overboard.) Old Tom continued: “I say, Tom, you won’t be able to open that cupboard, so I’ll put the sugar and the grog into it, you scamp. It goes too fast when you’re purser’s steward.”

“For grog is our larboard and starboard,
Our main-mast, our mizzen, our log,
On shore, or at sea, or when harbour’d,
The mariner’s compass is grog.”

“But it arn’t a compass to steer steady by, father,” replied Tom.

“Then don’t you have nothing to do with it, Tom.”

“I only takes a little, father, because you mayn’t take too much.”

“Thanky for nothing; when do I ever take too much, you scamp?”

“Not too much for a man standing on his own pins, but too much for a man on two broomsticks.”

“Stop your jaw, Mr Tom, or I’ll unscrew one of the broomsticks, and lay it over your shoulders.”

“Before it’s out of the socket, I’ll give you *leg-bail*. What will you do then, father?”

“Catch you when I can, Tom, as the spider takes the fly.”

“What’s the good o’ that, when you can’t bear malice for ten minutes?”

“Very true, Tom? then thank your stars that you have two good legs, and that your poor father has none.”

“I very often do thank my stars, and that’s the truth of it; but what’s the use of being angry about a drop of rum, or a handful of sugar?”

“Because you takes more than your allowance.”

“Well, do you take less, then all will be right.”

“And why should I take less, pray?”

“Because you’re only half a man; you haven’t any legs to provide for, as I have.”

“Now, I tell you, Tom, that’s the very reason why I should have more to comfort my old body for the loss of them.”

“When you lost your legs you lost your ballast, father, and, therefore, you mustn’t carry too much sail, or you’ll topple overboard some dark night. If I drink the grog, it’s all for your good, you see.”

“You’re a dutiful son in that way, at all events; and a sweet child, as far as sugar goes; but Jacob is to sleep in the cabin with me, and you’ll shake your blanket forward.”

“Now that I consider quite unnatural; why part father and son?”

“It’s not that exactly, it’s only parting son and the grog bottle.”

“That’s just as cruel; why part two such good friends?”

“Cause, Tom, he’s too strong for you, and floors you sometimes.”

“Well, but I forgives him; it’s all done in good humour.”

“Tom, you’re a wag; but you wag your tongue to no purpose. Liquor ain’t good for a boy like you, and it grows upon you.”

“Well, don’t I grow too? we grow together.”

“You’ll grow faster without it.”

“I’ve no wish to be a tall man cut short, like you.”

“If I hadn’t been a tall man, my breath would have been cut short for ever; the ball which took my legs would have cut you right in half.”

“And the ball that would take your head off, would whistle over mine; so there we are equal again.”

“And there’s the grog fast,” replied old Tom, turning the key, and putting it into his pocket. “That’s a stopper over all; so now we’ll go on deck.”

I have narrated this conversation, as it will give the reader a better idea of Tom, and his way of treating his father. Tom was fond of his father, and although mischievous, and too fond of drinking when he could obtain liquor, was not disobedient or vicious. We had nearly reached Battersea Fields when they returned on deck.

“Do you know, Jacob, how the parish of Battersea came into the possession of those fields?”

“No, I do not.”

“Well, then, I’ll tell you; it was because the Battersea people were more humane and charitable than their neighbours. There was a time when those fields were of no value; now they’re worth a mint of money, they say. The body of a poor devil, who was drowned in the river, was washed on shore on those banks, and none of the parishes would be at the expense of burying it. The Battersea people, though they had least right to be called upon, would not allow the poor fellow’s corpse to be lying on the mud, and they went to the expense. Now, when the fields became of value, the other parishes were ready enough to claim them; but the case was tried, and as it was proved that Battersea had buried the body, the fields were decided to belong to that parish. So they were well paid for their humanity, and they deserved it. Mr Drummond says you know the river well, Jacob.”

“I was born on it.”

“Yes, so I heard, and all about your father and mother’s death. I was telling Tom of it, because he’s too fond of *bowsing up his jib*.”

“Well, father, there’s no occasion to remind Jacob; the tear is in his eye already,” replied Tom, with consideration.

“I wish you never had any other *drop* in your *eye*,—but never mind, Jacob, I didn’t think of what I was saying. Look ye, d’ye see that little house with the two chimneys—that’s mine, and there’s my old woman.—I wonder what she’s about just now.” Old Tom paused for a while, with his eyes fixed on the object, and then burst out:—

“I’ve crossed the wide waters, I’ve trod the lone strand,
I’ve triumphed in battle, I’ve lighted the brand,
I’ve borne the loud thunder of death o’er the foam;
Fame, riches, ne’er found them,—yet still found a home.

“Tom, boy, haul up the skiff and paddle on shore with the bundle; ask the old woman how she is, and tell her I’m hearty.” Tom was in the boat in a moment, and pulling lustily for the shore. “That makes me recollect when I returned to my mother, a’ter the first three years of my sea service. I borrowed the skiff from the skipper.—I was in a Greenland-man, my first ship, and pulled ashore to my mother’s cottage under the cliff. I thought the old soul would have died with joy.” Here old Tom was silent, brushed a tear from his eye, and, as usual, commenced a strain, *sotto voce*:—

“Why, what’s that to you if my eyes I’m a wiping?
A tear is a pleasure, d’ye see, in its way.

“How, miserable,” continued he, after another pause, “the poor thing was when I would go to sea—how she begged and prayed—boys have no feeling, that’s sartin.”

“O bairn, dinna leave me, to gang far away,
O bairn, dinna leave me, ye’re a’ that I hae,
Think on a mither, the wind and the wave,
A mither set on ye, her feet in the grave.

“However, she got used to it at last, as the woman said when she skinned the ells. Tom’s a good boy, Jacob, but not steady, as they say you are. His mother spoils him, and I can’t bear to be cross to him neither; for his heart’s in the right place, after all. There’s the old woman shaking her dish-clout at us as a signal. I wish I had gone on shore myself, but I can’t step into these paper-built little boats without my timber toes going through at the bottom.”

Chapter Nine

The two Toms take to protocolling—Treaty of Peace ratified between the belligerent parties—Lots of songs and supper—The largest mess of roast meat upon record

Tom then shoved off the skiff. When half-way between the lighter and the shore, while his mother stood watching us, he lay on his oars. “Tom, Tom!” cried his mother, shaking her fist at him, as he stooped down his head; “if you do, Tom!”

“Tom, Tom!” cried his father, shaking his fist also; “if you dare, Tom!”

But Tom was not within reach of either party; and he dragged a bottle out of the basket which his mother had entrusted to him, and putting it to his mouth, took a long swig.

“That’s enough, Tom!” screamed his mother, from the shore.

“That’s too much, you rascal!” cried his father, from the barge.

Neither admonition was, however, minded by Tom, who took what he considered his allowance, and then very coolly pulled alongside, and handed up the basket and bundle of clean clothes on deck. Tom then gave the boat’s painter to his father, who, I perceived, intended to salute him with the end of it as soon as he came up; but Tom was too knowing—he surged the boat ahead, and was on deck and forward before his father could stump up to him. The main hatch was open, and Tom put that obstacle between his father and himself before he commenced his parley.

“What’s the matter, father?” said Tom, smiling, and looking at me.

“Matter, you scamp! How dare you touch the bottle?”

“The bottle—the bottle’s there, as good as ever.”

“The grog is what I mean—how dare you drink it?”

“I was half-way between my mother and you, and so I drank success and long life to you both. Ain’t that being a very dutiful son?”

“I wish I had my legs back again, you rascal!”

“You wish you had the grog back again, you mean, father.”

“You have to choose between—for if you had the grog you’d keep your legs.”

“For the matter of drinking the grog, you scamp, you seem determined to stand in my shoes.”

“Well, shoes are of no use to you now, father—why shouldn’t I? Why don’t you trust me? If you hadn’t locked the cupboard, I wouldn’t have helped myself.” And Tom, whose bootlace was loose, stooped down to make it fast.

Old Tom, who was still in wrath, thought this a good opportunity, as his son’s head was turned the other way, to step over the bricks, with which, as I before said, the lighter had been laden level with the main hatchway, and take his son by surprise. Tom, who had no idea of this manoeuvre, would certainly have been captured, but, fortunately for him, one of the upper bricks turned over, and let his father’s wooden leg down between two of the piles, where it was jammed fast. Old Tom attempted to extricate himself, but could not. “Tom, Tom, come here,” cried he, “and pull me out.”

“Not I,” replied Tom.

“Jacob, Jacob, come here; Tom, run and take the helm.”

“Not I,” replied Tom.

“Jacob, never mind the helm, she’ll drift all right for a minute,” cried old Tom; “come and help me.”

But I had been so amused with the scene, and having a sort of feeling for young Tom, that I declared it impossible to leave the helm without her going on the banks. I therefore remained, wishing to see in what way the two Toms would get out of their respective scrapes.

“Confound these—! Tom, you scoundrel, am I to stick here all day?”

“No, father, I don’t suppose you will. I shall help you directly.”

“Well, then, why don’t you do it?”

“Because I must come to terms. You don’t think I’d help myself to a thrashing, do you?”

“I won’t thrash you, Tom. Shiver my timbers if I do.”

“They’re in a fair way of being shivered as it is, I think. Now, father, we’re both even.”

“How’s that?”

“Why you clapped a stopper over all on me this morning, and now you’ve got one on yourself.”

“Well, then, take off mine, and I’ll take off yours.”

“If I unlock your leg, you’ll unlock the cupboard?”

“Yes.”

“And you promise me a *stiff one* after dinner?”

“Yes, yes, as stiff as I stand here.”

“No, that will be too much, for it would *set me fast*. I only like it about half-and-half, as I took it just now.”

Tom, who was aware that his father would adhere to his agreement, immediately went to his assistance, and throwing out some of the upper bricks, released him from his confinement. When old Tom was once more on deck and on his legs, he observed, “It’s an ill wind that blows nobody good. The *loss* of my leg has been the *saving* of you many a time, Mr Tom.”

It was now time to anchor, as we were meeting the flood. Tom, who officiated as cook, served up the dinner, which was ready; and we were all very pleasant; Tom treating his father with perfect confidence. As we had not to weigh again for some hours, our repast was prolonged, and old Tom, having fulfilled his promise to his son of a *stiff one*, took one or two himself, and became very garrulous.

“Come, spin us a good yarn, father; we’ve nothing to do, and Jacob will like to hear you.”

“Well, then, so I will,” answered he; “what shall it be about?”

“Fire and water, of course,” replied Tom.

“Well, then, I’ll tell you something about both, since you wish it; how I came into his Majesty’s sarvice, through *fire*, and how the officer who pressed me went out of it through *water*. I was still ’prentice, and wanted about three months to sarve my time, when, of course, I should no longer be protected from sarving the king, when the ship I was in sailed up the Baltic with a cargo of bullocks. We had at least two hundred on board, tied up on platforms on every deck, with their heads close to the sides, and all their sterns looking in-board. They were fat enough when they were shipped, but soon dwindled away: the weather was very bad, and the poor creatures rolled against each other, and slipped about in a way that it pitied you to see them. However, they were stowed so thick, that they held one another up, which proved of service to them in the heavy gales which tossed the ship about like a pea in a rattle. We had joined a large convoy, and were entering the Sound, when, as usual, it fell calm, and out came the Danish gunboats to attack us. The men-of-war who had charge of the convoy behaved nobly; but still they were becalmed, and many of us were a long way astern. Our ship was pretty well up; but she was too far in-shore; and the Danes made a dash at us with the hope of making a capture. The men-of-war, seeing what the enemy were about, sent boats to beat them off; but it was too late to prevent them boarding, which they did. Not wishing to peep through the bars of the gaol at Copenhagen, we left the ship in our boats on one side, just as the Danes boarded on the other, and pulled towards the men-of-war’s armed boats coming to our assistance. The men-of-war’s boats pulled right for the ship to retake her, which they did, certainly, but not before the enemy had set fire to the vessel, and had then pulled off towards another. Seeing this, the men-of-war’s

boats again gave chase to the Danes, leaving us to extinguish the flames, which were now bursting out fore and aft, and climbing like fiery serpents up to the main catharprings. We soon found that it was impossible; we remained as long as the heat and smoke would permit us, and then we were obliged to be off, but I shall never forget the roaring and moaning of the poor animals who were then roasting alive. It was a cruel thing of the Danes to fire a vessel full of these poor creatures. Some had broken loose, and were darting up and down the decks goring others, and tumbling down the hatchways; others remained trembling, or trying to snuff up a mouthful of fresh air amongst the smoke; but the struggling and bellowing, as the fire caught the vessel fore and aft, and was grilling two hundred poor creatures at once, was at last shocking, and might have been heard for a mile. We did all we could. I cut the throats of a dozen, but they kicked and struggled so much, falling down (upon), and treading you under their feet; and one lay upon me, and I expected to be burnt with them, for it was not until I was helped that I got clear of the poor animal. So we stayed as long as we could, and then left them to their fate; and the smell of burnt meat, as we shoved off, was as horrible as the cries and wailings of the poor beasts themselves. The men-of-war's boats returned, having chased away the Danes, and very kindly offered us all a ship, as we had lost our own, so that you see that by *fire* I was forced into his Majesty's sarvice. Now, the boat that took us belonged to one of the frigates who had charge of the convoy, and the lieutenant who commanded the boat was a swearing, tearing sort of a chap, who lived as if his life was to last for ever.

“After I was taken on board, the captain asked me if I would enter, and I thought that I might as well sarve the king handsomely, so I volunteered. It's always the best thing to do, when you're taken, and can't help yourself, for you are more trusted than a pressed man who is obstinate. I liked the sarvice from the first—the captain was not a particular man; according to some people's ideas of the sarvice, she wasn't in quite man-of-war fashion, but she was a happy ship, and the men would have followed and fought for the captain to the last drop of their blood. That's the sort of ship for me. I've seen cleaner decks, but I never saw merrier hearts. The only one of the officers disliked by the men was the lieutenant who pressed me; he had a foul mouth and no discretion; and as for swearing, it was really terrible to hear the words which came out of his mouth. I don't mind an oath rapped out in the heat of the moment, but he invented his oaths when he was cool, and let them out in his rage. We were returning home, after having seen the convoy safe, when we met with a gale of wind in our teeth, one of the very worst I ever fell in with. It had been blowing hard from the South West, and then shifted to the North West, and made a cross sea, which was tremendous. Now, the frigate was a very old vessel, and although they had often had her into dock and repaired her below, they had taken no notice of her upper works, which were as rotten as a medlar. I think it was about three bells in the middle watch, when the wind was howling through the rigging, for we had no canvas on her 'cept a staysail and trysail, when the stay-sail sheet went, and she broached-to afore they could prevent her. The lieutenant I spoke of had the watch, and his voice was heard through the roaring of the wind swearing at the men to haul down the staysail, that we might bend on the sheet, and set it right again; when, she having, I said, broached-to, a wave—ay, a wave as high as the maintop almost, took the frigate right on her broadside, and the bulwarks of the quarter-deck being, as I said, quite rotten, cut them off clean level with the main chains, sweeping them, and guns, and men, all overboard together. The mizzenmast went, but the mainmast held on, and I was under its lee at the time, and was saved by clinging on like a nigger, while for a minute I was under the water, which carried almost all away with it to leeward. As soon as the water passed over me, I looked up and around me—it was quite awful; the quarter-deck was cut off as with a knife—not a soul left there, that I could see; no man at the wheel—mizzen-mast gone—skylights washed away—waves making a clear breach, and no defence; boats washed away from the quarters—all silent on deck, but plenty of noise below and on the main-deck, for the ship was nearly full of water, and all below were hurrying up in their shirts, thinking that we were going down. At last the captain crawled up, and clung by the stancheons, followed by the first lieutenant and the officers, and by degrees all was quiet, the ship was cleared, and the hands

were turned up to muster under the half-deck. There were forty-seven men who did not answer to their names—they had been summoned to answer for their lives, poor fellows! and there was also the swearing lieutenant not to be found. Well, at last we got the hands on deck, and put her before the wind, scudding under bare poles. As we went aft to the taffrail, the bulwark of which still remained, with about six feet of the quarter-deck bulwark on each side, we observed something clinging to the stern-ladder, dipping every now and then into the sea, as it rose under her counter, and assisted the wind in driving her before the gale. We soon made it out to be a man, and I went down, slipped a bowling knot over the poor fellow, and with some difficulty we were both hauled up again. It proved to be the lieutenant, who had been washed under the counter, and clung to the stern-ladder, and had thus miraculously been preserved. It was a long while before he came to, and he never did any duty the whole week we were out, till we got into Yarmouth Roads; indeed, he hardly ever spoke a word to any one, but seemed to be always in serious thought. When we arrived, he gave his commission to the captain, and went on shore; went to school again, they say, *bore up for a parson*, and, for all I know, he'll preach somewhere next Sunday. So you see, *water* drove him out of the sarvice, and *fire* forced me in. There's a yarn for you, Jacob."

"I like it very much," replied I.

"And now, father, give us a whole song, and none of your little bits." Old Tom broke out with the "Death of Nelson," in a style that made the tune and words ring in my ears for the whole evening.

The moon was up before the tide served, and we weighed our anchor; old Tom steering, while his son was preparing supper, and I remaining forward, keeping a sharp look-out that we did not run foul of anything. It was a beautiful night; and as we passed through the several bridges, the city appeared as if it were illuminated, from the quantity of gas throwing a sort of halo of light over the tops of the buildings which occasionally marked out the main streets from the general dark mass—old Tom's voice was still occasionally heard, as the scene brought to his remembrance his variety of song.

"For the murmur of thy lip, love,
Comes sweetly unto me,
As the sound of oars that dip, love,
At moonlight on the sea."

I never was more delighted than when I heard these snatches of different songs poured forth in such melody from old Tom's lips, the notes floating along the water during the silence of the night. I turned aft to look at him; his face was directed upwards, looking on the moon, which glided majestically through the heavens, silvering the whole of the landscape. The water was smooth as glass, and the rapid tide had swept us clear of the ranges of ships in the pool; both banks of the river were clear, when old Tom again commenced:—

"The moon is up, her silver beam
Shines bower, and grove, and mountain over;
A flood of radiance heaven doth seem
To light thee, maiden, to thy lover."

"Jacob, how does the bluff-nob bear? on the starboard bow?"

"Yes—broad on the bow; you'd better keep up half a point, the tide sweeps us fast."

"Very true, Jacob; look out, and say when steady it is, boy.

"If o'er her orb a cloud should rest,
'Tis but thy cheek's soft blush to cover.
He waits to clasp thee to his breast;

The moon is up—go, meet thy lover.

“Tom, what have you got for supper, boy? What is that frizzling in your frying-pan? Smells good, anyhow.”

“Yes, and I expect will taste good too. However, you look after the moon, father, and leave me and the frying-pan to play our parts.”

“While I sing mine, I suppose, boy.

“The moon is up, round beauty’s shine,
Love’s pilgrims bend at vesper hour,
Earth breathes to heaven, and looks divine,
And lovers’ hearts confess her power.”

Old Tom stopped and the frying-pan frizzled on, sending forth an odour which, if not grateful to Heaven, was peculiarly so to us mortals, hungry with the fresh air.

“How do we go now, Jacob?”

“Steady, and all’s right; but we shall be met with the wind next reach, and had better brail up the mainsail.”

“Go, then, Tom, and help Jacob.”

“I can’t leave the *ingons*, (onions) father, not if the lighter tumbled overboard; it would bring more tears in my eyes to spoil them, now that they are frying so merrily, than they did when I was cutting them up. Besides, the liver would be as black as the bends.”

“Clap the frying-pan down on deck, Tom, and brail the sail up with Jacob, there’s a good boy. You can give it another shake or two afterwards.

“Guide on, my bark, how sweet to rove,
With such a beaming eye above!

“That’s right, my boys, belay all that; now to our stations; Jacob on the look-out, Tom to his frying-pan, and I to the helm—

“No sound is heard to break the spell,
Except the water’s gentle swell;
While midnight, like a mimic day,
Shines on to guide our moonlight way.

“Well, the moon’s a beautiful creature—God bless her! How often have we longed for her in the dark winter, channel-cruising, when the waves were flying over the Eddystone, and trying in their malice to put out the light. I don’t wonder at people making songs to the moon, nor at my singing them. We’ll anchor when we get down the next reach.”

We swept the next reach with the tide which was now slacking fast. Our anchor was dropped and we all went to supper, and to bed. I have been particular in describing the first day of my being on board with my new shipmates, as it may be taken as a sample of our every day life; Tom and his father fighting and making friends, cooking, singing, and spinning yarns. Still, I shall have more scenes to describe. Our voyage was made, we took in a return cargo, and arrived at the proprietor’s wharf, when I found that I could not proceed with them the next voyage, as the trial of Fleming and Marables was expected to come on in a few days. The lighter, therefore, took in another cargo, and sailed without me; Mr Drummond, as usual, giving me the run of his house.

Chapter Ten

**I help to hang my late bargemate for his attempt to drown me—
One good turn deserves another—The subject suddenly dropped
at Newgate—A yarn in the law line—With due precautions and
preparations, the Dominie makes his first voyage—To Gravesend**

It was on the 7th of November, if I recollect rightly, that Fleming and Marables were called up to trial at the Old Bailey, and I was in the court, with Mr Drummond and the Dominie, soon after ten o'clock. After the judge had taken his seat, as their trial was first on the list, they were ushered in. They were both clean and well dressed. In Fleming I could perceive little difference; he was pale, but resolute; but when I looked at Marables I was astonished. Mr Drummond did not at first recognise him—he had fallen away from seventeen stone to, at the most, thirteen—his clothes hung loosely about him—his ruddy cheeks had vanished—his nose was becoming sharp, and his full round face had been changed to an oblong. Still there remained that natural good-humoured expression in his countenance, and the sweet smile played upon his lips. His eyes glanced fearfully round the court—he felt his disgraceful situation—the colour mounted to his temples and forehead, and he then became again pale as a sheet, casting down his eyes as if desirous to see no more.

After the indictment had been read over, the prisoners were asked by the clerk whether they pleaded guilty or not guilty.

“Not guilty,” replied Fleming, in a bold voice.

“John Marables—guilty or not guilty?”

“Guilty,” replied Marables—“guilty, my lord;” and he covered his face with his hands.

Fleming was indicted on three counts;—an assault, with intent to murder; having stolen goods in his possession; and for a burglary in a dwelling-house, on such a date; but I understand that they had nearly twenty more charges against him, had these failed. Marables was indicted for having been an accessory to the last charge, as receiver of stolen goods. The counsel for the crown, who opened the trial, stated that Fleming, *alias* Barkett, *alias* Wenn, with many more *aliases*, had for a long while been at the head of the most notorious gang of thieves which had infested the metropolis for many years; that justice had long been in search of him, but that he had disappeared, and it had been supposed that he had quitted the kingdom to avoid the penalties of the law, to which he had subjected himself by his enormities. It appeared however, that he had taken a step which not only blinded the officers of the police, but at the same time had enabled the gang to carry on their depredations with more impunity than ever. He had concealed himself in a lighter on the river, and appearing in her as one diligently performing his duty, and earning his livelihood as an honest man had by such means been enabled to extend his influence, the number of his associates, and his audacious schemes. The principal means of detection in cases of burglary was by advertising the goods, and the great difficulty on the part of such miscreants was to obtain a ready sale for them—the receivers of stolen goods being aware that the thieves were at their mercy, and must accept what was offered. Now, to obviate these difficulties, Fleming had, as we before observed, concealed himself from justice on board of a river barge, which was made the receptacle for stolen goods: those which had been nefariously obtained at one place being by him and his associates carried up and down the river in the craft, and disposed of at a great distance, by which means the goods were never brought to light, so as to enable the police to recognise or trace them. This system had now been carried on with great success for upwards of twelve months, and would, in all probability, have not been discovered even now, had it not been that a quarrel as to profits had taken place, which had induced two of his associates to give information

to the officers; and these two associates had also been permitted to turn king's evidence, in a case of burglary, in which Fleming was a principal, provided that it was considered necessary. But there was a more serious charge against the prisoner,—that of having attempted the life of a boy, named Jacob Faithful, belonging to the lighter, and who, it appeared, had suspicions of what was going on, and, in duty to his master, had carefully watched the proceedings, and given notice to others of what he had discovered from time to time. The lad was the chief evidence against the prisoner Fleming, and also against Marables, the other prisoner, of whom he could only observe, that circumstances would transpire, during the trial, in his favour, which he had no doubt would be well considered by his lordship. He would not detain the gentlemen of the jury any longer, but at once call on his witnesses.

I was then summoned, again asked the same questions as to the nature of an oath, and the judge being satisfied with my replies, I gave my evidence as before; the judge as I perceived, carefully examining my previous disposition, to ascertain if anything I now said was at variance with my former assertions. I was then cross-examined by the counsel for Fleming, but he could not make me vary in my evidence, I did, however, take the opportunity, whenever I was able, of saying all I could in favour of Marables. At last the counsel said he would ask me no more questions. I was dismissed; and the police-officer who had picked me up, and other parties who identified the various property as their own, and the manner in which they had been robbed of it, were examined. The evidence was too clear to admit of doubt. The jury immediately returned a verdict of guilty against Fleming and Marables, but strongly recommended Marables to the mercy of the crown. The judge rose, put on his black cap, and addressed the prisoners as follows. The court was so still, that a pin falling might have been heard:—

“You, William Fleming, have been tried by a jury of your countrymen, upon the charge of receiving stolen goods, to which you have added the most atrocious crime of intended murder. You have had a fair and impartial trial, and have been found guilty; and it appears that, even had you escaped in this instance, other charges, equally heavy, and which would equally consign you to condign punishment, were in readiness to be preferred against you. Your life has been one of guilt, not only in your own person, but also in abetting and stimulating others to crime; and you have wound up your shameful career by attempting the life of a fellow-creature. To hold out to you any hope of mercy is impossible. Your life is justly forfeited to the offended laws of your country; and your sentence is that you be removed from this court to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, there to be hanged by the neck till you are dead; and may God, in his infinite goodness, have mercy on your soul!

“You, John Marables, have pleaded guilty to the charges brought against you; and it has appeared, during the evidence brought out on the trial, that, although you have been a party to these nefarious transactions, you are far from being hardened in your guilt.” (“No, no!” exclaimed Marables.) “I believe sincerely that you are not, and much regret that one who, from the evidence brought forward, appears to have been, previously to this unfortunate connection, an honest man, should now appear in so disgraceful a situation. A severe punishment is, however, demanded by the voice of justice, and by that sentence of the law you must now be condemned: at the same time I trust that an appeal to the mercy of your sovereign will not be made in vain.”

The judge then passed the sentence upon Marables, the prisoners were led out of court, and a new trial commenced; while Mr Drummond and the Dominie conducted me home. About a week after the trial, Fleming suffered the penalty of the law; while Marables was sentenced to transportation for life, which, however, previous to his sailing, was commuted to seven years.

In a few days the lighter returned. Her arrival was announced to me one fine sunny morning as I lay in bed, by a voice whose well-known notes poured into my ear as I was half dozing on my pillow:—

“Bright are the beams of the morning sky,
And sweet the dew the red blossoms sip,

But brighter the glances of dear woman's eye—

“Tom, you monkey, belay the warp, and throw the fenders over the side. Be smart, or old Fuzzle will be growling about his red paint.

“And sweet is the dew on her lip.”

I jumped out of my little crib, threw open the window, the panes of which were crystallised with the frost in the form of little trees, and beheld the lighter just made fast to the wharf, the sun shining brightly, old Tom's face as cheerful as the morn, and young Tom laughing, jumping about, and blowing his fingers. I was soon dressed, and shaking hands with my barge-mates.

“Well, Jacob, how do you like the Old Bailey? Never was in it but once in my life, and never mean to go again if I can help it; that was when Sam Bowles was tried for his life, but my evidence saved him. I'll tell you how it was. Tom, look a'ter the breakfast; a bowl of tea this cold morning will be worth having. Come, jump about.”

“But I never heard the story of Sam Bowles,” answered Tom.

“What's that to you? I'm telling it to Jacob.”

“But I want to hear it—so go on, father. I'll start you. Well, d'ye see, Sam Bowles—”

“Master Tom, them as play with *bowls* may meet with *rubbers*. Take care I don't *rub* down your hide. Off, you thief, and get breakfast.”

“No, I won't: if I don't have your *Bowles* you shall have no *bowls* of tea. I've made my mind up to that.”

“I tell you what, Tom; I shall never get any good out of you until I have both your legs amputated. I've a great mind to send for the farrier.”

“Thanky, father; but I find them very useful.”

“Well,” said I, “suppose we put off the story till breakfast time; and I'll go and help Tom to get it ready.”

“Be it so, Jacob. I suppose Tom must have his way, as I spoiled him myself. I made him so fond of yarns, so I was a fool to be vexed.

“Oh, life is a river, and man is the boat
That over its surface is destined to float;
And joy is a cargo so easily stored,
That he is a fool who takes sorrow on board.

“Now I'll go on shore to master, and find out what's to be done next. Give me my stick, boy, and I shall crawl over the planks a little safer. A safe stool must have three legs, you know.”

Old Tom then stumped away on shore. In about a quarter of an hour he returned, bringing half-a-dozen red herrings.

“Here, Tom, grill these sodgers. Jacob, who is that tall old chap, with such a devil of a cutwater, which I met just now with master? We are bound for Sheerness this trip, and I'm to land him at Greenwich.”

“What, the Dominie?” replied I, from old Tom's description.

“His name did begin with a D, but that wasn't it.”

“Dobbs?”

“Yes, that's nearer; he's to be a passenger on board of us, going down to see a friend who's very ill. Now, Tom, my hearty, bring out the crockery, for I want a little inside lining.”

We all sat down to our breakfast, and as soon as old Tom had finished, his son called for the history of Sam Bowles.

“Well, now you shall have it. Sam Bowles was a shipmate of mine on board of the Greenlandman; he was one of our best harpooners, and a good, quiet, honest messmate as ever slung a hammock. He was spliced to as pretty a piece of flesh as ever was seen, but she wasn’t as good as she was pretty. We were fitting out for another voyage, and his wife had been living on board with him some weeks, for Sam was devilish spoony on her, and couldn’t bear her to be out of his sight. As we ’spected to sail in a few days, we were filling up our complement of men, and fresh hands came on board every day.

“One morning, a fine tall fellow, with a tail as thick as a hawser, came on board and offered himself; he was taken by the skipper, and went on shore again to get his traps. While he was still on deck I went below, and seeing Sam with his little wife on his knee playing with his love-locks, I said that there was a famous stout and good-looking fellow that we should have as a shipmate. Sam’s wife, who, like all women, was a little curious, put her head up the hatchway to look at him. She put it down again very quick, as I thought, and made some excuse to go forward in the eyes of her, where she remained some time, and then, when she came aft, told Sam that she would go on shore. Now, as it had been agreed that she should remain on board till we were clear of the river, Sam couldn’t think what the matter was; but she was positive, and go away she did, very much to Sam’s astonishment and anger. In the evening, Sam went on shore and found her out, and what d’ye think the little Jezebel told him?—why, that one of the men had been rude to her when she went forward, and that’s why she wouldn’t stay on board. Sam was in a devil of a passion at this, and wanted to know which was the man; but she fondled him, and wouldn’t tell him, because she was afraid that he’d be hurt. At last she bamboozled him, and sent him on board again quite content. Well, we remained three days longer, and then dropped down the river to Greenwich, where the captain was to come on board, and we were to sail as soon as the wind was fair. Now, this fine tall fellow was with us when we dropped down the river, and as Sam was sitting down on his chest eating a basin o’ soup, the other man takes out a ’baccy pouch of seal-skin;—it was a very curious one, made out of the white and spotted part of a young seal’s belly. ‘I say, shipmate,’ cries Sam, ‘hand me over my ’baccy pouch. Where did you pick it up?’

“‘Your pouch!’ says he to him; ‘I killed the seal, and my fancy girl made the pouch for me.’

“‘Well, if that ain’t cool! you’d swear a man out of his life, mate. Tom,’ says he to me, ‘ain’t that my pouch which my wife gave me when I came back last trip?’

“I looked at it, and knew it again, and said it was. The tall fellow denied it, and there was a devil of a bobbery. Sam called him a thief, and he pitched Sam right down the main hatchway among the casks. After that there was a regular set-to, and Sam was knocked all to shivers, and obliged to give in. When the fight was over, I took up Sam’s shirt for him to put on. ‘That’s my shirt,’ cried the tall fellow.

“‘That’s Sam’s shirt,’ replied I; ‘I know it’s his.’

“‘I tell you it’s mine,’ replied the man; ‘my lass gave it to me to put on when I got up this morning. The other is his shirt.’

“We looked at the other, and they both were Sam’s shirts. Now when Sam heard this, he put two and two together, and became very jealous and uneasy: he thought it odd that his wife was so anxious to leave the ship when this tall fellow came on board; and what with the pouch and the shirt he was puzzled. His wife had promised to come down to Greenwich and see him off. When we anchored, some of the men went on shore—among others the tall fellow. Sam, whose head was swelled up like a pumpkin, told one of his shipmates to say to his wife that he could not come on shore, and that she must come off to him. Well, it was about nine o’clock, dark, and all the stars were twinkling, when Sam says to me, ‘Tom, let’s go on shore; my black eyes can’t be seen in the dark.’ As we hauled up the boat, the second mate told Sam to take his harpoon-iron on shore for him, to have the hole for the becket punched larger. Away we went, and the first place, of course, that Sam went to, was the house where he knew that his wife put up at, as before. He went upstairs to her room, and I followed him. The door was not made fast, and in we went. There was his little devil of a wife, fast asleep in the arms of the tall fellow. Sam couldn’t command his rage, and having the harpoon-iron in his

hand, he drove it right through the tall fellow's body before I could prevent him. It was a dreadful sight: the man groaned, and his head fell over the side of the bed. Sam's wife screamed, and made Sam more wroth by throwing herself on the man's body, and weeping over it. Sam would have pulled out the iron to run her through with, but that was impossible. The noise brought up the people of the house, and it was soon known that murder had been committed. The constable came, Sam was thrown into prison, and I went on board and told the whole story. Well, we were just about to heave up, for we had shipped two more men in place of Sam, who was to be tried for his life, and the poor fellow he had killed, when a lawyer chap came on board with what they call a *suppeny* for me; all I know is, that the lawyer pressed me into his service, and I lost my voyage. I was taken on shore, and well fed till the trial came on. Poor Sam was at the bar for murder. The gentleman in his gown and wig began his yarn, stating that how the late fellow, whose name was Will Errol, was with his own wife when Sam harpooned him.

“That's a lie!” cried Sam; ‘he was with my wife. False papers! Here are mine;’ and he pulled out his tin case, and handed them to the court.

“The judge said that this was not the way to try people and that Sam must hold his tongue; so the trial went on, and at first they had it all their own way. Then our turn came, and I was called up to prove what had passed, and I stated how the man was with Sam's wife, and how he, having the harpoon-iron in his hand, had run it through his body. Then they compared the certificates, and it was proved that the little Jezebel had married them both; but she had married Sam first, so he had the most right to her; but fancying the other man afterwards, she thought she might as well have two strings to her bow. So the judge declared that she was Sam's wife, and that any man, even without the harpoon in his hand, would be justified in killing a man whom he found in bed with his own wife. So Sam went scot-free; but the judge wouldn't let off Sam's wife, as she had caused murder by her wicked conduct; he tried her a'terwards for *biggery*, as they call it, and sent her over the water for life. Sam never held up his head a'terwards; what with having killed an innocent man, and the 'haviour of his wife, he was always down. He went out to the fishery, and a whale cut the boat in two with her tail; Sam was stunned, and went down like a stone. So you see the mischief brought about by this little Jezebel, who must have two husbands, and be damned to her.”

“Well, that's a good yarn, father,” said Tom, as soon as it was finished. “I was right in saying I would hear it. Wasn't I?”

“No,” replied old Tom, putting out his large hand, and seizing his son by the collar; “and now you've put me in mind of it, I'll pay you off for old scores.”

“Lord love you, father, you don't owe me anything,” said Tom.

“Yes, I do; and now I'll give you a receipt in full.”

“O Lord! they'll be drowned,” screamed Tom, holding up both his hands with every symptom of terror.

Old Tom turned short round to look in the direction, letting go his hold. Tom made his escape, and burst out a-laughing. I laughed also, and so at last did his father.

I went on shore, and found that old Tom's report was correct—the Dominie was at breakfast with Mr Drummond. The new usher had charge of the boys, and the governors had allowed him a fortnight's holiday to visit an old friend at Greenwich. To save expense, as well as to indulge his curiosity, the old man had obtained a passage down in the lighter. “Never yet, Jacob, have I put my feet into that which floateth on the watery element,” observed he to me; “nor would I now, but that it saveth money, which thou knowest well is with me not plentiful. Many dangers I expect, many perils shall I encounter; such have I read of in books; and well might Horace exclaim—*Ille robur et aes triplex*,’ with reference to the first man who ventured afloat. Still doth Mr Drummond assure me that the lighter is of that strength as to be able to resist the force of the winds and waves; and, confiding in Providence, I intend to venture, Jacob, *te duce*.”

“Nay, sir,” replied I, laughing at the idea which the Dominie appeared to have formed of the dangers of river navigation, “old Tom is the *Dux*.”

“Old Tom; where have I seen that name? Now I do recall to mind that I have seen the name painted in large letters upon a cask at the tavern bar of the inn at Brentford; but what it did intend to signify I did not inquire. What connection is there?”

“None,” replied I; “but I rather think they are very good friends. The tide turns in half-an-hour, sir; are you ready to go on board?”

“Truly am I, and well prepared, having my habiliments in a bundle, my umbrella and my great-coat, as well as my spencer for general wear. But where I am to sleep hath not yet been made known to me. Peradventure one sleepeth not—*tanto in periculo*.”

“Yes, sir, we do. You shall have my berth, and I’ll turn in with young Tom.”

“Hast thou, then, a young Tom as well as an old Tom on board?”

“Yes, sir; and a dog, also, of the name of Tommy.”

“Well, then, we will embark, and thou shalt make me known to this triad of Thomases. ‘*Inde Tomos dictus locus est.*’ (*Cluck, cluck.*) Ovid, I thank thee.”

Chapter Eleven

Much learning Afloat—Young Tom is very Lively upon the Dead Languages—The Dominie, after experiencing the Wonders of the Mighty Deep, prepares to revel upon Lobsouse—Though the Man of Learning gets Many Songs and some Yarns from Old Tom, he loses the Best Part of a Tale without knowing it

The old Dominie's bundle and other paraphernalia being sent on board, he took farewell of Mr Drummond and his family in so serious a manner, that I was convinced that he considered he was about to enter upon a dangerous adventure, and then I led him down to the wharf where the lighter lay alongside. It was with some trepidation that he crossed the plank, and got on board, when he recovered himself and looked round.

"My sarvice to you, old gentleman," said a voice behind the Dominie. It was that of old Tom, who had just come from the cabin. The Dominie turned round, and perceived old Tom.

"This is old Tom, sir," said I to the Dominie, who stared with astonishment.

"Art thou, indeed? Jacob, thou didst not tell me that he had been curtailed of his fair proportions, and I was surprised. Art thou then Dux?" continued the Dominie, addressing old Tom.

"Yes," interrupted young Tom, who had come from forward, "he is *ducks*, because he waddles on his short stumps; and I won't say who be goose. Eh, father?"

"Take care you don't *buy goose*, for your imperance, sir," cried old Tom.

"A forward boy," exclaimed the Dominie.

"Yes," replied Tom "I'm generally forward."

"Art thou forward in thy learning? Canst thou tell me Latin for goose?"

"To be sure," replied Tom; "Brandy."

"Brandy!" exclaimed the Dominie. "Nay, child, it is *anser*."

"Then I was right," replied Tom. "You had your *answer*!"

"The boy is apt." *Cluck cluck*.

"He is apt to be devilish saucy, old gentleman; but never mind that, there's no harm in him."

"This, then, is young Tom, I presume, Jacob?" said the Dominie, referring to me.

"Yes, sir," replied I. "You have seen old Tom, and young Tom, and you have only to see Tommy."

"Want to see Tommy, sir?" cried Tom. "Here, Tommy, Tommy!"

But Tommy, who was rather busy with a bone forward, did not immediately answer to his call, and the Dominie turned round to survey the river. The scene was busy, barges and boats passing in every direction, others lying on shore, with waggons taking out the coals and other cargoes, men at work, shouting or laughing with each other. "*Populus in fluvius*," as Virgil hath it. Grand indeed is the vast river, '*Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum*,' as the generations of men are swept into eternity," said the Dominie, musing aloud. But Tommy had now made his appearance, and Tom, in his mischief, had laid hold of the tail of the Dominie's coat, and shown it to the dog. The dog, accustomed to seize a rope when it was shown to him, immediately seized the Dominie's coat, making three desperate tugs at it. The Dominie, who was in one of his reveries, and probably thought it was I who wished to direct his attention elsewhere, each time waved his hand, without turning round, as much as to say, "I am busy now."

"Haul and hold," cried Tom to the dog, splitting his sides, and the tears running down his cheeks with laughing. Tommy made one more desperate tug, carrying away one tail of the Dominie's coat; but the Dominie perceived it not, he was still "*nubibus*," while the dog galloped forward with the

fragment, and Tom chased him to recover it. The Dominie continued in his reverie, when old Tom burst out—

“O, England, dear England, bright gem of the ocean,
Thy valleys and fields look fertile and gay,
The heart clings to thee with a sacred devotion,
And memory adores when in far lands away.”

The song gradually called the Dominie to his recollection; indeed, the strain was so beautiful that it would have vibrated in the ears of a dying man. The Dominie gradually turned round, and when old Tom had finished, exclaimed, “Truly it did delight mine ear, and from such—and,” continued the Dominie, looking down upon old Tom—“without legs too!”

“Why, old gentleman, I don’t sing with my *legs*,” answered old Tom.

“Nay, good *Dux*, I am not so deficient as not to be aware that a man singeth from the mouth; yet is thy voice mellifluous, sweet as the honey of Hybla, strong—”

“As the Latin for goose,” finished Tom. “Come, father, old *Dictionary* is in the doldrums; rouse him up with another stave.”

“I’ll rouse you up with the stave of a cask over your shoulders, Mr Tom. What have you done with the old gentleman’s swallow-tail?”

“Leave me to settle that affair, father: I know how to get out of a scrape.”

“So you ought, you scamp, considering how many you get into; but the craft are swinging and heaving up. Forward there, Jacob, and sway up the mast; there’s Tom and Tommy to help you.”

The mast was hoisted up, the sail set, and the lighter in the stream before the Dominie was out of his reverie.

“Are there whirlpools here?” said the Dominie, talking more to himself than to those about him.

“Whirlpools!” replied young Tom, who was watching and mocking him; “yes, that there are, under the bridges. I’ve watched a dozen *chips* go down, one after the other.”

“A dozen *ships*!” exclaimed the Dominie, turning to Tom; “and every soul lost?”

“Never saw them afterwards,” replied Tom, in a mournful voice.

“How little did I dream of the dangers of those so near me,” said the Dominie, turning away, and communing with himself. “Those who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters;—‘*Et vastas aperit Syrtes*;’—‘These men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.’—‘*Alternante vorans vasta Charybdis aqua*.’—‘For at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof.’—‘*Surgens a puppi ventus*.—‘*Ubi tempestas et caeli mobilis humor*.’—‘They are carried up to the heavens, and down again to the deep.’—‘*Gurgitibus miris et lactis vertice torrens*.’—‘Their soul melteth away because of their troubles.’—‘*Stant pavidī. Omnibus ignoīae mortis timor, omnibus hostem*.’—‘They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man.’”

“So they do, father, don’t they, sometimes?” observed Tom, leering his eye at his father. “That’s all I’ve understood of his speech.”

“They are at their wit’s end,” continued the Dominie.

“Mind the end of your wit, master Tom,” answered his father, wroth at the insinuation.

“So when they call upon the Lord in their trouble’—‘*Cujus jurare timent et fallere nomen*’—‘He delivereth them out of their distress, for he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still; yea, still and smooth as the peaceful water which now floweth rapidly by our anchored vessel—yet it appeareth to me that the scene hath changed. These fields met not mine eyes before. ‘*Riparumque toros et prata recentia rivis*.’ Surely we have moved from the wharf?”—and the Dominie turned round, and discovered, for the first time, that we were more than a mile from the place at which we had embarked.

“Pray, sir, what’s the use of speech, sir?” interrogated Tom, who had been listening to the whole of the Dominie’s long soliloquy.

“Thou asketh a foolish question, boy. We are endowed with the power of speech to enable us to communicate our ideas.”

“That’s exactly what I thought, sir. Then pray what’s the use of your talking all that gibberish, that none of us could understand?”

“I crave thy pardon, child; I spoke, I presume, in the dead languages.”

“If they’re dead, why not let them rest in their graves?”

“Good; thou hast wit.” (*Cluck, cluck.*) “Yet, child, know that it is pleasant to commune with the dead.”

“Is it? then we’ll put you on shore at Battersea churchyard.”

“Silence, Tom. He’s full of his sauce, sir—you must forgive it.”

“Nay, it pleaseth me to hear him talk; but it would please me more to hear thee sing.”

“Then here goes, sir, to drown Tom’s impudence:—

“Glide on my bark, the morning tide
Is gently floating by thy side;
Around thy prow the waters bright,
In circling rounds of broken light,
Are glittering, as if ocean gave
Her countless gems unto the wave.

“That’s a pretty air, and I first heard it sung by a pretty woman; but that’s all I know of the song. She sang another—

“I’d be a butterfly, born in a bower.”

“You’d be a butterfly!” said the Dominie, taking old Tom literally, and looking at his person.

Young Tom roared, “Yes, sir, he’d be a butterfly, and I don’t see why he shouldn’t very soon. His legs are gone, and his wings aren’t come: so he’s a grub now, and that, you know, is the next thing to it. What a funny old beggar it is, father—aren’t it?”

“Tom, Tom, go forward, sir; we must shoot the bridge.”

“Shoot!” exclaimed the Dominie; “shoot what?”

“You aren’t afraid of fire-arms, are ye, sir?” inquired Tom.

“Nay, I said not that I was afraid of fire-arms; but why should you shoot?”

“We never could get on without it, sir; we shall have plenty of shooting, by-and-by. You don’t know this river.”

“Indeed, I thought not of such doings; or that there were other dangers besides that of the deep waters.”

“Go forward, Tom, and don’t be playing with your betters,” cried old Tom. “Never mind him, sir, he’s only humbugging you.”

“Explain, Jacob. The language of both old Tom and young Tom are to me as incomprehensible as would be that of the dog Tommy.”

“Or as your Latin is to them, sir.”

“True, Jacob, true. I have no right to complain; nay, I do not complain, for I am amused, although at times much puzzled.”

We now shot Putney Bridge, and as a wherry passed us, old Tom carolled out—

“Did you ever hear tell of a jolly young waterman?”

“No, I never did,” said the Dominie, observing old Tom’s eyes directed towards him. Tom, amused by this *naïveté* on the part of the Dominie, touched him by the sleeve, on the other side, and commenced with his treble—

“Did you ne’er hear a tale
Of a maid in the vale?”

“Not that I can recollect, my child,” replied the Dominie.

“Then, where have you been all your life?”

“My life has been employed, my lad, in teaching the young idea how to shoot.”

“So, you’re an old soldier, after all, and afraid of fire-arms. Why don’t you hold yourself up? I suppose it’s that enormous jib of yours that brings you down by the head.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.