THE RIDE TO YORK
BY
WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

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CHAPTER I

THE RENDEZVOUS AT KILBURN

An excellent Comedy, replete with various conceits and Tarltonian mirth.

The present straggling suburb at the north-west of the metropolis, known as Kilburn, had scarcely been called into existence a century ago, and an ancient hostel, with a few detached farmhouses, were the sole habitations to be found in the present populous vicinage. The place of refreshment for the ruralizing cockney of was a substantial-looking tenement of the good old stamp, with great bay windows, and a balcony in front, bearing as its ensign the jovial visage of the lusty knight, Jack Falstaff. Shaded by a spreading elm, a circular bench embraced the aged trunk of the tree, sufficiently tempting, no doubt, to incline the wanderer on those dusty ways to "rest and be thankful," and to cry encore to a frothing tankard of the best ale to be obtained within the chimes of Bow bells.

Upon a table, green as the privet and holly that formed the walls of the bower in which it was placed, stood a great china bowl, one of those leviathan memorials of bygone wassailry which we may sometimes espy—reversed in token of its desuetude—perched on the top of an old japanned closet, but seldom, if ever, encountered in its proper position at the genial board. All the appliances of festivity were at hand. Pipes and rummers strewed the board. Perfume, subtle, yet mellow, as of pine and lime, exhaled from out the bowl, and, mingling with the scent of a neighboring bed of mignonette and the subdued odor of the Indian weed, formed altogether as delectable an atmosphere of sweets as one could wish to inhale on a melting August afternoon. So, at least, thought the inmates of the arbor; nor did they by any means confine themselves to the gratification of a single sense. The ambrosial contents of the china bowl proved as delicious to the taste as its bouquet was grateful to the smell; while the eyesight was soothed by reposing on the smooth sward of a bowling-green spread out immediately before it, or in dwelling upon gently undulating meads, terminating, at about a mile's distance, in the woody, spire-crowned heights of Hampstead.

At the left of the table was seated, or rather lounged, a slender, elegant-looking young man, with dark, languid eyes, sallow complexion, and features wearing that peculiarly pensive expression often communicated by dissipation; an expression which, we regret

to say, is sometimes found more pleasing than it ought to be in the eyes of the gentle sex. Habited in a light summer riding-dress, fashioned according to the taste of the time, of plain and unpretending material, and rather under than overdressed, he had, perhaps, on that very account, perfectly the air of a gentleman. There was, altogether, an absence of pretension about him, which, combined with great apparent self-possession, contrasted very forcibly with the vulgar assurance of his showy companions. The figure of the youth was slight, even to fragility, giving little outward manifestation of the vigor of frame he in reality possessed. This spark was a no less distinguished personage than Tom King, a noted high-tobygloak of his time, who obtained, from his appearance and address, the sobriquet of the "Gentleman Highwayman."

Tom was indeed a pleasant fellow in his day. His career was brief, but brilliant: your meteors are ever momentary. He was a younger son of a good family; had good blood in his veins, though not a groat in his pockets. According to the old song—

When he arrived at man's estate,
It was all the estate he had;

and all the estate he was ever likely to have. Nevertheless, if he had no income, he contrived, as he said, to live as if he had the mines of Peru at his control—a miracle not solely confined to himself. For a moneyless man, he had rather expensive habits. He kept his three nags; and, if fame does not belie him, a like number of mistresses; nay, if we are to place any faith in certain scandalous chronicles to which we have had access, he was for some time the favored lover of a celebrated actress, who, for the time, supplied him with the means of keeping up his showy establishment. But things could not long hold thus. Tom was a model of infidelity, and that was the only failing his mistress could not overlook. She dismissed him at a moment's notice. Unluckily, too, he had other propensities which contributed to involve him. He had a taste for the turf—a taste for play—was well known in the hundreds of Drury, and cut no mean figure at Howell's, and the faro tables there-anent. He was the glory of the Smyrna, D'Osyndar's, and other chocolate houses of the day; and it was at this time he fell into the hands of certain dexterous sharpers, by whom he was at first plucked and subsequently patronized. Under their tuition he improved wonderfully. He turned his wit and talent to some account. He began to open his eyes. His nine days' blindness was over. The dog saw. But, in spite of his quickness, he was at length discovered, and ejected from Howell's in a manner that left him no alternative. He must either have called out his adversary, or have gone out himself. He preferred the latter, and took to the road; and in his new line he was eminently successful. Fortunately, he had no scruples to get over. Tom had what Sir Walter Scott happily denominates "an indistinct notion of meum and tuum," and became confirmed in the opinion that everything he could lay hands upon constituted lawful spoil. And then, even those he robbed, admitted that he was the most

gentlemanlike highwayman they had ever the fortune to meet with, and trusted they might always be so lucky. So popular did he become upon the road, that it was accounted a distinction to be stopped by him; he made a point of robbing none but gentlemen, and—Tom's shade would quarrel with us were we to omit them—ladies. His acquaintance with Turpin was singular, and originated in a rencontre. Struck with his appearance, Dick presented a pistol, and bade King deliver. The latter burst into a laugh, and an explanation immediately ensued. Thenceforward they became sworn brothers—the Pylades and Orestes of the road; and though seldom seen together in public, had many a merry moonlight ride in company.

Tom still maintained three mistresses, his valet, his groom—tiger, we should have called him,—"and many a change of clothes besides," says his biographer, "with which he appeared more like a lord than a highwayman." And what more, we should like to know, would a lord wish to have? Few younger sons, we believe, can boast so much; and it is chiefly on their account, with some remote view to the benefit of the unemployed youth of all professions, that we have enlarged so much upon Tom King's history. The road, we must beg to repeat, is still open; the chances are greater than they ever were; we fully believe it is their only road to preferment, and we are sadly in want of highwaymen!

Fancy Tom lounging at D'Osyndar's, carelessly tapping his boots on the steps; there he stands! Is he not a devilish good-looking, gentlemanlike sort of fellow? You could never have taken him for a highwayman but for our information. A waiter appears—supper is ordered at twelve—a broiled chicken and a bottle of Burgundy—his groom brings his nags to the door—he mounts. It is his custom to ride out on an evening—he is less liable to interruption. At Marylebone Fields—now the Regent's Park,—his groom leaves him. He has a mistress in the neighborhood. He is absent for a couple of hours, and returns gay or dispirited, as his luck may have turned out. At twelve he is at supper, and has the night before him. How very easy all this seems. Can it be possible we have no Tom Kings?

To return to Tom as he was in the arbor. Judging from his manner, he appeared to be almost insensible to the presence of his companions, and to be scarcely a partaker in their revelry. His back was towards his immediate neighbor; his glass sparkled untouched at his elbow; and one hand, beautifully white and small, a mark of his birth and breeding—crede Byron—rested upon the edge of the table, while his thin, delicate digits, palpably demonstrative of his faculty of adaptation—crede James Hardy Vaux—were employed with a silver toothpick. In other respects, he seemed to be lost in reverie, and was, in all probability, meditating new exploits.

Next to King sat our old friend Jerry Juniper; not, however, the Jerry of the gipsies, but a much more showy-looking personage. Jerry was no longer a gentleman of "three

outs"—the difficulty would now have been to say what he was "without." Snakelike he had cast his slough, and rejoiced in new and brilliant investiture. His were "speaking garments, speaking pockets too." His linen was of the finest, his hose of the smartest. Gay rings glittered on his fingers; a crystal snuff-box underwent graceful manipulation; a handsome gold repeater was sometimes drawn from its location with a monstrous bunch of onions—anglicè, seals—depending from its massive chain. Lace adorned his wrists, and shoes—of which they had been long unconscious,—with buckles nearly as large as themselves, confined his feet. A rich-powdered peruke and silver-hilted sword completed the gear of the transmogrified Jerry, or, as he now chose to be designated, Count Albert Conyers. The fact was, that Jerry, after the fracas, apprehensive that the country would be too hot for him, had, in company with Zoroaster, quitted the ranks of the Canting Crew, and made the best of his way to town. A lucky spice on the road set them up; and having some acquaintance with Tom King, the party, on their arrival, sought him out at his customary haunt, D'Osyndar's, and enlisted under his banners.

Tom received them with open arms, gave them unlimited use of his wardrobe, and only required a little trifling assistance in return. He had a grand scheme in petto, in the execution of which they could mainly assist him. Jerry was a Greek by nature, and could land a flat as well as the best of them. Zoroaster was just the man to lose a fight; or, in the language of the Fancy, to play a cross. No two legs could serve Tom's purposes better. He welcomed them with fraternal affection.

We will now proceed to reconnoitre Jerry's opposite neighbor, who was, however, no other than that Upright Man,

The Magus Zoroaster, that great name.

Changed as was Juniper, the Magus was yet more whimsically metamorphosed. Some traces of Jerry still remained, but not a vestige was left of the original Dimber Damber. His tawny mother had not known her son. This alteration, however, was not owing to change of dress; it was the result of the punishment he had received at the "set-to" at the priory. Not a feature was in its place; his swollen lip trespassed upon the precincts of his nose; his nose trod hard upon his cheek; while his cheek again, not to be behind the rest, rose up like an apple-dumpling under his single eye,—single, we say—for, alas! there was no speculation in the other. His dexter daylight was utterly darkened, and, indeed, the orb that remained was as sanguinary a luminary as ever struggled through a London fog at noonday. To borrow a couplet or so from the laureate of the Fancy:

————One of his peepers was put
On the bankruptcy list, with his shop windows shut,
While the other made nearly as tag-rag a show,

All rimmed round with black like the Courier in woe.
One black patch decorated his rainbow-colored cheek; another adorned his chin; a grinder having been dislodged, his pipe took possession of the aperture. His toggery was that of a member of the prize-ring; what we now call a "belcher" bound his throat; a spotted fogle bandaged his jobbernowl, and shaded his right peeper, while a white beaver crowned the occiput of the Magus. And though, at first sight, there would appear to be some incongruity in the association of such a battered character as the Upright Man with his smart companions, the reader's wonder will rapidly diminish, when he reflects that any distinguished P. C. man can ever find a ready passport to the most exclusive society. Viewed in this light, Zoroaster's familiarity with his swell acquaintance occasioned no surprise to old Simon Carr, the bottle-nosed landlord of the Falstaff, who was a man of discernment in his way, and knew a thing or two. Despite such striking evidences to the contrary, the Magus was perfectly at his ease, and sacrificing as usual to the god of flame. His mithra, or pipe, the symbol of his faith, was zealously placed between his lips, and never did his Chaldean, Bactrian, Persian, Pamphylian, Proconnesian, or Babylonian namesake, whichever of the six was the true Zoroaster—vide Bayle,—respire more fervently at the altar of fire, than our Magus at the end of his enkindled tube. In his creed we believe Zoroaster was a dualist, and believed in the co-existence and mystical relation of the principles of good and ill; his pipe being his Yezdan, or benign influence; his empty pouch his Ahreman, or the devil. We shall not pause to examine his tenets; we meddle with no man's religious opinions, and shall leave the Magus to the enjoyment of his own sentiments, be they what they may.

One guest alone remains, and him we shall briefly dismiss. The reader, we imagine, will scarcely need to be told who was the owner of those keen gray eyes; those exuberant red whiskers; that airy azure frock. It was

Our brave co-partner of the roads.
Skilful surveyor of highways and hedges;
in a word—Dick Turpin!

Dick had been called upon to act as president of the board, and an excellent president he made, sedulously devoting himself to the due administration of the punch-bowl. Not a rummer was allowed to stand empty for an instant. Toast, sentiment, and anacreontic song, succeeded each other at speedy intervals; but there was no speechifying—no politics. He left church and state to take care of themselves. Whatever his politics might be, Dick never allowed them to interfere with his pleasures. His maxim was to make the most of the passing moment; the dum vivimus vivamus was never out of his mind; a precautionary measure which we recommend to the adoption of all gentlemen of the like, or any other precarious profession.

Notwithstanding all Dick's efforts to promote conviviality, seconded by the excellence of the beverage itself, conversation, somehow or other, began to flag; from being general it became particular. Tom King, who was no punch-bibber, especially at that time of day, fell into a deep reverie; your gamesters often do so; while the Magus, who had smoked himself drowsy, was composing himself to a doze. Turpin seized this opportunity of addressing a few words on matters of business to Jerry Juniper, or, as he now chose to be called, Count Conyers.

"My dear count," said Dick, in a low and confidential tone, "you are aware that my errand to town is accomplished. I have smashed Lawyer Coates's screen, pocketed the dimmock—here 'tis," continued he, parenthetically, slapping his pockets,—"and done t'other trick in prime twig for Tom King. With a cool thousand in hand, I might, if I chose, rest awhile on my oars. But a quiet life don't suit me. I must be moving. So I shall start to Yorkshire to-night."

"Indeed!" said the soi-disant count, in a languid tone—"so soon?"

"I have nothing to detain me," replied Dick. "And, to tell you the truth, I want to see how matters stand with Sir Luke Rookwood. I should be sorry if he went to the wall for want of any assistance I can render him."

"True," returned the count; "one would regret such an occurrence, certainly. But I fear your assistance may arrive a little too late. He is pretty well done up, I should imagine, by this time."

"That remains to be seen," said Turpin. "His case is a bad one, to be sure, but I trust not utterly hopeless. With all his impetuosity and pride, I like the fellow, and will help him, if I can. It will be a difficult game to set him on his legs, but I think it may be done. That underground marriage was sheer madness, and turned out as ill as such a scheme might have been expected to do. Poor Sybil! if I could pipe an eye for anything, it should be for her. I can't get her out of my head. Give me a pinch of snuff. Such thoughts unman one. As to the priest, that's a totally different affair. If he strangled his daughter, old Alan did right to take the law into his own hands, and throttle him in return. I'd have done the same thing myself; and, being a proscribed Jesuit, returned, as I understand, without the king's license for so doing, why Father Checkley's murder—if it must be so called, I can't abide hard terms—won't lie very heavy at Alan's door. That, however, has nothing to do with Sir Luke. He was neither accessory nor principal. Still he will be in danger, at least from Lady Rookwood. The whole county of York, I make no doubt, is up in arms by this time."

"Then why go thither?" asked the count, somewhat ironically; "for my part, I've a strange fancy for keeping out of harm's way as long as possible."

"Every man to his taste," returned Turpin; "I love to confront danger. Run away! pshaw! always meet your foe."

"True," replied the count, "half-way! but you go the whole distance. What prudent man would beard the lion in his den?"

"I never was a prudent man," rejoined Dick, smiling; "I have no superfluous caution about me. Come what will, I shall try to find out this Luke Rookwood, and offer him my purse, such as it is, and it is now better lined than usual; a hand free to act as he lists; and a head which, imprudent though it be, can often think better for others than for its own master."

"Vastly fine!" exclaimed the count, with an ill-disguised sneer. "I hope you don't forget that the marriage certificate which you hold is perfectly valueless now. The estates, you are aware——"

"Are no longer Sir Luke's. I see what you are driving at, count," returned Dick, coldly. "But he will need it to establish his claim to the title, and he shall have it. While he was Sir Luke, with ten thousand a year, I drove a hard bargain, and would have stood out for the last stiver. Now that he is one of 'us', a mere Knight of the Road, he shall have it and welcome."

"Perhaps Lady Rookwood, or Mrs. Mowbray, might be inclined to treat," maliciously insinuated the count; "the title may be worth something to Ranulph."

"It is worth more to Luke; and if it were not, he gets it. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly," replied the count, with affected bonhomie; "and I will now let you into a secret respecting Miss Mowbray, from which you may gather something for your guidance in this matter; and if the word of a woman is at all to be trusted, though individually I cannot say I have much faith in it, Sir Luke's planetary hour is not yet completely overcast."

"That's exactly what I wish to know, my dear fellow," said Turpin, eagerly. "You have already told me you were witness to a singular interview between Miss Mowbray and Sir Luke after my departure from the priory. If I mistook you not, the whole business will hinge upon that. What occurred? Let me have every particular. The whole history and mystery."

"You shall have it with pleasure," said the count; "and I hope it may tend to your benefit. After I had quitted the scene of action at the priory, and at your desire left the Rookwood party masters of the field, I fled with the rest of the crew towards the rocks. There we held a council of war for a short time. Some were for returning to the fight; but this was negatived entirely, and in the end it was agreed that those who had wives, daughters, and sisters, should join them as speedily as possible at their retreat in the Grange. As I happened to have none of these attractive ties, and had only a troublesome mistress, who I thought could take care of herself, I did not care to follow them, but struck deeper into the wood, and made my way, guided by destiny, I suppose, towards the cave."

"The cave!" cried Dick, rubbing his hands; "I delight in a cave. Tom King and I once had a cave of our own at Epping, and I'll have another one of these fine days. A cave is as proper to a high-tobyman as a castle to a baron. Pray go on."

"The cave I speak of," continued the count, "was seldom used, except upon great emergencies, by any of the Stop Hole Abbey crew. It was a sort of retiring den of our old lioness Barbara, and, like all belonging to her, respected by her dupes. However, the cave is a good cave for all that; is well concealed by brushwood, and comfortably lighted from a crevice in the rock above; it lies near the brink of the stream, amongst the woods just above the waterfall, and is somewhat difficult of approach."

"I know something of the situation," said Turpin.

"Well," returned the count, "not to lose time, into this den I crept, and, expecting to find it vacant, you may imagine my surprise on discovering that it was already occupied, and that Sir Luke Rookwood, his granddad, old Alan, Miss Mowbray, and, worst of all, the very person I wished most to avoid, my old flame Handassah, constituted the party. Fortunately, they did not perceive my entrance, and I took especial care not to introduce myself. Retreat, however, was for the moment impracticable, and I was compelled to be a listener. I cannot tell what had passed between the parties before my arrival, but I heard Miss Mowbray implore Sir Luke to conduct her to her mother. He seemed half inclined to comply with her entreaties; but old Alan shook his head. It was then Handassah put in a word; the minx was ever ready at that. 'Fear not,' said she, 'that she will wed Sir Ranulph. Deliver her to her friends, I beseech you, Sir Luke, and woo her honorably. She will accept you.' Sir Luke stared incredulously, and grim old Alan smiled. 'She has sworn to be yours,' continued Handassah; 'sworn it by every hope of heaven, and the oath has been sealed by blood—by Sybil's blood.'—'Does she speak the truth?' asked Sir Luke, trembling with agitation. Miss Mowbray answered not. 'You will not deny it, lady,' said Handassah. 'I heard that oath proposed. I saw it registered. You

cannot deny it.'—'I do not,' replied Miss Mowbray, with much anguish of manner; 'if he claim me, I am his.'—'And he will claim you,' said Alan Rookwood, triumphantly. 'He has your oath, no matter how extorted—you must fulfil your vow.'—'I am prepared to do so,' said Eleanor. 'But if you would not utterly destroy me, let this maid conduct me to my mother, to my friends.'—'To Ranulph?' asked Sir Luke, bitterly.—'No, no,' returned Miss Mowbray, in accents of deepest despair, 'to my mother—I wish not to behold him again.'—'Be it so,' cried Sir Luke; 'but remember, in love or hate, you are mine; I shall claim the fulfilment of your oath. Farewell. Handassah will lead you to your mother.' Miss Mowbray bowed her head, but returned no answer, while, followed by old Alan, Sir Luke departed from the cavern."

"Whither went they?" demanded Turpin.

"That I know not," replied Jerry. "I was about to follow, when I was prevented by the abrupt entrance of another party. Scarcely, I think, could the two Rookwoods have made good their retreat, when shouts were heard without, and young Ranulph and Major Mowbray forced their way, sword in hand, into the cave. Here was a situation—for me, I mean—to the young lady, I make no doubt, it was pleasant enough. But my neck was in jeopardy. However, you know I am not deficient in strength, and, upon the present occasion, I made the best use of the agility with which nature has endowed me. Amidst the joyous confusion—the sobbings, and embracings, and congratulations that ensued—I contrived, like a wild cat, to climb the rocky sides of the cave, and concealed myself behind a jutting fragment of stone. It was well I did so, for scarcely was I hidden, when in came old Barbara, followed by Mrs. Mowbray, and a dozen others."

"Barbara!" ejaculated Dick. "Was she a prisoner?"

"No," replied Jerry; "the old hell-cat is too deep for that. She had betrayed Sir Luke, and hoped they would seize him and his granddad. But the birds were flown."

"I'm glad she was baulked," said Dick. "Was any search made after them?"

"Can't say," replied Jerry. "I could only indistinctly catch the sounds of their voices from my lofty retreat. Before they left the cavern, I made out that Mrs. Mowbray resolved to go to Rookwood, and to take her daughter thither—a proceeding to which the latter demurred."

"To Rookwood," said Dick, musingly. "Will she keep her oath, I wonder?"

"That's more than I can say," said Jerry, sipping his punch. "'Tis a deceitful sex!"

"'Tis a deceitful sex, indeed," echoed Dick, tossing off a tumbler. "For one Sybil we meet with twenty Handassahs, eh, count?"

"Twenty!—say rather a hundred," replied Jerry. "'Tis a vile sex."

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CHAPTER II

TOM KING

Grimm. How gloriously the sun sets to-night.

Moor. When I was a boy, my favorite thought was, that I should live and die like yonder glorious orb. It was a boyish thought.

Grimm. True, captain.

The Robbers.

"Peace, base calumniators," exclaimed Tom King, aroused from his toothpick reverie by these aspersions of the best part of creation. "Peace, I say. None shall dare abuse that dear devoted sex in the hearing of their champion, without pricking a lance with him in their behalf. What do you, either of you, who abuse woman in that wholesale style, know of her? Nothing—less than nothing; and yet you venture, upon your paltry experience, to lift up your voices and decry the sex. Now I do know her; and upon my own experience avouch, that, as a sex, woman, compared with man, is as an angel to a devil. As a sex, woman is faithful, loving, self-sacrificing. We 'tis that make her otherwise; we, selfish, exacting, neglectful men; we teach her indifference, and then blame her apt scholarship. We spoil our own hand, and then blame the cards. No abuse of women in my hearing. Give me a glass of grog, Dick. 'The sex!—three times three!'—and here's a song for you into the bargain." Saying which, in a mellow, plaintive tone, Tom gave the following:

PLEDGE OF THE HIGHWAYMAN

Come, fill up a bumper to Eve's fairest daughters,
Who have lavished their smiles on the brave and the free;
Toast the sweethearts of Dudley, Hind, Wilmot, and Waters,
Whate'er their attraction, whate'er their degree.
Pledge! pledge in a bumper, each kind-hearted maiden,
Whose bright eyes were dimmed at the highwayman's fall;
Who stood by the gallows with sorrow o'erladen,
Bemoaning the fate of the gallant Du-Val!
Here's to each lovely lass chance of war bringeth near one,
Whom, with manner impassioned, we tenderly stop;

And to whom, like the lover addressing his dear one,
In terms of entreaty the question we pop.
How oft, in such case, rosy lips have proved sweeter
Than the rosiest book, bright eyes saved a bright ring;
While that one other kiss has brought off a repeater,
And a bead as a favor—the favorite string.
With our hearts ready rifled, each pocket we rifle,
With the pure flame of chivalry stirring our breasts;
Life's risk for our mistress's praise is a trifle;
And each purse as a trophy our homage attests.
Then toss off your glasses to all girls of spirit,
Ne'er with names, or with number, your memories vex;
Our toast, boys, embraces each woman of merit,
And, for fear of omission, we'll drink the whole sex.
"Well," replied Dick, replenishing King's rummer, while he laughed heartily at his ditty, "I shan't refuse your toast, though my heart don't respond to your sentiments. Ah, Tom! the sex you praise so much will, I fear, prove your undoing. Do as you please, but curse me if ever I pin my life to a petticoat. I'd as soon think of neglecting the four cautions."

"The four cautions," said King; "what are they?"

"Did you never hear them?" replied Dick. "Attend, then, and be edified."

THE FOUR CAUTIONS

Pay attention to these cautions four,
And through life you will need little more,
Should you dole out your days to threescore
Beware of a pistol before!
Before! before!
Beware of a pistol before!
And when backward his ears are inclined,
And his tail with his ham is combined,
Caution two you will bear in your mind:
Beware of a prancer behind!
Behind! behind!
Beware of a prancer behind!
Thirdly, when in the park you may ride,
On your best bit of blood, sir, astride,
Chatting gay to your old friend's young bride:
Beware of a coach at the side!

At the side! at the side!
Beware of a coach at the side!
Lastly, whether in purple or gray,
Canter, ranter, grave, solemn, or gay,
Whate'er he may do or may say,
Beware of a priest every way!
Every way! every way!
Beware of a priest every way!
"Well," said Tom King, "all you can sing or say don't alter my good opinion of the women. Not a secret have I from the girl of my heart. She could have sold me over and over again if she had chosen, but my sweet Sue is not the wench to do that."

"It is not too late," said Dick. "Your Delilah may yet hand you over to the Philistines."

"Then I shall die in a good cause," said King; "but

The Tyburn Tree
Has no terrors for me,
Let better men swing—I'm at liberty.
I shall never come to the scragging-post, unless you turn topsman, Dick Turpin. My nativity has been cast, and the stars have declared I am to die by the hand of my best friend—and that's you—eh? Dick?"

"It sounds like it," replied Turpin; "but I advise you not to become too intimate with Jack Ketch. He may prove your best friend, after all."

"Why, faith, that's true," replied King, laughing; "and if I must ride backwards up Holborn Hill, I'll do the thing in style, and honest Jack Ketch shall never want his dues. A man should always die game. We none of us know how soon our turn may come; but come when it will, I shall never flinch from it.

As the highwayman's life is the fullest of zest,
So the highwayman's death is the briefest and best;
He dies not as other men die, by degrees,
But at once! without flinching—and quite at his ease!
as the song you are so fond of says. When I die it will not be of consumption. And if the surgeon's knife must come near me, it will be after death. There's some comfort in that reflection, at all events."

"True," replied Turpin, "and, with a little alteration, my song would suit you capitally:

There is not a king, should you search the world round,
So blithe as the king's king, Tom King, to be found;
Dear woman's his empire, each girl is his own,
And he'd have a long reign if he'd let 'em alone.
Ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Tom. "And now, Dick, to change the subject. You are off, I understand, to Yorkshire to-night. 'Pon my soul, you are a wonderful fellow—an alibi personified!—here and everywhere at the same time—no wonder you are called the flying highwayman. To-day in town—to-morrow at York—the day after at Chester. The devil only knows where you will pitch your quarters a week hence. There are rumors of you in all counties at the same moment. This man swears you robbed him at Hounslow; that on Salisbury Plain; while another avers you monopolize Cheshire and Yorkshire, and that it isn't safe even to hunt without pops in your pocket. I heard some devilish good stories of you at D'Osyndar's t'other day; the fellow who told them to me little thought I was a brother blade."

"You flatter me," said Dick, smiling complacently; "but it's no merit of mine. Black Bess alone enables me to do it, and hers be the credit. Talking of being everywhere at the same time, you shall hear what she once did for me in Cheshire. Meantime, a glass to the best mare in England. You won't refuse that toast, Tom. Ah! if your mistress is only as true to you as my nag to me, you might set at naught the tightest hempen cravat that was ever twisted, and defy your best friend to hurt you. Black Bess! and God bless her! And now for the song." Saying which, with much emotion, Turpin chanted the following rhymes:

BLACK BESS

Let the lover his mistress's beauty rehearse,
And laud her attractions in languishing verse;
Be it mine in rude strains, but with truth to express,
The love that I bear to my bonny Black Bess.
From the west was her dam, from the east was her sire,
From the one came her swiftness, the other her fire;
No peer of the realm better blood can possess
Than flows in the veins of my bonny Black Bess.
Look! Look! how that eyeball grows bright as a brand!
That neck proudly arches, those nostrils expand!
Mark! that wide flowing mane! of which each silky tress
Might adorn prouder beauties—though none like Black Bess.
Mark! that skin sleek as velvet, and dusky as night,

With its jet undisfigured by one lock of white;
That throat branched with veins, prompt to charge or caress
Now is she not beautiful?—bonny Black Bess!
Over highway and by-way, in rough and smooth weather,
Some thousands of miles have we journeyed together;
Our couch the same straw, and our meal the same mess
No couple more constant than I and Black Bess.
By moonlight, in darkness, by night, or by day,
Her headlong career there is nothing can stay;
She cares not for distance, she knows not distress:
Can you show me a courser to match with Black Bess?
"Egad! I should think not," exclaimed King; "you are as sentimental on the subject of your mare, as I am when I think of my darling Susan. But pardon my interruption. Pray proceed."

"Let me first clear my throat," returned Dick; "and now to resume:"

Once it happened in Cheshire, near Dunham, I popped
On a horseman alone, whom I speedily stopped;
That I lightened his pockets you'll readily guess—
Quick work makes Dick Turpin when mounted on Bess.
Now it seems the man knew me; "Dick Turpin," said he,
"You shall swing for this job, as you live, d'ye see;"
I laughed at his threats and his vows of redress;
I was sure of an alibi then with Black Bess.
The road was a hollow, a sunken ravine,
Overshadowed completely by wood like a screen;
I clambered the bank, and I needs must confess,
That one touch of the spur grazed the side of Black Bess.
Brake, brook, meadow, and plough'd field, Bess fleetly bestrode,
As the crow wings her flight we selected our road;
We arrived at Hough Green in five minutes, or less—
My neck it was saved by the speed of Black Bess.
Stepping carelessly forward, I lounge on the green,
Taking excellent care that by all I am seen;
Some remarks on time's flight to the squires I address,
But I say not a word of the flight of Black Bess.
I mention the hour—it was just about four—
Play a rubber at bowls—think the danger is o'er;
When athwart my next game, like a checkmate at chess,
Comes the horsemen in search of the rider of Bess.

What matter details? Off with triumph I came;
He swears to the hour, and the squires swear the same;
I had robbed him at four!—while at four they profess
I was quietly bowling—all thanks to Black Bess!
Then one halloo, boys, one loud cheering halloo!
To the swiftest of coursers, the gallant, the true!
For the sportsman unborn shall the memory bless
Of the horse of the highwayman, bonny Black Bess!

Loud acclamations rewarded Dick's performance. Awakened from his doze, Zoroaster beat time to the melody, the only thing, Jerry said, he was capable of beating in his present shattered condition. After some little persuasion, the Magus was prevailed upon to enliven the company with a strain, which he trolled forth after a maudlin manner:

THE DOUBLE CROSS

Though all of us have heard of crost fights,
And certain gains, by certain lost fights,
I rather fancies that it's news,
How in a mill, both men should lose;
For vere the odds are thus made even,
It plays the dickens with the steven;
Besides, against all rule they're sinning,
Vere neither has no chance of vinning.
Ri, tol, lol, &c.
Two milling coves, each vide avake,
Vere backed to fight for heavy stake:
But in the mean time, so it vos,
Both kids agreed to play a cross;
Bold came each buffer to the scratch,
To make it look a tightish match;
They peeled in style, and bets vere making,
'Tvos six to four, but few vere taking.
Ri, tol, lol, &c.
Quite cautiously the mill began,
For neither knew the other's plan;
Each cull completely in the dark,
Of vot might be his neighbor's mark;
Resolved his fibbing not to mind,
Nor yet to pay him back in kind;
So on each other kept they tout,
And sparred a bit, and dodged about,

Ri, tol, lol, &c.
Vith mawleys raised, Tom bent his back,
As if to plant a heavy thwack:
Vile Jem, with neat left-handed stopper,
Straight threatened Tommy with a topper;
'Tis all my eye! no claret flows,
No facers sound—no smashing blows—
Five minutes pass, yet not a hit,
How can it end, pals?—vait a bit.
Ri, tol, lol, &c.
Each cove vas teazed with double duty,
To please his backers, yet play booty;
Ven, luckily for Jem, a teller
Vos planted right upon his smeller;
Down dropped he, stunned; ven time vas called,
Seconds in vain the seconds bawled;
The mill is o'er, the crosser crost,
The loser's von, the vinner's lost!
Ri, tol, lol, &c.

The party assumed once more a lively air, and the glass was circulated so freely, that at last a final charge drained the ample bowl of its contents.

"The best of friends must part," said Dick; "and I would willingly order another whiff of punch, but I think we have all had enough to satisfy us, as you milling coves have it, Zory! Your one eye has got a drop in it already, old fellow; and, to speak the truth, I must be getting into the saddle without more delay, for I have a long ride before me. And now, friend Jerry, before I start, suppose you tip us one of your merry staves; we haven't heard your pipe to-day, and never a cross cove of us all can throw off so prime a chant as yourself. A song! a song!"

"Ay, a song!" reiterated King and the Magus.

"You do me too much honor, gemmen," said Jerry, modestly, taking a pinch of snuff; "I am sure I shall be most happy. My chants are all of a sort. You must make all due allowances—hem!" And, clearing his throat, he forthwith warbled

THE MODERN GREEK

(Not translated from the Romaic.)

Come, gemmen, name, and make your game,

See, round the ball is spinning.
Black, red, or blue, the colors view,
Une, deux, cinque, 'tis beginning,
Then make your game,
The color name,
While round the ball is spinning.
This sleight of hand my flat shall land
While covered by my bonnet,
I plant my ball, and boldly call,
Come make your game upon it!
Thus rat-a-tat!
I land my flat!
'Tis black—not red—is winning.
At gay roulette was never met
A lance like mine for bleeding!
I'm ne'er at fault, at nothing halt,
All other legs preceding.
To all awake,
I never shake
A mag unless I nip it.
Blind-hookey sees how well I squeeze
The well-packed cards in shuffling.
Ecarté, whist, I never missed,
A nick the broads while ruffling.
Mogul or loo,
The same I do,
I am down to trumps as trippet!
French hazard ta'en, I nick the main,
Was ne'er so prime a caster.
No crabs for me, I'm fly, d'ye see;
The bank shall change its master.
Seven quatre, trois,
The stakes are high!
Ten mains! ten mains are mine, pals!
At Rouge et Noir, you hellite choir
I'll make no bones of stripping;
One glorious coup for me shall do,
While they may deal each pip in.
Trente-un-après
Ne'er clogs my way;
The game—the game's divine, pals.

At billiards set, I make my bet,
I'll score and win the rub, pals;
I miss my cue, my hazard, too,
But yet my foe I'll drub, pals.
That cannon-twist,
I ne'er had missed,
Unless to suit my views, pals.
To make all right, the match look tight,
This trick, you know, is done, pals;
But now be gay, I'll show my play—
Hurrah! the game is won, pals.
No hand so fine,
No wrist like mine,
No odds I e'er refuse, pals.
Then choose your game; whate'er you name,
To me alike all offers;
Chic-hazard, whist, whate'er you list,
Replenish quick your coffers.
Thus, rat-a-tat!
I land my flat!
To every purse I speak, pals.
Cramped boxes 'ware, all's right and fair,
Barred balls I bar when goaded;
The deuce an ace is out of place!
The deuce a die is loaded!
Then make your game,
Your color name;
Success attend the Greek, pals.
"Bravo, Jerry—bravissimo!" chorused the party.

"And now, pals, farewell!—a long farewell!" said Dick, in a tone of theatrical valediction. "As I said before, the best friends must separate. We may soon meet again, or we now may part forever. We cannot command our luck; but we can make the best of the span allotted to us. You have your game to play. I have mine. May each of us meet with the success he deserves."

"Egad! I hope not," said King. "I'm afraid, in that case, the chances would be against us."

"Well, then, the success we anticipate, if you prefer it," rejoined Dick. "I have only to observe one thing more, namely, that I must insist upon standing Sam upon the present occasion. Not a word. I won't hear a syllable. Landlord, I say—what oh!" continued Dick,

stepping out of the arbor. "Here, my old Admiral of the White, what's the reckoning?—what's to pay, I say?"

"Let ye know directly, sir," replied mine host of the Falstaff.

"Order my horse—the black mare," added Dick.

"And mine," said King, "the sorrel colt. I'll ride with you a mile or two on the road, Dick; perhaps we may stumble upon something."

"Very likely."

"We meet at twelve, at D'Osyndar's, Jerry," said King, "if nothing happens."

"Agreed," responded Juniper.

"What say you to a rubber at bowls, in the mean time?" said the Magus, taking his everlasting pipe from his lips.

Jerry nodded acquiescence. And while they went in search of the implements of the game, Turpin and King sauntered gently on the green.

It was a delicious evening. The sun was slowly declining, and glowed like a ball of fire amid the thick foliage of a neighboring elm. Whether, like the robber Moor, Tom King was touched by this glorious sunset, we pretend not to determine. Certain it was that a shade of inexpressible melancholy passed across his handsome countenance, as he gazed in the direction of Harrow-on-the Hill, which, lying to the west of the green upon which they walked, stood out with its pointed spire and lofty college against the ruddy sky. He spoke not. But Dick noticed the passing emotion.

"What ails you, Tom?" said he, with much kindness of manner—"are you not well, lad?"

"Yes, I am well enough," said King; "I know not what came over me, but looking at Harrow, I thought of my school days, and what I was then, and that bright prospect reminded me of my boyish hopes."

"Tut—tut," said Dick, "this is idle—you are a man now."

"I know I am," replied Tom, "but I have been a boy. Had I any faith in presentiments, I should say this is the last sunset I shall ever see."

"Here comes our host," said Dick, smiling. "I've no presentiment that this is the last bill I shall ever pay."

The bill was brought and settled. As Turpin paid it, the man's conduct was singular, and awakened his suspicions.

"Are our horses ready?" asked Dick, quickly.

"They are, sir," said the landlord.

"Let us be gone," whispered Dick to King; "I don't like this fellow's manner. I thought I heard a carriage draw up at the inn door just now—there may be danger. Be fly!" added he to Jerry and the Magus. "Now, sir," said he to the landlord, "lead the way. Keep on the alert, Tom."

Dick's hint was not lost upon the two bowlers. They watched their comrades; and listened intently for any manifestation of alarm.

The Ride To York By William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER III

A SURPRISE

Was this well done, Jenny?—Captain Macheath.

While Turpin and King are walking across the bowling-green, we will see what has taken place outside the inn. Tom's presentiments of danger were not, it appeared, without foundation. Scarcely had the ostler brought forth our two highwaymen's steeds, when a post-chaise, escorted by two or three horsemen, drove furiously up to the door. The sole occupant of the carriage was a lady, whose slight and pretty figure was all that could be distinguished, her face being closely veiled. The landlord, who was busied in casting up Turpin's account, rushed forth at the summons. A word or two passed between him and the horsemen, upon which the former's countenance fell. He posted in the direction of the garden; and the horsemen instantly dismounted.

"We have him now, sure enough," said one of them, a very small man, who looked, in his boots, like Buckle equipped for the Oaks.

"By the powers! I begin to think so," replied the other horseman. "But don't spoil all, Mr. Coates, by being too precipitate."

"Never fear that, Mr. Tyrconnel," said Coates; for it was the gallant attorney: "he's sure to come for his mare. That's a trap certain to catch him, eh, Mr. Paterson? With the chief constable of Westminster to back us, the devil's in it if we are not a match for him."

"And for Tom King, too," replied the chief constable; "since his blowen's peached, the game's up with him, too. We've long had an eye upon him, and now we'll have a finger. He's one of your dashing trouts to whom we always give a long line, but we'll land him this time, anyhow. If you'll look after Dick Turpin, gemmen, I'll make sure of Tom."

"I'd rather you would help us, Mr. Paterson," said Coates; "never mind Tom King; another time will do for him."

"No such thing," said Paterson; "one weighs just as much for that matter as t'other. I'll take Tom to myself, and surely you two, with the landlord and ostler, can manage Turpin amongst you."

"I don't know that," said Coates, doubtfully; "he's a devil of a fellow to deal with."

"Take him quietly," said Paterson. "Draw the chaise out of the way, lad. Take our tits to one side, and place their nags near the door, ostler. Shall you be able to see him, ma'am, where you are?" asked the chief constable, walking to the carriage, and touching his hat to the lady within. Having received a satisfactory nod from the bonnet and veil, he returned to his companions. "And now, gemmen," added he, "let's step aside a little. Don't use your fire-arms too soon."

As if conscious of what was passing around her, and of the danger that awaited her master, Black Bess exhibited so much impatience, and plunged so violently, that it was with difficulty the ostler could hold her. "The devil's in the mare," said he; "what's the matter with her? She was quiet enough a few minutes since. Soho! lass, stand."

Turpin and King, meanwhile, walked quickly through the house, preceded by the host, who conducted them, and not without some inward trepidation, towards the door. Arrived there, each man rushed swiftly to his horse. Dick was in the saddle in an instant, and stamping her foot on the ostler's leg, Black Bess compelled the man, yelling with pain, to quit his hold of the bridle. Tom King was not equally fortunate. Before he could mount his horse, a loud shout was raised, which startled the animal, and caused him to swerve, so that Tom lost his footing in the stirrup, and fell to the ground. He was instantly seized by Paterson, and a struggle commenced, King endeavoring, but in vain, to draw a pistol.

"Flip him, Dick; fire, or I'm taken," cried King. "Fire! damn you, why don't you fire?" shouted he, in desperation, still struggling vehemently with Paterson, who was a strong man, and more than a match for a light weight like King.

"I can't," cried Dick; "I shall hit you, if I fire."

"Take your chance," shouted King. "Is this your friendship?"

Thus urged, Turpin fired. The ball ripped up the sleeve of Paterson's coat, but did not wound him.

"Again!" cried King. "Shoot him, I say. Don't you hear me? Fire again!"

Pressed as he was by foes on every side, himself their mark, for both Coates and Tyrconnel had fired upon him, and were now mounting their steeds to give chase, it was impossible that Turpin could take sure aim; added to which, in the struggle, Paterson and King were each moment changing their relative positions. He, however, would no

longer hesitate, but again, at his friend's request, fired. The ball lodged itself in King's breast! He fell at once. At this instant a shriek was heard from the chaise: the window was thrown open, and her thick veil being drawn aside, the features of a very pretty female, now impressed with terror and contrition, were suddenly exhibited.

King fixed his glazing eyes upon her.

"Susan!" sighed he, "is it you that I behold?"

"Yes, yes, 'tis she, sure enough," said Paterson. "You see, ma'am, what you and such like have brought him to. However, you'll lose your reward; he's going fast enough."

"Reward!" gasped King; "reward! Did she betray me?"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Paterson, "she blowed the gaff, if it's any consolation to you to know it."

"Consolation!" repeated the dying man; "perfidious!—oh!—the prophecy—my best friend—Turpin—I die by his hand."

And vainly striving to raise himself, he fell backwards and expired. Alas, poor Tom!

"Mr. Paterson! Mr. Paterson!" cried Coates; "leave the landlord to look after the body of that dying ruffian, and mount with us in pursuit of the living rascal. Come, sir; quick! mount! despatch! You see he is yonder; he seems to hesitate; we shall have him now."

"Well, gemmen, I'm ready," said Paterson; "but how the devil came you to let him escape?"

"Saint Patrick only knows!" said Titus; "he's as slippery as an eel—and, like a cat, turn him which way you will, he is always sure to alight upon his legs. I wouldn't wonder but we lose him now, after all, though he has such a small start. That mare flies like the wind."

"He shall have a tight run for it, at all events," said Paterson, putting spurs into his horse. "I've got a good nag under me, and you are neither of you badly mounted. He's only three hundred yards before us, and the devil's in it if we can't run him down. It's a three hundred pound job, Mr. Coates, and well worth a race."

"You shall have another hundred from me, sir, if you take him," said Coates, urging his steed forward.

"Thank you, sir, thank you. Follow my directions, and we'll make sure of him," said the constable. "Gently, gently, not so fast up the hill—you see he's breathing his horse. All in good time, Mr. Coates—all in good time, sir."

And maintaining an equal distance, both parties cantered leisurely up the ascent now called Windmill Hill. We shall now return to Turpin.

Aghast at the deed he had accidentally committed, Dick remained for a few moments irresolute; he perceived that King was mortally wounded, and that all attempts at rescue would be fruitless; he perceived, likewise, that Jerry and the Magus had effected their escape from the bowling-green, as he could detect their figures stealing along the hedge-side. He hesitated no longer. Turning his horse, he galloped slowly off, little heeding the pursuit with which he was threatened.

"Every bullet has its billet," said Dick; "but little did I think that I really should turn poor Tom's executioner. To the devil with this rascally snapper," cried he, throwing the pistol over the hedge. "I could never have used it again. 'Tis strange, too, that he should have foretold his own fate—devilish strange! And then that he should have been betrayed by the very blowen he trusted! that's a lesson, if I wanted any. But trust a woman!—not I, the length of my little finger."

The Ride To York By William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER IV

THE HUE AND CRY

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:
Stop thief! stop thief! a highwayman!
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.
John Gilpin.

Arrived at the brow of the hill, whence such a beautiful view of the country surrounding the metropolis is obtained, Turpin turned for an instant to reconnoitre his pursuers. Coates and Titus he utterly disregarded; but Paterson was a more formidable foe, and he well knew that he had to deal with a man of experience and resolution. It was then, for the first time, that the thoughts of executing his extraordinary ride to York first flashed across him; his bosom throbbed high with rapture, and he involuntarily exclaimed aloud, as he raised himself in the saddle, "By God! I will do it!"

He took one last look at the great Babel that lay buried in a world of trees beneath him; and as his quick eye ranged over the magnificent prospect, lit up by that gorgeous sunset, he could not help thinking of Tom King's last words. "Poor fellow!" thought Dick, "he said truly. He will never see another sunset." Aroused by the approaching clatter of his pursuers, Dick struck into a lane which lies on the right of the road, now called Shoot-up-hill Lane, and set off at a good pace in the direction of Hampstead.

"Now," cried Paterson, "put your tits to it, my boys. We must not lose sight of him for a second in these lanes."

Accordingly, as Turpin was by no means desirous of inconveniencing his mare in this early stage of the business, and as the ground was still upon an ascent, the parties preserved their relative distances.

At length, after various twistings and turnings in that deep and devious lane; after scaring one or two farmers, and riding over a brood or two of ducks; dipping into the

verdant valley of West End, and ascending another hill, Turpin burst upon the gorsy, sandy, and beautiful heath of Hampstead. Shaping his course to the left, Dick then made for the lower part of the heath, and skirted a path that leads towards North End, passing the furze-crowned summit which is now crested by a clump of lofty pines.

It was here that the chase first assumed a character of interest. Being open ground, the pursued and pursuers were in full view of each other; and as Dick rode swiftly across the heath, with the shouting trio hard at his heels, the scene had a very animated appearance. He crossed the hill—the Hendon Road—passed Crackskull Common—and dashed along the cross road to Highgate.

Hitherto no advantage had been gained by the pursuers; they had not lost ground, but still they had not gained an inch, and much spurring was required to maintain their position. As they approached Highgate, Dick slackened his pace, and the other party redoubled their efforts. To avoid the town, Dick struck into a narrow path at the right, and rode easily down the hill.

His pursuers were now within a hundred yards, and shouted to him to stand. Pointing to a gate which seemed to bar their further progress, Dick unhesitatingly charged it, clearing it in beautiful style. Not so with Coates's party; and the time they lost in unfastening the gate, which none of them chose to leap, enabled Dick to put additional space betwixt them. It did not, however, appear to be his intention altogether to outstrip his pursuers: the chase seemed to give him excitement, which he was willing to prolong as much as was consistent with his safety. Scudding rapidly past Highgate, like a swift-sailing schooner, with three lumbering Indiamen in her wake, Dick now took the lead along a narrow lane that threads the fields in the direction of Hornsey. The shouts of his followers had brought others to join them, and as he neared Crouch End, traversing the lane which takes its name from Du-Val, and in which a house frequented by that gayest of robbers stands, or stood, "A highwayman! a highwayman!" rang in his ears, in a discordant chorus of many voices.

The whole neighborhood was alarmed by the cries, and by the tramp of horses: the men of Hornsey rushed into the road to seize the fugitive, and women held up their babes to catch a glimpse of the flying cavalcade, which seemed to gain number and animation as it advanced. Suddenly three horsemen appear in the road—they hear the uproar and the din. "A highwayman! a highwayman!" cry the voices: "stop him, stop him!" But it is no such easy matter. With a pistol in each hand, and his bridle in his teeth, Turpin passed boldly on. His fierce looks—his furious steed—the impetus with which he pressed forward, bore down all before him. The horsemen gave way, and only served to swell the list of his pursuers.

"We have him now—we have him now!" cried Paterson, exultingly. "Shout for your lives. The turnpike man will hear us. Shout again—again! The fellow has heard it. The gate is shut. We have him. Ha, ha!"

The old Hornsey toll-bar was a high gate, with chevaux-de-frise on the upper rail. It may be so still. The gate was swung into its lock, and, like a tiger in his lair, the prompt custodian of the turnpike trusts, ensconced within his doorway, held himself in readiness to spring upon the runaway. But Dick kept steadily on. He coolly calculated the height of the gate; he looked to the right and to the left—nothing better offered; he spoke a few words of encouragement to Bess, gently patted her neck, then struck his spurs into her sides, and cleared the spikes by an inch. Out rushed the amazed turnpike man, thus unmercifully bilked, and was nearly trampled to death under the feet of Paterson's horse.

"Open the gate, fellow, and be expeditious," shouted the chief constable.

"Not I," said the man, sturdily, "unless I gets my dues. I've been done once already. But strike me stupid if I'm done a second time."

"Don't you perceive that's a highwayman? Don't you know that I'm chief constable of Westminster?" said Paterson, showing his staff. "How dare you oppose me in the discharge of my duty?"

"That may be, or it may not be," said the man, doggedly. "But you don't pass, unless I gets the blunt, and that's the long and short on it."

Amidst a storm of oaths, Coates flung down a crown piece, and the gate was thrown open.

Turpin took advantage of this delay to breathe his mare; and, striking into a by-lane at Duckett's Green, cantered easily along in the direction of Tottenham. Little repose was allowed him. Yelling like a pack of hounds in full cry, his pursuers were again at his heels. He had now to run the gauntlet of the long straggling town of Tottenham, and various were the devices of the populace to entrap him. The whole place was up in arms, shouting, screaming, running, dancing, and hurling every possible description of missile at the horse and her rider. Dick merrily responded to their clamor as he flew past, and laughed at the brickbats that were showered thick as hail, and quite as harmlessly, around him.

A few more miles' hard riding tired the volunteers, and before the chase reached Edmonton most of them were "nowhere." Here fresh relays were gathered, and a strong

field was again mustered. John Gilpin himself could not have excited more astonishment amongst the good folks of Edmonton, than did our highwayman as he galloped through their town. Unlike the men of Tottenham, the mob received him with acclamations, thinking, no doubt, that, like "the citizens of famous London town," he rode for a wager. Presently, however, borne on the wings of the blast, came the cries of "Turpin! Dick Turpin!" and the hurrahs were changed to hootings; but such was the rate at which our highwayman rode, that no serious opposition could be offered to him.

A man in a donkey-cart, unable to get out of the way, drew himself up in the middle of the road. Turpin treated him as he had done the dub at the knapping jigger, and cleared the driver and his little wain with ease. This was a capital stroke, and well adapted to please the multitude, who are ever taken with a brilliant action. "Hark away, Dick!" resounded on all hands, while hisses were as liberally bestowed upon his pursuers.

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CHAPTER V

THE SHORT PIPE

The Peons are capital horsemen, and several times we saw them, at a gallop, throw the rein on the horse's neck, take from one pocket a bag of loose tobacco, and, with a piece of paper, or a leaf of Indian corn, make a cigar, and then take out a flint and steel and light it.

Head's Rough Notes.

Away they fly past scattered cottages, swiftly and skimmingly, like eagles on the wing, along the Enfield highway. All were well mounted, and the horses, now thoroughly warmed, had got into their paces, and did their work beautifully. None of Coates's party lost ground, but they maintained it at the expense of their steeds, which were streaming like water-carts, while Black Bess had scarcely turned a hair.

Turpin, the reader already knows, was a crack rider; he was the crack rider of England of his time, and, perhaps, of any time. The craft and mystery of jockeyship was not so well understood in the eighteenth as it is in the nineteenth century; men treated their horses differently, and few rode them as well as many ride now, when every youngster takes to the field as naturally as if he had been bred a Guacho. Dick Turpin was a glorious exception to the rule, and anticipated a later age. He rode wonderfully lightly, yet sat his saddle to perfection, distributing the weight so exquisitely that his horse scarcely felt his pressure; he yielded to every movement made by the animal, and became, as it were, part and parcel of itself; he took care Bess should be neither strained nor wrung. Freely, and as lightly as a feather, was she borne along; beautiful was it to see her action—to watch her style and temper of covering the ground; and many a first-rate Meltonian might have got a wrinkle from Turpin's seat and conduct.

We have before stated that it was not Dick's object to ride away from his pursuers—he could have done that at any moment. He liked the fun of the chase, and would have been sorry to put a period to his own excitement. Confident in his mare, he just kept her at such speed as should put his pursuers completely to it, without in the slightest degree inconveniencing himself. Some judgment of the speed at which they went may be formed, when we state that little better than an hour had elapsed and nearly twenty miles had been ridden over. "Not bad travelling that," methinks we hear the reader exclaim.

"By the mother that bore me," said Titus, as they went along in this slapping style—Titus, by-the-by, rode a big, Roman-nosed, powerful horse, well adapted to his weight, but which required a plentiful exercise both of leg and arm to call forth all his action, and keep his rider alongside his companions—"by the mother that bore me," said he, almost thumping the wind out of his flea-bitten Bucephalus with his calves, after the Irish fashion, "if the fellow isn't lighting his pipe! I saw the sparks fly on each side of him, and there he goes like a smoky chimney on a frosty morning! See, he turns his impudent phiz, with the pipe in his mouth! Are we to stand that, Mr. Coates?"

"Wait awhile, sir—wait awhile," said Coates; "we'll smoke him by-and-by."

Pæans have been sung in honor of the Peons of the Pampas by the Headlong Sir Francis; but what the gallant major extols so loudly in the South American horsemen, viz., the lighting of a cigar when in mid career, was accomplished with equal ease by our English highwayman a hundred years ago, nor was it esteemed by him any extravagant feat either. Flint, steel, and tinder were bestowed within Dick's ample pouch, the short pipe was at hand, and within a few seconds there was a stream of vapor exhaling from his lips, like the smoke from a steamboat shooting down the river, and tracking his still rapid course through the air.

"I'll let 'em see what I think of 'em!" said Dick, coolly, as he turned his head.

It was now gray twilight. The mists of coming night were weaving a thin curtain over the rich surrounding landscape. All the sounds and hum of that delicious hour were heard, broken only by the regular clatter of the horses' hoofs. Tired of shouting, the chasers now kept on their way in deep silence; each man held his breath, and plunged his spurs, rowel deep, into his horse; but the animals were already at the top of their speed, and incapable of greater exertion. Paterson, who was a hard rider, and perhaps a thought better mounted, kept the lead. The rest followed as they might.

Had it been undisturbed by the rush of the cavalcade, the scene would have been still and soothing. Overhead a cloud of rooks were winging their garrulous flight to the ancestral avenue of an ancient mansion to the right; the bat was on the wing; the distant lowing of a herd of kine saluted the ear at intervals; the blithe whistle of the rustic herdsman, and the merry chime of waggon bells, rang pleasantly from afar. But these cheerful sounds, which make the still twilight hour delightful, were lost in the tramp of the horsemen, now three abreast. The hind fled to the hedge for shelter, and the waggoner pricked up his ears, and fancied he heard the distant rumbling of an earthquake.

On rush the pack, whipping, spurring, tugging for very life. Again they gave voice, in hopes the waggoner might succeed in stopping the fugitive. But Dick was already by his side. "Harkee, my tulip," cried he, taking the pipe from his mouth as he passed, "tell my friends behind they will hear of me at York."

"What did he say?" asked Paterson, coming up the next moment.

"That you'll find him at York," replied the waggoner.

"At York!" echoed Coates, in amaze.

Turpin was now out of sight, and although our trio flogged with might and main, they could never catch a glimpse of him until, within a short distance of Ware, they beheld him at the door of a little public house, standing with his bridle in his hand, coolly quaffing a tankard of ale. No sooner were they in sight, than Dick vaulted into the saddle, and rode off.

"Devil seize you, sir! why didn't you stop him?" exclaimed Paterson, as he rode up. "My horse is dead lame. I cannot go any further. Do you know what a prize you have missed? Do you know who that was?"

"No, sir, I don't," said the publican. "But I know he gave his mare more ale than he took himself, and he has given me a guinea instead of a shilling. He's a regular good 'un."

"A good 'un!" said Paterson; "it was Turpin, the notorious highwayman. We are in pursuit of him. Have you any horses? our cattle are all blown."

"You'll find the post-house in the town, gentlemen. I'm sorry I can't accommodate you. But I keeps no stabling. I wish you a very good evening, sir." Saying which, the publican retreated to his domicile.

"That's a flash crib, I'll be bound," said Paterson. "I'll chalk you down, my friend, you may rely upon it. Thus far we're done, Mr. Coates. But curse me if I give it in. I'll follow him to the world's end first."

"Right, sir—right," said the attorney. "A very proper spirit, Mr. Constable. You would be guilty of neglecting your duty were you to act otherwise. You must recollect my father, Mr. Paterson—Christopher, or Kit Coates; a name as well known at the Old Bailey as Jonathan Wild's. You recollect him—eh?"

"Perfectly well, sir," replied the chief constable.

"The greatest thief-taker, though I say it," continued Coates, "on record. I inherit all his zeal—all his ardor. Come along, sir. We shall have a fine moon in an hour—bright as day. To the post-house! to the post-house!"

Accordingly to the post-house they went; and, with as little delay as circumstances admitted, fresh hacks being procured, accompanied by a postilion, the party again pursued their onward course, encouraged to believe they were still in the right scent.

Night had now spread her mantle over the earth; still it was not wholly dark. A few stars were twinkling in the deep, cloudless heavens, and a pearly radiance in the eastern horizon heralded the rising of the orb of night. A gentle breeze was stirring; the dews of evening had already fallen; and the air felt bland and dry. It was just the night one would have chosen for a ride, if one ever rode by choice at such an hour; and to Turpin, whose chief excursions were conducted by night, it appeared little less than heavenly.

Full of ardor and excitement, determined to execute what he had mentally undertaken, Turpin held on his solitary course. Everything was favorable to his project; the roads were in admirable condition, his mare was in like order; she was inured to hard work, had rested sufficiently in town to recover from the fatigue of her recent journey, and had never been in more perfect training. "She has now got her wind in her," said Dick; "I'll see what she can do—hark away, lass—hark away! I wish they could see her now," added he, as he felt her almost fly away with him.

Encouraged by her master's voice and hand, Black Bess started forward at a pace which few horses could have equalled, and scarcely any have sustained so long. Even Dick, accustomed as he was to her magnificent action, felt electrified at the speed with which he was borne along. "Bravo! bravo!" shouted he, "hark away, Bess!"

The deep and solemn woods through which they were rushing rang with his shouts, and the sharp rattle of Bess's hoofs; and thus he held his way, while, in the words of the ballad,

Fled past, on right and left, how fast,
Each forest, grove, and bower;
On right and left, fled past, how fast,
Each city, town, and tower.

The Ride To York By William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER VI

BLACK BESS

Dauphin. I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. Ca, ha! He bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hairs; le cheval volant, the Pegasus qui a les narines de feu! When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

Shakespeare: Henry V., Act III.

Black Bess being undoubtedly the heroine of the Fourth Book of this Romance, we may, perhaps, be pardoned for expatiating a little in this place upon her birth, parentage, breeding, appearance, and attractions. And first as to her pedigree; for in the horse, unlike the human species, nature has strongly impressed the noble or ignoble caste. He is the real aristocrat, and the pure blood that flows in the veins of the gallant steed will infallibly be transmitted, if his mate be suitable, throughout all his line. Bess was no cock-tail. She was thorough-bred; she boasted blood in every bright and branching vein:

If blood can give nobility,
A noble steed was she;
Her sire was blood, and blood her dam,
And all her pedigree.

As to her pedigree. Her sire was a desert Arab, renowned in his day, and brought to this country by a wealthy traveller; her dam was an English racer, coal-black as her child. Bess united all the fire and gentleness, the strength and hardihood, the abstinence and endurance of fatigue of the one, with the spirit and extraordinary fleetness of the other. How Turpin became possessed of her is of little consequence. We never heard that he paid a heavy price for her; though we doubt if any sum would have induced him to part with her. In color, she was perfectly black, with a skin smooth on the surface as polished jet; not a single white hair could be detected in her satin coat. In make she was magnificent. Every point was perfect, beautiful, compact; modelled, in little, for strength and speed. Arched was her neck, as that of the swan; clean and fine were her lower limbs, as those of the gazelle; round and sound as a drum was her carcase, and as broad as a cloth-yard shaft her width of chest. Hers were the "pulchræ clunes, breve caput, arduaque cervix," of the Roman bard. There was no redundancy of flesh, 'tis true; her flanks might, to please some tastes, have been rounder, and her shoulders fuller; but

look at the nerve and sinew, palpable through the veined limbs! She was built more for strength than beauty, and yet she was beautiful. Look at that elegant little head; those thin, tapering ears, closely placed together; that broad, snorting nostril, which seems to snuff the gale with disdain; that eye, glowing and large as the diamond of Giamschid! Is she not beautiful? Behold her paces! how gracefully she moves! She is off!—no eagle on the wing could skim the air more swiftly. Is she not superb? As to her temper, the lamb is not more gentle. A child might guide her.

But hark back to Dick Turpin. We left him rattling along in superb style, and in the highest possible glee. He could not, in fact, be otherwise than exhilarated; nothing being so wildly intoxicating as a mad gallop. We seem to start out of ourselves—to be endued, for the time, with new energies. Our thoughts take wings rapid as our steed. We feel as if his fleetness and boundless impulses were for the moment our own. We laugh; we exult; we shout for very joy. We cry out with Mephistopheles, but in anything but a sardonic mood, "What I enjoy with spirit, is it the less my own on that account? If I can pay for six horses, are not their powers mine! I drive along, and am a proper man, as if I had four-and-twenty legs!" These were Turpin's sentiments precisely. Give him four legs and a wide plain, and he needed no Mephistopheles to bid him ride to perdition as fast as his nag could carry him. Away, away!—the road is level, the path is clear. Press on, thou gallant steed, no obstacle is in thy way!—and, lo! the moon breaks forth! Her silvery light is thrown over the woody landscape. Dark shadows are cast athwart the road, and the flying figures of thy rider and thyself are traced, like giant phantoms, in the dust!

Away, away! our breath is gone in keeping up with this tremendous run. Yet Dick Turpin has not lost his wind, for we hear his cheering cry—hark! he sings. The reader will bear in mind that Oliver means the moon—to "whiddle" is to blab.

OLIVER WHIDDLES!

Oliver whiddles—the tattler old!
Telling what best had been left untold.
Oliver ne'er was a friend of mine;
All glims I hate that so brightly shine.
Give me a night black as hell, and then
See what I'll show to you, my merry men.
Oliver whiddles!—who cares—who cares,
If down upon us he peers and stares?
Mind him who will, with his great white face,
Boldly I'll ride by his glim to the chase;
Give him a Rowland, and loudly as ever
Shout, as I show myself, "Stand and deliver!"

"Egad," soliloquized Dick, as he concluded his song, looking up at the moon. "Old Noll's no bad fellow, either. I wouldn't be without his white face to-night for a trifle. He's as good as a lamp to guide one, and let Bess only hold on as she goes now, and I'll do it with ease. Softly, wench, softly—dost not see it's a hill we're rising. The devil's in the mare, she cares for nothing." And as they ascended the hill, Dick's voice once more awoke the echoes of night.

WILL DAVIES AND DICK TURPIN

Hodiè mihi, cràs tibi.—Saint Augustin.

One night, when mounted on my mare,
To Bagshot Heath I did repair,
And saw Will Davies hanging there,
Upon the gibbet bleak and bare,
With a rustified, fustified, mustified air!
Within his chains bold Will looked blue,
Gone were his sword and snappers too,
Which served their master well and true;
Says I, "Will Davies, how are you?
With your rustified, fustified, mustified air!"
Says he, "Dick Turpin, here I be,
Upon the gibbet, as you see;
I take the matter easily;
You'll have your turn as well as me,
With your whistle-me, pistol-me, cut-my-throat air!"
Says I, "That's very true, my lad;
Meantime, with pistol and with prad,
I'm quite contented as I am,
And heed the gibbet not a d—n!
With its rustified, fustified, mustified air!"
"Poor Will Davies!" sighed Dick; "Bagshot ought never to forget him."

For never more shall Bagshot see
A highwayman of such degree,
Appearance, and gentility,
As Will, who hangs upon the tree,
With his rustified, fustified, mustified air!
"Well," mused Turpin, "I suppose one day it will be with me like all the rest of 'em, and that I shall dance a long lavolta to the music of the four whistling winds, as my betters have done before me; but I trust, whenever the chanter-culls and last-speech scribblers

get hold of me, they'll at least put no cursed nonsense into my mouth, but make me speak, as I have ever felt, like a man who never either feared death, or turned his back upon his friend. In the mean time I'll give them something to talk about. This ride of mine shall ring in their ears long after I'm done for—put to bed with a mattock, and tucked up with a spade.

And when I am gone, boys, each huntsman shall say,
None rode like Dick Turpin, so far in a day.
And thou, too, brave Bess!—thy name shall be linked with mine, and we'll go down to posterity together; and what," added he, despondingly, "if it should be too much for thee? what if——but no matter! Better die now, while I am with thee, than fall into the knacker's hands. Better die with all thy honors upon thy head, than drag out thy old age at the sand-cart. Hark forward, lass—hark forward!"

By what peculiar instinct is it that this noble animal, the horse, will at once perceive the slightest change in his rider's physical temperament, and allow himself so to be influenced by it, that, according as his master's spirits fluctuate, will his own energies rise and fall, wavering

From walk to trot, from canter to full speed?

How is it, we ask of those more intimately acquainted with the metaphysics of the Houyhnhnm than we pretend to be? Do the saddle or the rein convey, like metallic tractors, vibrations of the spirit betwixt the two? We know not, but this much is certain, that no servant partakes so much of the character of his master as the horse. The steed we are wont to ride becomes a portion of ourselves. He thinks and feels with us. As we are lively, he is sprightly; as we are depressed, his courage droops. In proof of this, let the reader see what horses some men make—make, we say, because in such hands their character is wholly altered. Partaking, in a measure, of the courage and the firmness of the hand that guides them, and of the resolution of the frame that sways them—what their rider wills, they do, or strive to do. When that governing power is relaxed, their energies are relaxed likewise; and their fine sensibilities supply them with an instant knowledge of the disposition and capacity of the rider. A gift of the gods is the gallant steed, which, like any other faculty we possess, to use or to abuse—to command or to neglect—rests with ourselves; he is the best general test of our own self-government.

Black Bess's action amply verified what we have just asserted; for during Turpin's momentary despondency, her pace was perceptibly diminished and her force retarded; but as he revived, she rallied instantly, and, seized apparently with a kindred enthusiasm, snorted joyously as she recovered her speed. Now was it that the child of the desert showed herself the undoubted offspring of the hardy loins from whence she

sprung. Full fifty miles had she sped, yet she showed no symptoms of distress. If possible, she appeared fresher than when she started. She had breathed; her limbs were suppler; her action was freer, easier, lighter. Her sire, who, upon his trackless wilds, could have outstripped the pestilent simoom; and with throat unslaked, and hunger unappeased, could thrice have seen the scorching sun go down, had not greater powers of endurance. His vigor was her heritage. Her dam, who upon the velvet sod was of almost unapproachable swiftness, and who had often brought her owner golden assurances of her worth, could scarce have kept pace with her, and would have sunk under a third of her fatigue. But Bess was a paragon. We ne'er shall look upon her like again, unless we can prevail upon some Bedouin chief to present us with a brood mare, and then the racing world shall see what a breed we will introduce into this country. Eclipse, Childers, or Hambletonian, shall be nothing to our colts, and even the railroad slow travelling, compared with the speed of our new nags!

But to return to Bess, or rather to go along with her, for there is no halting now; we are going at the rate of twenty knots an hour—sailing before the wind; and the reader must either keep pace with us, or drop astern. Bess is now in her speed, and Dick happy. Happy! he is enraptured—maddened—furious—intoxicated as with wine. Pshaw! wine could never throw him into such a burning delirium. Its choicest juices have no inspiration like this. Its fumes are slow and heady. This is ethereal, transporting. His blood spins through his veins; winds round his heart; mounts to his brain. Away! away! He is wild with joy. Hall, cot, tree, tower, glade, mead, waste, or woodland, are seen, passed, left behind, and vanish as in a dream. Motion is scarcely perceptible—it is impetus! volition! The horse and her rider are driven forward, as it were, by self-accelerated speed. A hamlet is visible in the moonlight. It is scarcely discovered ere the flints sparkle beneath the mare's hoofs. A moment's clatter upon the stones, and it is left behind. Again it is the silent, smiling country. Now they are buried in the darkness of woods; now sweeping along on the wide plain; now clearing the unopened toll-bar; now trampling over the hollow-sounding bridge, their shadows momently reflected in the placid mirror of the stream; now scaling the hill-side a thought more slowly; now plunging, as the horses of Phœbus into the ocean, down its precipitous sides.

The limits of two shires are already past. They are within the confines of a third. They have entered the merry county of Huntingdon; they have surmounted the gentle hill that slips into Godmanchester. They are by the banks of the rapid Ouse. The bridge is past; and as Turpin rode through the deserted streets of Huntingdon, he heard the eleventh hour given from the iron tongue of St. Mary's spire. In four hours—it was about seven when he started—Dick had accomplished full sixty miles!

A few reeling topers in the streets saw the horseman flit past, and one or two windows were thrown open; but Peeping Tom of Coventry would have had small chance of

beholding the unveiled beauties of Queen Godiva had she ridden at the rate of Dick Turpin. He was gone, like a meteor, almost as soon as he appeared.

Huntingdon is left behind, and he is once more surrounded by dew-gemmed hedges and silent slumbering trees. Broad meadows, or pasture land, with drowsy cattle, or low bleating sheep, lie on either side. But what to Turpin, at that moment, is nature, animate or inanimate? He thinks only of his mare—his future fame. None are by to see him ride; no stimulating plaudits ring in his ears; no thousand hands are clapping; no thousand voices huzzaing; no handkerchiefs are waved; no necks strained; no bright eyes rain influence upon him; no eagle orbs watch his motions; no bells are rung; no cup awaits his achievement; no sweepstakes—no plate. But his will be renown—everlasting renown; his will be fame which will not die with him—which will keep his reputation, albeit a tarnished one, still in the mouths of men. He wants all these adventitious excitements, but he has that within which is a greater excitement than all these. He is conscious that he is doing a deed to live by. If not riding for life, he is riding for immortality; and as the hero may perchance feel—for even a highwayman may feel like a hero,—when he willingly throws away his existence in the hope of earning a glorious name, Turpin cared not what might befall himself, so he could proudly signalize himself as the first of his land,

And witch the world with noble horsemanship!

What need had he of spectators? The eye of posterity was upon him; he felt the influence of that Argus glance which has made many a poor wight spur on his Pegasus with not half so good a chance of reaching the goal as Dick Turpin. Multitudes, yet unborn, he knew would hear and laud his deeds. He trembled with excitement, and Bess trembled under him. But the emotion was transient. On, on they fly! The torrent leaping from the crag—the bolt from the bow—the air-cleaving eagle—thoughts themselves are scarce more winged in their flight!

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CHAPTER VII

THE YORK STAGE

York, Four Days!—Stage Coach begins on Friday, the th of April, . All that are desirous to pass from London to York, or from York to London, or any other place on that road, let them repair to the Black Swan, in Holborn, in London, or to the Black Swan, in Coney Street, in York. At both which places they may be received in a Stage Coach, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, which performs the journey in four days—if God permits!—and sets forth at five in the morning. And returns from York to Stamford in two days, and from Stamford, by Huntingdon, in two days more. And the like stages in their return. Allowing each passenger fourteen pounds' weight, and all above, three pence per pound. Performed by Benjamin Kingman, Henry Harrison, and Waller Baynes.—Placard, preserved in the coffee-room, of the Black Swan Inn at York.

The night had hitherto been balmy and beautiful, with a bright array of stars, and a golden harvest moon, which seemed to diffuse even warmth with its radiance; but now Turpin was approaching the region of fog and fen, and he began to feel the influence of that dank atmosphere. The intersecting dykes, yawners, gullies, or whatever they are called, began to send forth their steaming vapors, and chilled the soft and wholesome air, obscuring the void, and in some instances, as it were, choking up the road itself with vapor. But fog or fen was the same to Bess; her hoofs rattled merrily along the road, and she burst from a cloud, like Eöus at the break of dawn.

It chanced, as he issued from a fog of this kind, that Turpin burst upon the York stage coach. It was no uncommon thing for the coach to be stopped; and so furious was the career of our highwayman, that the man involuntarily drew up his horses. Turpin had also to draw in the rein, a task of no little difficulty, as charging a huge, lumbering coach, with its full complement of passengers, was more than even Bess could accomplish. The moon shone brightly on Turpin and his mare. He was unmasked, and his features were distinctly visible. An exclamation was uttered by a gentleman on the box, who, it appeared, instantly recognized him.

"Pull up—draw your horses across the road!" cried the gentleman; "that's Dick Turpin, the highwayman. His capture would be worth three hundred pounds to you," added he, addressing the coachman, "and is of equal importance to me. Stand!" shouted he, presenting a cocked pistol.

This resolution of the gentleman was not apparently agreeable, either to the coachman or the majority of the passengers—the name of Turpin acting like magic upon them. One man jumped off behind, and was with difficulty afterwards recovered, having tumbled into a deep ditch at the roadside. An old gentleman with a cotton nightcap, who had popped out his head to swear at the coachman, drew it suddenly back. A faint scream in a female key issued from within, and there was a considerable hubbub on the roof. Amongst other ominous sounds, the guard was heard to click his long horse-pistols. "Stop the York four-day stage!" said he, forcing his smoky voice through a world of throat-embracing shawl; "the fastest coach in the kingdom: vos ever such atrocity heard of? I say, Joe, keep them ere leaders steady; we shall all be in the ditch. Don't you see where the hind wheels are? Who—whoop, I say."

The gentleman on the box now discharged his pistol, and the confusion within was redoubled. The white nightcap was popped out like a rabbit's head, and as quickly popped back on hearing the highwayman's voice. Owing to the plunging of the horses, the gentleman had missed his aim.

Prepared for such emergencies as the present, and seldom at any time taken aback, Dick received the fire without flinching. He then lashed the horses out of his course, and rode up, pistol in hand, to the gentleman who had fired.

"Major Mowbray," said he, in a stern tone, "I know you. I meant not either to assault you or these gentlemen. Yet you have attempted my life, sir, a second time. But you are now in my power, and by hell! if you do not answer the questions I put to you, nothing earthly shall save you."

"If you ask aught I may not answer, fire!" said the major; "I will never ask life from such as you."

"Have you seen aught of Sir Luke Rookwood?" asked Dick.

"The villain you mean is not yet secured," replied the major, "but we have traces of him. 'Tis with a view of procuring more efficient assistance that I ride to town."

"They have not met then, since?" said Dick, carelessly.

"Met! whom do you mean?"

"Your sister and Sir Luke," said Dick.

"My sister meet him!" cried the major, angrily—"think you he dares show himself at Rookwood?"

"Ho! ho!" laughed Dick—"she is at Rookwood, then? A thousand thanks, major. Good night to you, gentlemen."

"Take that with you, and remember the guard," cried the fellow, who, unable to take aim from where he sat, had crept along the coach roof, and discharged thence one of his large horse-pistols at what he took to be the highwayman's head, but which, luckily for Dick, was his hat, which he had raised to salute the passengers.

"Remember you," said Dick, coolly replacing his perforated beaver on his brow; "you may rely upon it, my fine fellow, I'll not forget you the next time we meet."

And off he went like the breath of the whirlwind.

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CHAPTER VIII

ROADSIDE INN

Moor. Take my horse, and dash a bottle of wine over him. 'Twas hot work.

Schiller: The Robbers.

We will now make inquiries after Mr. Coates and his party, of whom both we and Dick Turpin have for some time lost sight. With unabated ardor the vindictive man of law and his myrmidons pressed forward. A tacit compact seemed to have been entered into between the highwayman and his pursuers, that he was to fly while they were to follow. Like bloodhounds, they kept steadily upon his trail; nor were they so far behind as Dick imagined. At each post-house they passed they obtained fresh horses, and, while these were saddling, a postboy was despatched en courrier to order relays at the next station. In this manner they proceeded after the first stoppage without interruption. Horses were in waiting for them, as they, "bloody with spurring, fiery hot with haste," and their jaded hacks arrived. Turpin had been heard or seen in all quarters. Turnpike-men, waggoners, carters, trampers, all had seen him. Besides, strange as it may sound, they placed some faith in his word. York they believed would be his destination.

At length the coach which Dick had encountered hove in sight. There was another stoppage and another hubbub. The old gentleman's nightcap was again manifested, and suffered a sudden occultation, as upon the former occasion. The postboy, who was in advance, had halted, and given up his horse to Major Mowbray, who exchanged his seat on the box for one on the saddle, deeming it more expedient, after his interview with Turpin, to return to Rookwood, rather than to proceed to town. The postboy was placed behind Coates, as being the lightest weight; and, thus reinforced, the party pushed forward as rapidly as heretofore.

Eighty and odd miles had now been traversed—the boundary of another county, Northampton, passed; yet no rest nor respite had Dick Turpin or his unflinching mare enjoyed. But here he deemed it fitting to make a brief halt.

Bordering the beautiful domains of Burleigh House stood a little retired hostelry of some antiquity, which bore the great Lord Treasurer's arms. With this house Dick was not altogether unacquainted. The lad who acted as ostler was known to him. It was now midnight, but a bright and beaming night. To the door of the stable then did he ride, and

knocked in a peculiar manner. Reconnoitering Dick through a broken pane of glass in the lintel, and apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, the lad thrust forth a head of hair as full of straw as Mad Tom's is represented to be upon the stage. A chuckle of welcome followed his sleepy salutation. "Glad to see you, Captain Turpin," said he; "can I do anything for you?"

"Get me a couple of bottles of brandy and a beefsteak," said Dick.

"As to the brandy, you can have that in a jiffy—but the steak, Lord love you, the old ooman won't stand it at this time; but there's a cold round, mayhap a slice of that might do—or a knuckle of ham?"

"A pest on your knuckles, Ralph," cried Dick; "have you any raw meat in the house?"

"Raw meat!" echoed Ralph, in surprise. "Oh, yes, there's a rare rump of beef. You can have a cut off that, if you like."

"That's the thing I want," said Dick, ungirthing his mare. "Give me the scraper. There, I can get a whisp of straw from your head. Now run and get the brandy. Better bring three bottles. Uncork 'em, and let me have half a pail of water to mix with the spirit."

"A pail full of brandy and water to wash down a raw steak! My eyes!" exclaimed Ralph, opening wide his sleepy peepers; adding, as he went about the execution of his task, "I always thought them Rum-padders, as they call themselves, rum fellows, but now I'm sartin sure on it."

The most sedulous groom could not have bestowed more attention upon the horse of his heart than Dick Turpin now paid to his mare. He scraped, chafed, and dried her, sounded each muscle, traced each sinew, pulled her ears, examined the state of her feet, and, ascertaining that her "withers were un-wrung," finally washed her from head to foot in the diluted spirit, not, however, before he had conveyed a thimbleful of the liquid to his own parched throat, and replenished what Falstaff calls a "pocket-pistol," which he had about him. While Ralph was engaged in rubbing her down after her bath, Dick occupied himself, not in dressing the raw steak in the manner the stable-boy had anticipated, but in rolling it round the bit of his bridle.

"She will now go as long as there's breath in her body," said he, putting the flesh-covered iron within her mouth.

The saddle being once more replaced, after champing a moment or two at the bit, Bess began to snort and paw the earth, as if impatient of delay; and, acquainted as he was

with her indomitable spirit and power, her condition was a surprise even to Dick himself. Her vigor seemed inexhaustible, her vivacity was not a whit diminished, but, as she was led into the open space, her step became as light and free as when she started on her ride, and her sense of sound as quick as ever. Suddenly she pricked her ears, and uttered a low neigh. A dull tramp was audible.

"Ha!" exclaimed Dick, springing into his saddle; "they come."

"Who come, captain?" asked Ralph.

"The road takes a turn here, don't it?" asked Dick—"sweeps round to the right by the plantations in the hollow?"

"Ay, ay, captain," answered Ralph; "it's plain you knows the ground."

"What lies behind yon shed?"

"A stiff fence, captain—a reg'lar rasper. Beyond that a hill-side steep as a house, no oss as was ever shoed can go down it."

"Indeed!" laughed Dick.

A loud halloo from Major Mowbray, who seemed advancing upon the wings of the wind, told Dick that he was discovered. The major was a superb horseman, and took the lead of his party. Striking his spurs deeply into his horse, and giving him bridle enough, the major seemed to shoot forward like a shell through the air. The Burleigh Arms retired some hundred yards from the road, the space in front being occupied by a neat garden, with low, clipped edges. No tall timber intervened between Dick and his pursuers, so that the motions of both parties were visible to each other. Dick saw in an instant that if he now started he should come into collision with the major exactly at the angle of the road, and he was by no means desirous of hazarding such a rencontre. He looked wistfully back at the double fence.

"Come into the stable. Quick, captain, quick!" exclaimed Ralph.

"The stable!" echoed Dick, hesitating.

"Ay, the stable; it's your only chance. Don't you see he's turning the corner, and they are all coming? Quick, sir, quick!"

Dick, lowering his head, rode into the tenement, the door of which was unceremoniously slapped in the major's face, and bolted on the other side.

"Villain!" cried Major Mowbray, thundering at the door, "come forth! You are now fairly trapped at last—caught like the woodcock in your own springe. We have you. Open the door, I say, and save us the trouble of forcing it. You cannot escape us. We will burn the building down but we will have you."

"What dun you want, measter?" cried Ralph, from the lintel, whence he reconnoitered the major, and kept the door fast. "You're clean mista'en. There be none here."

"We'll soon see that," said Paterson, who had now arrived; and, leaping from his horse, the chief constable took a short run to give himself impetus, and with his foot burst open the door. This being accomplished, in dashed the major and Paterson, but the stable was vacant. A door was open at the back; they rushed to it. The sharply sloping sides of a hill slipped abruptly downwards, within a yard of the door. It was a perilous descent to the horseman, yet the print of a horse's heels were visible in the dislodged turf and scattered soil.

"Confusion!" cried the major, "he has escaped us."

"He is yonder," said Paterson, pointing out Turpin moving swiftly through the steaming meadow. "See, he makes again for the road—he clears the fence. A regular throw he has given us, by the Lord!"

"Nobly done, by Heaven!" cried the major. "With all his faults, I honor the fellow's courage and admire his prowess. He's already ridden to-night as I believe never man rode before. I would not have ventured to slide down that wall, for it's nothing else, with the enemy at my heels. What say you, gentlemen, have you had enough? Shall we let him go, or——?"

"As far as chase goes, I don't care if we bring the matter to a conclusion," said Titus. "I don't think, as it is, that I shall have a sate to sit on this week to come. I've lost leather most confoundedly."

"What says Mr. Coates?" asked Paterson. "I look to him."

"Then mount, and off," cried Coates. "Public duty requires that we should take him."

"And private pique," returned the major. "No matter! The end is the same. Justice shall be satisfied. To your steeds, my merry men all. Hark, and away."

Once more upon the move, Titus forgot his distress, and addressed himself to the attorney, by whose side he rode.

"What place is that we're coming to?" asked he, pointing to a cluster of moonlit spires belonging to a town they were rapidly approaching.

"Stamford," replied Coates.

"Stamford!" exclaimed Titus; "by the powers! then we've ridden a matter of ninety miles. Why, the great deeds of Redmond O'Hanlon were nothing to this! I'll remember it to my dying day, and with reason," added he, uneasily shifting his position on the saddle.

The Ride To York By William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER IX

EXCITEMENT

How fled what moonshine faintly showed!
How fled what darkness hid!
How fled the earth beneath their feet,
The heaven above their head.
William and Helen.

Dick Turpin, meanwhile, held bravely on his course. Bess was neither strained by her gliding passage down the slippery hill-side nor shaken by larking the fence in the meadow. As Dick said, "It took a devilish deal to take it out of her." On regaining the high road she resumed her old pace, and once more they were distancing Time's swift chariot in its whirling passage o'er the earth. Stamford, and the tongue of Lincoln's fenny shire, upon which it is situated, were passed almost in a breath. Rutland is won and passed, and Lincolnshire once more entered. The road now verged within a bowshot of that sporting Athens—Corinth, perhaps, we should say—Melton Mowbray. Melton was then unknown to fame, but, as if inspired by that furor venaticus which now inspires all who come within twenty miles of this Charybdis of the chase, Bess here let out in a style with which it would have puzzled the best Leicestershire squire's best prad to have kept pace. The spirit she imbibed through the pores of her skin, and the juices of the meat she had champed, seemed to have communicated preternatural excitement to her. Her pace was absolutely terrific. Her eyeballs were dilated, and glowed like flaming carbuncles; while her widely-distended nostril seemed, in the cold moonshine, to snort forth smoke, as from a hidden fire. Fain would Turpin have controlled her; but, without bringing into play all his tremendous nerve, no check could be given her headlong course, and for once, and the only time in her submissive career, Bess resolved to have her own way—and she had it. Like a sensible fellow, Dick conceded the point. There was something even of conjugal philosophy in his self-communion upon the occasion. "E'en let her take her own way and be hanged to her, for an obstinate, self-willed jade as she is," said he: "now her back is up there'll be no stopping her, I'm sure: she rattles away like a woman's tongue, and when that once begins, we all know what chance the curb has. Best to let her have it out, or rather to lend her a lift. 'Twill be over the sooner. Tantivy, lass! tantivy! I know which of us will tire first."

We have before said that the vehement excitement of continued swift riding produces a paroxysm in the sensorium amounting to delirium. Dick's blood was again on fire. He

was first giddy, as after a deep draught of kindling spirit; this passed off, but the spirit was still in his veins—the estro was working in his brain. All his ardor, his eagerness, his fury, returned. He rode like one insane, and his courser partook of his frenzy. She bounded; she leaped; she tore up the ground beneath her; while Dick gave vent to his exultation in one wild, prolonged halloo. More than half his race is run. He has triumphed over every difficulty. He will have no further occasion to halt. Bess carries her forage along with her. The course is straightforward—success seems certain—the goal already reached—the path of glory won. Another wild halloo, to which the echoing woods reply, and away!

Away! away! thou matchless steed! yet brace fast thy sinews—hold, hold thy breath, for, alas! the goal is not yet attained!

But forward! forward, on they go,
High snorts the straining steed,
Thick pants the rider's laboring breath,
As headlong on they speed!

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CHAPTER X

THE GIBBET

See there, see there, what yonder swings
And creaks 'mid whistling rain,
Gibbet and steel—the accursed wheel—
A murderer in his chain.
William and Helen.

As the eddying currents sweep over its plains in howling, bleak December, the horse and her rider passed over what remained of Lincolnshire. Grantham is gone, and they are now more slowly looking up the ascent of Gonerby Hill, a path well known to Turpin; where often, in bygone nights, many a purse had changed its owner. With that feeling of independence and exhilaration which every one feels, we believe, on having climbed the hill-side, Turpin turned to gaze around. There was triumph in his eye. But the triumph was checked as his glance fell upon a gibbet near him to the right, on the round point of hill which is a landmark to the wide vale of Belvoir. Pressed as he was for time, Dick immediately struck out of the road, and approached the spot where it stood. Two scarecrow objects, covered with rags and rusty links of chains, depended from the tree. A night crow screaming around the carcases added to the hideous effect of the scene. Nothing but the living highwayman and his skeleton brethren was visible upon the solitary spot. Around him was the lonesome waste of hill, o'erlooking the moonlit valley: beneath his feet, a patch of bare and lightning-blasted sod: above, the wan, declining moon and skies, flaked with ghostly clouds; before him, the bleached bodies of the murderers, for such they were.

"Will this be my lot, I marvel?" said Dick, looking upwards, with an involuntary shudder.

"Ay, marry will it," rejoined a crouching figure, suddenly springing from beside a tuft of briars that skirted the blasted ground.

Dick started in his saddle, while Bess reared and plunged at the sight of this unexpected apparition.

"What, ho! thou devil's dam, Barbara, is it thou?" exclaimed Dick, reassured upon discovering it was the gipsy queen, and no spectre whom he beheld. "Stand still, Bess—

stand, lass. What dost thou here, mother of darkness? Art gathering mandrakes for thy poisonous messes, or pilfering flesh from the dead? Meddle not with their bones, or I will drive thee hence. What dost thou here, I say, old dam of the gibbet?"

"I came to die here," replied Barbara, in a feeble tone; and, throwing back her hood, she displayed features well-nigh as ghastly as those of the skeletons above her.

"Indeed," replied Dick. "You've made choice of a pleasant spot, it must be owned. But you'll not die yet?"

"Do you know whose bodies these are?" asked Barbara, pointing upwards.

"Two of your race," replied Dick; "right brethren of the blade."

"Two of my sons," returned Barbara; "my twin children. I am come to lay my bones beneath their bones—my sepulchre shall be their sepulchre; my body shall feed the fowls of the air as theirs have fed them. And if ghosts can walk, we'll scour this heath together. I tell you what, Dick Turpin," said the hag, drawing as near to the highwayman as Bess would permit her; "dead men walk and ride—ay, ride!—there's a comfort for you. I've seen these do it. I have seen them fling off their chains, and dance—ay, dance with me—with their mother. No revels like dead men's revels, Dick. I shall soon join 'em."

"You will not lay violent hands upon yourself, mother?" said Dick, with difficulty mastering his terror.

"No," replied Barbara, in an altered tone. "But I will let nature do her task. Would she could do it more quickly. Such a life as mine won't go out without a long struggle. What have I to live for now? All are gone—she and her child! But what is this to you? You have no child; and if you had, you could not feel like a father. No matter—I rave. Listen to me. I have crawled hither to die. 'Tis five days since I beheld you, and during that time food has not passed these lips, nor aught of moisture, save Heaven's dew, cooled this parched throat, nor shall they to the last. That time cannot be far off; and now can you not guess how I mean to die? Begone and leave me; your presence troubles me. I would breathe my last breath alone, with none to witness the parting pang."

"I will not trouble you longer, mother," said Dick, turning his mare; "nor will I ask your blessing."

"My blessing!" scornfully ejaculated Barbara. "You shall have it if you will, but you will find it a curse. Stay! a thought strikes me. Whither are you going?"

"To seek Sir Luke Rookwood," replied Dick. "Know you aught of him?"

"Sir Luke Rookwood! You seek him, and would find him?" screamed Barbara.

"I would," said Dick.

"And you will find him," said Barbara; "and that ere long. I shall ne'er again behold him. Would I could. I have a message for him—one of life and death. Will you convey it to him?"

"I will," said the highwayman.

"Swear by those bones to do so," cried Barbara, pointing with her skinny fingers to the gibbet; "that you will do my bidding."

"I swear," cried Dick.

"Fail not, or we will haunt thee to thy life's end," cried Barbara; adding, as she handed a sealed package to the highwayman, "Give this to Sir Luke—to him alone. I would have sent it to him by other hands ere this, but my people have deserted me—have pillaged my stores—have rifled me of all save this. Give this, I say, to Sir Luke, with your own hands. You have sworn it, and will obey. Give it to him, and bid him think of Sybil as he opens it. But this must not be till Eleanor is in his power; and she must be present when the seal is broken. It relates to both. Dare not to tamper with it, or my curse shall pursue you. That packet is guarded with a triple spell, which to you were fatal. Obey me, and my dying breath shall bless thee."

"Never fear," said Dick, taking the packet; "I'll not disappoint you, mother, depend upon it."

"Hence!" cried the crone; and as she watched Dick's figure lessening upon the Waste, and at length beheld him finally disappear down the hill-side, she sank to the ground, her frail strength being entirely exhausted. "Body and soul may now part in peace," gasped she. "All I live for is accomplished." And ere one hour had elapsed, the night crow was perched upon her still breathing frame.

Long pondering upon this singular interview, Dick pursued his way. At length he thought fit to examine the packet with which the old gipsy had entrusted him.

"It feels like a casket," thought he. "It can't be gold. But then it may be jewels, though they don't rattle, and it ain't quite heavy enough. What can it be? I should like to know.

There is some mystery, that's certain, about it; but I will not break the seal, not I. As to her spell, that I don't value a rush; but I've sworn to give it to Sir Luke, and deliver her message, and I'll keep my word if I can. He shall have it." So saying, he replaced it in his pocket.

The Ride To York By William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER XI

THE PHANTOM STEED

I'll speak to thee, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace.
Hamlet.

Time presses. We may not linger in our course. We must fly on before our flying highwayman. Full forty miles shall we pass over in a breath. Two more hours have elapsed, and he still urges his headlong career, with heart resolute as ever, and purpose yet unchanged. Fair Newark, and the dashing Trent, "most loved of England's streams," are gathered to his laurels. Broad Notts, and its heavy paths and sweeping glades; its waste—forest no more—of Sherwood past; bold Robin Hood and his merry men, his Marian and his moonlight rides, recalled, forgotten, left behind. Hurrah! hurrah! That wild halloo, that waving arm, that enlivening shout—what means it? He is once more upon Yorkshire ground; his horse's hoof beats once more the soil of that noble shire. So transported was Dick, that he could almost have flung himself from the saddle to kiss the dust beneath his feet. Thrice fifty miles has he run, nor has the morn yet dawned upon his labors. Hurrah! the end draws nigh; the goal is in view. Halloo! halloo! on!

Bawtrey is past. He takes the lower road by Thorne and Selby. He is skirting the waters of the deep-channelled Don.

Bess now began to manifest some slight symptoms of distress. There was a strain in the carriage of her throat, a dulness in her eye, a laxity in her ear, and a slight stagger in her gait, which Turpin noticed with apprehension. Still she went on, though not at the same gallant pace as heretofore. But, as the tired bird still battles with the blast upon the ocean, as the swimmer still stems the stream, though spent, on went she: nor did Turpin dare to check her, fearing that, if she stopped, she might lose her force, or, if she fell, she would rise no more.

It was now that gray and grimly hour ere one flicker of orange or rose has gemmed the east, and when unwearying Nature herself seems to snatch brief repose. In the roar of restless cities, this is the only time when their strife is hushed. Midnight is awake—alive; the streets ring with laughter and with rattling wheels. At the third hour, a dead, deep silence prevails; the loud-voiced streets grow dumb. They are deserted of all, save the

few guardians of the night and the skulking robber. But even far removed from the haunts of men and hum of towns it is the same. "Nature's best nurse" seems to weigh nature down, and stillness reigns throughout. Our feelings are, in a great measure, influenced by the hour. Exposed to the raw, crude atmosphere, which has neither the nipping, wholesome shrewdness of morn, nor the profound chillness of night, the frame vainly struggles against the dull, miserable sensations engendered by the damps, and at once communicates them to the spirits. Hope forsakes us. We are weary, exhausted. Our energy is dispirited. Sleep does "not weigh our eyelids down." We stare upon the vacancy. We conjure up a thousand restless, disheartening images. We abandon projects we have formed, and which, viewed through this medium, appear fantastical, chimerical, absurd. We want rest, refreshment, energy.

We will not say that Turpin had all these misgivings. But he had to struggle hard with himself to set sleep and exhaustion at defiance.

The moon had set. The stars,

Pinnacled deep in the intense main,

had all—save one, the herald of the dawn—withdrawn their luster. A dull mist lay on the stream, and the air became piercing cold. Turpin's chilled fingers could scarcely grasp the slackening rein, while his eyes, irritated by the keen atmosphere, hardly enabled him to distinguish surrounding objects, or even to guide his steed. It was owing, probably, to this latter circumstance, that Bess suddenly floundered and fell, throwing her master over her head.

Turpin instantly recovered himself. His first thought was for his horse. But Bess was instantly upon her legs—covered with dust and foam, sides and cheeks—and with her large eyes glaring wildly, almost piteously, upon her master.

"Art hurt, lass?" asked Dick, as she shook herself, and slightly shivered. And he proceeded to the horseman's scrutiny. "Nothing but a shake; though that dull eye—those quivering flanks——" added he, looking earnestly at her. "She won't go much further, and I must give it up—what! give up the race just when it's won? No, that can't be. Ha! well thought on. I've a bottle of liquid, given me by an old fellow, who was a knowing cove and famous jockey in his day, which he swore would make a horse go as long as he'd a leg to carry him, and bade me keep it for some great occasion. I've never used it; but I'll try it now. It should be in this pocket. Ah! Bess, wench, I fear I'm using thee, after all, as Sir Luke did his mistress, that I thought so like thee. No matter! It will be a glorious end."

Raising her head upon his shoulder, Dick poured the contents of the bottle down the throat of his mare. Nor had he to wait long before its invigorating effects were instantaneous. The fire was kindled in the glassy orb; her crest was once more erected; her flank ceased to quiver; and she neighed loud and joyously.

"Egad, the old fellow was right," cried Dick. "The drink has worked wonders. What the devil could it have been? It smells like spirit," added he, examining the bottle. "I wish I'd left a taste for myself. But here's that will do as well." And he drained his flask of the last drop of brandy.

Dick's limbs were now become so excessively stiff, that it was with difficulty he could remount his horse. But this necessary preliminary being achieved by the help of a stile, he found no difficulty in resuming his accustomed position upon the saddle. We know not whether there was any likeness between our Turpin and that modern Hercules of the sporting world, Mr. Osbaldeston. Far be it from us to institute any comparison, though we cannot help thinking that, in one particular, he resembled that famous "copper-bottomed" squire. This we will leave to our reader's discrimination. Dick bore his fatigues wonderfully. He suffered somewhat of that martyrdom which, according to Tom Moore, occurs "to weavers and M. P.'s, from sitting too long;" but again on his courser's back, he cared not for anything.

Once more, at a gallant pace, he traversed the banks of the Don, skirting the fields of flax that bound its sides, and hurried far more swiftly than its current to its confluence with the Aire.

Snaith was past. He was on the road to Selby when dawn first began to break. Here and there a twitter was heard in the hedge; a hare ran across his path, gray-looking as the morning self; and the mists began to rise from the earth. A bar of gold was drawn against the east, like the roof of a gorgeous palace. But the mists were heavy in this world of rivers and their tributary streams. The Ouse was before him, the Trent and Aire behind; the Don and Derwent on either hand, all in their way to commingle their currents ere they formed the giant Humber. Amid a region so prodigal of water, no wonder the dews fell thick as rain. Here and there the ground was clear; but then again came a volley of vapor, dim and palpable as smoke.

While involved in one of these fogs, Turpin became aware of another horseman by his side. It was impossible to discern the features of the rider, but his figure in the mist seemed gigantic; neither was the color of his steed distinguishable. Nothing was visible except the meagre-looking, phantom-like outline of a horse and his rider, and, as the unknown rode upon the turf that edged the way, even the sound of the horse's hoofs was scarcely audible. Turpin gazed, not without superstitious awe. Once or twice he essayed

to address the strange horseman, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. He fancied he discovered in the mist-exaggerated lineaments of the stranger a wild and fantastic resemblance to his friend Tom King. "It must be Tom," thought Turpin; "he is come to warn me of my approaching end. I will speak to him."

But terror o'ermastered his speech. He could not force out a word, and thus side by side they rode in silence. Quaking with fears he would scarcely acknowledge to himself, Dick watched every motion of his companion. He was still, stern, spectre-like, erect; and looked for all the world like a demon on his phantom steed. His courser seemed, in the indistinct outline, to be huge and bony, and, as he snorted furiously in the fog, Dick's heated imagination supplied his breath with a due proportion of flame. Not a word was spoken—not a sound heard, save the sullen dead beat of his hoofs upon the grass. It was intolerable to ride thus cheek by jowl with a goblin. Dick could stand it no longer. He put spurs to his horse, and endeavored to escape. But it might not be. The stranger, apparently without effort, was still by his side, and Bess's feet, in her master's apprehensions, were nailed to the ground. By-and-by, however, the atmosphere became clearer. Bright quivering beams burst through the vaporous shroud, and then it was that Dick discovered that the apparition of Tom King was no other than Luke Rookwood. He was mounted on his old horse, Rook, and looked grim and haggard as a ghost vanishing at the crowing of the cock.

"Sir Luke Rookwood, by this light!" exclaimed Dick, in astonishment. "Why, I took you for——"

"The devil, no doubt?" returned Luke, smiling sternly, "and were sorry to find yourself so hard pressed. Don't disquiet yourself; I am still flesh and blood."

"Had I taken you for one of mortal mould," said Dick, "you should have soon seen where I'd have put you in the race. That confounded fog deceived me, and Bess acted the fool as well as myself. However, now I know you, Sir Luke, you must spur alongside, for the hawks are on the wing; and though I've much to say, I've not a second to lose." And Dick briefly detailed the particulars of his ride, concluding with his rencontre with Barbara. "Here's the packet," said he, "just as I got it. You must keep it till the proper moment. And here," added he, fumbling in his pocket for another paper, "is the marriage document. You are now your father's lawful son, let who will say you nay. Take it and welcome. If you are ever master of Miss Mowbray's hand, you will not forget Dick Turpin."

"I will not," said Luke, eagerly grasping the certificate; "but she never may be mine."

"You have her oath?"

"I have."

"What more is needed?"

"Her hand."

"That will follow."

"It shall follow," replied Sir Luke, wildly. "You are right. She is my affianced bride—affianced before hell, if not before heaven. I have sealed the contract with blood—with Sybil's blood—and it shall be fulfilled. I have her oath—her oath—ha, ha! Though I perish in the attempt, I will wrest her from Ranulph's grasp. She shall never be his. I would stab her first. Twice have I failed in my endeavors to bear her off. I am from Rookwood even now. To-morrow night I shall renew the attack. Will you assist me?"

"To-morrow night!" interrupted Dick.

"Nay, I should say to-night. A new day has already dawned," replied Luke.

"I will: she is at Rookwood?"

"She languishes there at present, attended by her mother and her lover. The hall is watched and guarded. Ranulph is ever on the alert. But we will storm their garrison. I have a spy within its walls—a gipsy girl, faithful to my interests. From her I have learnt that there is a plot to wed Eleanor to Ranulph, and that the marriage is to take place privately to-morrow. This must be prevented."

"It must. But why not boldly appear in person at the hall, and claim her?"

"Why not? I am a proscribed felon. A price is set upon my head. I am hunted through the country—driven to concealment, and dare not show myself for fear of capture. What could I do now? They would load me with fetters, bury me in a dungeon, and wed Eleanor to Ranulph. What would my rights avail? What would her oath signify to them? No; she must be mine by force. His she shall never be. Again, I ask you, will you aid me?"

"I have said—I will. Where is Alan Rookwood?"

"Concealed within the hut on Thorne Waste. You know it—it was one of your haunts."

"I know it well," said Dick, "and Conkey Jem, its keeper, into the bargain: he is a knowing file. I'll join you at the hut at midnight, if all goes well. We'll bring off the wench, in spite of them all—just the thing I like. But in case of a break-down on my part, suppose you take charge of my purse in the mean time."

Luke would have declined this offer.

"Pshaw!" said Dick. "Who knows what may happen? and it's not ill-lined either. You'll find an odd hundred or so in that silken bag—it's not often your highwayman gives away a purse. Take it, man—we'll settle all to-night; and if I don't come, keep it—it will help you to your bride. And now off with you to the hut, for you are only hindering me. Adieu! My love to old Alan. We'll do the trick to-night. Away with you to the hut. Keep yourself snug there till midnight, and we'll ride over to Rookwood."

"At midnight," replied Sir Luke, wheeling off, "I shall expect you."

"'Ware hawks!" hallooed Dick.

But Luke had vanished. In another instant Dick was scouring the plain as rapidly as ever. In the mean time, as Dick has casually alluded to the hawks, it may not be amiss to inquire how they had flown throughout the night, and whether they were still in chase of their quarry.

With the exception of Titus, who was completely done up at Grantham, "having got," as he said, "a complete bellyful of it," they were still on the wing, and resolved sooner or later to pounce upon their prey, pursuing the same system as heretofore in regard to the post-horses. Major Mowbray and Paterson took the lead, but the irascible and invincible attorney was not far in their rear, his wrath having been by no means allayed by the fatigue he had undergone. At Bawtrey they held a council of war for a few minutes, being doubtful which course he had taken. Their incertitude was relieved by a foot traveller, who had heard Dick's loud halloo on passing the boundary of Nottinghamshire, and had seen him take the lower road. They struck, therefore, into the path at Thorne at a hazard, and were soon satisfied they were right. Furiously did they now spur on. They reached Selby, changed horses at the inn in front of the venerable cathedral church, and learnt from the postboy that a toilworn horseman, on a jaded steed, had ridden through the town about five minutes before them, and could not be more than a quarter of a mile in advance. "His horse was so dead beat," said the lad, "that I'm sure he cannot have got far; and, if you look sharp, I'll be bound you'll overtake him before he reaches Cawood Ferry."

Mr. Coates was transported. "We'll lodge him snug in York Castle before an hour, Paterson," cried he, rubbing his hands.

"I hope so, sir," said the chief constable, "but I begin to have some qualms."

"Now, gentlemen," shouted the postboy, "come along. I'll soon bring you to him."

The Ride To York By William Harrison Ainsworth

CHAPTER XII

CAWOOD FERRY

The sight renewed my courser's feet,
A moment, staggering feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answered, and then fell.
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immovable,—
His first, and last career was done.
Mazeppa.

The sun had just o'ertopped the "high eastern hill," as Turpin reached the Ferry of Cawood, and his beams were reflected upon the deep and sluggish waters of the Ouse. Wearily had he dragged his course thither—wearily and slow. The powers of his gallant steed were spent, and he could scarcely keep her from sinking. It was now midway 'twixt the hours of five and six. Nine miles only lay before him, and that thought again revived him. He reached the water's edge, and hailed the ferryboat, which was then on the other side of the river. At that instant a loud shout smote his ear; it was the halloo of his pursuers. Despair was in his look. He shouted to the boatman, and bade him pull fast. The man obeyed; but he had to breast a strong stream, and had a lazy bark and heavy sculls to contend with. He had scarcely left the shore when, another shout was raised from the pursuers. The tramp of their steeds grew louder and louder.

The boat had scarcely reached the middle of the stream. His captors were at hand. Quietly did he walk down the bank, and as cautiously enter the water. There was a plunge, and steed and rider were swimming down the river.

Major Mowbray was at the brink of the stream. He hesitated an instant, and stemmed the tide. Seized, as it were, by a mania for equestrian distinction, Mr. Coates braved the torrent. Not so Paterson. He very coolly took out his bulldogs, and, watching Turpin, cast up in his own mind the pros and cons of shooting him as he was crossing. "I could certainly hit him," thought, or said, the constable; "but what of that? A dead highwayman is worth nothing—alive, he weighs l. I won't shoot him, but I'll make a pretence." And he fired accordingly.

The shot skimmed over the water, but did not, as it was intended, do much mischief. It, however, occasioned a mishap, which had nearly proved fatal to our aquatic attorney. Alarmed at the report of the pistol, in the nervous agitation of the moment Coates drew in his rein so tightly that his steed instantly sank. A moment or two afterwards he rose, shaking his ears, and floundering heavily towards the shore; and such was the chilling effect of this sudden immersion, that Mr. Coates now thought much more of saving himself than of capturing Turpin. Dick, meanwhile, had reached the opposite bank, and, refreshed by her bath, Bess scrambled up the sides of the stream, and speedily regained the road. "I shall do it yet," shouted Dick; "that stream has saved her. Hark away, lass! Hark away!"

Bess heard the cheering cry, and she answered to the call. She roused all her energies; strained every sinew, and put forth all her remaining strength. Once more, on wings of swiftness, she bore him away from his pursuers, and Major Mowbray, who had now gained the shore, and made certain of securing him, beheld him spring, like a wounded hare, from beneath his very hand.

"It cannot hold out," said the major; "it is but an expiring flash; that gallant steed must soon drop."

"She be regularly booked, that's certain," said the postboy.

"We shall find her on the road."

Contrary to all expectation, however, Bess held on, and set pursuit at defiance. Her pace was swift as when she started. But it was unconscious and mechanical action. It wanted the ease, the lightness, the life of her former riding. She seemed screwed up to a task which she must execute. There was no flogging, no gory heel; but the heart was throbbing, tugging at the sides within. Her spirit spurred her onwards. Her eye was glazing; her chest heaving; her flank quivering; her crest again fallen. Yet she held on. "She is dying!" said Dick. "I feel it——" No, she held on.

Fulford is past. The towers and pinnacles of York burst upon him in all the freshness, the beauty, and the glory of a bright, clear, autumnal morn. The ancient city seemed to smile a welcome—a greeting. The noble Minster and its serene and massive pinnacles, crocketed, lantern-like, and beautiful; St. Mary's lofty spire, All-Hallows Tower, the massive mouldering walls of the adjacent postern, the grim castle, and Clifford's neighboring keep—all beamed upon him, like a bright-eyed face, that laughs out openly.

"It is done—it is won," cried Dick. "Hurrah! hurrah!" And the sunny air was cleft with his shouts.

Bess was not insensible to her master's exultation. She neighed feebly in answer to his call, and reeled forwards. It was a piteous sight to see her,—to mark her staring, protruding eyeball,—her shaking flanks; but, while life and limb held together, she held on.

Another mile is past. York is near.

"Hurrah!" shouted Dick; but his voice was hushed. Bess tottered—fell. There was a dreadful gasp—a parting moan—a snort; her eye gazed, for an instant, upon her master, with a dying glare; then grew glassy, rayless, fixed. A shiver ran through her frame. Her heart had burst.

Dick's eyes were blinded, as with rain. His triumph, though achieved, was forgotten—his own safety was disregarded. He stood weeping and swearing, like one beside himself.

"And art thou gone, Bess?" cried he, in a voice of agony, lifting up his courser's head, and kissing her lips, covered with blood-flecked foam. "Gone, gone! and I have killed the best steed that was ever crossed! And for what?" added Dick, beating his brow with his clenched hand—"for what? for what?"

At this moment the deep bell of the Minster clock tolled out the hour of six.

"I am answered," gasped Dick; "it was to hear those strokes."

Turpin was roused from the state of stupefaction into which he had fallen by a smart slap on the shoulder. Recalled to himself by the blow, he started at once to his feet, while his hands sought his pistols: but he was spared the necessity of using them, by discovering in the intruder the bearded visage of the gipsy Balthazar. The patrico was habited in mendicant weeds, and sustained a large wallet upon his shoulders.

"So it's all over with the best mare in England, I see," said Balthazar; "I can guess how it has happened—you are pursued?"

"I am," said Dick, roughly.

"Your pursuers are at hand?"

"Within a few hundred yards."

"Then, why stay here? Fly while you can."

"Never—never," cried Turpin; "I'll fight it out here by Bess's side. Poor lass! I've killed her—but she has done it—ha, ha!—we have won—what?" And his utterance was again choked.

"Hark! I hear the tramp of horse, and shouts," cried the patrico. "Take this wallet. You will find a change of dress within it. Dart into that thick copse—save yourself."

"But Bess—I cannot leave her," exclaimed Dick, with an agonizing look at his horse.

"And what did Bess die for, but to save you?" rejoined the patrico.

"True, true," said Dick; "but take care of her, don't let those dogs of hell meddle with her carcase."

"Away," cried the patrico, "leave Bess to me."

Possessing himself of the wallet, Dick disappeared in the adjoining copse.

He had not been gone many seconds when Major Mowbray rode up.

"Who is this?" exclaimed the Major, flinging himself from his horse, and seizing the patrico; "this is not Turpin."

"Certainly not," replied Balthazar, coolly. "I am not exactly the figure for a highwayman."

"Where is he? What has become of him?" asked Coates, in despair, as he and Paterson joined the major.

"Escaped, I fear," replied the major. "Have you seen any one, fellow?" added he, addressing the patrico.

"I have seen no one," replied Balthazar. "I am only this instant arrived. This dead horse lying in the road attracted my attention."

"Ha!" exclaimed Paterson, leaping from his steed, "this may be Turpin after all. He has as many disguises as the devil himself, and may have carried that goat's hair in his pocket." Saying which, he seized the patrico by the beard, and shook it with as little reverence as the Gaul handled the hirsute chin of the Roman senator.

"The devil! hands off," roared Balthazar. "By Salamon, I won't stand such usage. Do you think a beard like mine is the growth of a few minutes? Hands off! I say."

"Regularly done!" said Paterson, removing his hold of the patrico's chin, and looking as blank as a cartridge.

"Ay," exclaimed Coates; "all owing to this worthless piece of carrion. If it were not that I hope to see him dangling from those walls"—pointing towards the Castle—"I should wish her master were by her side now. To the dogs with her." And he was about to spurn the breathless carcase of poor Bess, when a sudden blow, dealt by the patrico's staff, felled him to the ground.

"I'll teach you to molest me," said Balthazar, about to attack Paterson.

"Come, come," said the discomfited chief constable, "no more of this. It's plain we're in the wrong box. Every bone in my body aches sufficiently without the aid of your cudgel, old fellow. Come, Mr. Coates, take my arm, and let's be moving. We've had an infernal long ride for nothing."

"Not so," replied Coates; "I've paid pretty dearly for it. However, let us see if we can get any breakfast at the Bowling-green, yonder; though I've already had my morning draught," added the facetious man of law, looking at his dripping apparel.

"Poor Black Bess!" said Major Mowbray, wistfully regarding the body of the mare, as it lay stretched at his feet. "Thou deservedst a better fate, and a better master. In thee, Dick Turpin has lost his best friend. His exploits will, henceforth, want the coloring of romance, which thy unfailing energies threw over them. Light lie the ground over thee, thou matchless mare!"

To the Bowling-green the party proceeded, leaving the patrico in undisturbed possession of the lifeless body of Black Bess. Major Mowbray ordered a substantial repast to be prepared with all possible expedition.

A countryman, in a smock-frock, was busily engaged at his morning's meal.

"To see that fellow bolt down his breakfast, one would think he had fasted for a month," said Coates; "see the wholesome effects of an honest, industrious life, Paterson. I envy him his appetite—I should fall to with more zest were Dick Turpin in his place."

The countryman looked up. He was an odd-looking fellow, with a terrible squint, and a strange, contorted countenance.

"An ugly dog!" exclaimed Paterson: "what a devil of a twist he has got!"

"What's that you says about Dick Taarpin, measter?" asked the countryman, with his mouth half full of bread.

"Have you seen aught of him?" asked Coates.

"Not I," mumbled the rustic; "but I hears aw the folks hereabouts talk on him. They say as how he sets all the lawyers and constables at defiance, and laughs in his sleeve at their efforts to cotch him—ha, ha! He gets over more ground in a day than they do in a week—ho, ho!"

"That's all over now," said Coates, peevishly. "He has cut his own throat—ridden his famous mare to death."

The countryman almost choked himself, in the attempt to bolt a huge mouthful. "Ay—indeed, measter! How happened that?" asked he, so soon as he recovered speech.

"The fool rode her from London to York last night," returned Coates; "such a feat was never performed before. What horse could be expected to live through such work as that?"

"Ah, he were a foo' to attempt that," observed the countryman; "but you followed belike?"

"We did."

"And took him arter all, I reckon?" asked the rustic, squinting more horribly than ever.

"No," returned Coates, "I can't say we did; but we'll have him yet. I'm pretty sure he can't be far off. We may be nearer him than we imagine."

"May be so, measter," returned the countryman; "but might I be so bold as to ax how many horses you used i' the chase—some half-dozen, maybe?"

"Half a dozen!" growled Paterson; "we had twenty at the least."

"And I one!" mentally ejaculated Turpin, for he was the countryman.


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