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THE
COMPLETE CONCORDANCE TO SHAKSPEARE,

BEING A VERRAL INDEX TO ALL THE PASSAGES IN THE
DRAMATIC WORKS OF THE POET.

BY
MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

"Order gave each thing view."
SHAKESPEARE.

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George Cruikshank sc.

Kit and the Merman's Family. Page 356.

KIT BAM'S ADVENTURES;

OR, THE

YARNS OF AN OLD MARINER.

BY

MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

AUTHOR OF THE CONCORDANCE TO SHAKSPEARE.

Twere a pity
To stint the wondrous to the known, and leave
Imagination not a world to conquer.

We thus may welcome fresh true wonders,
Most Sinbad-like, nor give up dear astonishment.

I could hear such mixture
Of truth and fiction for a summer's day.

LEIGH HUNT.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

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SUCCESSORS TO

J. HARRIS, CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

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IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

TO

JOHN AND EMILY ROLT,

BY THEIR FRIEND,

MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

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VOLUME OF ADVANCEMENTS

IS APPROPRIATELY ILLUSTRATED

AND IS FULLY ILLUSTRATED

BY THE AUTHOR

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THE
STRANGE ADVENTURES
OF
KIT BAM, MARINER.

CHAPTER I.

PREFATORY AND INTRODUCTORY.

THE SWALLOW FAMILY; THE YOUNGER ONES' LOVE OF FICTION; THE ELDERS' OPINIONS OF FANCY AND MATTER-OF-FACT, IMAGINATION AND REALITIES.—KIT BAM; HIS FIRST YARN; THE ISLAND OF FALSE APPEARANCES.

"MAMMA," said Dick Swallow to his mother one evening, during the holidays, "before the candles come, and Fanny and I have our game of chess together, I wish you'd tell us one of your famous long stories, as you used to do."

"I fear, my dear boy," replied his mother, "that you and your sister have exhausted my stock of 'famous stories' (as you are so polite as to call them) long ago; besides, you are too old now to care for stories, surely; you hope to go to college in a couple

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of years, and are very often quite a man already, you know, in your own opinion."

"And yet, mother, I really think I shall never be too old to like a good long story," answered Dick. "In the first place, listening instead of reading, is such pleasant, lazy work—such complete rest, after a day's fag at Latin and Greek. And then, when the stories are about fairies, and spirits, and strange adventures, such as yours used to tell of, I feel as if they took me out of the horse-in-a-mill routine of books and study, which is all very right and useful, of course, and must be attended to, but which makes one long for amusement and rest—I mean rest for the thoughts and the head, as much as cricket, and rowing, and going to bed, are rest for the limbs after sitting many hours at lessons."

"I sometimes feel the same thing, Mamma;" said his sister Fanny; "I often wish I had one of your old stories of an evening to amuse me after lessons and my duty-walk are over; an interesting story is such pleasant rest; and, you know, I am not allowed to read novels yet—they are 'too old' for me, it is said."

"I know well your love of stories, my dears!" said their mother; "and I agree with you that there are few things afford so perfect a relaxation to the mind as fiction, and its pleasant appeals to the imagination. You, Dick, will soon form an acquaintance with the fine old poets; their lovely classical stories, and beautiful fancies, will prove a grand resource for you as a relief from severer studies; and you, my dear

Fanny, may, in a year or two, hope to enjoy with me those interesting fictions from the pen of some of our best authors, which have so well depicted the stage of human life, its various hopes, disappointments, aspirations, duties, and feelings; and which form a not inapt introduction to the world itself, where you will some day be called upon to act your part. But it is not well too early to anticipate the amusement and even instruction to be derived from such a course of reading; and, meantime, I will own that you are both deprived of a pleasant source of amusement, if it is decreed that you are 'too old' for the stories of your childhood, and that the Poets and Novelists are 'too old' for you. I have been thinking, therefore, that as my own story-telling powers are exhausted, I will endeavour to procure you another source of entertainment of the like kind, which may supply the want you feel; and that your favourite twilight hour may still be spent in the way you both love so well, in listening to a long story."

"Capital, mamma!" exclaimed both the young Swallows, joyfully, as they jumped up to give her a hearty kiss; for though Dick had nearly attained the manly age of fourteen, and his sister Fanny was but a year younger, yet they both frequently expressed their joy in a burst of childish rapture, and were generally as gay as larks. The nature of their education had made our two young friends simple in their manners, though sensible in their heads; their hearts were young, though their minds were strong, active, and well-stored. They had been brought up

under the superintendence of their mother, a woman of keen sensibilities, yet firm judgment. She had indulged their fancy, while she had secured solid instruction; and the result was, that, though Dick could construe Virgil, or work many of the problems in Euclid, and Fanny was a good modern linguist and an accomplished needlewoman and housekeeper, yet they both of them still loved a long twilight tale, and listened to it with all their old-young delight. They were child-like, though not childish, in taste and feeling; and their manners were unconventional, and unlike the little old men and women we now-a-days often meet with in young people of their age.

"Your father tells me he has invited his old ship-mate, Kit Bam, (of whom you have often heard him speak,) to come and spend the remainder of his days close by us," resumed their mother; "the little cottage in the lane, just by the clump of beech trees, at the back of our grounds, has been prepared for him, and we expect that he will arrive from town to-day, and take possession of his new abode. Indeed, I should not wonder if it is the reception of his old friend which detains papa at this very moment, for it is much after his usual hour of return from his walk. I dare say he is now at the cottage welcoming his favourite Kit, and settling him in his new home. We will ask papa to go with us to-morrow morning to see his old friend, that we may make his acquaintance."

"That will be pleasant!" said Dick.

"If *he* is pleasant," added Fanny, in a lower tone. "Do you know Mr. Kit Bam, mamma?" enquired she. "Is he pleasant? Is he good-natured?"

"Very good-natured," replied her mother; "and very pleasant—especially pleasant he will seem to you both; for he has seen a vast deal, and passed through a great many adventures in his time, so that he has plenty of long stories to tell—if you can coax him to relate them; and I know you have rather a knack in persuading those from whom you have hopes of a story, Fanny."

Next morning, forth the party sallied; the day was bright, the birds were singing cheerfully; the young people were in high spirits at the idea of the new acquaintance they were about to make; and their parents were happy in the thought that they had secured a comfortable asylum near them, and the enjoyment of complete repose in his old age, to one whose youth and maturer years had been faithfully employed in a course of active exertion, uncomplaining hardship, many perils, and ceaseless wandering. Across the lawn, skirting the fishpond, between the flower-beds, by the arbour, down the gravel-walk, along the avenue, out at the little wicket-gate, into the lane, all flowery with hedgerow climbers and plants—the honeysuckle, the dogrose, the hawthorn, the briony; and all bowery with hedge-row trees—the maple, the oak, the elm, and the ash; on passed the four walkers, till they came to a cottage in a small garden, that was screened off from the lane by a quickset hedge. Through a slight opening in this

hedge Captain Swallow looked, and beckoned to his wife that she should silently follow his example.

“Does not the dear old fellow look a perfect picture of contented comfort?” asked he in a whisper.

Dick and Fanny peeped too. Sitting on a bench in the sun, they saw an old man with grey hair, a very brown face, and still browner hands, which were folded carelessly together round a thick knotty stick, that lay between his knees. He wore coarse dark blue clothes that looked too big for him; indeed so big and so loose, that they appeared as if they would have held an additional set of legs and arms without any inconvenience to the limbs already there. On his head was a shiny glazed hat; so shiny that it made our young friends wink as they looked at it sparkling and glistening in the bright sun; but as it was worn perched very forward, it shaded the old man's own eyes, without his suffering any apparent annoyance from the ends of black ribbon which dangled from its brim, and occasionally fluttered into the corner of one of them, as he gazed thoughtfully at a hive of bees that stood near him.

“It's a home-loving though a wandering life,” they heard him murmur; “they range freely abroad in the pure air and sunshine, and collect stores of sweet and pleasant things to enjoy quietly in their wintry days. They're strangely like men, those bees;—the flowery fields and the wide ocean—the warm hive, and the snug cottage—a wandering youth, and a tranquil old age, are each their portion; and then, the honey-juice of blossoms, and the pleasant hoard of sweet fancies

and recollections that the bee and the man both gather in their early rambles, are equally the gift of a bounteous Creator. And how well the little things manage it all! They're as orderly and as handy at their work, and get as little in each other's gangway as a ship's crew mustering 'all hands' at the call of the boatswain's whistle. Ay, ay, sir; this way, captain;" added the old mariner a moment after, as he started up from his seat, on hearing his friend's voice saluting him with a hearty cheer, while the party approached and entered the little garden-gate. "This way, madam; this way, my young lady," continued he, as he bustled about to do the honours of his new house to his visitors.

He shewed them the straight rows of cabbages and potatoes, and carrots, and onions, in the orderly little garden, and gathered a posy of sweet-williams and bachelors'-buttons for Fanny and her Mamma. He shewed them the draw-well, with its bucket quite handy; and told them that the water was as fresh and bright as crystal; as a proof of which he took some up in the hollow of his hand, and let it fall in sparkling drops from his palm, which he once raised to his lips, as if willing to confirm his words by drinking some; though, on second thoughts, he let that handful fall too, sprinkling it over the flowers; remarking, with a sly smile at the captain, "that *they* liked it, poor things, it did them good! And yet I can remember times when I would have given more for that handful of fresh water than for all the wine that ever was crushed, either from grapes or in a jovial cup," added he, with

a thoughtful look that often came over his weather-beaten countenance, giving a strange contradiction to his usual careless sailorlike manner and appearance. He shewed them the bees next, saying, "they were tight lads for work." He took them into the snug cottage with its cozy sitting-room and comfortable bed-room, and said it was as warm a berth as heart could desire; and that it was just like his ship-mate's kind way, to think of getting it rigged for him to turn into in his old age.

While Kit was grasping their father warmly by the hand, and saying this in a hearty tone to their mother, Dick whispered to Fanny, "I wonder whether he'd tell us one of his stories now. I should like to hear some of his adventures."

"I think he must be too tired to-day to talk much, after his journey yesterday," said Fanny; "besides, he's busy and taken up with papa and mamma now, and I don't like to interrupt him."

Soon after their parents took leave; and, as they walked home, their mother told Fanny she had overheard how considerate she had been towards their old friend; but that she and her brother should come and spend an hour or two every afternoon with him, if they pleased. Accordingly, that very afternoon, the moment the cloth was removed, the young Swallows were darting off, when their father cried out, "Hallo! youngsters, whither so fast? I never saw you in such a hurry to run away from a dish of currants and cherries before!"

Dick and Fanny both began in a breath to reply:

but their mother said, smiling, "Never mind; take your dessert on some leaves, and away with you, and I'll explain to your father."

"They are off to renew their acquaintance with old Kit, I suppose," said Captain Swallow, when his children had vanished; "they appeared to be prodigiously taken with him this morning—as indeed he seemed to be with them. Well, they'll amuse him, and help to make the dear old fellow's time pass pleasantly."

"They rather hope he will amuse them, I believe," said their mother; "they have a passion for long stories, and I should think he has plenty to tell them."

"Yes, he has indeed; Kit will spin you a yarn as long as a ship's cable, only once set him a talking," replied the captain. "But do you think all these strange adventures and wonderful histories of his are quite the sort of thing for the children to listen to, my dear? Kit has a knack of relating marvels that I very much suspect never had any existence but in his own brain; for, though he's as true and honest a chap as ever lived, he has a spice of romance in him that, I've a notion, has led him to see all his adventures with a fanciful eye. You know, all we sailors have the reputation of being a superstitious set—our life naturally engenders strange beliefs and extraordinary imaginings. While surrounded for the most part by grand natural objects,—sky and ocean, the sun, the moon, the stars,—yet we are, nevertheless, shut within a narrow limit, and confined in our daily intercourse, for days and weeks together. This circumscribed life has, in Kit's instance, been even

enhanced by many solitary wanderings. Frequently thrown far apart from his own species, an indulgence in silent musing, and a habit of following his own whimsical thoughts, joined to a great taste for imaginative reading, and an originally contemplative disposition, have combined to make him unusually credulous—even for one of us sailors. Don't you think, therefore, his yarns will be apt to set their wits a-wandering and a-wool-gathering, when maybe it would be better that they should be hove-to, steady, and brought alongside more useful things, safe in the harbour of knowledge?"

"Even during Dick's holidays, they both work hard at their lessons in the morning," replied his wife; "and while they work, I try to keep their young heads steady and attentive, and really intent upon storing up as much useful information as possible, that they may secure the all-important advantage of a solid education. But the more careful I am that they shall not think of anything else while they are at study, the more anxious I am that they should have plenty of amusement at other times—and no amusement do they like so well as what they call 'a long story.' While they work, let them work with their whole souls, and when they play, let it be as heartily. The very nature of the narratives they will hear from your old friend, too, will form a judicious contrast to the matter-of-fact practical sort of acquirements I have endeavoured to lead them to cultivate, as being better fitted to their station in life than mere flimsy accomplishments; and as I think the

tendency of the present age (in which they will be called upon to act their part) is perhaps rather too strictly utilitarian in its nature, so this will be best counteracted by the appeals to the imagination and fancy that will be made by Kit's stories, which may form a kind of introduction to the classical fictions they will read by-and-bye. We are too apt, I think, now-a-days, to heap upon bewildered childhood an accumulation of dry facts, scientific scraps, and hard information; which, ill-arranged, ill-digested, and unrelieved by lighter matter, only serve to render young people the prating, superficial, addle-brained little pragmatists which they too frequently are. Let them have sterling knowledge, by all means, but let them have holiday of the mind too."

"I think you are right in the main, my love," said the captain, smiling at his wife's warmth; "for though I've often regretted that my early love of the sea and a sailor's profession led me to neglect the opportunity of learning while young, and so have been compelled to blunder through life more of a dunce than you in your wifely partiality would perhaps be willing to allow, yet I have known some of the happiest moments of my existence from an ardent enjoyment of nature, and a passionate love of the beautiful."

"And if we too strictly exclude the cultivation of the Imagination and Fancy in young people," replied his wife, "I am sure we deprive them of these very sources of happiness you speak of. 'My mind to me a kingdom is!' and surely the region of idea is its most precious dominion. The poetry and ro-

mance of Thought are the best solace for daily toil, and the surest refuge from the inevitable commonplaces of every-day existence. I feel sure we shall do well in permitting our children to take an interest in all the wild tales and travellers' wonders of old Kit, while we are careful at the same time to instil sound principles, an earnest love of truth, and a veneration for the light of Wisdom."

"Very true," said the captain. "Besides, Kit, though a sailor and a wanderer, is anything but a common man. His natural love of romance and adventure gave a tone of sentiment and imagination to his thoughts, and led him to observe and reflect upon what he saw. He was always noted among us for a lad extremely fond of reading, whenever he could find time, and get hold of a book; and this, joined to his naturally ardent fancy, his good simple heart, and his strict sense of honour and moral worth, gave him a cultivated and refined tone of mind very different from what his station in life might lead one to expect. Therefore, on the whole, I do not know but what his society is the very thing we could desire for our children; for, at the same time that he amuses their fancy, and excites their love of the marvellous, he will lead them to reflect, and draw a moral from most of his narratives, wild and even mystical as they may be."

Meantime, the young Swallows reached the cottage of their new-old friend. They found him comfortably seated in a wooden arm-chair near the hearth (though, the season being early, there was no

fire in the grate), with his legs stretched out at full length and crossed easily over one another, his arms folded, and his eyes glancing occasionally towards the model of a ship that stood on a table in the corner of the room, though they were more frequently employed in gazing through the little cottage-casement at the soft glories of the setting sun, in which he seemed to read and revolve innumerable memories of the past. Between his lips rested a short pipe, from which he drew lazy puffs at long intervals, as if rather from habit than actual enjoyment; though now and then it became firmly clenched between his teeth, as he murmured a lengthened "Ah! —'m!" and shook his head slowly, and closed his eyes dreamily;—though when they were open, they were keen, grey, piercing eyes, and looked at the sunlight with as steady and unwinking a gaze as an eagle's. But they wore a kind and even tender expression as they suddenly fell upon the figures of our two young friends as they appeared at the open door, which was thrown back to admit the sweet breath of the evening air, rich with the odour of the flowers in the cottage garden.

"I hope we don't disturb you," said Fanny, as she stole softly to the old man's side; "but we know you have some wonderful stories to tell, and we want you to tell them to us, if you please; and you have a good thinking face on now, and we hope you'll begin directly, if you could be so good as to remember one—could you? Would you, do you think, Mr. Bam?" She said this with a childlike mixture of

eagerness and timidity, while she put her arms round his large blue sleeve, and hugged it close and winningly. The old mariner's face looked so pleasantly towards her, as she urged her entreaty, that she could not help letting her hand glide round his huge blue collar, and rest for an instant on the bald spot at the top of his head, and then drawing it caressingly down his silver hairs, and smoothing his withered cheek, marked with a thousand minute red lines, while her own round rosy one crept nearer to it, she whispered a repeated:—"Could you be so very kind, do you think, Mr. Bam?"

"To be sure I will, my lass—my dear young lady! Disturb me? that you don't, my dears! Remember? Of course I can—want of memory's not my failing. But I say, my dear lass," continued the old mariner affectionately, "when you look in my eyes in that way, with a smile so like your father's (God bless him!) just call me Kit, plain Kit, as he always does; and not Mr. Bam, which sounds formal, and is moreover a name I somehow never particularly liked. What's your name, my man?" added he turning to her brother.

"Richard—Dick," answered he.

"Ay, Dick! that's right! your brave father's name. Come and sit here in the corner, Dick, my fine fellow; and you, my lass,—what's your name? Oh, Fanny; come and perch close to me on the other side."

"But the story, Mr.—I mean, my darling old Kit; won't you begin and tell us your story?"

He smiled at her eagerness:—"I should begin, I believe, by telling you, that though I was born in a quiet little inland village, never boy had greater hankering after a wandering life, or a more ardent desire to go to sea. My longing to behold other scenes, and take part in those active exertions that engaged my fellow-creatures in the world beyond, filled me with intolerable craving, and rendered the monotony of our simple village existence insupportably wearisome to me. Often did my father check me for the repining spirit which this restless desire for change engendered in me, and would exclaim in the pity of a wiser experience: 'Poor lad! thou little know'st what thou wishest for!' My mother had a brother living at a small sea-port town about forty miles' distance, on the nearest coast to the part of the country where our village was situated; and to this uncle's house I was once sent by my father, not without a hope, I believe, that the rough usage which he knew I should meet with there would have the desired effect of sickening me of a town life, and the wear and tear of the world, and so lead me to love and return to my own quiet home. For this uncle was a hard, money-loving man, and his wife was a hard, money-loving woman, and, moreover, a shrew, with a loud, shrill voice, fierce eyes, thin lips, and bony arms, who thought the chief virtue of the mistress of a house was to scold her servants for faults they might possibly commit some time or other, and to give them continual orders about work they were at the moment doing.

“My uncle had persuaded my father to send me to him, that he might ‘push my fortune, and give me a lift in the world, instead of letting me rot in an out-of-the-way village all my life,’ as he expressed it; so he proceeded to shew his ideas of promotion and worldly advancement, by installing me, immediately on my arrival, in the honourable post of errand-boy, in which office were included the slight duties of cleaning knives, brushing boots and shoes, washing dishes, chopping wood, drawing water, lighting fires, scrubbing floors, cleaning windows, taking down and putting up the shop shutters, opening the door (which, as my thrifty aunt-mistress let lodgings, was a charge that kept me trotting up and down the kitchen stairs like a canary-bird incessantly hopping from perch to perch), carrying trays that were too heavy for the bit of a girl who passed for the maid of all-work to the establishment, running with letters, parcels, and messages for the lodgers, besides occasionally helping my uncle in his business, which was that of a shoemaker.

“Of all these various duties there were none I performed so willingly as those which in any way helped to save my poor little fellow-servant, ‘the bit of a girl’ I spoke of. She was a thin, hollow-eyed, pale-faced creature, bleached and smoke-dried with perpetual dwelling in a town air; and yet I thought her pretty, from a meek, patient look she had. She would fix her soft blue eyes with a sort of helpless fascination on the flashing fierce ones of her mistress, while she was giving her ‘a good set-down,’ as she

called it; and with her quivering lips, and submissively imploring eyes, poor Molly would stand there to be rated as 'a good-for-nothing, idle slut,' and 'a bold-faced staring minx,' till my blood boiled with a sense of wrong that all my own hardships failed to excite in the like degree.

"And yet these hardships of my own were bad enough. Coarse, and grudgingly-given food; incessant labour; want of the pure country air, to which I had been accustomed from infancy; brutal, unkind usage; violent, abusive language; little or no rest—for I was up early and down late: all these were but harsh substitutes for the peaceful existence I had hitherto led in my native village; where, if I worked hard, it was in the fresh free air, and with those who loved and fostered me. Still, these, my first rude experiences of life from home, did not lead me to wish for a return to that home. I longed, it is true, to escape from this bondage, this miserable drudgery (so doubly irksome to one of my peculiar disposition),—but it was that I might wander forth to those scenes which my fancy still portrayed to me as full of joy, animation, and beauty. My only consolation during those ten dreary months that I spent at my uncle's were the few stolen opportunities I found of devouring a book now and then, or of creeping down to the sea-shore and indulging my visions about those far distant lands, that lay stretched away beyond the ocean, and which my imagination painted in the most vivid and alluring colours. Innumerable castles in the air did my boyish fancy build, of

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taking my poor little gentle Molly away from her thralldom, and of setting sail together for some delightful island, where we might live happy and free the livelong day, with no one to thwart or control us. In those charming day-dreams I pictured her to myself the queen of our beautiful solitude, wandering hand in hand with me through shady groves, and flowering thickets, and majestic woods, where the birds should be our sole companions; and there, I thought, her blue eyes would lose those dark rings that encircled them—there her cheeks would become dimpled and rosy, and her lips would smile instead of tremble. Poor, meek, gentle Molly!”

Here Kit sighed and paused for a moment, then he resumed:—“One morning poor Molly told me, with tears in her eyes, that her mistress had bid her clean the windows, and that she was afraid. ‘But I will do them,’ said I, ‘that’s always my job.’ But she reminded me that I was going on an errand to a place at some little distance from the town that day for my uncle, and, therefore, her mistress insisted that as I could not do them, Molly should; as nothing would induce her to put off the regular day for cleaning the windows. I comforted her as well as I could, assuring her that I would make the utmost haste, so that I might be back in time, to prevent her doing what she so much dreaded. But everything that unhappy day was fated to turn out in misery. I was detained late by my uncle before I set out—I was detained at the house to which I was sent—I was detained on my road back by an accident which nearly ended in a

child being run over. I had scarcely helped to rescue the infant from its dangerous vicinity to the wheels of the cart, and seen it safely placed in its mother's arms, when I resumed the quick pace which I hoped would still enable me to return in time. I reached the entrance to the town; I turned into the street where my uncle lived; but I had scarcely done so, when I perceived a large crowd assembled before his house, who surrounded something that lay upon the pavement. I will not pain your tender hearts, my dears, by dwelling upon the horror of that moment; suffice it to say, that on making my way through the crowd, I found my poor Molly stretched upon the ground, bleeding and lifeless! Her cruel mistress had insisted upon her getting outside the upper window to clean it; the poor girl had missed her footing; she fell, and was killed upon the spot. As I approached they were lifting her from the earth tenderly, and conveying her into the house. Her cap had fallen off, and her comb dropped from her long hair upon the pavement. I picked it up mechanically, and followed those who were bearing the body like one in a fearful dream. I scarcely heard my uncle's voice, though he was storming loudly as I entered the shop. I found, a few minutes afterwards, that he was raving at me for my having loitered so long on my errand; but I stared at him, with dry eyes and a parched mouth, for some time without making out the sense of what he was talking about. At length he drew a letter from his pocket, saying:—
'But here's what releases me from all farther care

of you, you lazy lout, you ; your father's dying, and you are to go home to your mother ; she sent me this letter to say so this morning ; so pack up your alls, and begone ! Off with you at once, and good riddance of bad rubbish ! Nothing but plagues and troubles in this world, I do think !' As he finished speaking, he took up his work again ; and I, merely repeating (in a tone which I could not think of afterwards without shuddering), 'your father's dying, and you are to go home to your mother,' turned round, and went out of the shop. I remember shivering, and feeling a sharp pain shoot through my limbs, as I passed close to the spot where my poor Molly had lain dead so lately. I remember looking vacantly at her comb, which remained unconsciously clutched in my fingers ; and I remember something of walking through the streets, and taking the road which led across the country towards my village home, and which happened to be the same I had traversed in the morning on my luckless errand ; but I recollect nothing else till I found myself leaning heavily and faintly against the parapet of a little bridge that crossed the road near where the accident had happened to the child that morning. How long I remained thus I do not know, but the first thing I was conscious of, was a pair of little chubby bare arms clinging round my neck, and a voice saying : 'Ay, kiss him, and hug him, and love him, Billy, for he saved your life this morning, that he did !' I looked up, and found it was the poor woman with her child, who was so nearly run over, and whom she was

holding close to me that he might thank me in his baby way. I verily believe the poor little infant returned me life for life at that moment, and was an instrument in the hands of Providence for bringing relief to my overburthened heart, for I burst into tears, and thus found vent for the grief and sorrow that had struck me such cruel blows in the death of my poor Molly, and my father's danger, and had made me unable to shed one tear until that time.

“Seeing me ill and sorrowful, the kind woman took me into her cottage, which was close by, where she gave me some food, and made me lie down upon her bed for a couple of hours, telling me that even if I could not sleep, it would be better to take some rest, as I should set out on my journey all the stronger for it. But heaven sent the blessing of sleep to support the poor boy in his early trouble, and I did not awake till the afternoon, when my kind friend told me she had thought of a good plan for me, which was no other than to get a lift in the waggon that would pass by, before evening, on its way to the part of the country where our village was situated. She knew the waggoner, she said, and she would speak to him for me, and tell him how well I deserved help. Well, my dears, I reached home, but it was too late! My father had died of the fever that he had taken suddenly, and I found that my poor mother was rapidly sinking under the same disease; which, joined to the fatigue and anxiety of nursing him, carried her off in three days after my return, so

that in the course of one week I followed both parents to their graves. Nothing consoled me so well under the grief I suffered for their loss, as the recollection that I had never yielded to my ardent desire to become a sailor while they lived; but now that they were gone, and I had no tie to bind me to home, my old longing for the sea returned with greater force than ever. To my desire for wandering, was now added a disgust towards the land that amounted to loathing. I thought that those who spoke of the perils and dangers of the ocean, strangely overlooked the equal risks that existed on the shore. Had I not lost my dear and only friends by violent and painful deaths though they had never stirred abroad? As my thoughts dwelt in horror upon the mangled form of my poor Molly, and the fevered sufferings of my dear parents, I asked myself whether winds, and waves, and stormy shipwrecks, could have worse terrors. Again, the vision of the sea, the vast, the boundless ocean, arose to my imagination, as the only free and unlimited range for man's spirit, and I yielded to my insatiable craving, by setting forth the very next day on my voyage of life.

"I have already kept you so long, my dears, talking of my early sorrows, that I shall not stay to tell you all the particulars of my difficulties in getting a berth on board a ship; suffice it to say, that I did at last contrive to obtain one, and was likewise so fortunate as to find my captain and shipmates as kind a master and as pleasant companions as ever fell to the lot of a poor cabin-boy on first going to sea. It will

frequently happen in the course of my after adventures, that I shall have to allude to the early friends I made among the crew, in that first cruise of mine, but I shall not stop to describe them now, as it is getting nearly time for you to return home, and I want to tell you a bit of a yarn before you go, that you mayn't think all my adventures are as melancholy as those of my childhood were.

“In one of my wanderings—it was some time after my first voyage—I was sent ashore, with another sailor and a young boy, by the captain, to get a supply of fresh water. The latitudes we were in then, being very hot, and the atmosphere very stifling, we had been for some days greatly distressed on board ship for the want of this important provision, so that it became absolutely necessary to seek water, notwithstanding there was some risk in so doing. Many of the men had demurred when the captain had first talked of landing—others had evaded the task—and all had muttered hints of dread and dislike of this place, though it was fair and inviting to all appearance,—saying it was as well to perish of thirst at sea, as to tempt a still more horrible fate on this shore, from which no one was ever known to return. My natural love of adventure, and my usual habit of obedience, however, made me at once accept the task, when the captain selected me for the purpose; and one of the least cowardly of the other sailors and the boy having been appointed to accompany me, we accordingly lowered the boat and rowed to land, which in itself certainly presented anything but a hostile aspect.

Trees, of the most beautiful shape and foliage, stretched forth their palmy branches with assurance of a cooling and luxurious shade; the sands, over which the waves rippled in gentle undulation, were of the most dazzling whiteness, and were strewed with innumerable shells of the most vivid colour and varied form; birds, of bright and glowing plumage, glanced from tree to tree, uttering melodious cooings, intermingled with gay outbursts of joyous thrilling song; and the grass, which lay like a soft green carpet beneath the trees beyond the sands, was sown with a thousand many-coloured flowers; while a sparkling stream of clear water flowed like a silver thread through the brilliant landscape, affording the most delicious promise of the needed refreshment. My two companions, on beholding this rivulet, forgot their fears, and pushing the boat gently aground, sprang ashore, and ran to enjoy the desired draught, heedless of my earnest entreaties that they would stay to help me take the casks out of the boat. Knowing the anxiety of the captain to secure the desired supply, and the extreme state of suffering to which the crew were reduced from its want, as well as having the habit of always punctually observing the old rule of 'duty first and pleasure afterwards,' I remained steadily at my post; lifting out the casks and vessels we had brought with us, as well as I could by myself, though not without some impatience at my companions' desertion. I have never in my life, my dears, had reason to repent my adherence to the rule I spoke of just now, which should form a chief one in the con-

duct of everybody, particularly in that of a sailor ; but in the instance I am now relating, it was of singular service to me. Just as I had succeeded in rolling one of the casks ashore, I raised my head towards my companions, with the intention of calling to them again to come and help me, when I was struck with terror and indescribable dismay at what I beheld. The sailor had gained considerably on the steps of the young boy, and had preceded him by some minutes in arriving at the brink of the beautiful streamlet. Here he had thrown himself down in all the rash eagerness of ardent thirst, and had swallowed several long draughts of the tempting liquid, when, on rising from the ground with a gesture of luxurious satisfaction, and while I almost seemed to hear the sigh with which he yielded himself to the exquisite enjoyment of allayed thirst, I saw him no longer,—he had vanished entirely from my wondering eyes! I placed my hands involuntarily before them for an instant, and then again strained them in the endeavour to make out this marvellous disappearance. In vain! the man had totally vanished from the scene. The spot where he had stood an instant before, and where he had intercepted my view of the fatal rivulet, was utterly vacant ; and there was no one to be seen but the advancing boy, who, struck like myself by the miraculous disappearance of his comrade, had halted for a moment in consternation, but was now hastening forward again. I shouted to him to return—I implored—I threatened ; but to no purpose. Goaded alike by his amazement, his curiosity, and his raging

thirst, he speeded on to the fatal brink, as if fascinated to his destruction; and, to my unspeakable horror, I beheld him share the same fate as his companion!

“Whether they faded into the air, whether they merged into the shining water beside them, or whether they sunk into the earth beneath their feet, I was equally unable to determine, and all my efforts to discover the actual cause of their unhappy doom were unavailing. I could not, however, fail to connect their fate with the mysterious rivulet, and, though parched with thirst, and ready to sink with exhaustion,—the result of my terror and exposure to the noon-day sun,—I firmly resolved I would not yield to the sort of fascination which I was sensible was fast creeping over me, and urging me to go and drink also; but, turning my eyes resolutely away from the tempting shore and alluring stream, I looked in the direction of the ship, determining to row back to her immediately, while I had strength and courage left. These, however, had very nearly forsaken me altogether when I discovered that the ship was rapidly receding from my view, and that she was, in fact, making all sail away from this dangerous and dreaded place. Giving myself up for lost, I uttered a cry of agony and sunk on the sands in despair; when, reflecting on the weakness and folly of such self-abandonment, I summoned sufficient energy to crawl beneath the shade of one of the spreading palm-trees, where, stretched on the velvet turf, I could yield with greater safety to the overwhelming

drowsiness and stupor which was stealing over my senses. My sleep, however, was fevered and restless. Visions of delicious cool draughts tantalizingly held to my parched lips, and snatched away at the moment of enjoyment, tortured and disturbed my repose. I beheld translucent waves within an inch of bathing my feet; I saw showers of silver spray burst in a thousand sparkling drops just a hand's-breadth from my aching brow; I vainly struggled to plunge my burning hands into a crystal vase that seemed placed but a pace or two from the tree beneath which I lay; but, as I eagerly pressed forward to seize it, it eluded my grasp, and, assuming the form of the departing ship, seemed to vanish in a double mockery, which so stung and maddened me that I started and awoke with a deep groan. On unclosing my eyes, the first object they encountered was a human face hanging over me with an expression of interest and wonder; and, springing up to be on my guard, I found it belonged to a short queer little being about three feet high, who began making a series of sharp quick bows, strutting hither and thither, laying his hand on his breast, winking his eyes, and chattering very fast, though unintelligibly; but this, joined to his gestures, which were anything but uncourteous, inspired me with a feeling of the ludicrous rather than of the terrible, so that I soon concluded that I had nothing to fear, especially as the creature's size rendered him no very formidable antagonist, even should he prove himself to be one instead of a friend.

“Trusting, therefore, to these conclusions, I made

signs to him that I was perishing with thirst, and that I entreated him to help me to some means of allaying the fever that consumed me; when he stepped forward, and, nodding consequentially, twice or thrice, he took me by the hand,—which he contrived to do with a very patronizing air, notwithstanding the difference in our height,—and led me from the spot. But what was my consternation, when I found that he was leading me towards the fatal streamlet; and how quickly did all my first misgivings of him revive, when I found that this abominable little dwarf actually made signs to me that I should drink. I started back in abhorrence, and was just about to give way to my desire to punish him for his treachery, by pitching him into the water head foremost, when I reflected that, as he was the only creature I had met with in this apparently uninhabited region, I absolutely depended on him for assistance and relief, and that I had better not destroy him till I had tried whether I could not make him of use to me.

“I accordingly made signs to him that he should drink first, which, however, he immediately declined by stepping back, laying his hand on his breast as before, with innumerable jerking bows, sharp twinklings of his eyes, and a profusion of grimace and chattering. He then pointed to a tree at a little distance, on which grew several clusters of a ruddy juicy-looking fruit, and, perceiving that I hesitated, he ran towards it, and, making a sudden and agile spring, he succeeded in plucking down a branch, and

gathered three or four of the finest-looking, which he immediately proceeded to eat, nodding and smiling and winking at me all the while with a sly sagacious leer of triumph and encouragement.

“The sight of this delicious fruit, which streamed with juice as the dwarf opened and sucked it, was irresistibly tempting to me; and, satisfied with the precaution I had taken, I recklessly seized some, and buried my dry, parched lips in the rosy refreshment. No bad effects, however, followed my rash act; on the contrary, the cool, pulpy repast quite invigorated me, and I felt not only my strength repaired and my spirits revived, but my confidence in my diminutive acquaintance was partially restored, by the pleasant meal he had been the means of procuring for me.

“I accordingly advanced towards him, and shook him heartily by the hand, as the best means of expressing to him my good faith; this salutation he received with his usual struts, shrugs, and grimaces, and ended by standing on tiptoe and endeavouring to hit me a smart slap on the back, which friendly effort falling short, only produced a feeble tap on the edge of my blue jacket.

“However, he seemed to feel that amity was now re-established between us, and so, taking me by the hand again, which he did by placing his little fingers round mine, in the same style of protection and sustaining care with which a nursery-maid would lead along her young charge, he conducted me under the trees, along the smooth grass, and then across a field or two, where, to my surprise, I saw wheat growing

with all the signs of cultivation and human care. Beyond these fields, I beheld a hut rudely built, but surrounded by a garden and an orchard, and bearing marks of order and habitation. But what made me look at this hut with peculiar attention, was its remarkable size, and the large proportions of its doors, windows, and general dimensions. I had no sooner remarked this, and had concluded from that very circumstance that it could not be the residence of my diminutive guide, than I perceived that he was conducting me straight towards the garden-gate, through which we immediately passed, and soon after found ourselves standing before the tall door of the hut. The dwarf, still clutching my hand, stepped up upon the door-sill, stood on tiptoe, strained his little person to the utmost, and succeeded in lifting the huge knocker with the tips of his finger-nails, letting it drop again with a ponderous single knock, which somehow fell upon my heart like a note of evil warning.

“I had hardly time to reflect upon this, and to entertain thoughts of extricating my hand from the dwarf’s grasp, which, though small, was as tight as a vice, when the door was opened by a figure that made my heart quail with dread.

“It was that of a monster some eight or nine feet high, who glared at us with red flaming eyes, set round with flaxen lashes, and brows that gave a strange, weak, silly look to his great features; and his wide nose and big mouth gaped horribly as he smiled a ghastly welcome, and displayed enormous gums, as red, and almost as thick, as beet-roots.

"I shuddered, and closed my eyes involuntarily; but when I opened them again, and would have retreated, I found the door made fast behind me, and that I was in the hut with the malicious dwarf and the terrible giant.

"The two were soon engaged in a vehement conversation, of which I immediately guessed I was the object, from the frequent glances that they each directed towards me; but it was not long before I found I had more to dread from the polite attentions of the detestable little dwarf, with his eternal bowings and scrapings, than from the mighty arm of the giant, who had filled me with such terror by his frightful eyes and vast grinning gums. At one period of their conference, when the dwarf became exceeding wroth, and was making as if he would rush towards me, the giant suddenly and effectually stopped him by putting his forefinger on the top of his head; and at last, finding, I suppose, that it was hopeless arguing the point any longer with his obstinate little comrade, he ended the dispute by opening a door and poking me into a side room, where, upon recovering my breath from the force of the giant's push (which, though doubtless intended for a gentle one, was sufficiently powerful to fling me down upon my hands and knees into a corner), I found myself a close prisoner, without a hope of escape. The door was fast locked, and the window, being accommodated to the giant's height, was far above my head; and, moreover, there was no chair or table by which I could hope to climb up to it, and endeavour to make my way out. In-

deed, there was no furniture of any kind in the apartment, which seemed to be used as a sort of store-room to the farm—if farm the hut could be called,—for on all sides were ranged high shelves, on which lay provisions of many kinds, such as loaves, butter, cheese, eggs, and several sorts of fruits, among which I perceived some of those delicious, juicy, rosy-cheeks that I had enjoyed so much soon after my first meeting with the hated dwarf.

“The peril of my situation, and the dread of incensing still further those creatures in whose power I now so completely was, could not prevent my feeling the pangs of hunger and thirst to so violent a degree that the sight of these stores high above my reach filled me with insupportable longings, and made even my desire of escape yield to the immediate wish to obtain some of this tempting food.

“Inspired by this ardent craving, I seized off my hat and flung it up at one of the shelves, in the hope of sweeping down some of the good things with it; but alas! it only brought down one of the rosy-cheeks, and an egg, which latter, of course, was smashed to bits by the fall; and what was worse, my hat had pitched right on to the shelf, and remained there. However, I made the best of my misfortune, by devouring the fruit and draining every drop of the juice it contained; but I had hardly knelt down upon the floor, carefully endeavouring to sip a little of the yoke from the broken egg, before I heard the key turn softly in the door, and in an instant after beheld the broad round face of the grinning giant,

peering in at me. I was about to start up with a cry of alarm and entreaty, when I perceived that the big monster was making signs to me to be quiet; and at the same time pointing over his shoulder stealthily with the huge thumb of his other hand.

“I remained perfectly still; upon which he advanced into the room; and, coming towards me, he perceived the remains of the shattered egg, and then glancing up, he discovered on the shelf my unfortunate hat, which plainly betrayed the source of the accident. To my great surprise, however, and no less relief, he took up the offending missile with a smile of pity, as if he understood and commiserated the hunger which had driven me to this expedient for obtaining food; and then, placing it with would-be gentleness on my head,—though the weight of his descending hand, as he playfully patted it on, nearly stunned me,—he proceeded to break open two loaves, and placing a pat of butter and a lump of cheese within them, between the crumb, he thrust them hastily into my hands, and strode back to the door, beckoning me to follow him silently. This I did, of course, and entering the same room I had been in before, on first coming to the hut, I saw the remains of a repast spread on the table, at one end of which sat the dwarf, reclining in an arm-chair, with a half-emptied goblet of wine before him, his tooth-pick in his hand, his mouth open, his head thrown back, and his eyes closed in a profound slumber. The friendly giant led me past this sleeping enemy; and I had hardly time to wonder within myself at all this deferential

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observance on the part of this strong creature towards one whom one blow of his huge fist would have annihilated in an instant, when I found that we had proceeded through the door of the hut, and were making our way across the garden towards the orchard. I felt almost as much perplexity as gratitude at the conduct of the giant, for I could not account for his generosity towards me, and even doubted now that he was really aiding me to escape, so forbidding was his aspect, and so at variance was his terrible appearance with his kind demeanour. But I soon had a convincing proof of the real goodness of his intentions towards me; for, seeing a brook running beneath the hedge which formed the boundary between the garden and the orchard, I was stooping down to assuage the thirst which still tormented me, when the giant suddenly snatched me by the shoulder, and forcibly upheld me and prevented my drinking, while his vehement gestures and eager expression of countenance warned me to forbear. In an instant the truth flashed upon me;—it was the fatal stream! The same rivulet whose pernicious waters had doomed my comrades to destruction before my eyes that very morning. I drew back in dismay; and, struck with the conviction of my friendly giant's genuine benevolence, I seized his immense hand between both mine, and pressed it fervently to my lips. He seemed pleased with this token of my gratitude; then, leading me back a few paces towards a well that stood in the garden, he drew for me a bucket of the delicious element, and watched me with grim benignity, while

I revelled in its limpid coolness, and not only drank deep consoling draughts, but laved my face and hands in the long-desired water. Soon, however, he resumed his careful solicitude for my safety, and glancing uneasily towards the hut, as if he feared the awakening and approach of the dwarf, he gave me to understand I must now hasten away immediately. I once more hugged his enormous hand to my breast, and prepared to depart; while he, hastily snatching up a small keg that lay among some other vessels by the well-side, filled it with fresh water, and slinging it on my back, he hurried me across the orchard and through a little gate, which he closed upon me as soon as I had emerged into the open fields. His evident awe of the dwarf had impressed me with a like fear of him, and had impelled me to fly with the utmost speed from his hated neighbourhood, as soon as I was thus free to do so; but when I had reached the sea-shore, and to my great joy found my boat still floating in the kind of small bay where I had left it in the morning, I sprung into it, and as I rowed away from this fated shore, indulged in regret at having so abruptly parted from the friendly giant, though I could not but rejoice at my safe delivery from the malicious dwarf. At the same time I could not avoid pondering on the strange events that had happened to me on this lone island—if island it were; and when reviewing the wonderful disappearance of my comrades, the remarkable behaviour of the dwarf and the giant so singularly in contrast with their several aspects, and the extraordinary way

in which I had been misled and deceived throughout by appearances, I could never recur in imagination to that spot without naming it in fancy the Island of False Appearances. But it is getting late, my dear young people," said Kit, interrupting himself; "and though it is very pleasant chatting away to you of old adventures, yet I must leave off now, lest we should not be allowed to spin yarns together any more."

"Good-bye, then, dear Kit," said Fanny, affectionately; "we shall be sure to come again to-morrow evening for another story;—and you'll tell us one, won't you?"

The old man nodded a smiling assent, and the two young folks returned home at a pace that betokened light and happy hearts.

CHAPTER II.

KIT'S SECOND YARN.—HIS SHIP-MATE, JOHN PAUL.—THE RAINBOW AND THE GOLDEN KEY.—THE ROCKY VALLEY.—THE OCEAN OF IMAGINATION.—THE LONE MOTHER AND CHILD.

"Now then, my dear Kit!" exclaimed Fanny, as she and her brother bounced into the old mariner's cottage on the following evening, "now then, for another yarn! But, in the first place, I want you to tell me all about the very first adventure you ever had. What was the first strange event that ever happened to you? And how old were you?"

"Oh, but first, Fanny, I want Kit to finish his yarn about the Island of Appearances," said Dick, "and to tell us how he managed after he had got away from the wicked dwarf and the amiable giant."

"Well, but which of you am I to obey?" said Kit laughing, "I can't do what you both wish at once, can I?"

"Then tell Dick what he wishes,—he's the eldest;" "tell Fanny what she wishes,—she's the youngest;" exclaimed both the young Swallows in a breath.

"You are both good," said the old man, smiling, "to be so willing to give up to each other; but perhaps 'eldest' or 'youngest' are bad reasons. If a

lad's given up to because he's the eldest, it's only adding another chance to the usual ones that he is made a selfish domineering man by the over-indulgence of his mother and sisters; and if a girl is given up to because she's the youngest, it's only teaching her to be more exacting and whimsical than younger ones are apt to be. However, I'll give your sister her way this time, Dick, my friend, for a reason that I don't know is much wiser than the one you thought of, but which will do for us two, because we're gallant men, arn't we? We'll give Fanny her wish, because she's a woman, eh? shall we?"

The young folks laughed merrily, and then, Kit nodding and laughing too, began his second yarn.

"My first strange adventure happened to me as I was returning from my first voyage with that pleasant ship's company that I mentioned to you yesterday. It was a calm afternoon; the weather had been serene and beautiful for many days; we were sailing on a smooth sea, with only just breeze enough to send us merrily on. The captain was in his cabin enjoying his cigar and his glass of grog after mess; the sailors were all grouped lazily about, either chatting to each other in quiet talk, or lolling idly on different parts of the deck half dozing, or perhaps thinking, for there was nothing particular to do, and all hands were at ease. I was hanging listlessly over the side, watching the rippling waves as they danced and sparkled beneath my eyes, while my thoughts were in that state half idle, half employed, which I believe some people call musing. My fancy care-



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Was the Giant and the Dwarf.

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lessly wandered over some of the early scenes of my infancy, when, quite a child, I had toddled about the floor of our small cottage watching my mother engaged about some household work; insignificant trifles floated indistinctly to and fro before me; I saw the sanded hearth, and the deal tables and chairs snow-white with my mother's housewifely care; I heard the wooden clock tick, and the cat pur, and even the clatter of the tea-cups and saucers as they were ranged on the board for our evening meal. These slight home-fancies were succeeded, or rather crossed and chequered by curious things that had been told me at different times by some of my favorite ship-mates,—Will Wavelance, Geoffry Tabard, John Paul, Edmund Faery, and others, who would spin yarns by the hour together, when any one of them and I kept watch together. Well, I can't tell how it was,—I could not make it out at the time, and I can't even now say exactly how it happened,—but in the midst of this dreamy state, I suddenly found myself plunging and flouncing in the open sea, and buffeting with the waves for dear life. I suppose I must have lost my hold, and slipped over the side while I was wandering and wool-gathering among all that cross-fire of fancies and odd notions,—but however, there I was sure enough; and what was worse, I could not swim fast enough to gain upon the ship, and no one on board seemed to be aware of my having fallen overboard, nor could I make them hear my cries, shout and bawl as I would, and pretty lustily I did that, you may be sure. Fortunately I

was a good swimmer; and, though my heart sank within me when I found that I could neither overtake the ship, nor make the crew hear me, yet still it did not fail me altogether, and I swam on with tolerable courage for some time, knowing that I could not be very far from land, which we had seen at intervals for some days past, as if it were the coast of some large continent. At length I became conscious that my power would soon be exhausted, and I cast about eagerly in my mind how I could best husband it, to enable me to reach land in safety. I remembered hearing, that if you could but hold yourself perfectly still in the water, and allow yourself to lie flat on your back, you might float with ease and safety. I contrived carefully to assume this position, and the weather being calm, and the tide flowing in, they favoured my endeavours, and it was not long before I found myself gently drifting right on to the desired land, which proved to be a shelving, sandy shore, and very convenient for my purpose. I had no sooner effected my safe landing than I threw myself on my knees and returned heartfelt thanks to God for my preservation; and then, having allowed myself half an hour's rest after my toilsome swimming, I proceeded to explore the place where I was, and to find out whether it would not afford some means of satisfying the hunger, of which I began to feel sensible.

“The country was fertile and beautiful, but there were no marks of habitation, and the few birds and animals I met with were so little alarmed by my ap-

pearance, that I felt convinced they had no human beings to dread. Though this relieved me from fear of meeting with savages or other foes, yet it considerably lessened my hope of finding any means of assuaging my growing appetite for food. As I walked on, my attention was attracted by the manœuvres of a bee, that was wrestling in the cup of a beautiful bell-shaped flower, and seemed to be almost unable to extricate himself, either clogged by the weight of wax he had collected, or detained by the sticky nature of the petals of the flower on which he walked, or rather stumbled along buzzingly. I stopped to help him out of his uncomfortable strait, and I soon had the pleasure of seeing him dart away in a hurried manner, as if he thought he had better return home in case of a change of weather. He did not fly far, however, for I saw him settle on a neighbouring tree, where he went straight to a small crevice in one of the lower branches, and crept in with his load. If I could but help myself to a little of that wild bee's store, thought I, in return for the service I have just rendered him! A feast of honey would be no bad thing! I went towards the tree, and, with a little climbing, soon reached the branch; which, as I conjectured, contained the bee's nest, with a considerable store of honey. Indeed, I was soon convinced that all this large collection was not owing to the industry of my little friend alone, for out flew a dozen or more of his hive-mates, as soon as I had helped myself to a handful of their store. Whether my little friend, the bee, had prepossessed

his companions in my favour, by having informed them of the assistance I had just given him, or whether they were naturally hospitable, and willing that I should enjoy a share of their good things, I know not; but certain it is, that they left me perfectly unmolested; and I, rejoiced to be spared an attack of their stings, sat at my ease in the tree, enjoying my feast, which was soon enhanced by my pulling off some of the cones or pods which grew on the boughs near me, and, finding that they contained a sort of floury substance very like wheat;—so that I do not know that I ever eat a better treat of bread and honey in all my life.

“The scene was beautiful—my meal was pleasant, and seasoned by that best of sauces, hunger—my heart was light with the feeling of recent deliverance from peril,—and I gave myself up to the pleasurable feeling of the moment, without suffering myself to be depressed by the thought of any coming evil that might possibly be in store for me. Even the uncertainty of food and lodging for the night, I would not permit to interfere and perplex me then; and I have frequently had reason, my dears, to be thankful to the Almighty for having blessed me with this happy temper of mine—a power of enjoying the passing good, without meeting a coming misfortune half way.

“Presently I had cause to admire that keen foreknowledge of weather which my friend the bee had shewn himself to possess in common with all his tribe; for, as I sat dangling my feet from my comfortable perch on the branch, and enjoying myself as

I told you, I felt a drop of water fall on my nose, and presently another on my eyelid that made me wink, and then another, and, in a few moments, more and more; and at last I perceived that there was rain coming down fast. It did not incommode me much where I sat, so well did the boughs and leaves of the tree screen me from the wet; I therefore remained where I was, and enjoyed the beauty of the landscape under the influence of the passing shower. And very lovely it was! The trees, the grass, the distant hills, faded gradually from the rich golden hue in which they had been previously bathed by the afternoon sun, and were shrouded in a soft grey veil, that only permitted their graceful outlines to be partially revealed. Then fell the slanting rain-shower; and presently the rays of the sun, gaining power, darted their magic light across the scene, and turned all to glistening beauty. A thousand diamonds gemmed each leaf and spray, bright flashed the still-falling rain-drops, and clear and distinct shone the distant hill-tops against the rich back-ground of the purple clouds. Suddenly all became steeped in a gorgeous many-coloured splendour, and I felt that I was in the midst of a stately rainbow. Often when I had beheld this magnificent object at sea, and its far stretching arch spanned the entire heavens, I had thought with tender awe of its symbolic significance of God's mercy to man, and admired it as one of the most elevating as well as beautiful objects in creation; but now, my whole mind was occupied with something I had heard one of my ship-mates say about

the rainbow. It was John Paul—I believe he had some other name—some surname—but I never heard him called anything but John Paul among our crew. Well, once when we stood together at the ship's prow admiring a majestic rainbow that lay across the heavens before us, John Paul told me that he had heard it frequently affirmed in his native land, Germany, that on the spot where the rainbow rises, a golden key is to be found. Now, I thought of this; now that I felt in the very centre of the rainbow itself, as it were, I thought of this tale of the spot where it rises, and of the golden key, and I wondered whether I was not actually on the very place indicated.

“I looked vaguely on the ground, with certainly but a very faint idea of seeing my hope realized, when what was my astonishment to behold lying on the grass at a few paces from me, a golden key! I started forward and seized my prize eagerly, and indeed such was the joy that took possession of me as I gazed on it with wonder and admiration at its richness and beautiful shape, that I could scarcely forbear clasping it to my heart, or pressing it to my lips. It was a strange indescribable rapture that I felt as I examined this new-found treasure again and again. A sort of unaccountable transport glowed in my heart, and made my veins thrill with glad ecstasy. And yet I knew not why I should be so delighted with the discovery of this key! I have said it was rich, and of a beautiful shape. It was so, for it was of gold, and its wards were formed of graceful lines

and curves, that delighted the eye by their variety and harmonious proportion. Still, singular to say, it was extremely simple withal, and I believe that it was this extreme simplicity, joined to its magic beauty, that filled me with such wild and almost absurd admiration. My next feeling was one of wonder to what or to where it belonged. Did it open some mysterious castle? Did it make fast some concealed treasure, of which I was to be the fortunate discoverer? Did it close in some crime from the eye of day? or did it withhold from the light some wondrous knowledge?

“I was recalled from my reverie about the key by perceiving that the shades of evening were gradually stealing over the landscape, and that I must speedily make up my mind as to what I had best do for a berth to sleep in. Not a trace of hut, cabin, or habitation of any kind was there to be seen, and the hills were too distant for me to hope to be able to reach them in time for me to find a cave to sleep in. At length I resolved to climb up again into my friendly tree which had already afforded me such excellent shelter; so after having sought about till I found some berries on a bush near at hand, I made a tolerably hearty supper on these, as I did not wish to tax the hospitality of my friends the bees too heavily, and then I went to bed, with the best cheer I might. I had no sooner fallen asleep, however, than my dreams took the colour of the events which had so lately occupied my waking thoughts. I fancied that I was still in the lonely spot where I

had found the golden key, and that I sat on a grassy mound intently gazing upon it, while I revolved all the questions concerning its shape and purpose which had recently perplexed me.

“As I gazed, methought I was sensible of an increased brilliancy in the rainbow-tinted atmosphere that still suffused every surrounding object, and on raising my head to discover the cause, my eyes encountered those of a being who was gazing on me with an aspect of benign encouragement.

“Its figure was that of a young seraph, and was robed in a garment of shining white. Two curious wings, of vivid and varied hue, sprung from his shoulders; his limbs were of the most graceful mould, and bespoke strength and swiftness, combined with delicacy; while the exquisite features that composed his countenance shone with a radiant expression of goodness, intelligence, and happiness, that were more than mortal. As I looked up to this lustrous stranger with respectful admiration and attention, his lips parted with a serene smile, and he spoke with a voice of silver sweetness.

“‘Happy human being!’ said the vision; ‘you hold in your hand the means of a beatitude seldom attained in perfection by your race. It is within the reach of almost all; and yet how few are the happy ones who resolutely stretch forth their hand to seize the blessings contained in its dominion. Even you, mortal, are ignorant of its value; you know not how to use the means actually within your power—in your very grasp!’

“The figure glanced at the key I held in my hand, and continued:—‘That key, rightly used, conveys to the owner unbounded wealth, exhaustless treasures, in realms apart from the common haunts of men. But beware of seeking these riches sordidly, or with an unhallowed motive; the key will never turn, the lock will never yield. That key, in the hands of one with a pure heart and clear brain, renders him more potent than a monarch, more mighty than an emperor, and possessing more rule over his fellow-men than a conqueror at the head of a vast army. That key, truly applied, lets in the free light of heaven to the deepest and darkest dungeon that ever disgraced the earth, and leads forth the closest prisoner that ever pined for life and liberty. Bright, and with honest mastery, that key discloses exalted and infinite blessings;—rusty, consigned to neglect, or, worse than all, misused, it becomes a blight and a withering curse to its possessor.’

“I shuddered; the voice ceased; I recovered, and looked up; but, alas! the vision had departed, and left me uninstructed as to the way in which I was to set about gaining the requisite knowledge as owner of the key. The pang of disappointment I endured gave me such pain, that I awoke with a start. I found the dawn just breaking, and the chill of the morning air so benumbed my limbs, that I was glad to descend from my tree couch, and try what exercise would do towards restoring warmth and vigour to them. I walked sharply forward then, in the direction of the hills, and soon I found the motion bring

not only elasticity to my frame, but comfort and animation to my spirits, which had been somewhat depressed by the baffling dream; so that by the time the sun rose in all his majesty, I was in a fit state of energetic resolve and buoyant hope, to pay him my morning salutation, and to offer up my devotions to the bountiful Creator of all good, with a grateful and trusting spirit. By the time I reached the hills, my appetite, sharpened by early exercise, warned me that I was quite ready for breakfast, and bade me look keenly in search of something that might supply me with one. From a slight rift in a gentle eminence a little further on, all overhung with flowering shrubs and drooping brambles, and floating garlands of a kind of wild honeysuckle, I saw a little rill trickling forth; and I was just admiring this natural fountain, and congratulating myself on this pleasant substitute for tea or coffee after a long morning's walk, when, peering about in its neighbourhood for a seat where I might rest myself while I enjoyed a cool draught of the refreshing beverage, I suddenly found I had scared a flock of birds, something like our plovers. They rose in a body into the air at my abrupt appearance, though they evidently did not fear me much, as they settled again very shortly, and not far off.

“On approaching the spot whence they had risen, and which was a sort of sheltered grassy nook not far from the fountain, I found to my great joy a number of eggs, scattered about in clusters here and there which made me guess that these creatures used this

pleasant spot as a sort of general nest for their community. You may imagine I did not scruple to help myself to some of their treasure, and a very excellent meal of eggs and spring-water did I make. After breakfast I resumed my journey, and about ten o'clock, as I guessed by the sun, I had surmounted the chain of hills. On descending the other side, I found myself in a rocky valley, wild and desolate beyond description. There was a sort of dull leaden atmosphere, too, that hung over this dreary spot, which rendered its sterile features still more gloomy and repulsive, though they were sufficiently austere in themselves. Steep rocks of one uniform dull grey colour frowned in rude grandeur on every side, and seemed inaccessible to all human footsteps. Stern, sullen, arid, and blank, the barren monotony of the scene struck a chill to the heart, and cast an oppressive weight on the spirits. I traversed the valley with listless, aimless steps, and with a jaded supineness of feeling that was more insupportably wearisome than the hardest labour, or the most irksome tasks could have been. I dragged my limbs along, and yet I seemed to have no object in proceeding. How was this inert apathy changed, however, into joyful energy and thrilling expectation when I arrived on the other side of the dreary valley, and beheld in the granite wall of rock which formed its opposite boundary, a key-hole—a distinct, well-defined key-hole,—and one that instantly struck me as being of similar dimensions with my new-found treasure of the previous evening—the wondrous

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golden key! I drew it forth from my bosom, where I had carefully secured it, and was about to apply it eagerly to the lock, when the words of the vision flashed upon my memory, and I hesitated with a timid doubt of my own unworthiness and inefficiency for the task before me. The key was to be 'rightly used,' 'truly applied;' did these require any previous consideration or study? It was to be directed by the hands of one who had a 'pure heart and a clear brain;' did I possess either? I hardly knew, young and inexperienced as I was, how to resolve these questions. But I thought, 'I do know that I shall use it without one sordid or unhallowed motive; for I do not particularly covet riches or power, and it is solely with a hope of strange adventure and new incidents that I feel urged to try the power of the golden key. Besides, neglect and rusty disuse are equally to be avoided by its possessor; let me then endeavour to apply it honestly and trustfully.' Stepping lightly forward, then, and breathing a short but fervent prayer to heaven that my enterprise might prosper, with a throbbing but resolute heart I placed the key in the lock. I had no sooner done so, than a strain of solemn music pealed forth as of a rich and deep-toned organ in some cathedral aisle; a soft and gracious perfume pervaded the atmosphere, and the granite rocks parted before me, and disclosed a scene of sublime beauty. I beheld a wide expanse of ocean steeped in the most gorgeous sunshine; the waves heaved and fell in glowing undulations of light; the sky blazed in noon-day splen-

dour, and reflected lustrous brilliancy on the grey rocks that surrounded the valley, gilding even their dullness. I stepped forth to meet this burst of radiance, when the granite gates of the rocky valley closed immediately behind me, and I then perceived that I had inadvertently left the key in the lock on the other side. I felt little temptation, it is true, to return to the dreary monotony of the rocky valley; the rather, as I reflected that the key had already done its office in having introduced me to this new and glowing region, so inviting and so full of promise.

“I gazed with rapture on this grand expanse of ocean, and felt all my early love of the sea revive in full force, with an added sense of beauty that swelled my heart, and filled my eyes. Mingled awe and admiration possessed my soul as I contemplated this ever-heaving bosom of Mother Nature, which conveys her children to behold all those distant wonders that fill the imagination, and dilate the heart with burning desire to wander forth and come face to face with their marvellous reality. I felt even physical effects of this yearning of the spirit; my chest expanded, my breathing was deep yet hurried, my fingers were clutched in impatient convulsion, and my feet curled and writhed with the vehemence of my longing to set forth at once. As I stood thus pantingly, and strained forth my eyes, I distinguished, amid the dazzling undulations of the waves, a small object, which proved to be a boat; it was not moored, but balanced lightly to and fro, as if

beckoning me to put forth upon that glowing ocean. A few plunges enabled me to reach it, as it lay close in shore, and stepping in, I yielded myself up to the delight of finding myself launched upon the alluring waters, taking no thought of rudder, compass, or sails, but feeling a sort of lulling, though blind faith in the power of this slight vessel to convey me prosperously to some desirable haven.

“I had proceeded thus some hours, feeling neither hunger nor thirst, so absorbed was I with the delight of this new world of waters, when towards evening I became sensible that I was approaching land. I folded my arms, and drooping my head a little, I closed my eyes, and yielded to a sort of dreamy repose between sleeping and waking, partly the result of the strong emotions I had felt during the day. As I sat thus, I was roused from my soothing composure by a something that pressed softly and warmly across my feet. I know not why, but I did not uncloset my eyes immediately; when I was still more startled by feeling the warm soft object move, then followed a gentle cooing sound, and, on opening my eyes, I beheld, to my infinite astonishment, a little child crawling over my feet, and stretching forth its fat dimpled hand to my knee with a winning murmur of entreaty, as if it besought me to take it up and caress it. In the utmost amazement, I took it in my arms, and set it on my knee, and pressed its soft, blooming cheek to my bosom, while I kissed its fair, curly head, and uttered an incoherent exclamation of tenderness and surprise. The little creature only

fixed its large blue eyes upon mine for a moment, smiled, repeated his cooing murmur, and then replaced his head against my breast with affectionate pleasure, and the loving confidence of childhood.

“It seemed about a year or fifteen months old, and too young to walk; but how could it have come into my boat? Had it dropped from the clouds? Was it wafted through the air? Had it been borne hither floating on the waters? I kissed its bright hair, and folded its chubby limbs in my arms again and again, as if to convince myself of its reality, and actual presence, for I could hardly believe my senses, that a lovely living child was actually in the boat with me.

“It seemed to like its new friend and its snug berth, for it nestled close to me, and sung a little under-song to itself, as of cooing contentment. As we neared land, however, it raised its head and began to struggle slightly in my embrace, as if it wished to free itself from my encircling arms. I withdrew them; the infant slid down through my knees, and before I could distinguish how it was, or by what means he reached as far, I beheld him on the prow of the boat, half crawling, half clinging to the side. I uttered an exclamation of terror almost amounting to a scream; when, as I rose to spring forward and rescue him from his dangerous situation, I beheld the little urchin rise, tottering, to an upright position, and while he uttered a musical crowing laugh as he nodded to me in baby triumph, he stood perched and balancing for a moment, and

then expanding a pair of curiously folded wings, as he remained hovering for a few seconds more, he suddenly darted away over the sea, and flew swiftly towards the land. The secret was now at once explained—he had *flown* into my boat. Yet a more perfectly human creature than the little fellow seemed, could hardly be. His flesh was mottled, firm, and dimpling, and yielded to the pressure of my fingers with the true elasticity yet smooth surface which distinguishes the limbs of childhood.

“By this time I had arrived close to the shore, and as I prepared to land, I perceived a young woman standing near the water’s edge, holding a child in her arms, which I soon discovered to be no other than my winged visitant. I stepped out of the boat, and approached them, when I observed my little friend stretch forth his hands towards me, and in another moment, he sprung out of his mother’s arms, and flying towards me, fluttered against my breast, till I clasped him fondly to me. The woman uttered a cry of alarm, and springing after the child, exclaimed wildly, ‘Felix! Felix!’

“I was much surprised to hear her speak in English; but, anxious to relieve her alarm as speedily as possible, I said, cheerfully, ‘Never fear, dear madam, your boy is as safe with me as in your own arms; he and I have made acquaintance before.’

“Her surprise at hearing me speak thus, equalled my own; but I went on endeavouring to reassure her, in which task I found some difficulty, for I think I never, in the whole course of my life, met with a per-

son so little within the control of reason when under the influence of her fear or anxiety.

“When she had a little recovered from her terror, which I think was rather from beholding how contentedly her boy nestled still with me, than from any arguments of mine, she proposed our going to her habitation, that I might take some repose and refreshment, as well as relate to her by what strange accident I had found my way thither. This made me recollect the boat in which I had arrived, and I looked towards the sea, in the hope of seeing it still near the shore. In vain, however; without moorings, without fastening of any kind, it had drifted away with the ebbing-tide, and I descried it in the distance lightly dancing to and fro on the waves, as I had first beheld it in the morning; but now each moment receding still further amid the world of waters, until it was entirely lost to view.

“I turned with a half sigh to my guide, as she led me towards her habitation, which proved to be a kind of cavity, naturally formed in the rock—lofty, spacious, and commodious enough; but I soon ceased to feel any regret as I hugged the beautiful child in my arms, and thought of all the endearing ways of this new little friend of mine.

“After I had made a hearty repast of some fruit, milk, and a kind of cake or bread which my hostess set before me, I was preparing to comply with the request she had previously made, that I would tell her how I came to this place; when she interrupted me, by telling me that she would hear my story on the

morrow, when I should be better recovered from my fatigue; and that she would now shew me where I could rest for the night.

“‘The cave is so spacious,’ said she with a feeble smile, ‘that it would afford many spare bedrooms did we need them for numerous visitors; but as it is, you can take your choice of one of them, and I will arrange some skins in it as well as I can for your accommodation, hoping that you will enjoy a comfortable night’s rest.’

“Her manner was quiet, and marked by a sort of apathetic indifference that chilled me, and forbade the warm thanks that sprung to my lips, and with which I was about to reply; indeed, she looked like one so lost to outward objects, and to be so wholly possessed by some absorbing inward sorrow, that all unnecessary words seemed an impertinence, and merely an intrusion on her melancholy. For some time after she had left me to repose, I was unable to sleep, from pondering on her singular manner and evident misery, as well as indulging in many conjectures relative to her winged boy, and the strange histories which doubtless belonged to them both; but by degrees, her pale unhappy face blended its hues with the rosy ones of her little son’s countenance—the mother’s woe-stricken lines became confused with the chubby rounded cheeks of the infant—my thoughts faded into inaction, and I slept profoundly.

“When I awoke the next morning the sun’s rays were making their way through the crevices of the rock, and darting bright reproach into the part of the

cavern where I lay; for I had fully intended being up with the earliest dawn, in order to assist my hostess as much as possible by forwarding some of the household arrangements before she should herself get up. However, to the great relief of my conscience, I found that she was not yet stirring; for, like many people who give way to an overwhelming grief, she had acquired a habit of lying in bed—a very foolish habit, by-the-bye, my dear young friends; for there is an animating principle and a strengthening stimulus in the fresh morning air which early risers alone know how to value properly. Had this poor woman sought the healthful courage imparted by the custom of early rising, she would have perhaps been better able to meet and sustain her melancholy fate. But you will find, as I proceed to tell you all I afterwards learned of my unhappy hostess, that this was not the only point in which she discovered a want of wisdom and knowledge of what was best for her.

“To return to the first morning of my acquaintance with her. On issuing from the portion of the cavern where I had slept, I found to my joy, as I told you, that my hostess was not yet up. I passed through the principal space in the cave where I had supped on the previous evening, which might be called the dining-room; and after arranging matters here to the best of my power (for you must know that a sailor learns to turn his hand to anything, and can make a bed, or sew on a button, with any chambermaid or workwoman of them all), I went out into

a sort of enclosed space near the cave, which was surrounded by a neat paling, and where I observed a cow and two or three goats grazing, evidently ready to be milked; and having provided myself with a wooden vessel that lay near at hand, I prepared to perform this office as well as I could. Considering that I had never learned to milk a cow, for my father had been far too poor to keep one, I managed pretty well on the present occasion; and I had already made good progress in my work, having finished with the cow, and was beginning with one of the goats, when I heard a little merry laugh not far from me, and looking up in the direction whence the sound proceeded, I perceived the winged boy perched on the paling close by. When he saw by my nodding and smiling that I had discovered him, he flew towards me, and settled on my shoulder; and there he stood fluttering and hovering, half on tip-toe, half held up by his quivering spread wings, while he tried to steady himself by clasping his dimpled arms round my head. 'Steady, Felix! steady, boy, steady!' cried I, while he laughed and crowed with delight; and thus his mother found us when she came soon after to summon us to breakfast.

"She seemed reconciled now to the attachment which had evidently sprung up between her son and me, and bore to see him in my arms with a complacency very different from her wild alarm of the previous evening, so we returned to the cave in very sociable style; the child frolicking about us, first fluttering to his mother, and then back to me again

—for he could evidently fly much better than he could walk. But though this poor woman made me welcome in the cave, and in her negligent fashion allowed me to feel that my arrival at this place was nowise disagreeable to her, yet it was long before her melancholy reserve yielded to my efforts at consolation: while my cheerful endeavours to draw her into conversation, and a more comfortable train of thought than the one which habitually engrossed her, were for some time met by a chilling apathy that was inexpressibly discouraging. After the first morning, when she had heard my history of the account I gave of my adventure in reaching this shore, she had expressed no more curiosity, and appeared to take no further interest in my presence. She seemed to have made up her mind that I was a nowise dangerous associate for her child, and beyond this she appeared to have no thought about me, but remained absorbed in moody grief and wrapt in silence. The gaiety and cheerfulness natural to my age, of course rendered me a more acceptable companion to little Felix, than his poor young mother, with her pale face and moping ways, could be to him; and when she wandered away, as was her daily custom, to the sea-shore, where she would sit for hours gazing fixedly across the wide ocean, he would remain by my side and watch me while I worked, or gambol with me when I indulged him after the morning labour was done with a game of play. Happy days were those I spent with this fascinating little being! He was so beautiful, so graceful, so full of joy and innocent mirth, and

yet so gentle, and winningly affectionate! Dear charming Felix! How my heart doted on your bewitching loveliness! And how I longed to make it a means of wiling your poor mother from her useless, her pernicious indulgence in her hopeless grief. At length, with the courage inspired by this thought, I would follow her to the lonely seat among the rocks, where she was accustomed to remain buried in her melancholy musings; and, seeming merely to follow the lead of my young companion, I would induce him to frolic and play his pretty gambols where she might observe them, and become inspired by their cheering influence. For some time this went on, she scarcely appearing to notice us or our romping, till I almost despaired of ever winning her to a smile or a remark; when, one day we were returning to our noontide meal after a morning spent among the rocks, she gazing as usual drearily and silently over the sea, and Felix and I having fairly worn ourselves out with a violent romping-bout, accompanied by roars of laughter; he had now fallen fast asleep in my arms as I bore him home; and she suddenly spoke to me of her own accord.

“‘You are a kind youth, Kit,’ she said, ‘and have been most patient and good with me and my sorrows; bearing with my moody silence, forbearing to intrude upon my secrets, and yet gently and affectionately seeking to relieve me from the burthen of their solitary endurance. But it is too late! Had I met with you sooner,—could I have earlier learnt the lesson taught me by your wise cheerfulness, and

imitated the wholesome energy with which you meet your hardships by activity and courage, instead of yielding to despondence; had I not weakened my powers, and exhausted even my spring of hope by supine lamentation and unavailing regret, I might have profited by your friendly help, and have believed that a future was still in store for me. But it is too late!' she repeated with a deep sigh.

"Why too late?" exclaimed I eagerly. "With such a treasure in your possession as this dear child,—with such a motive to make life dear to you,—with darling little Felix to keep a brave heart for,—why despair? why talk of its being too late? Why should it be too late?"

"'I am dying,' said she, sadly, but quietly; 'I am dying, Kit, though your young, hopeful eyes cannot see it. I feel too surely that my unhappy lot, with my want of submission to the Almighty's decree, and my unmindfulness of the blessings he has vouchsafed to me to relieve the misery of my fate, has worn away my existence, and as certainly brought my life to a close, as if I had deliberately drunk poison.'

"I was inexpressibly shocked, and could not utter a word in reply as she paused.

"Presently she resumed, 'I should have no right to pain your young heart by this declaration, had I not a hope of interesting your sympathy, and inducing you to promise aid and protection to my poor Felix, to my poor motherless boy, as I feel convinced he will shortly be. Alas! in all probability, then entirely an orphan.'

“This last word seemed to excite her grief beyond the power of control, for she burst into a flood of tears, bitter, and frightfully vehement; but, after a few minutes, she made a strong and convulsive effort, and mastering her emotion with evident difficulty, she resumed:—‘It is your due, Kit, that you should learn all the particulars of my sad story; you who have been so true a friend to me, and will, I hope, continue your loving-kindness to my boy hereafter; you, who have so considerately respected my grief hitherto, and restrained all expression of curiosity, ought to have nothing withheld from you; therefore, by to-morrow, I will endeavour to gain composure and courage to relate to you my history, and by what accident I arrived here.’

“The next day, accordingly, when we were seated in the usual nook among the rocks, with Felix playing at our feet, busily engaged in pouring out and replacing the shining contents of my purse, with which employment I had purposely provided him, to occupy his attention during his mother’s relation, she began her story as follows:—but,” said Kit, suddenly breaking off, and interrupting himself; “I fear it is getting time for you two to be off home, so I’ll tell you what she told me, when you come here to-morrow evening.”

“Well, dear Kit, we’ll go then,” replied Fanny, leaving the old man’s side reluctantly. “Come along, Dick; though I do long to hear the poor lady’s story, and more about the little Felix, with his curious wings, yet we must do as Kit wishes, or,

perhaps, he'll play the tyrant, and refuse to tell us any more of his wonderful stories."

"But, Fanny, I must ask him one question before we go," said her brother; "I want to know, Kit, whether the golden key really did bring you riches, and wealth, and power, and all the grand things mentioned by the vision? Did you ever find them after opening the gates of the rocky valley, and sailing across that bright sea?"

"My dear lad," answered the old mariner thoughtfully, "I have often asked myself the same question. And in pondering over the matter, I have come to this conclusion; that the key admitted me through those ponderous barriers from the desolate sterile valley, and led me to the shore of that resplendent sea, which I have always since named the Ocean of Imagination,—for it conducted me to the life I had always sighed for from earliest childhood—a life of adventure, of romantic incident, and of ever-shifting scenes of beauty and entrancing strangeness, worth more to me than sumless heaps of treasure, or mines of costliest gems. I have fancied that a hearty enjoyment of life, a power of abstracting my mind from the disagreeables and hardships of travel, while I dwelt with rapture on the ideas it conveyed, and the keen sense of gratification with which I was able to extract enjoyment from all my adventures under circumstances which might have depressed and discouraged a less ardent imagination than mine, was in fact, the sumptuous gift bestowed upon me by the possession of the key, and I do not know but that I

have had reason to receive it with more gratitude than any other treasure whatsoever."

The old mariner, at the conclusion of this speech, bidding his young friends gravely and affectionately farewell, they sped away home.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION OF KIT'S YARN OF THE LONE MOTHER AND CHILD.—HER STORY.—KALLISAH.—FELIX.—NEW ASSOCIATES.

THE next evening when the two young Swallows were comfortably ensconced in the old mariner's cottage, Dick snugly crouching on one side of him, and Fanny hugging his other arm as usual, Kit thus resumed his yarn, where the lone mother was beginning to tell him her story.

"My first misfortunes began," she said, "with the loss of my poor mother, who was sickly and weak-spirited, and unable to contend with the grief of discovering that her husband was an habitual drunkard. He had contrived to deceive her with regard to this defect in his character until after their marriage, but when once he had gained his point in inducing her to become his wife, he had relapsed into his usual excesses, and brought her to an early grave with shame and regret before I had reached the age of six years. My second calamity was my father's marrying again, and giving me for a stepmother a hard cruel woman, who ill-used me, and made me little better than a servant to her own children, who were born in rapid succession after her union with

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my father. On this little family I had to wait from morning till night, endure all their caprices, and abide by their ill-temperers, their mother's exactions, and my father's injustice. I sunk into a mere abject drudge, and was so broken spirited, that when, at the age of eighteen, I found that I had engaged the attention and sympathy of a young midshipman who came to lodge at the house next door to that in which we lived, and that he often took occasion to talk to me and manifest an interest in my fate, I could only at first conclude that he was jeering at me, and mocking my suffering, by a pretended kindness and solicitude. Soon, however, he contrived to convince me that his sympathy was sincere, and that it had produced an ardent attachment for me, which no time could weaken or destroy.

“For one who had been from childhood the unceasing object of unkindness, neglect, and cruelty, to inspire such an affection was as the opening of new life—the disclosing of an earthly heaven. I yielded myself impetuously to this unexpected prospect of happiness; and finding my young lover impatient to make me his before his next voyage should take him away for an indefinite period, and, possibly, separate us for ever, I gave him my hand with a joy equal to his own at receiving it, and became the wife of Felix Morton. Mere boy and girl as we both were,—for my husband was scarcely twenty,—we stayed not to calculate the importance of the step we had taken, or the consequences in which it would involve us; we loved with all the warmth and reck-

less ardour of youth; we married, and were for a time as happy as mortals could desire, notwithstanding the threatening event which marked the very first day of our clandestine union. Too much in awe of my father and tyrannous step-mother to consult them in the affair, or to dream of asking their consent, we were married privately one morning, at a neighbouring church; and, returning to our respective homes, I learned by a singular chance in the course of the afternoon, that my Felix's ship had sailing-orders, and that she was to leave port that very evening. In the utmost agitation I flew through the garden to my lover's lodging to learn the truth, and found a small hurried note, bidding me a distracted adieu, and informing me of his having been compelled to obey his captain's orders, which were to execute some commission at a neighbouring town to our own, which was a sea-port; that he should thus be detained till a late hour in the evening,—indeed until only within a short hour of the one fixed for the ship's weighing anchor; and that he, therefore, conjured me to meet him, if possible, on the quay at that hour, that he might assure me of his constant affection, his unshaken faith, and his firm hope of meeting again at some happier time, when he might claim his beloved bride, and make her all his own. I was absolutely stunned with this dreadful news. The thought of parting with my new-made husband, whom I adored so passionately, was worse than death to me. This being, so frank and handsome, so generous, so brave yet so gentle,—

so animated yet so tender!—this being, who had first taught me the bliss of loving and being loved; who had raised and cherished the poor despised outcast, and inspired her with hope and self-respect; could it be that this being was to be torn from me just as I had learned to cling to him as my only earthly treasure? Buried in grief, I returned to my miserable home, and resumed my usual drudgery, devouring my sobs and tears of anguish, and concealing them as well as I could from observation.

“Towards evening, however, while I was endeavouring to devise some means of stealing down to the quay unperceived, my father called me to him; and, after making some harsh remark upon my red eyes and sulky ways, he bade me go and fetch him some liquor from a public-house, at a tolerable distance from where we lived, but which had a name for selling good spirits. I was preparing to obey him, when my stepmother employed me about something for one of the children, which detained me so long as to exasperate my father, who was subject, like most intemperate men, to fits of violent passion. He took me by the shoulder, and bestowing a hearty curse upon me, turned me out of doors, bidding me begone, like a good-for-nothing lazy slut as I was. My heart was almost broken with this cruelty of my father’s, coming in the midst of the grief from which I had been previously suffering, and I fled through the darkening streets with a sort of mad bewilderment. ‘Begone!’ I exclaimed wildly, repeating my father’s words; ‘ay, begone!—would I could be gone, indeed; and return

no more to this wretched home, where I have never known anything but injustice and ill-treatment! Oh that I could be gone—gone far away with my own Felix—my own dear husband!’ I paused for an instant, struck with the recollection that this must be about the very hour he had spoken of as being the one when he had hoped to meet me previous to his departure. I hurried on, forgetful of aught but Felix and my anxiety to see him; when just as I was emerging from a dark narrow street which led straight on to the quay, close to that part where I knew his vessel lay, and where the crew were busy finishing her last preparations for sea, he perceived me, and sprung forward to clasp me in his arms, drawing me as he did so within the shadow of the houses in the narrow street. Here he earnestly repeated the passionate protestations of regret, constancy, and hope, which his note had expressed; and learnt in return from me my deep affliction, as well as the recent cause I had to dread and detest my home more than ever.

“‘This shall not, must not be!’ exclaimed he with a vehement burst of emotion; ‘she must not return to be trampled on and destroyed by her hateful relations. Who will protect her when I am away? She will sink and die before I can return to rescue her. She must be saved, and at once!’

“He paused for a few seconds in deep thought; and then, with the energetic decision which marked his character, strode a few paces up the narrow street, drawing me still with him, towards a small shop dimly lighted by a flaring tallow-candle, and in which

they sold slop-clothes and other ship's stores. Entering the shop, and bidding me wait close outside, Felix purchased a suit of coarse dark-blue clothes, of a lad's size, and quickly returning to me, he whispered :— ' There is still time for my project, Nanny, if you will be a brave girl, and do as I would have you ; but keep a stout heart, and lose not a moment. '

" I answered as boldly as I could (for his presence somehow always inspired me with greater courage than I could muster at any other time) ; and he then proceeded hurriedly to explain that he wished me to equip myself in the sailor-boy's suit he had just bought, and that in this disguise he hoped I should escape observation sufficiently for him to smuggle me on board ship, and carry me off with him. The hope of release from my bondage, but, far more, the thought of escape with my beloved husband, excited me to act with promptitude and resolution ; and, accordingly, I no sooner comprehended his design, than I retired quickly into a deserted yard or wharf not far from where we stood, and there, behind some broken casks and ship lumber, I effected an expeditious change of clothes, and returned to my lover, who declared that I now looked as trim a little cabin-boy as he would wish to see. It was by this time necessary to hasten back to the quay, and join those going on board. We were just in time ; for a rough voice calling out, ' Now then, where are those lads ! here, you boys, look alive there, ' pushed me onwards with a group of young sailors who were loitering about, and among whom I had immediately mingled on

reaching the spot; and thus, amid the bustle and darkness, I found myself hurried on deck, whence Felix soon contrived to convey me below unnoticed by any one. It was of course not very long that I could remain undiscovered; and the presence of a cabin-boy more than their number was perceived by the crew before many days had elapsed. However, a feigned story of my being a runaway lad whom love of the sea had rendered a truant from the home of his parents, and had induced him thus to steal a berth, found credit with the captain, who was the uncle of my Felix; and probably not unwilling to connive at what he believed to be a scape-grace trick of his nephew's to introduce a favourite comrade or school-fellow on board his ship. The other officers and sailors were always jealous of Felix, and of the fancied favouritism with which his captain treated him on the score of relationship; but it was some time before I discovered this enmity on their part, or indeed awoke to the perception of anything but the single all-engrossing fact of my being with my husband, and the constant object of his love and fond attention. While I was wrapped in this dream of happiness, I was the most enviable—the most blest of mortals; but, alas! the time came when I could no longer remain blind to the murmurs of discontented feeling and vindictive jealousy that prevailed among my Felix's shipmates against him; and my awakening from my dream of bliss was as abrupt and alarming, as my previous repose had been balmy and secure. The first thing which startled me to a sense of his

danger, were the rough taunts of one of the subordinates of the crew, in reply to some order which Felix had given him as midshipman, and his superior officer. The man ended by muttering,—‘A pretty thing indeed, to be ordered about by a whipper-snapper of a boy, who is himself led in tow by a petticoat—or what ought by rights to be one, or to wear one, it’s all the same thing.’

“‘This hint at the discovery of my sex and disguise, made me tremble for my secret, but still more for the safety of my husband, which I felt to be perilled by what might be considered an act of insubordination if represented to the captain malignantly, as the man’s manner shewed it would be, if reported at all.

“‘The next day I had fatal confirmation of all my worst fears.

“‘While sitting below, each moment expecting Felix, for he took every opportunity of stealing down to see me when his duty would permit, I heard loud voices, and tokens of vehement contention on deck; and, creeping up the companion with knocking knees and a beating heart, I beheld a scene of confusion and altercation of which I only too surely and at once comprehended the meaning. The sailor who had so brutally taunted Felix on the previous day stood forward, loudly charging my husband with having secreted a woman on board, and taxing the captain with undue partiality and favoritism, in having connived at this breach of discipline on the part of his nephew. The man was warmly supported

in his accusations by the majority of the crew, and, as the captain scarcely repelled the charge, but proceeded to rebuke them severely for their own insubordination and mutinous behaviour, in thus daring to dispute his justice and arraign his conduct, the remainder of the men gradually fell from him and left him standing side by side with Felix alone together. I would have sprung forward to the spot where they stood, but I was so hemmed in and impeded by the crowd of men who now all occupied the side of the deck where I was, that I could not force my way through them.

“‘I should tell you that we had by this time been about six weeks or nearly two months at sea, and we were, at the period I speak of, in the offing of a large continent that cannot, I feel sure, be far from where we at present are, and which I have always believed to be just visible from the point of rock on which we are seated.’

“The lone mother paused, and pointed with her trembling hand to a dim speck just perceptible on the horizon, which she believed to be the land she spoke of. Her pale face and quivering lips shewed what a severe restraint she had been putting on her feelings, in order to narrate her sad tale collectedly and intelligibly; but the effort evidently cost her dear, and was made at the expense of strength and even vitality. She resumed, however:—

“‘The mutiny once begun, it increased rapidly, and all the long-concealed wrath and jealous doubts of the captain and his nephew, flamed forth in open

rebellion and avowed threats of vengeance—threats which were cruelly and speedily fulfilled, and carried into fatal execution. Finding all their menaces fail in subduing Captain Morton's inflexible notions of their respective duties, and that they could not make him yield one jot of his command, or promise one point of their manifold exactions, they suddenly agreed to end the dispute at once by placing him and his detested nephew in an open boat, cutting them adrift, and letting them find their way ashore as they best might, whilst they themselves would seize the ship and command her as they chose. On hearing this horrible sentence passed on my beloved husband, I staggered and reeled, as if struck by a heavy blow, and, as I gasped forth a shriek for mercy, Felix heard me, and our eyes met in one mute expression of anguish. It was our farewell look—as brief and intense as our joys had been ;—I never beheld my Felix more—I fainted.

“ ‘Would to Heaven I had never recovered from that death-like swoon, which, at least, spared me the sense of my misery,’ resumed the poor young creature after a pause of emotion such as seemed to deprive her of several hours,—nay, days, of life, and bring her nearer to the grave, as it were, before my eyes; ‘but when I returned to consciousness, I heard remarks from the mutinous ruffians around me which evinced plainly their regret that, instead of having been left behind, a mere useless burden on their hands to remind them of their guilt, I had not been turned adrift with my friends. How fervently I echoed

their regret in the depths of my heart, you may easily imagine, Kit; but I gave no token of hearing or seeing aught that passed; and at length, after various proposals for getting rid of so troublesome a witness of their misdeeds, some even going so far as to talk of knocking me on the head and pitching me overboard at once, I heard them determine upon putting me ashore on the first land we touched at. In the course of a few hours we neared this place. I felt them lift me up from the spot where I lay still apparently insensible; and, so utterly devoid was I of any thought or care of life, now I had lost all that rendered it of any value to me, that not one murmur of remonstrance did I utter, not one token of animation did I give to prevent their consigning me to this living death. I remained in a kind of dumb stupor, almost like a corpse in their arms, as they lowered me into a small boat in which I was rowed to land, where they placed me on a ledge of rock just beyond the sands; the boat then returning to the ship, which set sail again immediately. Not one sensation approaching to regret or added horror, at thus finding myself abandoned on a lone shore to perish, was I conscious of feeling. My one great grief had swallowed up and effaced all lesser and merely personal considerations. If I felt anything at all, it was a kind of vague wonder (which I remember crossed my mind in the strange way that the like trivial fancies will wander into one's brain at such moments) that these ruffians, who could cold-bloodedly doom me to such a fate, should yet lift me gently and with an

almost cautious softness, as they conveyed me from their vessel to the boat, and from the boat to the shore. But I think there is a sort of natural and innate tenderness that inspires every sailor, however rough, when he touches a woman.

“Heaven help me! I surely needed tenderness then, or never poor creature did in this world! I verily believe, I should have remained there without moving a limb or exerting a muscle towards my own preservation: when, as I lay, I suddenly became conscious of warm human breath close to my face, as if some one were leaning over to examine me nearly; and, as I listlessly opened my eyes (for nothing could rouse me to any feeling half so active as that of surprise), I beheld a black countenance close to mine, and peering into it anxiously and wonderingly.

“I closed my eyes again with a deep sigh; but soon felt that soothing and prodigal attentions were bestowed upon me, and the most earnest means taken to restore me to sensation and life. I felt my head gently raised, and placed caressingly on the bosom of a young girl who knelt beside me, murmuring words of affectionate soothing, which, though uttered in an unknown tongue, were in melodious tones. Her dark exterior concealed a heart glowing with kind feeling, and beneath her swart skin throbbed a bosom instinct with every generous impulse and feminine softness. Poor, meek, affectionate, unselfish Kallisah! Your gentle goodness and fostering care were but ill met and rewarded by my sullen grief and despondent apathy! When I look back

now, with the clearer vision of approaching death, to this period, I feel how blameably ungrateful and unmindful I was of the boon accorded to me by a merciful Creator, in the shape of this simple black girl, who would have been a comfort and support to any less wilfully repining spirit than mine. As it was, I rather yielded to, than accepted, her cherishing care; and permitted her attention and hospitality, instead of receiving them with the warmth of welcome and mutual affection. From that first evening, when, finding me alone and perishing, she restored me to consciousness, and led me to her cave, her conduct was marked by one unceasing course of lavish solicitude and prodigal attachment; met on my part—I now shame to feel and avow—by unthankful negligence, cold indifference, and mere selfish indulgence in my own sorrow.

“Day after day, week after week, month after month, did I yield to my absorbing misery; and, wandering away from her companionship, would sit brooding on this rocky point in solitary despair, gazing over the wide waters, fixing my eyes on the dim speck of the horizon which I believed to be the land that contained all I held dear—my beloved husband—from whom I had been so rudely torn, and so cruelly and eternally separated.

“Here would I sit for hours, absorbed in this one engrossing idea, delivering myself over to voluntary gloom and despair. Not once did I seek help and courage from the society of Kallisah, or by relieving her from part of her household duties, give wholesome

exertion to my frame, and, by using the body, endeavour to strengthen the mind. Equally unmindful of her feelings—wounded, as they must be by my cold, ungrateful neglect, as of my own moral health, I suffered myself to become a mere inert lump of uselessness, and the morbid victim of a diseased imagination. Even the conviction that I was shortly to become a mother had scarce power to raise me from my lethargy, or turn my thoughts to any subject apart from the one which filled my soul with a single yearning desire, and kept my straining eyes fixed on that dimly-seen, far-away, coveted shore. Some lines that I had once read in an old play-book, often wandered into my musing brain, and I would frequently mutter to myself,

‘ Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye ;
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying—he ’ll lade it dry to have his way.’

“‘But more than all—more than any hope of lading the sea dry, did I long for wings—for wings that I might skim the surface of the waters, and clear the space that held me from my Felix. Had I but wings! then would I soar over these relentless waves that rolled in ceaseless mockery of my anguish, raising eternal barriers between me and my beloved, and there would I find blessed peace in his arms. Had I but the power of flight! This was the longing desire that haunted me ever, and ever, and ever. What wonder, then, that when my baby was

born, he was born with wings? An angel-token sent from heaven, of warning for past misused faculties, of hopeful strength for the future.

“The advent of this cherub, truthfully read and rightly used, might have proved such a token to his poor mother, but, weakly passive by nature, and totally unskilled in mental discipline, she was regardless of the blessed influence, and remained blind to the alleviations with which heaven had balanced the one great sorrow in her lot. But keenly, though tardily awake as I am, to my mistaken existence—an existence consumed rather than spent—I must not dwell upon my sad story longer than necessary, Kit. You must have heard enough to learn a serious lesson of the folly and wickedness of allowing the mind to dwell unhealthfully upon one single thought, and of permitting the imagination to become diseased, and to destructively prey upon the body. I will merely tell you the events that succeeded the birth of my boy, during which period of pain and suffering I was waited upon and tended night and day by my gentle Kallisah, the tenderest and most solicitous of nurses. The whole time I was thus confined to the cave, she would quietly sit by the side of my bed, heaping up the skins with which it was spread, arranging them beneath my weary head, and comfortably disposing them around my exhausted frame; her skill in herbal preparations, and cooling drinks from fruit and berry were inexhaustible; and they were administered to my fevered lips with tones of healing comfort and soothing encouragement. Her affectionate nature

inspired her with devices that supplied the place of experience and skill ; and, as I gradually recovered, she would, with unwearied patience and inventive fancy, beguile the passing hours, in relating her history by means of emphatic tones and expressive gestures. I learned that she had been carried off by a slave-ship from her native country ; that, in the course of the voyage, a British vessel had attacked the one in which she was ; and that, with the cruelty frequently practised by slave-ships under pursuit, the captain had thrown her overboard, with many others of her wretched companions, into the sea, to lessen his freight to the prescribed number of victims, should he be overtaken and examined. Young and active, she had contrived to swim on shore : alone, however ; for whether taken up by the British ship, rescued by other means, or drowned in the sea, she could not tell, but not one of her unhappy companions had ever reached that land. Hardy, and from childhood accustomed to depend greatly on her own exertions for obtaining the means of existence, she readily found food in this fertile place, which abounded in fruit and vegetables of various kinds ; the cave afforded her commodious shelter, and the pursuits of her early savage home had taught her skill sufficient to add many advantages to these natural ones of mere food and shelter. She fashioned rude tools, which enabled her to put a paling round the enclosed space in which she kept her cows and goats ; a well-directed missile from her practised hand, and impelled by the strength of her youthful arm (the vigour of which no

enervating habits of civilized life had weakened and impaired), would frequently procure her the comfort and luxurious warmth of some wild animal's skin for her couch; and thus, when my destiny threw me on this shore, it came that she was so well provided with means for the hospitable welcome with which her kind nature prompted her to greet the poor wanderer. How was it that I could remain insensible to so much goodness as shone conspicuous in the gentle character of this child of nature, enshrined though it was in an ebon casket. But it was not the dark exterior, it was the mist of self-indulgence and uncontrolled passion that veiled my eyes, and shrouded the priceless gem from my view! But no more of this! Suffice it, that not even her gentle tendance in my time of trouble effected the cure of my mental blindness. It was decreed that by her loss alone could I be brought to a sense of the invaluable treasure I possessed in her, with the consequent perception of my own previous ingratitude, and the perverse aid which it had afforded Fate in my martyrdom.

“ One evening, not very long before your arrival here, Kit, when Felix was little more than a twelve-month old, I returned to the cave somewhat surprised that I had not been fetched home by the faithful Kallisah, who used to bring Felix to my rocky seat, and then return with us to the afternoon meal, which her own activity and skill had meanwhile prepared. I found my boy alone, restless, and almost fretful at the absence of his affectionate nurse and playfellow, who was nowhere to be seen. I com-

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forted the child, and taking him in my arms, we sought through all the recesses of the cave, through all the neighbouring nooks of the rock, in the paddock, every where around, but in vain—no Kallisah! Nor did she come that evening, or that night, through the dark hours of which, I kept restless vigil, listening vainly for her approaching steps, and striving to still the moaning and plaintive wail of my little Felix, who was uneasy at missing his kind and loving friend.

“Next morning, as soon as the sun had risen, taking my child in my arms (for he had now fallen into a heavy slumber, in which I dared not leave him, lest he should wake in my absence), I set forth in quest of my faithful companion, dreading some fatal accident had befallen her, as nothing else, I felt, would have prevented her returning to us before. My fears were too speedily verified. I had not proceeded many hundred paces into the little wood which skirts the grassy plains adjoining the cave, before I beheld my poor Kallisah stretched beneath the trees, a disfigured lifeless corse! Her dark skin prevented the appearance of any discolouring marks of the poison, but the swollen flesh, the starting eye balls, the distorted mouth, told but too plainly the secret of her death, and gave distinct evidence of her having been attacked by a serpent, and mortally wounded by its deadly fang. The thought of sparing my child from the horror of this ghastly spectacle, gave me strength to dig a hasty shallow grave in the soil, which was fortunately of a light and crumbling

nature; and with the help of boughs and leaves I succeeded in concealing the body of my hapless friend, and affording it the respect of a slight though bowery tomb; so that by the time Felix awoke, I had not only conveyed him from the spot, but had saved him from any risk of encountering so sad an object, in case his wings should by chance convey him to this neighbourhood. For, I should tell you, that his power of flight had preceded the ability to run alone, which generally begins to manifest itself, I believe, in children of about his age; and I often dreaded that this gift of winged strength in my boy might prove a source of anxiety to me, lest he should wander beyond my care, and inflict upon me the pang of losing a second Felix. However, he has never hitherto been able to effect any long flight, and I suppose it was in attempting one of greater distance than usual, in the direction of the sea, that caused him to seek rest and protection in your boat when you were approaching this shore. If a mother's judgment may be trusted on such a point, his wings are an additional charm to the many beauties that render him one of the loveliest and most interesting beings that ever breathed; and his affectionate loving nature shews itself in every infantine caress, and tender fondling, which he lavishes on his poor mother, as well as in the constancy with which he long pined after his faithful nurse,—the lost Kallisah! But it is this singular beauty of his, both in frame and nature, that makes me surpassingly anxious with respect to his future fate, and bids me secure your

friendship and protection for my orphan child.' The lone mother fixed her eyes wistfully on mine as she paused, and after I had in a few warm and fervent words assured her that my affection for the interesting little creature equalled, if possible, her own; and that nothing should henceforth part me from him while we both lived, she pressed my hand, and concluded her story in the following words: 'For my own part, I shared the regret of my little one for the loss of Kallisah, and mourned for her as perseveringly as he did; but her death first opened my eyes to the error of my past conduct, and awakened fears for the future. Should my child be deprived of my care as he had been of hers, by any adverse and unforeseen accident, what was to become of him? These thoughts, and many other associated reflections, now shared my lonely musings with the one theme which had formerly been their only object; for so inveterate a thing is a habit of reverie, and an indulgence in solitude, that I still wandered daily to my rocky seat, and pursued my usual contemplation of the wide and ever-restless sea. In this state of awakened conscience and motherly solicitude you found me, Kit, on your arrival; and I had not known you long, before your frank nature, your generous anxiety to win me from my sorrows, and above all, your evident attachment to my boy, led me to confide in you, and place all my hope for my boy's future welfare in your promise to adopt him. This hope is now realized by your assurances, in which I have full faith, and I have nothing now left to wish

for, but that I may be speedily called to meet my beloved husband in a happier and a better world.' The poor young mother rose as she finished speaking, for the sun was declining from the meridian, and Felix began to shew symptoms of hungry anxiety to return to the cave, that he might have his dinner, which had been delayed somewhat beyond his usual hour by the long narrative his mother had been giving me.

"She was greatly exhausted, and did not rally at all after our meal; so that when I took leave of her for the night, my fears were joined to her own convictions that she was not destined long to remain on this earth, and they kept me some time awake in sorrowing sympathy for her fate. Just as I was sinking into a feverish slumber, however, I thought I heard a stifled groan, followed by a feeble cry. I started up, and listened intently, as I hurried on some clothing, and prepared to hasten forth. As I listened, the cry was repeated, and I was not long in finding my way through the labyrinths of the cave towards the space occupied by my hostess as her own sleeping apartment. It was near the outer part of the cavern; and, through some fissures and chasms of the rock, the light of a southern moon streamed in rays of softened splendour, and revealed to me a scene which will never be effaced from my memory. The poor young mother lay lifeless on her couch, while her child had crawled along the bed towards her on his hands and knees, and was hanging over her in all the terror and grief of finding her insensible to his cries

and inarticulate entreaties. As he knelt there in the moonlight, looking at her motionless form, with his bent head, his drooping wings, and his little clasped hands extended towards the object of his infantine grief, they looked like a marble group of Death, mourned by Seraph Innocence. But I recovered from the spell by which I was held for a moment in contemplation of this touching picture, and soon rallied all my courage to soothe and comfort my baby friend, and it was not very long before I succeeded in wiling him from the side of his dead mother. But though he was gentle, and yielded quietly to all my efforts to beguile his grief, I could perceive that he had not the usual facile spirits of childhood; he dwelt with a pertinacity foreign to his age, on the idea of his departed mother, and the remembrance of her pale face haunted his young imagination. He drooped visibly; and even after she had been removed (for I had taken the opportunity one night when he was in a profound sleep to pay her the last sad duties of interment) he would seek her still with wistful eyes, and evidently missed her in her accustomed seat and wonted places. I had buried her in a grassy spot of earth close to the nook among the rocks where she had spent so many lonely hours, and had pleased myself with the thought that it was in all probability the very spot she would herself have best approved. Hither her little son would now frequently draw me, as if aware of the vicinity where his mother lay; but it was in all probability from a fond clinging to the place where he

had so frequently beheld her,—on the rocky seat commanding a view of the sea.

“He and I were sitting here one day, he fluttering to and fro, taking short circling flights over the sea, and skimming lightly just above the surface of the waves, while I flattered myself with the pleasing hope of his reviving health and spirits; when suddenly I heard voices at a little distance, and on listening attentively I heard them again, and became more and more convinced that they were human tones, and proceeded from that part of the sea-shore beyond the rocks which lay between it and the spot where I had landed. I placed Felix softly on the rocky seat, and, charging him to remain there till I came back, I hastened in the direction whence I had heard the voices. On arriving at the sea-shore, which formed a sort of miniature bay on the coast, I perceived a party of sailors who had just landed from a boat that lay to, and who were in evident quest of fresh water. I went towards them and offered my services to lead them to a spring which welled forth its delicious waters near to the cave which formed my habitation, as I could then provide them with rest, shelter, and food, with a draught of milk in addition to the water they sought, and which I knew would prove welcome refreshment to sea-faring men. They accepted my proposal with the same frankness with which it was made, and we returned in the direction I had come; this led across the rocks, as I have said, towards the spot where I myself had originally landed, and then to the cave itself close by. As we crossed

the rocky pass, I looked eagerly for Felix, and approached the seat where I had left him, a few paces in advance of the party. An instant after, I heard the report of a gun close behind me, and the words: 'By Jove! I saw a curious large bird fly up! I'll have him!' I sprung forward just in time to catch my little Felix in my arms as he sunk bleeding on the grassy mound which covered the remains of his poor mother. An affectionate look—a fluttering sigh—an expiring breath—and the gentle spirit of this angel child had fled to its kindred heaven, leaving his mortal frame in my embrace, inanimate and motionless—winged though it was!

“The whole seemed like a dream, so quickly had it all passed; but, alas! it was too fatally true, and I had indeed lost the lovely cherub who had twined itself so closely about my heart, and engaged so powerfully my best affections. But a few moments since, instinct with life and beauty, and now, dead! gone for ever!

“The sailors, awed by the accident which their heedless love of sport had occasioned, tendered me their rough but honest sympathy. Aided by them, we soon dug a grave for my poor lost Felix, and he was laid gently and reverently by the side of his dead mother in her grave; and, when they were covered with the grassy sod again, and hidden for ever from my view, my manhood failed me, and I wept bitter tears. I turned from the spot hallowed by so many mournful recollections; I was followed by the party of strangers; and the cares of hospi-

tality in which their presence necessarily involved me, did the usual part of unselfish exertion in forming a distraction for my thoughts, and aiding me to throw off my load of sorrow for a time. It was agreed among my guests, that they should spend a night on land with me ; and that on the next day we should all set sail, they taking me away in their company, as the thought of remaining in this place was now become insupportable, bereft as I was of all that endeared it to me. But when night came, and I was left alone, after having seen to the accommodation of all the party, the weight of my grief returned upon me again. I resolutely struggled against its oppressive ascendancy, and endeavoured to soothe myself with the reflection, that my little Felix was now at rest with his mother, who had loved him so well ; and that he was thus secured against the possible evils that might have attended his future fate. Singularly gifted as he was, might not his mother's fears have predicted truly that he was unfitted for an existence among the common run of human beings ? And, as it was more than probable that my thirst for adventure and active life would lead me to quit this solitary shore, should I not then have exposed him to the risk of mingling with an uncongenial race ? Somewhat consoled with these thoughts, I yielded to their composing influence, and slept.

“ A solemn apparition visited my slumbers, and inspired gracious comfort and elevating trust. Methought I beheld the moonlit group of mother and child as I had witnessed it in the cavern, on the

night of her death; but in my present dream her marble countenance beamed with a heavenly joy, and her young boy's face reflected the hopeful smile which irradiated hers. The scene faded, and was replaced by the outlines of the seat among the rocks, with the adjacent grassy mound that enclosed the remains of the lone mother and child; but as I gazed, and the traces of the well-known spot assumed distinctness, I beheld my sweet Felix in his mother's arms, their countenances still wreathed in smiles; while close beside them stood a youthful manly form which I knew, methought, at once, for that of Felix Morton, the long-mourned husband. The figure pointed proudly and fondly to his wife and child, and bent his eyes with benignant approval upon myself;—then, while the group turned eyes of loving gratitude towards me in tender farewell, they expanded their wings (with which the parents were now furnished in common with their seraph child,) and all three floated gently away through the air across the sea, and soaring, were soon lost to view amid the realms of light beyond the sky.

“Next morning, invigorated and consoled by this beatific vision, I arose with new strength and spirits for my re-entrance into the world, and its various duties and pursuits; and I prepared to set forth with my new associates in quest of fresh adventures. I had not joined them long, however, before I found they were not companions greatly to my taste. The crew were not exactly bad men, but they were selfish, addicted to low tastes, coarse almost to brutality, and

ignorant; which last word, perhaps, accounts for all their other characteristics. The captain was vain, capricious, weak to a fault, and a glutton; and the mate, who had headed the party that landed for fresh water on the shore where I had lately sojourned, was a hard wiry man, with thin white lips, and eyes that never looked any one directly in the face who chanced to address him suddenly.

“Let me own that I early felt a prejudice against this man, when I learned that he was the person who had fired the unlucky shot which destroyed my little Felix; but as I was conscious of my prejudice, I endeavoured not to let it sway me unfairly, knowing that the accident was unintentional; and that, therefore, neither this, nor the man’s mere looks, ought to warrant my entertaining an actual dislike towards him, until I found more substantial reasons in his conduct and actions.

“Instead of the books and intelligent conversation that formed the chief delights of my earliest friends, the shipmates of my first voyage, these present associates took pleasure in games of hazard, betting, &c., and their usual consequences followed—idle habits, frequent bickerings, coarse language, with mutual ill-will and mistrust of each othre. I would not condemn the use of harmless pastime for sailors, or banish amusement from among them, far from it; but let them, if they are wise, choose games of skill rather than of chance, and abjure all betting and laying of wagers, as breeders of discord and vice. I did all I could to dissuade my new acquaintances from con-

tinuing their practice, by endeavouring to introduce what I believed to be more attractive, as well as higher pursuits; but I soon discovered that it merely caused me to be looked upon as a troublesome meddler, and I accordingly contented myself with declining to join their favorite kind of sports, while I bore, as well as I could, their taunting hints of my being 'a conceited young prig, and a miserly youngster who wanted to save his money.' The faculty of bearing taunts good-humouredly, I have always found to be an excellent means of disarming malice, as well as a good sort of discipline for one's own temper. I would have all youths cultivate it in their outset of life, my dear Dick, and also the power of steadily, as well as good-humouredly, saying, 'No,' when asked to join in a pursuit you think dishonourable, or even frivolous. This is a power especially valuable on board a ship—which is a sort of world in miniature—where you have to create a character for yourself among your associates, and to teach them to esteem and respect as well as like you.

"To return to the crew, of which I at this time formed one:—They continued their mode of recreation, in which they were unchecked, as unobserved, by their captain, who found his own peculiar diversion in dressing himself, contemplating himself when dressed, and pampering his appetite to the utmost of the limited extent within his power—a sea-faring life not affording many opportunities of epicurean indulgence. All these employments, of course, occupied a great deal of his time, and prevented his having

much leisure for making himself acquainted with the pursuits of his men during their hours of relaxation, or for endeavouring profitably to direct their tastes and amusements.

"One day,—but I declare," said Kit, interrupting himself, "it is getting late, so we must break off our yarn for this evening. Good night, my dear young friends."

"I'm so sorry we must go," said Fanny. "I'm always fond of the words 'One day' in a story, and so impatient to listen on; because then I know there's something new going to happen."

"But you shall hear to-morrow what happened 'one day,' my lass," said the old mariner; "and so once again, Good night, and be off with you both, without another word!"

CHAPTER IV.

KIT'S THIRD YARN.—A PEEP INTO FABLE-LAND.—TITTA, THE ITALIAN CABIN-BOY ; STEVENS, THE MATE.—THE STORM.—THE DECISION OF THE DICE.—THE WRECK.

“ ‘ ONE day ! ’—Well, Kit,—‘ one day ! ’ exclaimed both the young Swallows, as they flew breathlessly into the old mariner's cottage early the following evening ; “ now tell us all about what took place ‘ one day,’ when you had joined your new ship's company.”

“ Why, ‘ one day,’ when I had been among them about a fortnight,” said Kit, “ and had had time to make up my mind a little as to what kind of chaps they were, as I told you last evening, we neared the coast of a country that seemed flourishing and beautiful ; and nothing would suit the captain but that one of the crew should go ashore and fetch him some game, and a pine-apple or two for his table. The men were most of them deeply engaged in a game of loo, I think they called it, and the others were as anxiously interested about the issue of some wager or other depending on a rat-hunt down in the hold of the vessel ; so that I found it would be acceptable to all parties if I offered to undertake the execution of this commission myself. This suited me exactly ;

for I felt no objection to a few hours absence from company so little congenial to me, as well as from my always being ready for any thing that promised change and novelty of adventure.

“On landing, I found I was in the vicinity of a village, that seemed to form one of the suburbs to a large town that lay about a mile and a half distant from the spot where I then was. Mindful of my commission, I looked everywhere about for pines, and pheasants, or partridges. None however, could I spy, though I looked diligently around. Neat cottage gardens, trim orchards, paddocks, and meadows were there on all sides, much as in England, reminding me of my own lovely native village; and then I recollected that a simple country hamlet would not be so likely to afford the delicacies I sought, as a large town; so, in the direction of the one I perceived in the distance, I forthwith determined to proceed. As I walked through the village, I noticed that I met not a single human being, and just as this circumstance struck me, happening to glance in at a cottage window, I beheld a comely tortoiseshell Cat busily engaged in frying some veal-cutlets that were hissing in a pan on the fire. As I watched her, I was amused to see the gravity and orderly manner in which she pursued her culinary avocations,—pressing the morsels now and then gently with a fork, and shifting them occasionally in the pan, that they might not burn. When they were nearly done to her satisfaction, she drew off the gloves she had worn to preserve her hands from the scorching effects

of the fire (which slight circumstance told me a once that she could be no mere common cook) and tying a neat white apron on, she proceeded to lay the cloth, and then drawing an arm-chair to that part of the dinner-table where she had placed the lemon and cayenne by the side of a plate and folded napkin, she quickly dished the cutlets, and, placing them on the table, ran towards a side door that led to a small parlour, and called to some one, saying:—'Dinner's quite ready, captain.' This was answered by a voice that said 'And I'm quite ready for dinner, I can assure you, Mrs. Capsicum, my darling;' and then, in walked an old Goat in faded regimentals, with his gouty legs swathed in flannels. He seemed to me to be a retired half-pay officer, who having been a rover in his youth, had settled down comfortably and soberly in his old age by marrying his housekeeper; who appeared indeed, to be quite a domestic animal, and to take excellent care of her lord and master. I left them cosily seated opposite each other, enjoying their meal, just as he had leaned across the table to chuck her under the chin, while he tossed off a glass of old madeira to her good health, with a playful wink.

"A little further on, I came to a humble porch with a low plank placed across the door—and peeping in, I beheld, ranged along the sanded floor, half a dozen dwarf benches, on which were perched rows of tender fledglings, and almost callow nestlings, whose infant studies were superintended by a grave old Owl, birch-rod in hand, who raised her spectacled eyes

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George Smechok

A. Snug Dinner.

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from the primer she held in the other, as she glanced towards me, to discover what intruder darkened the doors of her dame-school.

“In a meadow just on the outskirts of the village, I saw a large party of Grasshoppers enjoying a hearty game of Cricket; and among them I observed a Bat, who flitted about to and fro, doing great execution, and taking a remarkably active part in the game.

“As I hastened on, and entered the town, I overtook a demure-looking Hen, a schoolmistress, marshalling her pretty Chickens two by two, as they returned from a rural walk, and gathering them carefully under her protective wings at the least approach of danger. I saw her cast a very anxious and suspicious glance at a Wolf, on the opposite side of the way, walking arm-in-arm with an innocent little Lamb, whom he was luring to destruction, by leading her to a milliner's window, and pointing to a chip bonnet trimmed with orange blossoms and bridal veil, while he induced her to listen to his false vows.

“I found I was now in the principal street of the town, for there was plenty of bustle and some very showy shops; but not one poulterer's or fruiterer's could I discover, where I could make the purchases I came for. As I stood on the pavement, irresolute what I had best do, a state carriage rolled by, in which sat a sleek and portly Mare, whose gown and chain sufficiently bespoke the principal civil functionary, while, on the seat opposite sat a lively Turtle, entertaining his friend with rich aldermanic

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jokes and fat unctuous jests, on their way to the Hall of Justice.

“Then came by a handsome chariot, in which reclined a skilful Leech, in a suit of shining black, with a neatly powdered wig and a gold-headed cane, as he drove towards the mansion of a graceful Swan, celebrated for her beauty, her stately mien and aristocratic airs, who was one of his best lady-patients.

“Presently I was jostled as I stood on the pavement, by two friends who passed arm-in-arm, one of whom, a great Boar, held the other tightly by the button-hole, and insisted upon inflicting an evidently unwelcome long story upon his companion, a Hog, who remained as obstinate as a pig, and only replied by an occasional grunt of disgust, declaring it made him as sulky as a bear to be so badgered.

“As I had made up my mind by this time, that I would not return to the ship with my errand unaccomplished, I determined to wait where I was until the following morning in hopes of better success; and as it was now past five o'clock, I looked about in search of an hotel where I might dine and secure a bed for the night. I perceived a respectable-looking tavern at a little distance, bearing the sign of the ‘Hook;’ and entering, I found in the hall the landlord, a grinning Fox, who bowed to the ground as he assured me I could have a well-aired bed, and that a dinner should be prepared for me immediately. He told me he would send a chambermaid to shew me to my room; and, while I awaited her coming, I per-

ceived a Cormorant in a small private room on one side of the passage, gorging a profuse dinner, including 'every delicacy of the season,' all by himself; and on the opening of a door opposite I obtained a view of the commercial room, where two grinning Spoonbills and a Wagtail were enjoying a poor little lark between them, and cutting up a miserable snipe that seemed roasted to rags.

"The chambermaid, a brisk busy little Bee, now approached, and flitted up stairs before me; and I had not to wait very long for my dinner, which was served by a smart young Dog of a waiter, who fetched and carried the several dishes to and fro with great fidelity and assiduity. He appeared to be a cross between a terrier and a poodle, though the next morning when I gave him my parting fee, he manifested tokens of being rather of the spaniel breed; for he fawned upon me prodigiously and almost licked my hand. When the third course of the dinner was served, however, he proved himself an admirable pointer, as the game came upon table, and throughout the meal was a faithful and attentive guide to the various tit-bits, when I was blind to my own gastronomic interests by selecting less excellent morsels than his practised scent enabled him to discover for me. He shewed great sagacity upon other points too; for, during dessert, meditating how I should pass the evening, I enquired of him what amusements there were in the town, and what theatres were open, when he replied, that, if he were me he should endeavour to obtain a stall at the opera, as there was

an excellent company here now. He was very eloquent upon this subject, and, indeed, appeared to be quite a musical connoisseur, and well versed in all the opera cabals and theatrical tittle-tattle, for he proceeded to say: 'O yes, sir, you must go this evening. The celebrated prima donna, the Nightingale, appears to-night in her favourite character of Norma. There is also an excellent tenor—a fine game cock—who is known under the *sobriquet* of 'Chanticleer.' He certainly is first-rate; but he has the defect of being a dreadful intriguer, getting up all sorts of shameful cabals in the theatre; trying to make the public believe that the Nightingale is as hoarse as a raven, by getting his friend the Puffin, who is the editor of our leading journal, to write all sorts of fibs about her; and he has even been known to send a flock of Geese into the pit on the nights of her new characters. The fact is, Chanticleer is never satisfied unless he has all his own way in the theatre, and is made perfect cock of the walk. The right of crowing over the rest to this extent, is disputed with him by the leader of the band, a pert Sparrow, who is never satisfied unless he is playing first fiddle wherever he is. It is rumoured,' pursued my voluble informant, 'that the great Star-fish is expected down here shortly, to play a round of all his grandest tragic characters; but as they propose giving him the off-nights with the Nightingale (who, in my opinion is a perfect duck), it is expected that he will decline the offered engagement. There was a foolish Donkey who attempted to draw in comedy, about a month since, but he only

proved himself an ass, and not worth his salary of thistles.' The impudent Dog, my waiter, rattled off all this theatrical scandal and chit-chat with a glib ease that took away my breath; but he was presently called away by the chambermaid, who rated him for a lazy hound, an idle cur, a contemptible mongrel, and I know not what offensive and discourteous names besides. Not feeling much inclination to go and shut myself up in a hot theatre, for it was a lovely evening still, I strolled out for another lounge through the streets, feeling sure of meeting with plenty to amuse me till bed-time.

"The first thing I saw were three or four old Cats, with baskets and bags hanging on their arms full of worsted work, tatting and notting, netting and knitting needles; they were evidently going out to a tea-party, a dish of scandal, and a hand at cards. In their company there was a younger one, a playful little Puss, who frisked hither and thither, and seemed immensely to disconcert her aunts, the old tabbies, by her kittenish tricks. Later, I noticed a grave black Tom, their footman, proceeding with a lantern, umbrella, several pairs of pattens and clogs, and a heap of calashes and cloaks for his mistresses, to fetch them home after their card-party.

"My attention was attracted to the cab of an old Lion, who was lolling back, driving easily and complacently, with his eye-glass stuck in one eye; on the seat beside him, I perceived a roll of paper, so that I immediately guessed he was going out to read a new manuscript play to a circle of admiring friends.

At the back of the cab, swung a spruce young Tiger in white knee-cords and top-boots.

“I sauntered on, past a cigar shop, where I beheld three or four foolish young Puppies, among whom I distinguished my impudent Dog of a waiter, smartly dressed, and smoking with the rest; all evidently flattering themselves that they looked the height of fashion, and the supreme of gentlemanly elegance. I also passed a large well-lighted gaming-house, up the steps of which were flocking a crowd of Gulls, Rooks, Pigeons, and Geese, in company with several Ponies. This was not the only place in the town where I met with Gulls; on the contrary, they seemed to abound in most of the public thoroughfares; I noticed a group of them in red coats, loitering near a barrack, or guard-house, while a few more in the guise of country clowns, stood gaping and staring at a Kite, who wore the cap and many-coloured floating ribands of a recruiting-officer. Others too, I observed peering earnestly in at a lottery-office window, where the prizes were displayed in large figures; and still larger numbers were lingering in the doorway of a railway share office, where they were joined by a herd of Stags. Out of one of the inns of court, I saw a Shark issue forth dressed like a lawyer, and followed by a clerkly Pike, who endeavoured to satisfy the numerous complaints of a shoal of client Gudgeons, who glided swiftly in their wake, vainly endeavouring to snatch a few crumbs of comfort about some pending suit.

“There was a mischievous Monkey goading and

worrying a slow Tortoise and an obstinate Mule that he had harnessed together, in order that he might grin and chatter at this ill-assorted pair he was trying to drive; but not one creature of my own race did I perceive throughout my walk that evening. However, although I met no human inhabitant in this country, yet I saw traces which indicated that they were not unknown here; for, in one of the public squares of the town, I saw some monuments which appeared to be raised in honour of individuals of the species, who seemed to be renowned in this land. They were marble statues placed on pedestals which severally bore the names of Phædrus, La Fontaine, Gellert, Lessing, and Gay; and it could not be for the beauty of their form that these statues were erected, for, among them, I noticed one of a little, crooked, hump-backed fellow, whose pedestal displayed the word *Æsop*.

“The next morning I rose betimes, determined to pursue my search for the game and pine desired by my captain, still more diligently than I had done on the previous evening; and, despairing of meeting with what I wanted in the town, as it contained neither of the shops that sold the articles I wanted, I sallied forth into the country again, only stopping for five minutes to look at a gay wedding-party that came trooping out of a church door as I passed. A pair of Turtles came first (the bride all of a flutter), and were followed by a circle of attendant Ring-doves, their relations; then the happy couple, mated for life, hopped into a travelling carriage with four

horses, and set off on their wedding tour, that they might enjoy a short flight abroad before they settled down in their new cage, and prepared to build a nest for any young ones with whom they might hereafter be blest.

“I walked many miles before I discovered what I wanted. At last, about midday, to my great joy I approached a large preserve of game belonging to a fine estate; and here I doubted not I should succeed, as I beheld some glorious pheasants, hanging their sleek tails from the branches, and flitting about in great numbers among the trees. I was just preparing to secure a brace, when I recollected that I had no right to help myself to these birds without asking leave of their owner, for, though they were wild creatures originally, they were evidently not so here, but fed and preserved carefully. I walked on towards the great house, which I observed at a little distance, in the hope of meeting some one who could grant me the permission I hoped to gain; when, on peeping over a park paling, I beheld a gentlemanly Bull of prepossessing appearance, sauntering along beneath the shady trees at an easy pace, with his hands carelessly folded together behind his back beneath his coat tails. He was talking with two friends of his, neighbours; the one, an Otter, a keen sportsman, and the other, a Beaver, the owner of a fine estate containing both land and water. I found out these circumstances by their conversation, as well as that the gentlemanly Bull was a large landed proprietor, and, indeed, master of the house, the park,

the preserves, and the whole domain around us. He and his friends were deep in talk about the country, the government, the rights of landlords, the game-laws, &c., and I heard the gentlemanly Bull say—'I never have stood for the county, and I never wish to be a member of parliament—I leave that for Rats and Cameleons; but I do say this—I will have my game respected, and I never will forgive a poacher.'

" 'Why, now, you know, Squire Bull,' replied the Otter, 'that your law is always worse than your gore; and as to 'never forgiving a poacher,' didn't you let that fellow off the other day that was found sneaking in your preserves, only because he told some whining excuse about his wife and family starving, which made you order him some good broth for them, and some bread and cheese for himself, telling him with a pretendedly gruff bellow, that they were far fitter food for such as he and his, than hares and pheasants?'

" 'And when that farmer was brought up before your brother magistrate,' added the beaver, 'for carrying a gun in the shooting season, and the chap talked some shuffling palaver about its being very hard to have his grain devoured, and his young crops destroyed, didn't you burst out into a loud roar that startled the court, and declare that the man was in the right?'

" 'The gentlemanly Bull looked down and blushed deeply at these retorts from his friends, whose charges he could not deny, and, with a bashful admission of his weakness, owned that he did not mind giving his game, but that he hated to have it taken.

“ On hearing this, I took courage, and stepping lightly over the paling, I presented myself before the three country gentlemen; and making a low obeisance to Squire Bull, I presented my captain's compliments, and told him what I sought in his name.

“ The gentlemanly animal replied with a benevolent courtesy of manner that did not belie his agreeable aspect and bland expression of countenance; for, desiring I would offer his compliments in return to my captain, he called to a Hind who stood at a little distance in a countryman's frock, and bid him go with me up to the great house, and see that his orders were executed with regard to my having what game I chose, with a couple of the finest fruit his pinery could afford; ending all with requesting me to be sure and drink a large mug of home-brewed ale in his kitchen before I left the premises. Having enjoyed his good cheer with extra relish for the hearty manner in which it was bestowed; and having drunk the gentlemanly Bull's health, with sincere wishes for his continued prosperity (of which he made such excellent use), and long life to him, I quitted the estate, and made the best of my way to the sea-shore, and on board ship, delighted with my trip and pleasant peep into what I could conclude to be no other than the far-famed Fable-Land. Contrary to my expectation, I escaped all reproach from the captain on the score of my delay and night's absence. He was too well satisfied with my success in procuring him the desired delicacies, to grudge the time spent in obtaining them. The

ship proceeded on her voyage, and the only circumstance that relieved the disagreeable monotony of my existence among people so repugnant to me as her crew, was a sort of attachment that had sprung up between myself and a poor Italian lad called Titta, who had been picked up as an extra cabin-boy at Genoa, some weeks since, when the ship was short of hands.

“It was from a feeling of sympathy for his forlorn condition, that first awakened this attachment on my part ; for, from his speaking a different language from themselves, the men, who were too brutal to make any effort to understand or communicate with one so insignificant in their eyes, either jeered at his ‘foreign lingo,’ or neglected and despised him altogether. My sympathy was afterwards heightened by indignation, when I found that Titta (which is the abbreviation for Battista, one of the commonest of Italian Christian-names) was the constant object of Stevens’s injustice and cruel tyranny. This Stevens (the mate, whom I before mentioned as having excited an early prejudice in my feelings towards him, by his ill-looking countenance, and by his having occasioned the death of my little Felix) seemed to take a malicious pleasure in heaping insult and contumely of all kinds upon young Titta ; besides savagely setting him tasks beyond his strength, subjecting him to needless hardships, and exposing him to continued damp and unduly protracted watches.

“To all these injuries from his tyrant, would Titta most frequently submit with patient resignation, and

a spirit of resolute endurance that might have touched a less vindictive villain than Stevens. At other times he would suffer with an air of dogged sullenness and dull obedience to the mate's commands, as those of his superior officer, and as such to be implicitly observed, however unjust or irksome; but there were moments when this usual bearing of poor Titta's was exchanged for one of haughty reprisal, and then the Italian lad's dark gleaming eyes would flash with proud disdain, reproach, and even defiance.

"Such instances, however, were rare, and evidently kept so by the ceaseless care and constant exertion of poor Titta himself, who maintained a strong guard upon his temper. He would bite his lips till the blood sprung, to repress the escape of a bitter expression. I have seen him close his eyes to veil their bright flashes, and imprison the indignant tears; while his pale, sallow cheek would assume an almost livid tint with the effort to check the sobs that swelled his heart to bursting.

"One night I had an early watch; after which, creeping below with the usual eagerness of a sailor for sleep, secure of being 'as fast as a church' within two seconds of his head touching his pillow after turning into his hammock, I stumbled over a cabin-boy who lay stretched across some planks below decks, and which only just prevented his lying in a pool of water that saturated the place just there. Perceiving it was Titta, I asked him how he came to sleep in such a damp unwholesome spot; when, telling me it was appointed by Stevens as his usual berth, he thanked

me, but said he did not much care about it, and only wished that was the worst he had to bear.

“This drew more expressions of sympathy from me, with questions as to what could be the cause of so much ill-will and malice on the part of Stevens, and if Titta himself could assign any grounds for the determined enmity he had evidently excited.

“‘But too well,’ replied the cabin-boy, in a hoarse whisper. ‘I have observed the kind feeling you have for me and my sufferings, Kit, and have frequently desired an opportunity of thanking you for it, and of giving you my confidence in return. No occasion has hitherto offered for speaking to you unheard, and I do not choose any one but my friend to be acquainted with my sufferings, and to give me their pity,’ continued the Italian in a proud tone; ‘I cannot stoop to receive commiseration from such men as the rest of our crew—but from a kind heart like yours, Kit, it will be a comfort and a joy to me; so, if you do not mind the damp, and the darkness, and the rats—I don’t, they are my bed-fellows too often—you can creep down here beside me, where we shall be sure not to be overheard.’ He then proceeded to tell me his simple history: how he had lived happily all his days with his mother and his pretty sister Peppina, in a little hut among the hills, not far from Genoa; that they had never known any trouble but poverty, and had never felt that, as long as they could get polenta or risotto enough to eat, until Peppina had reached sixteen years of age, when a young goatherd in the neighbourhood fell in love with her and she

with him, and that then they all for the first time regretted they were so poor as to prevent any hopes of marriage for the young couple. While things were in this state, and Titta was earnestly desiring to hit upon some method of making a fortune, that he might give it all to his dear Peppina and her lover, this ship had arrived in the port of Genoa; and the captain offering the situation of cabin-boy to Titta, he had eagerly closed with the proposal, as the desired means of obtaining money for his darling sister. Meanwhile this sister had been seen by Stevens, and her beauty had made so strong an impression upon him, that he had left no course untried to prevail upon her to give up the young goatherd, and accept himself. 'The evening before we set sail,' proceeded Titta, and I could hear the gasping agitation of his voice through its whispered tones, as he clutched my hand in his feverish grasp, 'that evening I overheard the villain endeavouring to persuade my Peppina to break her faith with her young lover, Gianni, to leave our fond mother and our humble cottage, and to go far away over the sea with him, where he would make her a princess of some beautiful island, and deck her in silks and satins, with bright jewels and a golden crown. Peppina knew better than to trust to his white face and black heart; and she told him firmly that she would not give up those she loved, to be made queen of the world. This so exasperated him, that, muttering something about knowing what was for her good better than she did, and carrying her off whether she would or no, the

ruffian was just about to throw his arms about her, and lift her from the spot by force, when I stepped forward, and bid him release my sister at his peril, as I had a stiletto, and knew how to use it. He flung her from him with a sneer, muttered a deep curse, and, turning on his heel, left us abruptly.

“Eager to carry out my project of earning money, and thinking I was secure of the captain's protection from any ill-usage on the part of this man, should he hereafter resent the course I had taken in this scene, I hesitated not to fulfil my engagement, by sailing in the ship, as cabin-boy, on the following day. But, alas! I knew not how little reliance is to be placed on a weak master, too supinely devoted to his own luxuries to care whether justice is dealt among his subordinates; or how ingenious in torture a villain can be, who has to resent a by-gone injury inflicted on his victim by himself. By insinuation and example, he contrived to inspire his shipmates with contempt and dislike of me, and, by careful management, he conveyed enough of distrust and suspicion into the mind of his captain on my account, to cause him to issue an order that I should be closely searched and disarmed of my stiletto. After this, Stevens pursued his malignant hatred towards me with impunity; and I, feeling myself in his power and totally defenceless, ceased to contend with my fate, and endeavoured to submit without murmur to what I could not resist. I am too proud to bewail what I cannot repel; besides, I feel that when I look at him indignantly, I recall to him the recollection of my sister, and I would

not have even her image come near him, to be sullied and polluted by his contemplation.'

"I could hear that my companion ground his teeth fiercely, as he gave utterance to the proud writhings of his wounded heart; but he added more softly—'I have hoarded up all my scanty earnings, Kit, in the hope of one day returning with them to the hut among the hills; but I have sometimes of late thought that I am never destined to see my loved home more—I have a presentiment that I shall never live to return, and I want you to promise that the task of taking this hard-earned money to the mother and sister—to secure whose happiness and prosperity I would encounter even worse suffering than mine has been—shall be yours—your task, for the sake of your poor friend Titta. You will not refuse me, Kit? You will grant my request—will you not, Kit? The poor lad uttered all this in his broken English (which I have repeated in distinct words that you might the better comprehend, my dear young friends), but with an earnestness of tone and a vehemence of gesture which won my assurances of interest and consent. At the same time, I endeavoured to dissuade him from entertaining any superstitious doubt of his surviving to execute his own wishes with regard to the money, but told him I hoped to come to see him in Italy some day when he was cosily settled at home with his mother and sister in the hut among the hills. He only shook his head with a mournful smile, while he persisted in shewing me the small sum which he had secured in the corner of his neck-

handkerchief, and of which he made me again promise to take charge, and convey as he desired, in case I should survive him.

“After I had given him my solemn promise that nothing should prevent my fulfilling his wishes if I had life, we parted for the night; he, with an appearance of greater calm and satisfaction than I ever witnessed in him before, and I, filled with compassion and sympathy for this hapless youth. These feelings caused me to encounter Stevens the next morning with increased disgust and aversion; but soon, all other thoughts gave way to anxiety about the threatened change of weather; for, towards the afternoon, there was every appearance of a coming storm, and all hands were now aloft to prepare everything closereefed and trim against the expected contest with the elements. The sun sunk in sullen majesty, surrounded by angry louring copper-coloured heaps and heavy masses of purple vapour, interlaced with green streaks; whilst across the heavens swept tracks of rose-coloured clouds, sinister in their very beauty of tint, and foretelling violent wind. Night closed in with an awful calm, and a pause terrific in its very stillness; and then suddenly the tempest burst forth in all its fury, and raged incessantly for several hours. The billows rose mountain high on every side of us, the wind howled, and tore among the shrouds and rigging with boisterous force, the lightning darted its impetuous forked flames, the thunder rolled its solemn deep-toned wrath, and, in the midst, struggled our labouring vessel, the seeming victim of the sur-

rounding elements, and the disputed sacrifice of fire, air, and water. The scene was sublime in its awful peril; and, while my eyes swam, and my ears rung with the confusion of threatening sights and sounds that stunned and bewildered me, yet I was conscious of one added horror on that dreadful night apart from aught of storm or tempest.

“ About mid-watch I was startled by a piercing shriek, that thrilled high above the crash and din of the thunder-peals, and penetrated sharp athwart the keenest whistling of the storm-blast, claiming attention by its shrill appeal of human agony. I made my way in the direction of the yell, but could perceive nothing in the dense obscurity which then shrouded every object. Suddenly, a vivid flash of lightning revealed to me the figure of Stevens, standing alone, trembling from head to foot, his face and lips of a livid pallor that glared a ghastly spot of white in the dark space around, while his eyes seemed starting from their sockets as they remained fixed on the foaming waters, boiling and surging beyond the ship's stern.

“ Here his gaze seemed to be riveted, without any power of his to withdraw it; for, after having accosted him, asking whether he had called, if he had heard aught, or wanted help, a second flash again gave him to my view in precisely the same attitude, while he answered shortly that he had heard nothing, wanted nothing, and bade me roughly begone and not stand there watching him, waving me back with his arm, at the same time that his head and eyes maintained the same position, and remained unswervingly

fixed in the exact direction I had first beheld them. I shrunk back, appalled, for the man looked like one spell-bound, and under the influence of some terror stronger than any arising from the storm and its perils. The whole of that dreadful night I kept fearful watch, alternately contemplating the tempest and musing on the strange trance of terror in which I had found Stevens. As morning dawned the tempest abated, and the captain, with some negligent commendation of my exertions and active conduct during the past night, dismissed me to my hammock, where I slept some hours profoundly. When I awoke, and rose to my usual avocations, I was surprised to see Titta nowhere about, neither below, nor on deck, nor among the shrouds, nor, in short, in any part of the ship. I asked one of the men (who was somewhat less brutal than the rest), where the boy was, and he answered that he feared he had been swept overboard in the storm during the night, for that none of them had seen anything of him since the previous evening. 'Poor lad!' added the fellow with the remorse which too often seizes obtuse people only when too late, 'I am sorry now I ever jeered him, and made game of his being a Talian—for he couldn't help that, you know! I wish I hadn't teased him, now that he's drowned, poor lad!'

"That night, it so happened, that it was this same man's turn to keep the mid-watch; and, as he was ill, and I felt pleased with his expression of regret for poor Titta, I offered to serve the watch in his stead.

“The weather was now clear and calm over head, though the sea still rolled with the heavy swell which always continues some time, after the turbulent commotion of a storm; and, as I gazed into the dark-blue canopy of heaven, I offered heartfelt devotion and thanksgiving for my preservation through the late tempest.

“As my thoughts thus ascended skyward, they were recalled abruptly by a singular hissing noise that sounded directly astern. I crept softly towards the spot, and there beheld Stevens in the same rigid attitude of terror as I had seen him last night about the same hour. His eyes were still fixed with a stricken stare upon the tumbling billows that rolled in the wake of our ship; and his colourless cheeks and quivering bloodless lips still shaped the hideous patch of white in the centre of sombre midnight. My quiet approach, and my being screened from his view, by standing somewhat apart, caused my presence to be unperceived by him; and I could not help remaining rooted to the spot in a sort of fascination of horror, to observe this spell-bound man. There was a sort of faint singular gleam that seemed to proceed from the spot upon which his gaze was riveted, and which shed a dim reflection upon the brow of the figure before me, so that I was able to see him distinctly. I could perceive that his convulsed lips were flecked with foam, and that they could not repress his agitated breathings, which exhaled in a series of lingering, gasping, hissing utterances, which seemed as if they were impelled forth by a power not his own, and occa-

sionally seemed almost to form themselves into incoherent and involuntary words. 'Thy sister! So, Titta, so!' were the first intelligible sounds I distinguished; then followed, 'that blackened throat witnesses against me!' while the muttered sentences hissed forth in the articulation of the rattle-snake. His hands clenched, his eyes strained eagerly, his form writhing and dilating, as 'So, Titta, so!' again hissed from his frothed lips, and he looked more like a serpent than a human being. I recoiled in horror; but the next moment I perceived his limbs relax, his staring eyes close, his lips become mute; and as the singular gleam, for it could scarcely be called light, faded into darkness, I beheld him stagger along the deck, retreat towards his own cabin, and I saw him no more that night.

"The horror of this scene, and the circumstances of its repetition, haunted me fearfully through that night and the next day; and I resolved to change watches with the man who had the coming midnight one, in order that I might have an opportunity of observing Stevens again. A frightful surmise that had crossed my mind when I first heard of poor Titta's disappearance, had recurred more forcibly since, and was now gaining the strength of conviction. As the mid-watch came on, I perceived that Stevens was on deck also, walking about in a constrained manner, and as if acting under involuntary impulse. I purposely kept my station not far from the stern of the vessel, and this circumstance seemed to annoy and perplex him not a little. He seemed to be afraid of express-

ing openly his desire that I should avoid that vicinity, but he spared no efforts to draw me away by stratagem more towards the bow of the ship. As the time crept on, he grew evidently more and more uneasy, and even condescended to assume a familiar and almost friendly tone of conversation, in the hope of diverting my attention, and withdrawing me from the fatal spot. At length he feigned to remember something that wanted attending to, or doing, at the head of the ship, and despatched me to look to it immediately. I went forward, but came back in a few seconds, as I knew that it must be just upon midnight. I shall never forget the black scowl with which he saw me return to his side again. I beheld it by the reflection of the faint gleam astern, which shone forth just as he seemed about to make some angry exclamation; when, instead of uttering it, his figure became suddenly struck into rigidity, and assumed the attitude of intense horror, in which I had seen it twice previously. His foaming lips again hissed forth their terrible sounds—his eyeballs once more started from their sockets in that riveted gaze; but though he was powerless to avert his looks, he seemed to be conscious of my presence, and waved his arms in furious token to me to be gone. But I was determined to abide by my purpose, and I nerved myself to watch steadily, through the whole time that this strange spell should endure. It held the stricken wretch for about the space of a quarter of an hour, during which period I saw and heard enough to convince me that I had done him no injustice in believing him to be

the murderer of poor Titta ; but when the trance ceased, and his limbs relaxed, and he was able to control his strained vision, the first use he made of his restored powers was to spring upon me, with mingled reproaches and threats. I shook off the reptile, for I was stronger as well as younger than he, and the baffled miscreant shrunk away, muttering curses, and vows of vengeance.

“The next morning, as I was casting about in my mind how best to state my accusation of the murderer to my captain, I was summoned to his presence to attend a charge of murder which was alleged against myself. I learned that Stevens had been beforehand with me ; finding that I had discovered his foul secret, and that I should probably not be long in revealing it, and publicly accusing him of the fatal deed, he determined to have the advantage of precedence, and throw discredit on the tale I should relate of him, by previously staining my own reputation.

“I found that he had ingeniously contrived to throw suspicion on the circumstance of a body having been found in the grave opened for the reception of my little Felix's remains. He declared that he believed the buried female who was discovered there to have been the victim of my cruelty, and to have fallen by my hand ; and such was the vehemence with which he declared that since this conviction had struck him, nothing should prevail upon him to consort further with a murderer, and that therefore he demanded my immediate imprisonment, until I could be tried at the first civilized country we arrived at, that it was not very

long before he succeeded in bringing many of the crew round to his opinion, and several loudly declared that for their parts they did not like consorting with a murderer either.

"The captain, in his weak inconclusive way, now declared that it was really very shocking, and that he positively could not tell what to think.

"'What is very shocking?' asked I indignantly; 'nothing has been proved against me yet. Is it very likely that if I had murdered a woman, I should lead strangers to her very grave, and bid them dig it open?'

"Stevens here reminded them that I was in such a state of grief at the time when I lost my little Felix, that I probably had not reflected on the consequences of anything I then did. This allusion to my winged darling, together with the consciousness that it was to this very wretch himself that I owed his destruction, joined to the abhorrence I felt for his recent deeds and present treachery, inspired me with such rage and loathing, that I hastily retorted his charge, and accused him of having murdered the cabin-boy, Titta. An accusation thus rashly and abruptly made, of course brought with it rather the appearance of retaliation, than an honest detestation of crime; and looked more like a desire of revenge and a mean attempt to screen myself by attaching blame to another, than a simple disclosure of truth. I soon read the mischief I had done to my own cause in the countenances of those around me; and it is not the only time in my life, my dear young friends, that I

have observed how fatally a rash word, an impetuous action, or an ill-advised step, may injure a righteous cause. It is well, therefore, in emergencies of vital importance, to keep strict watch upon the temper, and hold the judgment cool and prepared.

“Had I acted with more moderation and wisdom on the present occasion, it might have been better for me; as it was, I found the men had not only made up their mind that my accusation of Stevens was a mere false subterfuge, but that they were making a half jesting proposal to the captain that the question of my guilt or innocence should be decided by throws of the dice, as it was impossible now to return to the shore we had so long quitted, to collect proofs of the murder with which I stood charged.

“Certainly not, it is out of the question to retrace our way,” said the captain, ‘that would be sad loss of time indeed;’ and with those words he dismissed the reconsideration of the cause until another day, as he declared himself quite tired and worn to death with so much talking.

“I found myself now, however, an object of marked avoidance and detestation to my shipmates; and the proposal which had originated jestingly, was soon resumed and debated in earnest. There was a sort of novelty and excitement in the idea, which possessed a certain charm for their betting souls; and, unable to withstand the temptation of a game, where the stake involved a fellow-creature’s freedom or condemnation, nay, his very existence, they were not long in coming to a decision, and, as it was now near

noon, they made preparation for throwing the dice at midday.

“I vainly entreated them to wait till night, when they should have an opportunity of beholding confirmation of my words; but they jeeringly replied they would decide my fate first, and they would attend to the matter of Stevens’s alleged misdeeds afterwards. I glanced towards the mate as I uttered this allusion to the appalling vision in which his remorse held him nightly spell-bound; but he stood with his arms folded and his head bent, silently watching the arrangements the men were making for casting the dice; and it was only by a slight shudder, and a paling of the lip, that I discovered he had noticed what I said. It was a horrible mockery that was enacted in the full blaze of that noontide sun! The men stood round the board on which the dice were successively cast, their countenances agitated by bad passions, and absolutely void of one feeling of compunction for the deed they were about to perpetrate, or for the victim who was its object. I gazed vacantly on the scene, unable to gather the results of their play, for I knew not so much as what throws, or combinations of throws, had been agreed upon to decide my fate; when, just as a loud brutal huzza from the men, and a glance of malignant triumph from the white face of Stevens, had informed me of my doom, a tremendous shock was felt on board, so violent as to cast most of the crew prostrate, and a few minutes more sufficed to shew that the ship had struck upon a rock and was going to pieces.

"But," said Kit, interrupting himself, "it is time to leave off; so good night, and good-bye!"

"Good-bye, dear Kit," echoed both his young listeners with the deep-drawn sigh which shewed they had been unconsciously holding their breath in profound attention; "good-night and good-bye!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SEQUEL OF THE WRECK.—UBERTO AND BIONDELLO ; THE LITTLE BARBER ; KING IMBECILIO, PRINCESS EUDORA, AND LORD IGNORIO ; BARON FEROCIO, AND THE LADY ELLENA.

“WELL, Kit, what happened when the ship struck upon the rock and went to pieces?” asked Dick, the next evening.

“And how did you escape from the wreck?” added his sister.

“Immediately the nature of the disaster was ascertained,” replied Kit, “for the crew had been so deeply engaged in their wicked pursuit that they had not kept a strict look-out enough to be aware of the rocks that lay a-head, and on which our ship struck with such fatal force, all hands were in requisition to provide for their safety ; but, with the usual brutal selfishness which uniformly characterizes an inveterate gamester, they one and all devoted their efforts solely to securing their own individual rescue, losing sight of the general good, and forgetful that, in neglecting the salvation of the whole, they might probably involve their own risk of ultimate peril and loss.

“And thus it proved ; for, being at some distance from land, and the ship splitting and sinking more

rapidly than could have been believed, they all endeavoured to seize the boats, and, crowding into them rashly as fast as they could, many were drowned in the very outset, and boat after boat were sunk and lost, with the weight of the numbers that overloaded them. The last that survived was the long-boat; but as I swam rapidly towards it, in the hope of being taken up, I beheld the white face of Stevens glaring upon me, as he leaned forward, and hit me a smart blow on the hand (which I had placed on the side of the boat) with a cutlass; and I had hardly darted back with the pain of the wound, and a bitter feeling of despair, when I beheld the boat drawn towards the fast-sinking ship; and I had scarcely time to exert my utmost strength to swim beyond the whelming circle, when I beheld both ship and boat sucked into the dreadful vortex, and plunged beneath the abyss of waters.

“I struggled hard for my deliverance, and toiled with all my might to gain the land, which seemed to elude all my efforts to reach it, and to recede in proportion as I advanced. Spent and exhausted, I did just contrive to make my way as far as the shallow water, through which I crawled wadingly, and then sunk down on the sands at the very brink, insensible.

“The first thing of which I felt conscious, on returning to life, was being drawn from my perilous situation, and placed gently on the higher and drier part of the sand; and then of a sweet voice, which said, ‘Oh no, dear Uberto, he is not dead, he must not die; raise his head a little on to your knee; there—see, he opens his eyes!’

"I looked towards the gentle speaker, and saw a youth bending over me with soft kind eyes, in which I read anxiety for my recovery, and tender goodness of nature mingled with bright intelligence.

"His hand is badly wounded,' said the person who was supporting my head, as he raised the right wrist carefully to examine the cut cruelly inflicted by Stevens, but which was in fact the means of my preservation. I perceived that the last person who spoke was a somewhat elder, taller, and more robust youth than the one I had first beheld; but while I gazed, his features swam indistinctly before me, I felt faint, and closed my eyes again.

"I was not perfectly insensible, though, for I heard the sweet voice of the first youth utter a sorrowing exclamation; and then I heard the other reply, 'I will lift him into the shadow of those bushes, out of the sun; and if you will stay and watch by the poor fellow, Biondello, I will run home for a cordial for him, which I hope will give him strength enough, with my assistance, to reach the cottage.'

"Do so, dear Uberto,' answered the soft voice, 'and I will take care of him meanwhile.'

"The elder youth having effected his purpose of placing me in the shade, ran off at a quick pace, and left me alone with the one whom he had called Biondello, and who immediately set about binding my wounded hand with his handkerchief, which he tore into strips for the purpose, and applied with a lightness and delicacy of touch that a surgeon might have envied. The relief from pain which this dressing afforded me, and

the refreshment of the cool shady nook, caused me to revive; and it was not long before I was able to sit up and tender my acknowledgments to my young protector, for his share in my rescue from the waves, and for the relief his gentle care had since afforded me.

“He received my thanks with modest grace, and yet with a noble air that well became his beautiful features and high-bred appearance; his look and carriage were equally gracious and dignified, and I noticed that he wore a velvet riding-suit, rich, though of a dark sober hue, and simple fashion.

“Presently, there was the sound of approaching footsteps, and the voices of people in apparent quest of some one. Biondello started up, and, after listening for an instant, he said rapidly to himself,—‘They seek me, they must not find him, or meet Uberto;’ then hurriedly addressing me, the youth added,—‘Stranger, you will remain here; Uberto will soon return, and lead you where you can have shelter and refreshment. Farewell!—we may meet again; but, meanwhile, silence and discretion!’

“He placed his finger on his lips with a sweet, serious expression, and, waving his hand in graceful adieu, he glided away to meet those who approached, and seemed to lead them back the way they came; for I soon heard the receding steps of the whole party, while I merely caught the words, ‘Alone! unattended! wandering by the sea-shore! these solitary rambles cause me great uneasiness, lest your highness should meet with any—.’ Here the voice died away, and I heard no more until I was roused by Uberto, who

hurried towards me with the cordial, raised me from the reclining posture into which I had again sunk on the departure of Biondello; and when I was sufficiently restored to be able to walk, conducted me towards his dwelling, and bade me welcome with a courtesy and good breeding that savoured of a higher station than the one indicated by his attire, which was that of a shepherd.

“After he had set food before me, and congratulated me on my escape, waiving the thanks I earnestly proffered, with a hearty good-humoured warmth of manner, and a frank assurance that he had only aided his friend Biondello to save me from the waves, and draw me ashore, he begged I would lie down and rest myself for an hour or two while he went to look after his flock, which he had somewhat neglected that morning while enjoying a ramble on the sea-shore.

“He pointed to a large wooden settle that stretched across one side of the table towards the hearth; and, opening the door of the apartment which led immediately into the porch, he quitted the cottage with a friendly nod and an easy freedom of manner that made me feel at home at once, and as if I had known him for eighteen years at least,—that is to say, all our life; for our respective ages each appeared to comprehend little more than that period of time.

“When he left me, however, I was by no means inclined to sleep; my frame was too well inured to hardships not to be almost restored to its usual vigour by the refreshment and aid I had already received; and my mind was too busy revolving the circum-

stances that had recently befallen me in the new acquaintance I had made with the two youths, to permit any indulgence in slumber before night should come on.

“The afternoon sun streamed through the flaunting branches of roses and jasmine that embowered the cottage casement, and shewed me the room that I was in, to be no more like the abode of a simple shepherd, than the bearing of the youth himself assorted with the lowly calling which his dress bespoke. The apartment, though humble in the extreme, looked far more like the closet of a student than the interior of a shepherd's hut; for around the walls on all sides were shelves closely packed with books, books, and books of all shapes and dimensions, from the thin tall folio to the compact duodecimo; from the portly quarto to the medium octavo; they were ranged in various groups from the historic magnificence of twelve, the biographic importance of four, the romantic interest of three, down to the precious single volume, with its quaint lore and condensation of wisdom compressed into its few odd pages. But through all this profuse company of books, there was not one fine coat among them; their bindings were all homely, even unto shabbiness,—though they looked worn with loving use, and not injured by slovenry or neglect. Besides the one on which my repast had been served, there was another table, spread high and wide with more books, and which also bore materials for writing. Even on the settle beside me were strewed one or two books,

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which, on examination, I knew enough to be aware were Greek and Latin classic poets.

“In my eagerness to learn more of this shepherd-philosopher, I rose, and strolling through the cottage porch, all fragrant with the flowery bloom that distilled its sweets, as it crept around door and window in rich profusion, I issued forth into the open air, and made my way across some meadows, in the direction I had seen taken by my host when seeking his flock. I found myself in a lovely, peaceful valley, undisturbed by sight or sound but those of Nature in her serenest aspect of beauty; and, directed by the tinkle of a distant sheep-bell, I wandered on till I came to a grassy plain on the slope of a hill, where lay scattered the fleecy treasure of my host, cropping their evening meal beneath his watchful care; for he sat at a little distance under a shady tree enjoying a book, while his sheep enjoyed their meal, and his lambs their frisking, sportive game of play.

“He rose to meet me when he observed my approach, and, closing his book, said he was glad to find I was sufficiently recovered to be able to take so long a walk. I replied by telling him of my admiration of his cottage-study, and of my longing to know more of its master.

“He smiled, and said, my surprise at finding so many books in the possession of a poor scholar would cease when he informed me that they had been the gift of his uncle Erudito, of whose vast library they formed but a slight portion. That his venerable