

**THE RECIPE FOR  
DIAMONDS**

**BY**

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# **The Recipe for Diamonds**

## **CHAPTER I.**

### **BIG GAME.**

... The first shot was just a rib too far back, and though it staggered him, he didn't stop to it. Out tinkled cartridge number one and in went a second, and "cluck" said the breech-block. And then as he slewed round, I got the next bullet home, bang behind the shoulder. That did it. He tucked down his long Roman nose, and went heels over tip like a shot rabbit; and when a big elk that stands seventeen hands at the withers plays that trick, I tell you it shows a new hand something he hadn't much idea of before.

We ran up eagerly enough. "Meget stor bock," shouted Ulus, and whipped out his knife, and proceeded to do the offices, being filled with strong glee, which he imparted to the driving rain, the swishing trees, and my dripping self.

And, by Jove, his highness was a beauty too! Antlers in velvet, of course, as is the fashion with all Norwegian deer at this time of year; but there were eight points on each, and they've got the most approved "impudent" downward curve. What with no rype and few trout, I'd been feeling rather down on my luck all these long weeks till now; but this big elk turned the scale. Glad I came.

September nights drop down early here, and day was getting on, so we hurried up with the work, and loitered not for tempting admiration. Off came the coarse-haired pelt, pull by pull; and away dropped head and neck, after a haggle through sinew and vertebræ; and then we got heavy stones and built in the meat securely, lest the lynxes should thieve the lot. It all took time, and meanwhile the weather worsened steadily. The rain was snorting down in heavy squalls, and often there were crashes from amongst the pines. But the stor bock's trophies repaid one for these things.

At last we got through the obsequies, shouldered the spoils between us, and started.

It was slow passage. On this primæval ground one is so constantly being balked. There are so many knotted jungles of splintered rock, such frequent swamps, so much fallen timber. And, moreover, the watercourses and torrents were all new-bloated with the rain, so that we had to cast about for fords, and then to grip one another at stiff arm's length, so as not to get swept adrift whilst wading amongst the eddying boulders. And when at last

we did come to the lake, we saw there in the gray dusk a thing which caused Ulus to offer up hot words in Norsk, which were not words of prayer.

To remind you again of where we were:—

Some eight miles distant in crow-flight was the salt-water fjord. From it two mountain walls sprout out towards the north. At first the valley between these is filled with land which is mostly forest. Then comes a lake, hemmed by two precipices. Then another two-mile-wide strip of forest. Then another lake, with shiny granite walls running up sheer two thousand feet, so that of the fosses which jump in cream over the brinks above, only the stouter ones reach more than half-way down.

We were on the farther side of this last sheet of water, and across it lay our only practicable way to the coast—to home, dinner, dry things, and other matters longed for. And on this lake a lake-sea was running, short, quick, and steep, which is the wettest of all seas for small craft to tackle. The boat which had carried us up was one of those retroussé-nosed punts peculiar to the country, the very worst possible breed of craft for the weather. She would not face it for thirty seconds. Her turn-up snout would fall off the moment we left the shingle, she would fill and swamp, and we should be left a swim without having in any degree furthered our cause. Wherefore I also bowed to the inevitable, but like Ulus I said things. There was no chance of reaching the abodes of men by any other route. We were booked till the gale chose to ease—at any rate till morning; and for myself, I contemplated a moist bivouac under streaming Jove, with one clammy elk-skin for a joint coverlet.

But luckily Ulus was a man of the land besides being a vagrant hunter. He led back into the forest. A score of yards from the margin, in an overgrown clearing, was an abandoned saeter hut. It was in none of the best of repair, was seven feet square inside, and held five feet of head-room under the roof-tree. It was about half filled with dried birch-bark, piled up against the farther end. It also contained a rude wooden trough and ball for pounding up coffee, three sections of pine-stem for seats, and a rusted old stove which had not been worth carrying away.

Four words made a division of labour. Ulus set off to revisit the stor bock, Se going with him in case there should be any doubt about the track. It was my task to create a blaze with the dry, spluttering birch-bark, and collect a stack of solider fuel to feed it with. Afterwards I went and stopped the more obvious gaps in the roof with turf and logs, and by the time these things were done hunter and hound had returned. Then we wrung the supersaturation of wet from our clothes, and Se had a centrifugal shake;

and so prepared, we went inside. Thanks to wasteful use of an absent person's store of birch-bark, the place was warm as an oven. Such an atmosphere was grateful and comforting. Se indeed revelled in the heat too much at first, and pressing over near its source, thrust out a moist black nose, and got the full effect. There followed a hiss and a howl, and a sulky retreat to the farther angle. Then we two bipeds hacked off gobbets from the venison, and taking us sharpened sticks, roasted and charred and toasted the meat in the doorway of the stove and over the gap in its lid. And in time we made a satisfying meal, though the courses straggled, and their texture was savage. And so on to pipes, and water boiled in a pewter flask-cup with whisky added, whilst the injured Se champed over juicy rib-bones in his corner.

The hum and crackle from the stove, the grinding of the gray dog's teeth, the bumping and hissing of the gale outside, the boom of the cascades at the precipices, made up most of the sounds for that evening. Of chat there was a paucity. My knowledge of Norsk extends to few parts of speech beyond the common noun; and Ulus, ignorant person that he is, has no Sassenach: pantomime makes our usual phrase-book. Talk under these circumstances is a strain, and we were too tired for unnecessary athletics. So we smoked, and pondered over the slaying of the great deer.

In a while we discarded the stump-stools and trundled them aside. A bunk ran along the farther side of the hut where the bark had been stowed, but I had my doubts about its vacancy, and surrendered it to Ulus. His hide is tough; he had no qualms. I spread for myself a spring mattress of birch-bark upon the floor. Se annexed the clammy skin. And so we were all satisfied.

One does not wind up watches in these regions, and as time is arbitrarily marked off by the cries of the gastric juices, I cannot tell you how the hours were reckoned up that evening. I think we two humans verged into a semi-torpid condition after that barbaric meal. Repletion, heat, and fatigue were too strong a combination for complete wakefulness; and though perhaps not exactly asleep, we were, like hibernating animals, very dully conscious of passing events. Se's condition was inscrutable. His eyes were closed, but that is no criterion. He may have been asleep. But yet he possessed certain senses more keenly active than ours. As evidence of this, when the night had worn on to a tolerable age, we heard him give a growl in crescendo, and then a short yap.

Se in general is undemonstrative to a degree. Hence the short culminating bark, which might have been overlooked if emanating from another dog, in his case commanded attention.

I rose on an elbow, but could hear no new sound except the soft rustle of Ulus's wet clothes. He was moving too. There was a pause. Presently he whispered "Bjorn," and I saw in the stove's faint glow the butt of the Martini steal across to me.

You can lay your life to it I was awake enough then. What sportsman in Norway would not tingle with delight at the chance of getting a bear? Ulus had slipped a thong round Se's throat, and that wily hound was mute. He was as keen on bjorn as either of us, and being gray, and vastly experienced, he knew better than to bay or otherwise create a disturbance.

"Patron?" whispered Ulus.

I loaded cautiously, not sending the lever quite home, so as to avoid a click, and nodded. Then we slipped our knife-sheaths round to the hip—for a shot in the dark is apt to wound only and cause a red-mouthed charge—and then the door was opened.

We stooped and went outside. The rain was tumbling in sheets; the night was dark as the pit, and very noisy; we could make out nothing. Se strained forward in the leash, neck thrust out, nose on high, up wind towards the lake shore. As we neared the edge of the clearing a falling branch struck me across the face. The pine-needles stung, and I stopped, blinded for the moment. Then Ulus gripped my shoulder and I wiped the tears away, and saw dimly a dark shape coming out of the trees. The Martini swung up, and I squinted along the barrel. A mountain-ash was in the line of fire, swishing, swaying, so that it was impossible to aim; but the animal was coming along bravely—had not seen us probably—and so I determined to hold the shot till I could make sure.

The beast came nearer, dodging amongst the stems.

Suddenly, as it got into an opener space, I noted that it was erect. This surprised me, for I had heard that bears never reared on to their hind feet till wounded. Still you can bet that I intended to shoot first and inquire afterwards.

But just at that moment Ulus screamed "Nei bjorn," and hitting up the rifle barrel, brought my finger sufficiently hard on the hair trigger to cause explosion. The shot went Lord knows where. I swore, and when the echoes had finished bellowing, I heard the bear swearing too. Then I began to sweat, for it dawned upon me that I had been within an ace of deliberately potting a man.

Ulus also used powerful language, and by letting drop the word "Finne," gave me to understand that he supposed the intruder to be a Laplander; but it seemed to me that the shape that loomed through the trees was too big for one of those dwarfish aborigines. And, moreover, although I only caught the import of the stranger's words by tone and not by literal meaning, I could have taken affidavit that none of them were Norsk.

However, we did not stay in ignorance long. Before the powder smoke had been all driven away by the rain the intruder was out of the trees, and had pulled up in front of us, chuckling. Then—"Hallo! an Englishman? How we islanders do get to out-of-the-way chinks of the globe!"

He paused, and I began to apologize—to say how sorry I was, and work up a neat speech generally—when he cut me short.

"Nearly sent me to the happy hunting grounds, sir? Well, perhaps so, p'raps not. I've seen men missed at shorter rise."

I was a bit piqued at this, and said something about being pretty useful with a rifle.

He laughed again. "We won't quarrel over it, sir, anyway. I expect we're both of us satisfied as it is. My hide would have been no use to you; and for myself, I'm quite content to wear it a bit longer. It fits tolerably enough. But you've a camp somewhere hereaway, haven't you? I thought I caught the gleam of a flying spark from down by the shingle yonder. That's what brought me up."

I explained how we had got pinned in by the gale, and the quartette of us went back to the saeter hut. The newcomer feasted there off elk-venison (contriving to cook it, I noticed, much more cannily than we had done, though with exactly the same appliances), and between whiles he was told of the chase of the meget stor bock—the tracking, the view, and the place of the bullet wounds. Afterwards, when we got to pipes and the last drainings of the grog, he explained his presence.

"I expect the wandering Englishman is about as scarce up here as the hoopoo, even when he's got a rifle or a rod in his fist; and as I've neither the one nor the other, I must be very much of a rara avis, and quite the sort of animal to shoot on sight. Fact is, I was round on the fjord there with my boat, and from what my eyes showed me, and from what a local topografisk chart told, the country on the norrard side was much as God stuck it together. I wanted to see a strip of that sort up here, so I fixed a rendezvous and slipped ashore. As it turned out, the map is a pretty bad one, and I lost time in culs-de-sac. Finally came this lake with the steep flanks. I couldn't

see to prick out another course, and I was just casting about for a rock that held a dry lee when I saw your light. And now, as I hear you chaps yawning and as I'm about spun out, 'twouldn't be a bad notion to turn in."

## CHAPTER II.

### HALCYONII DIES.

It is a tolerably insane amusement for a foreigner to go tramping over wild fields and valleys in Northern Norway with no other guide than the thing they call an ordnance map and a bit of a pocket-compass. And to do the same without intent to slay the beasts, the birds, or the fish of the country seems, to my way of thinking, even more mad still. Perhaps I am peculiarly constituted, but that's the way it strikes me personally. So I was rather curious to know what make of man it was that did these things.

Overnight I had seen little of him that was not heavily shadowed. The stranger preferred to do his own cooking, saying that he was used to it, and had elected to heat his meat at the doorway of the stove. Through this gap little radiance escaped. The only matters illuminated were the slices of venison, the toasting-splinter, and the hands that held it alternately. These last, being the solitary things one's eyes could make out, naturally were glanced over more than once. They were slightly above the medium size for hands, and long in proportion to their breadth. The fingers were tapered like a woman's. The nails were filbert-shaped, and grimy with recent climbing. The palms were hard. The knuckle-side was very brown, and showed the tendons prominently. They were those lean, nervous sort of hands which you find out at times can grip like thumbscrews.

My couch was an uneasy one, and I awoke early. The visitor was snoring away on the log-floor, looking comfortable and contented.

He was a man of about two-and-thirty, dark, tall, and well-built. His clothes were those of the merchant seamen—that is, they smacked in no degree whatever of the sea. Indeed, the only outward things which connected him with the water were certain weather stains. He wore a moustache cropped somewhat over close, and the teeth then showing beneath it, though white, were chaotic; and, moreover, there was the purple ridge of a scar running from the corner of his mouth which might advantageously have been hidden. A beard also would have become him, for his chin verged slightly to the cut-away type, and a three-days' stubble looks merely unkempt. He would never have been a beauty, but groomed up he would have made a very passable appearance amongst other men, although the scar near his mouth, and another similar emblem of roughness over the opposite eye, would have made him a trifle remarkable.

After staring there dully for pretty nearly an hour, it began to dawn upon me that I had seen this man before somewhere, though under what



circumstances I could not for the life of me remember. That his outward person was that of the ordinary deck-hand ashore went for nothing. Besides, he had spoken overnight of "my boat." That evidently meant yacht, and might stand for anything from an eight-hundred ton steamer downwards.

The more I puzzled over his identity the less hope I seemed to have of guessing it.

At last he woke, yawned, stretched, and sat up. Then he looked at me and whistled. Then, "Slidey Methuen, by all that's odd! Fancy stumbling across you here!"

Still I couldn't put a name to the man, and after a bit of hesitation told him so bluntly.

He laughed, and said he didn't wonder at it. It was only eight years since last we had met, but in that time he had been about the world a good deal, and, as he himself expressed it, "got most of the old landmarks ground off his face, and new ones rubbed in." He was Michael Cospatric.

I had to take his word for it. There didn't seem to be a trace left of the man I had known at Cambridge, either of manner or outward form. However, Cospatric of C—— he was, fast enough; and after the manner of 'Varsity men, we started on to "shop" there and then, and had the old days over again in review.

We had both been of the same year, and although in a small college that argues some knowledge of one another, we were by no means in the same set. In fact, up there Cospatric had been rather an anomaly: a man in no clique, a man without a nickname, a man distinguished only by the halo of his exit. He came up, one of a bunch of fifty-two undergraduates, joined all the clubs, was tubbed, rowed four at the end of his first October term in a losing junior trial eight, and was promptly shelved. He was never in evidence anywhere, but was reported to be a subscriber of Rolandi's, and to spend his time reading novels in foreign tongues. As he seldom kept either lectures or chapels, a chronic gating fostered this occupation. His second October he again navigated the Cam in a junior trial. He lugged with the arms incurably and swung like a corkscrew, but we had five trials on that term, and men were wanted to fill them. So he rowed and raced, and again helped his crew to lose, and then was shelved as hopeless. He was a man of no account. Not three men, out of his own year, knew him by name.

At the beginning of his second Easter term he began to distinguish himself. Of all places, he started to do this at the Union—an institution few of us C—— men belonged to. There was a debate upon something connected with

Education. An unknown person got up and savagely attacked existing methods as being useless, impracticable, and in the interests of the teacher and not of the taught. "Of what use to society is a College fellow?" he asked, and answering, "Of none, except to reproduce his species," backed up his case with such cleverness that a majority grew out of nothing. Johnians howled; Trinity men and Hall men cheered with delight; Non-Colls hissed and made interruptions; and as the ragged-gowned crowd trooped out, a universal cry went up of, "Who the devil is he?"

We undergraduates at C—— were not much moved by this exploit, because, as I have hinted, the Union was not in our line. We rowed and danced and drove tandem; never preached, except to election mobs. We quite agreed with Cospatric that Classics and Mathematics, and Natural Science as she is taught at Cambridge, are one and all of them useless burdens, not worth the gathering; but we were not prepared to say with him that we hungered after the acquisition of French, German, Spanish, Norsk, and Italian, or eke *Lingua Franca* or Japanese.

The higher authorities saw the matter in a different light. Master and fellows looked upon Mr. Cospatric as a dangerous heretic—much, in fact, as Urban VIII. and his cardinals regarded Galileo—and resolved to make him recant. The senior tutor was chosen as their instrument. He was an official with what were described as "little ways of his own." He hauled Cospatric. Union speech and revolutionary sentiments were not referred to. The delinquent was (amid a cacophony of "Hems") accused, on the strength of coming up Chapel with surplice unbuttoned, of being inebriated within the walls of a sacred edifice. He was not allowed to speak a word in his own defence. He was gated for a week at eight, and coughed out of the room.

An eminently steady man, and conscious of being at the moment in question sober as an archangel, the iron of the accusation and punishment entered into his soul. For gatings as a general thing he cared not one jot. He had lived his year and a half in an atmosphere of them. Whether free or chained, he had always stayed in his rooms after hall, preferring the green-labelled books to any other evening companionship.

But to this present confinement, a piece of obviously rank injustice, he determined not to submit; and in consequence spent a dreary evening parading the streets, not arriving back till close upon twelve.

He kept in College. The porter sent up his name. He was again hauled, and again, without being allowed to say a word in his own defence, gated for the remainder of the term, and given to understand that he would be sent down for good if he cut a single gate.

The sentence was barbarous. A call at the Lodge and a patient explanation to the Master would probably have set matters right. But Cospatric was not the man such a course would occur to. Some long-slumbering demon rose within him, and he indulged heavily in College Audit in hall. Afterwards he came to my rooms, where there was a conclave of some sort going on, and made a statement. It was his first recorded appearance in any one's quarters but his own, and his first recorded look of excitement, and consequently his words were listened to. He did not stay long. He told us in forcible language that as the College authorities had seen fit to take it out of him, he intended to do the like by them, and we might form ourselves into umpires of the proceedings. Then he departed, and next morning joined a knot of us who were gazing with admiration at the stone angels beside the clock, who, during the hours of darkness, had been helmeted with obscene earthenware. No ladder in the College could reach that decorated statuary, and as the porter did not see fit to risk his neck over such a ghastly climb, decorated they stayed till mid-day, and our court teemed with ribald undergraduates.

The succeeding morning there was another raree-show. The College skeleton—framework of a long-passed don, so tradition stated—had been, by help of a screwdriver and patience, untombed from its dusty resting-place at the top of the Hall staircase. It had been dressed in some flashy Scotch tweeds well known as belonging to the junior tutor, and perched astride of the weather-cock. Again the position was impregnable, and again the trophy drew delighted crowds till long past mid-day.

And so one puerile outrage succeeded another, scarcely a day passing without some new triumph of the kind to report. Cospatric leaped at one bound into a public character. Of course every soul in the place knew that he was at the bottom of it all—the dons getting the news through the gyps—but no one in authority was smart enough to bring anything home to him. He even took to keeping lectures and chapels, which piece of pharisaism put, to our mind then, the finishing touch of this comedy of revenge.

It all seems a great piece of foolery when one looks back, but at the time we thought it high-minded and justifiable rebellion. We assembled in the court, and cheered after the senior tutor had been three parts smothered in his bed by a red-pepper squib dropped down the chimney; and on the morning after the Master's laundry was raided, and the linen (belonging to both sexes) distributed amongst the crows' nests in the avenue, I think special trains must have been running into Cambridge, so thick was the throng of sight-seers.

There is no doubt about it that Cospatric came to be a young man of much renown in those days.

Had he been a popular person beforehand, far-seeing friends would have advised him to retire on his laurels after, say, the first half-dozen exploits. But as it was, there was no one amongst the newly-formed acquaintances sufficiently interested in the hero of the moment to forgo his own personal anticipations of enjoyment. The man was egged on unthinkingly, although a moment's thought must have pointed to a certain deluge ahead.

And that deluge came, as usual, from an unlooked-for quarter.

Cospatric, in all his sober senses, was helping an overcome roisterer across the court late at night. The junior tutor arrived, and ordered Cospatric to his rooms. Cospatric went obediently, waited in the shadow of an archway, and returned to the overcome one. Enter once more the junior tutor; nothing said to the roisterer; Cospatric to pay an official call at twelve-thirty on the morrow. There is no use giving detail. They had a College meeting next day, and sent him down for an offence that was absolutely trivial; and every soul in the College, the culprit included, saw the justice of the injustice.

He came down the steps from the Combination room in triumph, and we chaired him round the court in a bath, some hundred and twenty men forming in procession behind, and singing an idiotic march-song from a current burlesque. Then we went to his rooms, and he sat on two tables, one above the other, with a tea-cosy on his head, and held an auction of his effects, which those of us who happened to possess any ready cash bought up at long figures. He had no plans for the future, so we stuck a false moustache on him, corked his eyebrows, and thus disguised kept him smuggled in our rooms for ten days, during which time Bacchus created Babel. And then we had him photographed in various attitudes—singly, and surrounded by groups of admirers—and then we went out with him to the station, saw him in a train for Liverpool Street, and—that's all. He was never viewed or heard of again. His period of brilliance up there was very comet-like.

### CHAPTER III.

#### VAGABOND.

"Hysterical madness" was the definition Cospatric clapped on to that culminating episode of his Cambridge life; "but," he added, with a chuckle, "I did enjoy myself whilst the fun lasted. That's just typical of the particular fool I am. Nature intended me for clown in a third-rate travelling circus. The father made up his mind I was to be a big thing in the lawyering way. The two clashed, and the present state of affairs is the result. If some far-seeing guardian could only have averaged matters, I might have turned out very differently. I'd have made a good courier, for instance, if such an animal had been in demand nowadays; or a continental drummer, if the commercial part of the work could have been left out; or even a passable navy officer. As it is, I'm nothing; I'm no mortal good to anybody: and I have a very tolerable time of it. Look, that's my boat."

We had worked our way down past the intervening barriers of water and wood, and were walking on the fjord shore. Rounding a bluff, we had suddenly opened out a small cutter of some six-and-twenty or thirty tons, riding to her anchor in the mouth of the river. One concluded that she was a yacht, as she was flush-decked, and had a skylight instead of a cargo-hatch amidships; but her lines were a good deal of the dray-horse type, and as for smartness, she did not know the meaning of the word. I expect traces of this opinion showed in my face, for Cospatric saw fit to explain.

"I learnt my sailing in an untidy school," he said—"tramp steamers, coasting schooners, collier brigs, and timber barques; and those aren't the sort of craft that rub neatness into a man. Our motto in the little drogher yonder is to keep her afloat with the least possible bother to ourselves. We never lie in swagger harbours to be looked at. There isn't a burgee or a brass button on board. Strict Spartan utility is very much the motto of the ship's company. Hence, for example, you find the decks brown and not white, and yet I can assure you that they are absolutely staunch. She scarcely leaks a tear anywhere; and although she's beamy and heavy-bowed and deep, she isn't such a sluggard either, especially when it's blowing. In fact, dirty weather's our strong point with that ugly duckling of a cutter. She'd sail most of your dandy craft slick under water if it came on really bad. And we got it a week ago by the Dogger here, and last year just to s'uthard of the Bay, as foul as I've ever seen it anywhere."

"Here's our boat," I cut in. "My headquarters are in that house at the other side of the river. I'll drop you at your craft as we cross."

"Not a bit of it, man. You must come and see me now we are here; and, besides"—here he chuckled—"perhaps the belly of the old cutter isn't quite so uncouth as her hide. You can send Ulus on with the impedimenta if he wants to report himself."

So we did that—dropped down with the ebb, stepped over the rail, bidding Ulus go his ways with boat and news and trophies. As our shoes clattered on the grimy deck-planks, a close-cropped head bobbed up through the forehatch, bowed, and retired.

"That's Celestin," said Cospatric, "my professional crew. He's principally cook; and at times he's a very good cook, as you may learn. There's another man below; my mate, part-owner with me. We're a queerly-assorted couple, but we've rubbed on very well together this past eighteen months."

He led the way down the ladder, and I followed. The inside of the cutter was certainly "not so uncouth as her hide." Indeed, seldom have I seen a cosier cabin, and I have been into a good many of one sort and another. The items of furniture and fitting had evidently been picked up from over a very wide area, but they had been selected with taste, and harmonized thoroughly. The effect aimed at was comely comfort, and that effect had been thoroughly gained.

One thing only seemed out of balance with the whole. The fore-cabin door was a narrow sliding panel well over to port. All the starboard side of the bulk-head was filled by a piano, which was bevelled off at its lower right-hand corner so as to fit against the sheathing.

Cospatric followed my glance. "Yes, it's an upright 'grand,' and German, specially made. It is rather bulky for the size of the ship, but you see we're a bit musical here. Haigh plays. By the way, you haven't seen Haigh yet."

He called out, and his mate came down the narrow alleyway from the after-cabin. He was a tall, lean, smooth-faced man, with moist black hair that was partly sleek and shining, partly bristling out in straggling wisps. His face was dewy, and his eyes perpetually blinking. Cospatric asked him to play something. He peered at me for a moment or two as though taking my measure, and then went to the piano and gave vent to a particularly low comic song.

"Fore-cabin tastes," thought I; "that upright grand's a wasted instrument."

Aloud I expressed conventional thanks. Haigh had another blink or two in my direction, and then broke into Gounod's "Chantez toujours," singing it very passably. He hadn't much voice, but he knew how to sing.

"Like that?" inquired Cospatric.

"Remarkably," said I.

"Better than the other?"

"A hundred per cent."

"Then keep the same stop out, Haigh, and go ahead."

And Haigh turned to the piano and rattled off half a dozen other goodish ballads. Then he said he was tired, and straggled out on a sofa and blinked at the ceiling, whilst Cospatric and I wallowed in Cambridge shop again. It's extraordinary how men do like to talk over the follies of those old times. And afterwards Celestin indulged us in dinner, a regular epicurean feast, washed down with decent wine, a thing worth much fine gold after a month and a half in Norway.

"You do know how to take care of yourself on this craft," I observed to Cospatric that evening.

"We don't live like this at sea, you know. It's regular ship's fare with us then. And so, you see, we appreciate little bouts of gourmandisé when we get into port. Personally, I've got that principle somewhat ingrained. In fact, I've rubbed along that way ever since I got adrift from England and respectability. The system has its drawbacks, but from my point of view it makes life worth living. I've had roughish spells between whiles, but I'm so peculiarly constituted that a short bright spot of comfort makes me forget the disagreeables that have gone before, and wipes the slate clean for a fresh start."

During the days that followed, when not shooting or fishing, I was generally on that ugly little cutter. Two things drew me: firstly (I'm sorry to own), the fare, which was so vastly superior to my own; and secondly, yarns. There was another attraction later, but I did not know of it then.

Those yarns of Cospatric's were tales one would not forget. He told of things which are not written down in books. He had travelled because he couldn't help it, and consequently had seen and done things that more well-to-do travellers are debarred from. He had housed amongst the most iniquitous places on God's earth, from Callao to Port Saïd; he had wandered from Yokohama to Mandalay; he had been trimmer on a Shaw-Savile boat; he had served as mate on a Genovese timber barque.

He told of all these matters with an open contempt, in which Haigh (when he did not happen to be dozing) readily joined him. The pair of them had both knocked about the world largely. But it was not because they liked it. It was the Fates that had ordained their first cycle of vagabondage. This new mode of living in a shifting house—to wit, the ugly cutter—was taken up because sea-roaming had been so thoroughly ingrained into their natures that as yet neither of them had found a spot he cared to settle down in permanently.

The rolling stone aphorism had been pretty accurately fulfilled in Cospatric's case. He had gathered during the greater part of his nomadic life little moss which he could convert into a bank-note equivalent. Another man might have utilized some of the material; he lacked the skill to set it in vendible form. With one solitary exception, his gains during those vagrant years may be summed up under two heads. He had gathered a knowledge of certain orders of his species that was both extensive and peculiar; and he had amassed a collection of tattooings that was unique for a European. The former he cared not one jot about, displaying his intimate acquaintance with the shadier side of the world's peoples with apologies; but in the latter he took an almost childish pride. They were not, he pointed out, the rude frescoings of the British mariner, who outlines a diagrammatic female with a sail needle, tints her with gunpowder, and labels her with the name of his current lady-love to prevent mistakes. Such crude efforts have their good points; for instance, they promote constancy. But they are hideously inartistic, and, moreover, to a man of ordinarily fickle nature, are apt to bring in very damning evidence at the most inopportune moments. Whereas (still according to Cospatric) the higher types of these human frescoes spell Art, with a very big A, and form a portable picture gallery which no spasmodic poverty can ever induce one to pawn or otherwise part with.

The adaptability of the medium for artistic design is a matter open to argument. However, Cospatric bore upon his person better specimens than I have ever seen before. He had sat to none but the most noted artists of Burmah and Japan, and the outcome of their brushes—or, rather, needles, as I suppose it should be termed—was in places more than remarkable. Buddhas, nautch-girls, sacred white elephants, serial fairy stories, and the rest were all worth studying; but I think the chefs-d'œuvre of the two artistic centres were a peacock and a multi-coloured dragon. The bird stood before a temple (on the mid forearm), serenely conscious of its own perfection. Every feather on its body was true to life, every spot on its tail a microscopic wonder. The beast (or the creeping thing, if you so prefer to name it) twined round one of his lower limbs, leaving the dent of its claws in the flesh, and resting its squat, outstretched head on the centre of the knee-cap. And so cunningly was the creature perched (as its owner gleefully pointed out) that



the least movement of his crural muscles set the jagged backbone a-quivering, and the slobbering lips to mumble and mow. Cospatric said that dragon was a most finished piece of workmanship, and worth all he had cost.

"That's the worst of really good tattooing," he explained, à propos of this beast; "it's so infernally expensive to get the best men. You've no idea how they are run after. But luckily they've a soft place for a real connoisseur, even though he comes from the West. And, besides, I've got such a grand skin...."

Music and dinners absorbed his spare cash when such were available; but out in Burmah and Japan neither were to his taste, and consequently all ready funds were wont to be sunk in corporeal decoration.

Whether the outlay seems judicious I will not say. It was not my hide that these uncanny limners operated upon.

Another of Cospatric's tastes was one I could chime in with more readily. He did not flaunt it, by any means. On the contrary, he kept the thing hidden, and I stumbled across it only by accident. Moreover, it was a stroke of luck for me that I did so, as my want of knowledge had been a bar to any intimacy; whereas, once in his confidence upon this point, we got on together swimmingly, and I had a good time.

It was an unpremeditated return to the yacht late at night with news of bear that helped the discovery. Ulu had brought the tidings just as I was going to bed that his bjorn-ship was expected to call at a neighbouring farm to polish off the remains of a sheep; and as bear was the only sort of local game which Cospatric considered worth powder and ball, I thought I'd knock him up for the chance of a shot. So I went out, and tramped down to the shore opposite to where the ugly cutter was riding. But I did not hail. I stood there and listened—listened with some wonder and some delight—I believe I gaped. The strings of the "upright grand" were in motion, but they were giving vent to neither ballad tune nor comic jig. And chiming in with them were the notes of a violin, played tunefully, accurately, boldly. That last, I knew, must be Cospatric's. I had not seen the instrument here as yet, but I remembered he was supposed to be rather good on it up at Cambridge.

After a bit I pulled myself together and hailed. The music ceased abruptly. Cospatric's head appeared through the hatch, and Cospatric's voice inquired with a good deal of impatience what I wanted.

I told him about the bear, and then added a few words in praise of the music. "Why ever didn't you let me hear your concert before?" I asked. "Did you think it was a case of pearls and pigs?"

"That's exactly the reason! I didn't know you cared for anything more advanced than those ballad affairs. However, if that's a wrong idea, I'm very glad. We'll have some tunes together after this, and perhaps Haigh and I may knock out an item or two that's fresh to you. But for the present, as you suggest—bjorn. I'll be with you on the sand there in nine seconds."

As for the bear, of course he didn't turn up, and we three and Se spent a particularly cold night in the open, with absolutely nothing to show for it. In this there was nothing surprising. It was quite in the ordinary way of business. Only Cospatric, who is at heart no sportsman, murmured, "Small potatoes."

It was not till a couple of days afterwards that we got on the subject of music again. We came at it this way: the cutter was going to work south and west again, and it was proposed that I should join her. "Don't go down in one of those beastly coasting steamers," said Cospatric. "They'll give you five sorts of cheese for breakfast, and poison you at all other meals. You'll live in an atmosphere of dried fish and engine-room oil, and you'll be driven half-mad by children who squall, and other children who rattle the saloon domino-box all through the watches. You'd much better come with me. I'll drop you at a steamer's port in the Channel somewhere some time. You aren't in a hurry. Come, and hear Haigh play again."

I said I preferred duets.

"All right, you shall hear the humble combined effort," said he; and then, after a good deal of pumping, I got more out of him as to whence sprang his powers.

"The thing's simple enough," he said. "I was fond of fiddling, and I stuck to it. I used to scrape at Cambridge, if you remember, as probably you don't, and had some goodish lessons there. Afterwards, when I got on the wander and took to pawning things, my spare shirt went frequently, but I always managed to stick to that little black box somehow. And I played on fore-castle heads and on beaches and in sailors' lodgings ashore, and occasionally I got a week or so's lessons from a good man ashore; and then I heard concerts and good orchestras all up and down. And so, you see, I picked it up that way.... No, I don't play from paper much, but Haigh's a bit of a kindred spirit, and between us we evolve things. And now let's talk of something else—say, the ptarmigan prospects for next year; you'll be good on that."

Now I am fond of music—ordinary music, that is—and I can appreciate a good song or well-performed operas such as Carmen and the Yeomen of the Guard, or even a classical concert if it is not too long. In fact, I had always plumed myself on being what one calls "very tolerably musical." But these two were streets in advance of such mediocrity. To begin with, they had a strong contempt for most vocal efforts, considering them as merely a sop for the outside public. Orchestral music was their formula for the highest form of the art, and orchestral music they accordingly played, that queer creature Haigh blinking over the upright grand, and Cospatric behind him bringing sounds out of his violin such as I never heard amateur produce before, with a combined result that was always marvellous, and sometimes verged upon that abstract goal, perfection.

They seldom had a screed of notes before them. Either they knew the stuff by heart, or, what seemed more likely, there was some sympathetic link between them which kept both instruments unerringly to the theme. I could not find how it was done; I could only acknowledge the results.

It was by no means always within my powers to appreciate their work. Sometimes the charm of what they played was too esoteric for my understanding. The sounds were unmeaning to me; not infrequently they were absolutely discordant. But I had confidence enough in the superiority of their intellects over mine not to condemn, still less to scoff. At these times I held my tongue. Genius is not improved by irreverent criticism.

I spoke with Cospatric one day about keeping all these creative gifts to himself. Why did he not share them with the outside world?

He gave a bit of a shudder. "Don't suggest such an idea," he said. "It's my one sensitive place. All the rest have been hammered dull in my roamings. I must keep that as it is."

And then at another time: "You know I can't conceive of a sensitive man, be he musician or painter, or even writer of romance, who would put out his very best for an indiscriminate public to browse upon or trample over. He knows and feels the thing he has created to be a beautiful thing and an original thing, and he has been at much pains to arrive at it, although there were special items in his own constitution which helped him. And he can be sure that there are a large percentage of pigs in the public by whom his pearl will not be appreciated. Its shape and its colour are new to them; and not having come within the range of their limited vision before, therefore its building must be altogether wrong. But that is not the worst. Spoken babblings one might be deaf to; written stuff is sure to be cut out by a friend and posted for you to enjoy with your morning's coffee. Those infernal

newspapers get hold of the thing you have made, and their verdict depends upon the individual taste of some anonymous 'we.' He may not like your sardines, and accordingly, though it does not therefore follow that sardines are unfit for human food, he proceeds to slate sardines with all his tricks of satire and argument, and to cover the maker and even the eater of sardines with ridicule."

He stopped then, and I asked if he had been catching it somewhere.

He laughed, "No, I've never had my name once in a paper that I know of; not even under the heading of Police Intelligence. I'm singularly uneager for fame. I'm only talking from what I've seen occasionally. That's been warning enough for me. It must sour a man to be jeered at in that sort of way, and, thanks, I prefer not to be soured. I've no superfluous sweetness."

All this may seem rather absurd, but I give it just to show what manner of a man Cospatric is when you come to know him intimately. No one from meeting him casually would guess that he had failings of this sort. In fact, you would take him for a very tough subject indeed, inured to hardship in the past, and liking hardship in the present for its own sake. As an instance: instead of taking his ugly cutter down coast by the inner passages, he must needs get out into the open water, which is at this time of year exceptionally unquiet, from sheer delight at getting kicked about. Indeed, when we picked up an equinoctial gale half-way across, and had our hands exceedingly full to keep the boat afloat, the man fairly revelled in the scene and the work; and what's more, that sleepy, stragglng person Haigh did too. It wasn't in my line at all. I've not the smallest objection to getting cold and wet when there is a big elk or a good bag of grouse in question; that's different. But when one is perpetually half-drowned and frozen in a little tub of a sailing craft, I fail to see where the fun comes in. Still, in spite of the hard, rough time, I should have been sorry to have missed that hammering across the North Sea and the trip down Channel to queer old St. Malo. There was one strong redeeming feature—Cospatric's accounts of his hunting after the Raymond Lully inscription. He and I took one watch between us, and to the accompaniment of northern gale and northern spindrift, he yarned about a chase under southern skies for an object which I believe to be an absolutely unique one. He was one of the men who were scouring after that Recipe for making Diamonds lost to this world since the death of its original finder in 1315.

[Follows, an account of the contention for the blessed Raymond Lully's Recipe, as given from Michael Cospatric's own lips.]

## CHAPTER IV.

### MR. WEEMS AND HIS PURCHASE.

... Genoa no doubt has its drawbacks. Incessant rain, perennial stink, and big prices can go to make up a heaven for few people. But for taking the taste of really bitter hard times out of one's mouth, the place has its good points.

I'd been catching it bad just before. I'd got on my beam-ends in Oporto, and couldn't afford to be fastidious about a berth. Consequently, I'd found myself in a rotten old Genovese tramp barque that most of the crew had run from because they thought she'd founder next time she put to sea. Of course the owners didn't want to see her again, and the skipper had been doing his best to play into their hands all the way down from the Baltic. His mate had contrived to baulk his losing her during the previous half of the trip, but got sick of the job and cleared when he found the chance. It was into the mate's shoes that I stepped; and having no interest in the insurance policy, and placing a certain value on my own hide, I continued at the same game. We'd a beautiful chance four days out. We picked up a sou'easter off St. Vincent, and the putty began to tumble out, and she got more of a basket than ever. We'd only ten of a crew all told, and there wasn't a man of them that had had a whole watch below since we got our clearance. Fore t'gallant mast had gone like a carrot at the cap, and mizzen-mast head was so sprung that she wouldn't bear the spanker. She was squattering along under the two lower topsails only, and we amused ourselves by betting when they'd split.

She was so infernally full of water that she steered like a haystack; and as any one in the waist got half-drowned every minute, long spells at the pumps weren't popular.

We couldn't make our easting a bit, and the old man kept saying that we should never get through the Straits. That was by way of preparation, but I understood what he was up to and said nothing.

At last he put it to me squarely. 'Twasn't good enough going on like this. The barque would have to be "Lost at Sea"—luckily the boat down yonder amidships was a thumping big one.

I said open-boat cruising in a December Atlantic wasn't an amusement I hankered after, and then asked him bluntly how much he was going to clear out of the job.

He said, "Nothing;" called a large squad of saints to witness that the loss of his vessel would ruin him; and then, changing tack, promised that I should make a good thing out of it.

But when I tried to pin him, it was no go. He wouldn't make me out a cheque; he wouldn't put pen to paper in any way; he wouldn't even pledge his owners for a figure; and I damned him for a slippery Maccaroni, and swore I'd drive his old tramp in between Genoa pierheads just to square up his meanness. He daren't knife me, because the crew would have understood why, and raised a wasp's nest; and he had to play the sailor, because I promised him if he piled her up anywhere I'd go to the nearest Italian consul and report him; but I'll give the man credit for keeping me in blacker Hades during the rest of that crawl across than I ever knew existed before. However, he got settled with when once we were snugly into harbour, and was a long fortnight in hospital repairing damages. That's where an Englishman scores. Whip away the coltello from the back of his belt, get him to put up his hands, steer clear of his feet, and you have a southerner on toast.

After living like a brute—and acting, of course, so as not to spoil the completeness of the part—for all that time, I naturally set to doing what the sailor man always does under the circumstances. I got ashore, and started washing the taste out of my mouth. Every man does this according to his own lights, and perhaps mine were a trifle out of the general groove. Lodging I was not fastidious about, neither did I long for drink, nor clothes, nor women. So I put up at a bit of an upstairs albergo in the Via S. Siro, where one who knows the ropes can get a decent room for a lira, and spent my time and money in having daily a real good dinner and hearing some tip-top music. And, by Jove, I did enjoy myself. It seemed almost worth going through the bad spell, just for the sake of the contrast.

But, more's the pity, my pay had been small, and it fractionized rapidly. The spree could only be a short one.

However, I wasn't going to run matters too fine this time and get cornered again, as had been my fate at Oporto, so I loafed amongst the shipping offices during my mornings, and had the good luck to stumble into a berth on one of the American liners. It was only as third mate, to be sure; but then she was a big ship, and I, professionally speaking, was a small man. I hadn't exactly been schooled for the sea, you know, so you can guess I was feeling pretty comfortable over it.

It's just spells like those which prove to a man how thoroughly life is worth living.

The end of my tether was not long in coming. A man, when his shore riotings are thoroughly systematic, as mine were, can calculate his days of revelry to a nicety. I had arrived at my last two twenty-lire notes. I was going to finish up with a ten-lire dinner, then spend four lire for entrance and a seat at the Carlo Felice to hear "Cavalleria Rusticana," leaving part of six lire for bed, morning coffee, and other sundries, besides twenty odd to carry on the war with before I got my advance on the steamer. Being stone-broke when you go on board doesn't matter if you ship forward; but aft, to start with bare pockets may get you a bad name.

I had maundered out to the Campo Santo that last day, and on the road back, just after passing through the walls, an Englishman who had lost himself asked the way to the market-place. He was a little bit of a self-important chap, with a gruff, coarse voice, and schoolmaster written in large letters all over him. He knew no word of Italian, and was evidently feeling lonely to a degree; and so, as I had no objection to chatting with a countryman, we paced off together and dropped into conversation. He was "doing" North Italy with a circular ticket, and as he had read it all up with much thoroughness beforehand, he was very naturally much disappointed with the reality. "S. Mark's was too small, and Venice was most unhealthy. The sanitation of that part over the Rialto Bridge, where the butchers' shops were, was a disgrace to the country. The Duomo at Milan was squat, ugly, overrated, and the hotel charges in that city were most exorbitant. Turin might be a good place for shopping, but he had not gone there for that purpose. And Genoa, again, was unsanitary." In fact, he was the stereotyped travelling Briton, so full of melancholy discontent and disappointment that one wondered why he did not commit suicide or go home. And as, add to this, he laid down the law with the true schoolmaster's dogmaticalness on every conceivable subject that cropped up, from music to tattooing, you can guess that he had in him the makings of a very objectionable beast indeed. However, he was so appallingly ignorant of all the matters he plunged amongst as to be correspondingly amusing, and for that reason alone I didn't give him the go-by at once.

We were passing a bookseller's shop, where he caught sight of a mangy, leather-bound MS. in the window, and said he'd ask the price. He didn't know in the least what it was about, and didn't seem to care; but saying that he would make a good profit out of it at Quaritch's, went into the shop. I didn't offer an opinion about his last statement, but just followed. He was demanding "How much?"

"Vous parlez français, m'sieu'?" asked the bookseller.

"Nong, mais this gentleman here parlez Italiano.—I say, will you translate for me? Ask the fellow what he'll sell this for."

I did, and the bookseller started a long yarn about the MS. having come out of the Marchese di Somebody-or-other's library, where it had lain undisturbed for several thousand years. "Signor," said he, "the book is of inestimable value, and I cannot part with it for less than thirty lire."

I repeated the gist of this to my man—Weems was his name, by the way, of New, Oxford, so he said—and told him he could get the thing for about twelve lire, if he cared about it. And, to cut the yarn short, he did buy it for twelve-fifty, and left the shop feeling that he had been swindled out of at least half a crown.

"What's your purchase about?" I asked when we were in the street again.

He hadn't looked; didn't see that it mattered much; the stuff was old, and that was the main thing. All these old MSS. were valuable, and Quaritch was sure to buy it at a good price.

I still had my doubts about that last, but didn't argue. It was his affair, not mine.

Finally, he suggested dining together, and (as he had been in Genoa exactly twelve hours) laid down the law without the smallest hesitation as to which was the best place to go to, and what was best to have. By that time I had got about sick of his society, and said bluntly that, as I knew Genoa thoroughly, I was not going anywhere in the Galleria Mazzini, as he suggested, but to somewhere in another direction; and, further, that as his idea of his menu and mine didn't appear to coincide in any one item, we had better bid one another good afternoon. But the horror of loneliness loomed near him again, and for one of the few times in his life he changed front without argument. He would grant, upon second thoughts, that I must know best about such a matter, and would take it as a great favour if he might place himself under my guidance. After which, of course, I could not say anything except that I should be proud to act as his cicerone.

We had our meal—which was to be my last good one for many a long day to come—and a beauty it was. Even my North of England grammar-school master could not but admit the excellence, although he grumbled at the price. Afterwards we went through into the caffè, and I offered him a good cigar, saying that if he had been undergoing a course of the local vegetable he would appreciate it. However, the creature didn't smoke; and as he also didn't drink black coffee, and as I did both, he took occasion to point out to me at some length that I was deliberately crumpling up my constitution. To



turn the conversation, I suggested over-hauling his recent purchase. He seemed sorry to cut short his sermon, but finding that I was paying no attention, asked what the book was.

"It's a diary," said I, "written in Spanish, or to be more accurate, Catalan; and," I added rather maliciously, "I'm afraid you won't get much of a fortune out of Quaritch for it, as there seems to be nothing here except the merest tittle-tattle."

His face lengthened for a moment at the idea, but the old cocksure manner came back again, and he pooh-poohed my valuation with lofty superiority.

"I presume you are not an expert in such matters as these—er—Mr. Cospatric? No, of course not; it couldn't be expected. But let me assure you that I did not make this outlay with my eyes shut. Trust me for knowing what I was about." He turned over some dozen of the yellow pages, looking at them curiously. "That y there standing by itself means 'and.' H'm, yes. The thing's clear enough when one looks into it. I don't profess to translate this old MS. at sight. You see the—ar—the writing's crabbed; and my time is too much occupied to study it carefully. No, I shall just sell the thing to the man I mentioned as it stands. To return to what I was telling you about the use of tobacco, though. Whether you consider the matter from a scientific or merely from a rational point of view——" And away he steamed again, whilst I coned over the tangled quill-work.

My inattention was purposely obvious. I had got thoroughly sick of the man, and wanted to drive him away. But he had only his own society to fall back upon, and he had evidently the good taste to object strongly to that. And so he preached on.

There was only one other person at our end of the caffè, a dark, good-looking man with blue spectacles, who sat at an adjoining table with an Eco d'Italia before him, sipping cognac and sugar. But when Weems tried to drag him into conversation, the curse of the Tower of Babel applied the clôtüre, and, "Ignorant lot, these Italians," said the schoolmaster, going on to show with many statistics and arguments that English, being founded on dead languages, was irrevocably destined by the Fates to become the universal tongue of all terrestrial peoples.

I looked at the clock. Half an hour yet before the doors of the Carlo Felice opened. The steep street outside was wet and miserable. I went back to turning over the old book. The pages were a queer medley, superbly uninteresting most of them, and tedious to spell out. There were the usual Spanish flourishes of lettering and expression, and when one had winnowed

away all this chaff, it needed a great deal of hunger to make one appreciate the grain. In fact, I was on the point of closing the old scribble book through sheer weariness, when my eye lit on something which, as I read it further, made me fairly sweat.

Weems droned on with his sermon, and I chucked in question and retort from time to time, just to keep him at it. I was wanting to gain time for a little argument of my own. It was a case of should I keep what I had found to myself, or should I share it with Weems? Common sense said, "Don't be a fool. If Providence has chucked a good thing in your way, stick it in your own pocket. That self-sufficient idiot will be none the wiser." But the plague one calls Honour kept shoving in all manner of objections. By Jove, how a rational-minded cad would have scored there!

In the long run Honour, confound it, got a bit of a balancer which helped it to win. I'd a light purse; Weems seemed better off; he must supply the trifle of shot necessary for the pair of us; and together we should split the proceeds. Yes, that would be the idea. And besides, on second thoughts, there'd be lashings and lavings of plunder for both. No need for a bit of sharp practice on my part after all. So up I spoke:—

"See here, signor, you've had the carpet for long enough, so give me a turn. This twaddling old screed which you were going to sell without ever skimming it through holds what means nothing more or less than a thumping great fortune for each of us. You've heard of Raymond Lully? No? Well, he was an old swell who flourished in the twelve hundreds, and who was by trade rake, philosopher, quack, fanatic, organizer, and martyr. He hailed from Mallorca—or Majorca, as you English persist in calling it—and he wrote books on Apologetic Theology, Dogmatic Divinity, and Practical Alchemy. Also he penned this diary, which has evidently been kept pretty snug so far, and thanks to its general dreary tone, no one has read the memorandum on page the last but one."

"Let me see," interrupted Weems, stretching out his hand for the volume.

"It's of no use to you, as you can't read Spanish. However, I'll tell you what's here; only let me gently remind you first that if it hadn't been for my knowing the language and conning some of this stuff through, the book would have passed out of your hands without your ever having learnt a word about it. Shall I go on now? It's a bit important."

"Yes, we are practically alone here. That person with the blue spectacles speaks no English, and there is no one else within earshot. But you are slightly in error about my ignorance of Spanish, Mr. Cospatric!"

"Yes, yes; you know y means 'and,' don't you, and that si stands for 'yes,' and all the rest? But don't let's bother about that now. Just marvel at this wonderful find. If the old gentleman had only written 'R. Lully, His Book,' on the title-page or at the conclusion, some bibliophile would have picked the thing up for a certainty, and read it with the view of finding what I have found; and part of the world's history would be different. But as it is, Lully happily omitted his signature, and in consequence the memorandum of where the Recipe could be found has never been read since the day it was written."

"But," broke in Weems, "what is this all about? I can't understand what you are driving at, except that the book is a diary of Raymond Lully's, whose name, of course, I recollect clearly enough now."

"My dear sir, whilst this old quack was trafficking with alchemy, and trying to discover the elixir vital, or the philosopher's stone, or some other myth like that, he accidentally found out a method whereby common wood charcoal may be crystallized."

"What!" gasped the schoolmaster, "made into diamonds! Great heavens, how was it done? Tell me quick."

"He doesn't give it here. This diary was evidently a private one which he carried about with him, and it was liable to be destroyed. So he wrote up the Recipe in a quiet place where no one would stumble on it, and where, as he remarks, he could send his heir to if he thought fit to do such a thing. But still, I don't think that there is much fear of the secret having been given away. In the first place, we should undoubtedly hear of it if any one was manufacturing real diamonds for the market, as the diamond mines of the world are all known, and their output most strictly regulated. And, in the second place, he had a strong reason of his own for not divulging the formula. Listen, and I'll read. 'If,' he says, 'diamonds were made common and cheap so that the lower orders of people might obtain them, I can conceive that much dissension would arise. For the nobles, finding their stored gems to have become in a sudden of no richness, would be deeply embittered thereby—they and their woman-kind. And the common folk, being able to flaunt jewels equal to those of their betters, would wax arrogant and dissatisfied; and though being in reality no whit better off than before, would deem themselves the inferiors of none and the superiors to most; in support of which vain dreams they would strive to their own sore detriment. For as in the beginning the sons of Adam were equal, and as of their descendants some rose to be of ruling classes through mental and physical fitness, so if all men were to be levelled again to-day, to-morrow they would be uneven once more, and the next day more uneven, the weak

getting trampled under foot, and the strong fighting a red path upward with their ruthless sword."

"I need hardly inform you," interrupted Weems, "that those crude ideas of political economy are not what we modern thinkers accept. Even John Stuart—but I will tell you about that afterwards. Please let me hear how the diamonds are made. Never mind about the other twaddle. It pains one to listen to it."

"As I told you, the actual Recipe is not in the diary here. Lully wrote it out, so he says, in imperishable form, in a place where he conceived it would pass down through the centuries absolutely undisturbed. I am not quite so confident about that as he is, as I know the inquisitiveness of the present generation better than he could imagine it. But to cut the story short, he found a way into one of the Talayots of Minorca, carved his secret upon the plaster of the interior, hid the entrance again, and came away. He says that the Talayot was believed by the Minorcans to be solid throughout, and adds that his only confidant, the priest who helped him to gain the internal chamber, died of a fever two days afterwards. Then he mentions the name of the spot—Talaiti de Talt, near Mercadal—and says if you dig a man's length down in the middle of the side facing seaward, you'll come across the entrance passage. Oddly enough, I've been at Mercadal myself, when a brig I was on was weather-bound in Port Mahon; and though I don't recollect this Talaiti de Talt, it's very probable I saw it, as we overhauled all the Talayots in the neighbourhood."

"By the way, what is a Talayot? I'm—ar—sorry to confess ignorance——"

That last made me grin, which he saw, and didn't like a bit. However, I pulled my face together again, and explained. "'Talayot' is a generic term for the groups of prehistoric remains which lie all over the island. There are monoliths, short underground passages, duolithic altars, and rude pyramids. Talaiti de Talt is evidently one of these last."

"Old?"

"Tolerably. The race of men who put them up were extinct before the Egyptian pyramid-builders came upon the scene."

"I don't quite see how that can be. You must understand, Mr. Cospatric——"

"Oh, what does it matter, man? If it pleases you, I'll grant that Cheops and Co. took to architecture first. But, anyway, these Minorcan pyramids were up long before Lully's time, and that's enough for us. The Recipe's there, just waiting to be fetched. We must drink success to this."

A waitress brought us filled glasses, and we toasted one another. Then I told Weems openly enough about my financial position, and asked him to advance me enough for passage money. I said I knew the language and the route and all the rest of it, and the outlay for the pair of us would be very little more than what it would cost him to go alone. In fact, I was going on to sketch out the trip, and tot up the items of cost, when he cut me short, and coldly intimated that he did not intend to part with a cent. He did not even plead poverty. He gave no reason whatever.

I stared at him for a minute or so blankly. That he would refuse what I asked had never occurred to me. At last I blurted out, "Why, good God, man, I needn't have told you about the thing at all. If I'd held my tongue, you know very well you'd have parted with the book in absolute ignorance of what it contained."

"I might or might not have looked into it, Mr. Cospatric. That is as may be. But the most ordinary honesty would have compelled you to speak when I did. Perhaps I refused your request too abruptly just now. Believe me, I am not ungrateful for the service you have rendered. In fact, I should like to prove my obligation. But I could not have you labour under the error that you are entitled to a half share of whatever profits may accrue. This Recipe is mine, entirely mine, Mr. Cospatric, and it is not likely that I am going to put you in the way of annexing a share of it. Of course, legally, you have no claim on me; but as you say you are in indigent circumstances, I am willing to stretch a point, and do more than I otherwise should. I will give you the remainder of my circular ticket. That will take you back to England, let me see—via——"

"You scurvy little blackguard," said I, beginning to lose my temper, "aren't you afraid of being killed?"

He got very red, and exclaimed pompously, "Don't you attempt bombast with me, Mr. Cospatric. I am as safe from your personal violence here as I should be at home."

"Then," said I, "you must live at a tolerably lively place, for here there are at least four men knifed every week, and more when things are brisk."

"I shall put myself under the protection of the police if you threaten me," said he, evidently beginning to feel a bit uneasy.

"And I should like to know how the devil you would set about doing that same? Why, my blessed rustic, supposing you knew the lingo, which you don't, and you went up to the local substitute for a bobby, and said you wanted to get under his cloak, d'ye know what he'd do? Why, run you in

straight away. And in quod you'd stop; there isn't a soul in the city here who'd say a word for you." Of course all this was a bluff, but I knew the average Briton has an intense belief in official lawlessness on the Continent, and I thought I'd reckoned up this specimen pretty accurately. It looked as if I was right. He changed tack promptly, dropped the dictatorial schoolmaster, and started fawning. I seemed to have mistaken his motives. As a man of science, he naturally took an intense interest in this Recipe, and wished to have the administration of it entirely in his own hands. But, of course, I must have known that as a gentleman he would feel bound to divide any fortune that might proceed from it equally with me.

As a point of fact, I hadn't understood this. I had also overlooked the item that he was a gentleman, and even then did not recognize it. But I kept these trifles to myself; and as he was evidently trying to bury the hatchet, I got out my spade as well. And for the rest of that evening we were as civil to one another as a couple of smugglers with one load of bales.

We were to work the thing together on his coin and my experience, both of which were equally necessary; and as for the plunder, there'd be a belly-full for the pair of us, and a lot to spare. Thank goodness women existed; and as long as they didn't die out, the inhabitants of this globe would always buy diamonds, if the market was not over-glutted.

And we'd start by the train which set off westward along the coast at 7.10 the next morning.

When we get comfortably to Mahon, thought I, I'll tell Mr. Schoolmaster that the proof of the pudding can be found near the Recipe, for, according to the illustrious doctor's account, he has buried in the floor of the Talayot a fist-full of diamonds from his own manufactory. But as the little chap seems keen enough already, I'll let that stand over for the present. If at any time he wants an extra spur, it will come in handy.

## CHAPTER V.

### WANTED, A PASSAGE.

It had been agreed that we were to start off next morning by the 7.10 train, and half an hour before that time saw me standing before the Columbus statue in the Piazza Acquaverdi. Weems was such a mighty squeamish little creature about the proprieties that I thought an old dunnage-sack would scandalize him, and so had purchased a drab portmanteau for my kit at the cost of half my remaining capital. I intended to have no more breezes with him if it could be avoided.

The minute-hand of the clock above the central entrance of the station crept up to the vertical, and began to droop. Cab after cab rolled up over the flagstones and teemed out people and properties. Still my man came not. He had distinctly said he would be in good time, as he had baggage to be registered, and disliked being hurried. It began to look, in spite of his bragging about never having overslept himself in his life, as if he had been late in turning out.

The clock showed three minutes past the hour, and the big hand, being on the down grade, began to race. I walked through the rank of waiting cabs, and stood by the pillars of the central doorway. If we missed this train we should lose a day. The 9.35 didn't go through, as we had seen from the time-table overnight. It only landed one at Marseille.

The crowd of incoming people began to lessen, and finally ceased altogether. The last passenger passed through on to the platform, and the officials locked the waiting-room doors. We had missed that blessed train.

I cursed Weems vigorously, and set off to Isotta's, where he was staying, to beat him up, swinging the drab portmanteau in my fist, as I didn't want to pay for leaving it, as somehow or other economy seemed to me at that moment to be a strong line.

The Swiss day-porter was just coming down. He was a gorgeous personage who could have saved the architect of Babel his great disappointment, and at first he knew nothing of Mistaire Weem. Evidently the schoolmaster had not been generous. So I inquired in the bureau for my man's number, intending to beat up his room then and there, but was met by the staggering announcement that the signor had cleared by the Marseille train which left Genoa at 3.30 in the morning. But there was a letter for me.

I tore the limp envelope, and read:—

"Grand Hotel Isotta, Genova, Tuesday.

"Dear Sir,—Upon consideration I must return to my original decision. I fear I shall have left Genoa before you receive this, but do not trouble to give me any thanks. The balance of the circular ticket is very much at your service.—Yours faithfully,

"R. E. Weems.

"—Cospatric, Esq."

The little beast had done me brown.

It was getting on for eight o'clock then. I glanced at a time-table. He was due to leave Marseille at 8.4. By Jove, if I could have trumped up any charge that would have held water a minute I'd have had him arrested by wire. Anything to delay him! I was just savage mad. And I was as helpless as a figure-head.

I swung out into the Via Roma wondering what to do next. Common sense said go and take up my berth on the American steamer, and quit crying for the moon now that it had bounced out of reach again. But I was far too wild to listen to any sane sober plan like that. I couldn't swim out to Minorca, and I could not fly; but I told myself grimly that I was going somehow, and if Weems had got there first and collared the Recipe, he'd just have to hand over—or—well, it would be the worse for Weems. I shouldn't buy lavender kid gloves to handle him with.

All that day I hunted about, trying to get a passage across to the islands; needless to remark, without success. The mail steamers run there from Valencia and Barcelona only, and though there are occasional orange boats passing between Soller in North Mallorca and Marseille, they aren't to be depended on. By a singular irony of fate, I did come across an old white—painted barque which had just come out of Palma in ballast; but her skipper only told what I knew full well in my own heart, that I might very likely wait three years before I found a craft going the other way.

There seemed nothing for it but to go like a sensible Christian by train round the coast, and then across from one of the two Spanish ports by the regular ramshackle mail steamer. And so I bowed to fate, and converted the drab portmanteau and all its contents into the compactest form. The lot didn't fetch much. By dint of tedious haggling, I scraped together twenty-three lire thirty; and without selling the clothes on my back, and one other item, which I had rather sell the teeth out of my head than part with, I didn't see a possibility of getting more by that sort of trade. However, I had



only collected this slender store in the hopes of increasing it, and as soon as night came down and such places are open, I marched off to a gambling hell which I knew of in the low part of the town near the harbour side. The way lay through many passages and up many steps, and it was by no means a place to which the general public were admitted. In fact, in its style it was far more exclusive than the *salle de jeu* run by Monsieur Blanc's successors at Monte. But I had been there before, and knew how to get the *entrée*.

The whitewashed walls were grimy, the two naked gas-jets jumped and hooted spasmodically, and those who knew said that the atmosphere was reminiscent of a slaver's hold. The officials wore their shirt-sleeves rolled up for greater ease in movement, and no gentleman was allowed to enter the room till he had deposited his knife outside the door.

With the fluctuating population of a seaport, one might reasonably expect to find most nationalities represented at such a seductive spot; but, as a point of fact, the operators on that night were almost exclusively Italians. The sailor, take him in the bulk, is a tolerable fool all the world over; but the northerner has some grains of sense though he is a sportsman, and roulette with twenty-six numbers and a zero is a trifle too strong an order even for him.

I had fixed my desires at a hundred and twenty lire. Less would not see me through; more I was not going to try for.

In that assembly a man who plunges half-lire pieces on every spin of the ball is a man who means business; and the dilettanti soon let me press through to a stool at the table. Going on pair and impair or the colour was not to my taste. Either luck was going to stand by me that evening, or I was going to be broke; so I planked my money haphazard on four numbers every time, and didn't handicap myself with a system. I'd a distinct suspicion that the bank had even a greater pull than was apparent on the surface; but there was no chance of investigation, and I submitted to the fact that chances all-told stood about two to one against me.

The play was slow, and for ordinary people unexciting, though you can guess it did not send me to sleep. I won a little, and lost a little; but on the whole was able to shove a ten-lire note every now and again into my pocket. It doesn't do to leave such trifles about in some places.

A clock outside chimed ten, and I could count up sixty-four lire fifty. What with Italian tobacco and Italian garlic and Italian humanity, the air had got something too awful for words. The arteries inside my skull were playing some devil's tune of Thumpetty Bump that caused me to see mistily, and to

wish for an earthquake which would rearrange terrestrial economy. In short, I couldn't stand it any longer, and so went out for a few minutes' spell in the open.

But I didn't luxuriate over-long. The thought occurred to me that Weems was already at Cerbere, and in another hour and forty minutes would be having his baggage examined by an individual in green cotton gloves at Port Bou, previous to pursuing his career of conquest down into Spain. And by this time my grudge against that schoolmaster person had grown to be a very big one indeed. So I gave up parading the muddy paving-stones, and turned back into the biscazza.

A new arrival had turned up during my absence, a long, lean Englishman named Haigh, whom I had met casually once before. His nerves seemed in a delicate condition, for when the water-logged gas jumped, he jumped too, and, moreover, tried to do it as unobtrusively as possible, as if conscious and not over-proud of the failing. But he was gambling keenly and coolly enough, picking his notes one by one from a leather pocket-book, blinking over them to make sure of their value, and watching them unfailingly gathered up by the grimy paw of the croupier without an outward sign of regret.

I looked on a minute, thinking what a queer fish he was, and then elbowing in to the table started afresh on my own trading.

Fortune seemed to have improved by the rest. Three rattles of the pea brought my total up to a hundred and fifteen francs in Greek, French, and Italian money.

A hundred and twenty was certainly the original goal, but I had a precious great mind then to let the other five slide. In fact, I drew away from the table intending to stop. But instead of quitting the place there and then, I was fool enough to argue the position out solemnly to myself, with the result that I eventually decided the whole affair from beginning to end to be entirely of the nature of a gamble, and naturally felt bound to test whether the luck was going to hold any longer.

Indecision's my strong point, and many's the time I've had to pay for it. If I'd cleared out on the first impulse, I should have been comparatively affluent. As it was, ten more minutes beside that greasy baize cleared me down to the lining.

However, if I had made a donkey of myself, it wasn't an altogether novel experience, and I was philosopher enough not to weep over it. So I crammed

my fists into my pockets by way of ballast, and sauntered to the door for a trifle of property which the regulations had made me leave there.

Whilst I was picking my own particular weapon from amongst the armoury Haigh joined me, announcing that he also was cleaned out; and adding that he was not altogether sorry, as those flickering gas-jets bothered him.

The observation, if slightly illogical, was very explanatory; and so thinking that he'd be none the worse for being looked after, I said I'd stroll back up into the town with him. As we went up through the narrow streets he imparted a long detail of woe; but he maundered over it considerably, and whether the lady who was mostly in question was his own wife, or some one else's wife, or no wife at all, was a point still hidden from me when we sheered up in front of his hotel. Here he got more mournful still, and quitted the tale of his past ill-treatment for a more pressing question of the present.

"Yes, here we are, old chap, and I'm awfully sorry I can't ask you in to have something. But the fact is, I'm not in very good odour there just at present. My bill d'ye see's been galloping for the last three weeks, and at lunch to-day the proprietor fellow said he couldn't wait any longer for my remittances. He said that if they didn't come by evening he'd rather I went, leaving my baggage behind by way of souvenir. I'm afraid the two portmanteaus aren't worth very much, as I've—er—disposed of most of the contents, and supplied the weight by pieces of iron kentledge done up in one or other of the daily papers. I had a notion that I should have raised funds this evening, but circumstances intervened which—er—you understand, made me somewhat worse off than before. Of course if I went in there they might put me up again for to-night; but that proprietor fellow might be about, and I shouldn't care to meet him. He's such a nasty way of looking at a chap. So I think, on the whole, I shall just go down and sleep on my boat."

"Your boat?" I repeated in a dazed sort of way.

"Yes," said Haigh, blinking at me anxiously; "just a little cutter I've got down there in the harbour. But I say, dear chappie, you aren't taking it unkindly that I don't ask you in here, are you? 'Pon my honour, if I weren't dead stony broke I'd give you a drink either in this place or——"

"Damn your drinks, you lucky man. If your boat and my knowledge doesn't transmogrify us from a pair of stone-brokes into a couple of bloated millionaires, I'm a Dutchman. Come along, man. Come along now."

## CHAPTER VI.

### FORE AND AFT SEAMANSHIP.

It has been my fate to put to sea in some of the worst-found craft that ever scrambled into port again, but of the lot, that ugly little cutter of Haigh's stands pre-eminent.

She possessed no single good point in her favour. She had swung in harbour so long that everywhere above the water-line she was as staunch as a herring-net. Her standing rigging, being of wire, was merely rusted, but her running gear was something too appalling to think about. As for her bottom, if she had been turned up and dried for a day (so Haigh cheerfully averred), there would have been enough bushy cover on it to put down pheasants in. Fittings, even the barest necessities, were painfully lacking, as the man had been living riotously on them for over a month and a half. A Chinese pirate could not have picked her much cleaner. What he was pleased to term the "superfluities of the main and after cabins" had gone first, fetching fair prices. Afterwards he had peddled his gear little by little, dining one day off a riding-light, going to a theatre the next on two marline spikes and a sister-block, and so on. His ground tackle, long saved up for a *bonne bouche*, had provided funds for that last night in the gambling hell, where we both got cleared out together; and the balance that was left didn't represent a mosquito's ransom.

Haigh told me all this as we walked back again down the narrow streets to the quay, and I suggested that although Mediterranean air was good, we couldn't exactly live on it during the passage across. But he pointed out that as his dinghy was very old and rotten, it would be quite a useless encumbrance on the cruise; and so, dropping me on board the cutter, he sculled off again to swap this old wreck for provisions.

I roused out a weather-thinned mainsail, black with mildew, and bent it; and by the time that was on the spars, he had completed his barter, and had been put on board again by a friend.

We had a dozen words of conversation, and then got small canvas hoisted and quietly slipped moorings. The night was very black, and thick with driving rain; and we slid out through the pier-heads unquestioned save by a passing launch which hailed, and was politely answered in gibberish.

There was a singular lack of formality about our departure which was much to be regretted. But there was some small trouble about big accumulations of harbour dues and such minor items, which would have had to be settled in return for a clearance *en règle*; and, remembering how history was

galloping, we could not afford the time to deal with them. And so, after a narrow squeak of being cut down by a big steamer just outside, we found ourselves close-hauled under all plain sail, making a long leg with a short one to follow.

"Funds wouldn't run to the luxury of a chart," observed Haigh when I inquired about this trifle, "but I had a look at a big Mediterranean track chart at the place where I bartered the dinghy, and the course to Port Mahon is due south-west, as near as no matter."

"As near as no matter," groaned I in response.

"Why, my dear chap, we really can't indulge in the extreme niceties of navigation. We've got a compass, which is fairly accurate if you joggle it with your finger occasionally, and we can fix up a lead line when we get in soundings, and I dare say we can make a log. D'you mind having a spell at the pump now? I'm a bit out of condition."

The leaking decreased as the planking swelled to the wet, but other unpleasantnesses began to show themselves. One of the greatest, to my way of thinking, was the way we were victualled. To begin with, there were twenty-three bottles of vermouth, straw-jacketed, and carefully stowed. Then there was a bag of condemned sea-biscuits, which Haigh pleasantly alluded to as "perambulators." And the list of solids was completed by half a dozen four-pound tins of corned beef, and a hundred and fifty excellent cigars which had not paid duty. There was an iron tank full of rusty water which "had to do," as refilling it might have entailed awkward questions. And, lastly, there had been brought on board a very small and much-corroded kedge anchor, which, as it was the only implement of its kind that we possessed, gave much force to Haigh's comment that "it might come in handy."

To tell the truth, when the cold sea air blew away the glamour of plotting and planning, and I was able to tot up all these accessories with a practical mind, I was beginning very much to wish myself well off what seemed a certain road to Jones.

Haigh, on the other hand, seemed supremely contented and happy. Yachting as a general thing, he said, he found slow; but this cruise had an element of novelty which made it vastly entertaining. He had never heard of any one deliberately getting to sea quite under such circumstances before. He didn't uphold the wisdom of the proceeding in the least, for when I grunted something about the world not containing such another pair of thorough-paced fools, he agreed with me promptly. In fact, he was in far too jovial a

humour to argue about anything, and by degrees I began to fall in with his vein. "Let's split a bottle of vermouth," said he, "and drink confusion to every one except our two selves." And we did it.

The breeze lulled at daybreak, and northed till we had it nearly fair.

"This is great business," said Haigh. "I'll bet you five hundred pounds that we make the islands in the next twenty-four hours. I.O.U.'s accepted." He slipped off the after-hatch, and dragged up from the counter a venerable relic of a spinnaker, which was one vivid mottle of mildew. The sail was duly mocked and set. The wind was freshening, and our pace increased. The cutter and her parasitical escort kicked up enough wake for a Cardiff ore-steamer.

"Who says a foul bottom matters now?" said Haigh. "Who will suggest that she isn't kicking past this scenery at nine knots? Bless the ugly lines of her, we mustn't forget her builder's health. Hand up another bottle of that vermouth and the dipper."

We lifted her through it all that morning at a splendid pace, the wake boiling up astern like a mill-tail. The two booms did certainly make occasional plunges which might have jarred timid nerves, but such a trifle did not disturb us.

"It's the best bit of racing I've ever done," said Haigh. "There's a pig of a following sea, and the wind's squally. Just her weather. If we'd only got another craft trying to beat us, the thing would be perfect. We should have some inducement to carry on then."

Whilst we were eating our mid-day meal (on deck, of course) that variegated spinnaker went "pop," splitting neatly from head-crinkle to foot-rope. It was my trick at the tiller, and so I was tied aft. Haigh peered round at the ruin, and returned to his occupation of knocking weevils out of his biscuit. He didn't think it worth while to budge, and so we let the canvas blow into whatever shaped ribands it chose. If we couldn't carry the sail, we didn't want it.

The wind hardened down as the day went on, and every knot we went the sea got worse. The ugly cutter slid down one wet incline, drove up the next, and squattered through the hissing crest with a good deal of grumbling and plunging and rolling and complaining. But she had a good grip of the water, and with decently careful steering she showed but small inclination to broach-to or do anything else she wasn't wanted to. She might not be a beauty; she might be sluggish as a haystack in a light breeze; but, as Haigh said, this was just her day, and we were not too nervous to take advantage

of it. Still, considering her small tonnage, and the fact that all her tackle was so infernally rotten, she took a tidy bit of looking after. You see, we might be reckless about our skins, but at the same time we were very keenly anxious to make the Balearic Islands.

The thing that I mostly feared was that our old ruin of a mainsail would take leave of us. If once it started to split, the whole lot would go like a sheet of tissue-paper. However, whether we liked it or not, we had to run on now. The wind and sea were both far too heavy to dream of an attempt at rounding-to. And, indeed, even if we had succeeded in slewing her head to the wind without getting swamped in the process (the odds on which were about nine hundred to one against), it was distinctly doubtful as to whether she would deign to stay there. Small cutters are not great at staying hove-to in really dirty weather.

And so we topped the boom well up, hoisted the tack to prevent overrunning the seas, and let her drive; and whilst Haigh clung on to the tiller and its weather rope, I busied myself with a bent sail-needle at stitching up any places within reach on the mainsail where the seams seemed to be working loose.

Soon after dark that night—and I never saw much more inky blackness in my life—we came across a deep-laden brig which very nearly gave us a quietus. She was running sluggishly under lower fore-topsail, wallowing like a log-raft in a rapid, and doing less than a third of our knottage. We possessed neither side-lamps nor oil, and showed no light; and as she had not a lantern astern, we got no glimmer of warning till we were within a dozen fathoms of her taffrail. Haigh couldn't give the cutter much helm for fear of gibing her and carrying away everything, and consequently we did not clear that brig's low quarter by more than a short fathom. Had we passed her to starboard instead of to port, we should have fouled our main boom, and—well, we shouldn't have got any farther.

As we tore past, the white water squirming and hissing between the vessels' sides, a man leaned over the bulwark, with his face looking like a red devil's in the glare of the port light, and shook a fist and screamed a frightened venomous curse. Our only reply was a wild roar of laughter. As we drove off into the mist of scud ahead, I looked back and saw the man staring after us with dropped jaw and eyes fairly goggling. He must have thought us mad. Indeed, I believe we had taken leave of some of our senses then.

"Vermouth's cheapening," said Haigh. "Pass up another bottle. If we do happen to go to Jones, it 'ud be a thousand pities to take the liquor down with us undecanted."

Don't get the idea that we were drunk all through that wild cruise, because we were not. But one thing and another combined to make the excitement so vivid, that with the liquor handy it did not take much inducement to make us tipple pretty heavily. We were vilely fed, bitterly exposed, heavily overworked, unable even to smoke—and—the vermouth was very, very good.

As the seas swept her the ugly cutter's planking swelled, but before she became staunch a fearful amount of water had passed into her. Haigh, who was in no sort of condition, got utterly spun out by a five-minutes' spell at the pump, and consequently it had been my task to restore the incoming Mediterranean to its proper place again. It was a job that wearied every nerve in my body. The constant and monotonous heaving up and down of a pump-handle is probably the most exhausting work existent; and soon after passing that deeply-laden brig I pumped her dry for (what seemed) the ten thousandth time, and toppled on the deck dead beat.

"Look here," said Haigh, "you get below and turn in. I'm quite equal to keeping awake until further notice. I'm never much of a hand at sleeping at the best of times; and just now I'm well wound up for a week's watch on end. If you're wanted, I'll call you. Go."

I slipped down without argument, dropped into a bare and clammy bunk, and slept.

Haigh never roused me. I woke of my own accord, and found daylight struggling in through the dusty skylight in the after-cabin roof. After yawning there a minute or so, I conquered laziness and returned to the deck.

Those who think the Inland Sea is always calm ultramarine, under a sky to match, should have seen it then. The colouring was all of grays and whites, with here and there a slab of cold clear green, where a big wave heaved up sheer. It was awfully wild. The sea was running higher than ever, and the gale had not slackened one bit. The brine-smoke was hissing through our cross-trees in dense white clouds.

Haigh greeted me with a nod and a grin. His hat had gone, and the dank wisps of his hair were being fluttered about like black rags; his narrow slits of eyes were heavily bloodshot; his face was grimy and pale, his hands grimy and red; his clothing was a wreck. He looked very unpleasant, but he was undoubtedly very broad awake. He resigned the tiller and rope, and began gingerly to stretch his cramped limbs, talking the while.

"D'ye see that steamer, broadish on the weather-bow?"



I looked, and saw on the gray horizon a thin streak of a different gray.

"I rose her a quarter of an hour ago," he went on, "and bore away a couple of points so as to cut her off. I'm thinking it wouldn't be a bad idea to speak her if it could be managed, and find out where we are. As we haven't been able to rig a log-ship and line, and as the steering has been, to say the least of it, erratic, our dead reckoning has been some of the roughest. Personally, I wouldn't bet upon our whereabouts to quite a hundred miles. Ta-ta."

He went below to smoke, leaving me fully occupied with the steering. We rose the steamer pretty fast, and in half an hour could see her water-line when she lifted. She was a fine screw boat of three thousand tons, racing along at eighteen knots, and rolling with the beam sea up to her rails, in spite of the fore and aft canvas they had set to steady her.

Haigh came back to deck, blinking like an owl at the growing day. "Look at the gray-backs chivying her," said he. "Aren't the passengers just sorry for themselves now? And won't they have some fine yarns to pitch when they get ashore about the hardest gale the captain ever knew, and their own heroic efforts (down below), and all the rest of it? I've listened to those tales of desperate adventure by the hour together. Passengers by Dover-Calais packets are great at 'em."

All this while we were closing up. The steamer's decks were tenantless save for a couple of lookouts forward in oilskins, bright varnished by the spin-drift, and a couple of officers crouched behind the canvas dodgers of the bridge, and holding fast on to the stanchions. I was clearing my throat to hail these last, when Haigh turned and told me I might save my wind.

"Never mind," he said; "I know her well. She's the Eugène Perrier, a Transatlantique Company's boat, one of the quick line out of Algiers for Marseille. Look at your compass, and note the course she's steering—N.N.E. and by E. That's from Cape Bajoli straight for Marseille. They run both ways between Mallorca and Minorca without touching. Hooray! who says our luck isn't stupendous? Here we are, not having made enough southing, and heading so as to fetch Gibraltar without sighting the islands at all; and then in the nick of time up comes a dea ex machinâ in the guise of the Eugène Perrier to shove us on the course again. In main-sheet, and then, blow me if we won't have a bottle of that vermouth by way of celebrating the event in a way at once highly becoming and original."

We made a landfall that afternoon off some of the high ground in North-east Mallorca, and Haigh gave over champing his cold cigar-butt, and delivered himself of an idea.

"Isn't there another harbour in Minorca besides Port Mahon?"

I said I believed there were some half-dozen small ones.

"Any this west side?"

"Ciudadella, about in the middle."

"Know anything about it?"

"Nothing, except the fact of its existence; and as we have no vestige of chart, I don't exactly see how we are to learn anything more."

"Precisely. Then, my dear chap, to finish this cruise consistently, Ciudadella must now become our objective. It would take us another day to run round under the lee of the island to Port Mahon, and days are valuable. The cutter's only drawing five foot five, and with our luck at its present premium you'll see we'll worry in somehow without piling her up. Perhaps we may get some misguided person to come out and con us. Of course we'll take him if any one does offer, and owe him the pilotage; but I'd just as soon we navigated her on our own impudent hook. It's no use having a big credit on the Universal Luck Bank if you don't draw on it heavily. The concern may bust up any day."

Luckily for us the gale had eased, or we should never have been able to put the cutter on the wind. But as it was, with a four-reefed mainsail and a bit of a pocket-handkerchief jib, she lay the course like a Cowes-built racing forty; and if she did ship it green occasionally, there was no rail to hold the water in board. We didn't spare her an ounce. We kept her slap on her course, neither luffing up nor bearing away for anything. That was the sort of weather when the ugliness of the old cutter's lines was forgotten, and one saw only beauties in them. She might send the spindrift squirting through her cross-trees, but with the chap at the helm keeping her well a-going, she'd smoke through bad dirt like a steamer.

We rose the low cliffs of Eastern Minorca about half-way across; but rain came on directly afterwards, and in the thickness we lost them again. In that odd way in which things one has glanced through in a book recur to one when they are wanted, I had managed to recall something I had once conned over in a Sailing Directions about Ciudadella. The harbour entrance was narrow—scarcely a cable's length across—and it was marked by a lighthouse on the northern side, and a castle or tower or something of that kind on the other bank. The town behind, with its heavy walls and white houses, was plainly visible from seaward, and the spire of the principal church was somehow used as a leading mark. But whether one had to keep

it on the lighthouse or the castle, I could not recollect. Neither could I call to mind whether there was a bar. In fact, I could not remember a single thing else about the place; and as Haigh remarked, what little I did recall (without being in any way certain about its accuracy) was of singularly little practical use. But this ignorance did not deter us from holding on towards the coast in the very least. We might pile up the cutter on some outlying reef, but we were both cocksure that our stupendous luck was going to set us safe ashore somehow. Et après—the Recipe.

We held on sturdily, lifting slant-wise over the heavy green rollers till we were within half a mile of the land, and could see the surf creaming to the heads of the low cliffs, and could hear the moaning and booming as it broke on rocky outliers; and then easing off sheets again, we put up helm and ran down parallel with the coast. Being blissfully ignorant of anything beyond a general idea of Minorca's outlines, we had to keep a very wary lookout; for a heavy rain had started to drive down with the gale, and looking to windward was like peering through a dirty cambric pocket-handkerchief. Indeed, we made two several attempts at knocking the island out of the water, each sufficiently distinct to have made any ordinary sailorman in his sane senses get snugly to sea without further humbugging. And the afternoon wore on without our seeing either the lighthouse, the castle, or the town we were looking for; and just upon dusk the coast turned sharply off to the eastward.

"That looks like a bay," said Haigh, squinting at the land that was rising and falling over our weather quarter. "If we hold on as we are going, we ought to pick up the other horn of it." So we stuck to the course for three hours, and then came to the conclusion that the point we had seen must have been the extremity of the island, and that we were at present heading for a continent named Africa, then distant some two hundred nautical miles.

The discovery cast a gloom over the ship's company. Our nerves were in a condition then for taking strong impressions. For myself, all lightheartedness flitted away. The ugly cutter's good deeds were forgotten, and she appeared nothing more nor less than an ill-formed cockle-shell. The gale was terrific. I was bone-weary; also the most particularly damned fool on the globe's surface.

What Haigh's personal conclusions were I do not know. He said nothing, but stood propped against the weather runner, mumbling over an unlit cigar and peering into the mist.

After a while he turned. "Here, give me the helm, Cospatric, and do you get your strong fists on the main-sheet. We'll put her on the wind again, as close-hauled as she'll look at it. It's no use ratching up to windward again

hunting for Ciudadella, as ten to one we'd miss it a second time. We'll just run along the lee coast here for Port Mahon. There, now she's heading up for it like a steamer."

There was silence for a while, and we listened to the swish of the seas and the rattle of the wind through the rigging. Then Haigh delivered himself of further wisdom.

"It's a queer gamble this, take it through and back, and it's remarkably like roulette in being a game where a system doesn't pay. As long as we worked haphazard we did wonders. As soon as we tried to do a rational thing, and make that harbour at Ciudadella, we got euchred. Well, I dare say we both know how to take a whipping without howling over it. So for the present let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we may drown. Knock me a biscuit out of the weevils, old chappie, and give me likewise vermouth and corned horse."

Had the wind remained in its old quarter, we could have made one board of it all up the southern flank of the island; but, as if to accentuate the fact that we had already drawn more than our share of good fortune, the gale veered round to the east, and settled down to blow again in real hard earnest, bringing up with it a heavy sea. It was tack and tack all through the night, and we were always hard put to it to keep the ugly cutter afloat. Indeed, when some of the heavier squalls snorted down on to us, we simply had to heave-to. It was just a choice between that and being blown bodily under water.

The dawn was gray and wretched, but from the moment we sighted the last point the weather began to improve. The air cleared up, the gale began to ease, and when we ran in under Fort Isabelle just as the sunrise gun was fired, we saw that the day was going to turn out a fine one.

The long snug harbour of Mahon, which was in the days of canvas wings almost always filled with craft refuging, is now in this era of steam usually tenantless. So it was a bit of a surprise to us to find the English Channel Fleet lying there at anchor. The big war steamers were getting their matutinal scrub, and were alive with blue-and-white-clothed men. They looked very strong, very trim, very seaworthy, and the bitter contrast between them and our tattered selves made me curse them with sailor's point and fluency. Not so Haigh. He didn't mind a bit; rather enjoyed the rencontre, in fact; and producing a frayed Royal I— blue ensign, ran it up to the peak and dipped it in salute. If I remember right it was the *Immortalité* we met first, and down went the St. George's flag from her poop staff three times in answering salutation, whilst every pair of eyes on her decks was glued on the ugly cutter, their owners wondering where she had

popped up from. And so we passed her particularly Britannic Majesty's ships Anson, Rodney, Camperdown, Curlew, and Howe, and dropped our kedge overboard (at the end of the main halliards) close inside the torpedo-catcher Speedwell.

The strain was over. We staggered below and dropped into a dead sleep. Had there been a ton of diamonds waiting on the cliff road beside us, with half Mahon rushing to loot them, we could not have been induced to budge.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A DIPLOMATIC REMOVAL.

Individually the Minorcan is very amiably disposed towards the inhabitants of those other islands, Great Britain and Ireland. It is a matter of Spanish history that Minorca for many years groaned under English rule; and as prosperity has steadily decayed since the native article has been substituted for this reign of tyranny, it is not wonderful that the average Minorcan has a hankering to groan again. Indeed, he says as much with a candour that would be refreshing to haters of Victoria R et I's expansive raj. But the Carabiniere who guards the public morals holds (in the bulk) different opinions. He has no wish to be, like Othello, the possessor of a gone occupation; and by way of marking this distaste, he is apt on occasion to be uppish with the chance foreigner.

By force of circumstances, Haigh and I were in the way of finding ourselves in no slight difficulties. The Briton in his own insular ports is a very slipshod person with regard to the papers of small craft—especially pleasure craft. He looks upon those last with a favourable eye, and watches their going and coming with small concern. The peoples of the Mediterranean are constructed in different fashion. At the larger ports they are suspicious; but at the less frequented spots, firmly disbelieving that men can ever yacht for mere pleasure, they always take it for granted that any small craft is laden with explosives and conspiracy, until it has been most clearly and exhaustively demonstrated that such is not the case. Of course the orthodox papers and clearances from one's port of departure form the initial proof of innocence and harmlessness; and equally, of course, the lack of formality which had signalized our departure from Genoa prevented the display of these. And in addition, other matters combined to make our characters look still more shady.

We must have been boarded by the authorities soon after bringing up to our anchor, and I was dimly conscious of a stooping person in uniform staring in at us through the cabin door. But I was far too weary to wake or take any notice. However, the sight must have worked a dream into my sleep, for I remember imagining that official's feelings when he gazed at the mildewed desolation of the ugly cutter's interior, when he contrasted her size with the infernal gale she must have been sailing through to make the harbour, and when he noted that her entire crew consisted of two persons very much out of ordinary yachtsmen's uniform. And then I had visions of further inquiries; the official glee with which more unsatisfactory items were arrived at; the head-shakes of the British Vice-Consul; and—and then after that a deluge of lurid complexion.

These maundering cogitations must have spread themselves over a considerable time, for when Haigh roused me up, he said that I had slept very nearly round the clock. I pulled myself together and stared at him. He was looking distinctly excited; and this, seeing that he was usually a very calm sort of fish, was remarkable.

"Never say our luck has broken," said he. "I've just performed a regular four-cornered miracle. That port-authority person called again about two hours back, and it began to dawn upon me that we were done for. He fairly bristled with suspicion. I could see it even in the set of his clothes. If I'd told him that as soon as our fleet was gone you and I were going to take possession of the island in the name of the king of Ireland, he'd have believed it. But I temporized, having no yarn ready, and luck came down in a tornado. Not one Spaniard in a thousand has a soul above a single miserable liqueur—glass; but this one was the exception. He supped down that vermouth, pannikin after pannikin; and as he got more drunk, so did I get more eloquent. I believe at my strongest then I could have blarneyed Old Nick into giving me a draughty corner."

"But what in the plague did you say to the man? How could you get over the fact of having no clearance papers, and all the rest of it?"

"Simplest thing in the world, my dear chap, when once I'd grasped the idea. The cutter put out of Savona some two months ago—this being a fact, as I put documentary evidence under his nose to prove. Then she sailed to Corsica, and lay in a tiny coaster's harbour where there was no Captain of the Port or any one else who could scribble on stamped paper. There we stayed all the time till the crew deserted, and we ourselves were evilly entreated, the yacht being gutted by unprincipled natives. Après, you and I brought her across here alone, knowing this to be the abode of bliss. Of course, in his sober senses he'd never have believed a word of it; but, thanks to that lovely vermouth, he swallowed the whole yarn, lock, stock, and barrel, and wrote me out the wherewithal, and then tumbled off to sleep, swearing by three local saints that he wanted to go to the same heaven I landed at."

"But," said I, "when he's sober, he'll be down on us like a thousand of bricks."

"Not a bit of it, my dear boy. Don't you know that all Spaniards can look upon a murder without emotion, but no Spaniard can see a drunken man without being filled with loathing? Our beauty on the locker there will be the last to give himself away. But never mind raging about this now. I woke you up for something else. Come on deck. There, do you see that steamer just

opening out from the Hospital island? That's the Antiguo Mahones, the mail-boat from Barcelona. Unless he's broken down somewhere, your man Weems should be on board."

"I'm afraid not. According to the book of Steamer Sailings I looked at in Genoa, he ought to have left Barcelona three days ago."

"Precisely; but, old chappie, you don't know the Antiguo Mahones. Now I do. She was built on the Clyde in the early 'sixties, and has seen much service under the Red Duster. When she grew old and outclassed, she followed the way of all steamers, and was bought by a Mediterranean firm who quite understand her infirmities and nurse her accordingly. Her skipper is far too sensible a person to put to sea in anything approaching blowy weather, even though he does carry his most Catholic Majesty's mails; and the passengers are quite the class of people to appreciate his caution. Mañana, if you will remember, is the motto of the nation."

"Well, if that's the case," I broke in, "it seems to me our best plan will be to get ashore now, and go for our pickings in Talaiti de Talt without further delay. Weems is always seasick, so he told me, from the moment he leaves shore. He said it was a sign of a highly-organized mind, hinting that it was only coarse-fibred people who could keep their victuals under hatches in a roll. And so, as the Antiguo Mahones has been getting kicked about in big swell ever since she left Barcelona inner harbour, it's pretty safe to bet that Master Weems has had the business part of his little soul churned completely out of him, and that he'll go and lie up at Bustamente's Hotel for a day or two to recruit. He'll never guess we're here, and consequently will see no cause for hurry. And besides, these Fleet sailormen will make an additional argument towards lying low for a bit. He'll see how they wander about in batches into all sorts of unexpected places, and he will be very chary about rootling up the cache whilst they are in the neighbourhood and likely to disturb him."

"There's a good deal in that," commented Haigh, blinking at the shabby black steamer thoughtfully. "You'd better pop down below in case he has ventured his little self on deck, and should happen to twig you. But still it's best to be on the safe side." He chose a cigar, lighted it and puffed for a minute, and then took it out of his mouth and grinned at the glowing end. "Look here. The fellow doesn't know me from Adam. I'll slip ashore, and see if I can't find snug quarters for him where he'll be out of the way of doing mischief."

"What piece of devilry are you up to now?" I inquired a bit anxiously; for Haigh's vagaries, from what I had seen and heard of them, ranged between



wild and mad, and having got so near the Recipe, I didn't want to get in any mess that would baulk us at the finish. "You aren't going to shoot the man, are you?"

"Haven't got anything to shoot him with. No, I'm not going to lay hands on him at all. But I think I can get some one else to do it for me. It's no use asking my scheme, because I haven't got one. It's only a vague idea that has occurred to me, but there's no harm in giving it a trial. Only I must be off now, or the passengers will be landed before I get to the quay."

He took my hat and went on deck. I heard him hail some one in a passing boat, and presently he was taken off the cutter. I stood up and looked cautiously through the main skylight, so as not to be viewed by any chance from without. The steamer was being brought up alongside the quay with true Spanish caution and slowness, warps being sent in all directions, boats flying about, a couple of anchors down, windlass and steam-winch thundering. An English launch was lying-to close by, her crew highly amused at the display. And the quay was black with people enjoying their bi-weekly sensation.

Slowly the Antigua Mahones swung parallel to the quay wall, and then a derrick chain was hauled out and I heard the scrape of the big gangway as it drew along the gravel, and the thud of its iron-shod heel as it fell on deck and bridged the intervening two fathoms of water. But the black hull of the steamer blotted out all view of the people beyond it, and on the cutter I could learn nothing more of what was going on till Haigh came back.

The last glow of sunset had died away. The white walls and red roofs of the town up there on the cliff were already beginning to be hazed out by darkness, and the soft yellow splashes of lamplight were growing in number.

I sat down, and cut up a cigar for my pipe.

The situation did not please me at all. The more I thought it over, the more I remembered how uncertain Haigh was, and how likely he was to bring about some fiasco out of sheer devilry. If I'd had a boat I should have cut ashore there and then, and made off to Talaiti de Talt without delaying a single moment. And as it was, with no boat, I more than once got to my legs with the intention of swimming, but could never quite screw up my mind as to whether it was really advisable to do so.

I kept cursing myself for this womanish indecision; but even that didn't improve matters. I could not figure out what to do for the best. And consequently I stayed where I was, and mumbled and mowed in black fury.

Haigh was in all about an hour and a half gone, and returned very much cock-a-hoop with himself. He was brought on board by a smart boat rowed by four men; and telling them to wait, he came down below.

"Hullo, Cospatric! you're looking as black as a Soudanese stoker with the stomach-ache. Did ye think I'd been tampering with the interests of the firm? Not a bit of it, man. Thanks to his own natural cussedness, I've just fixed your schoolmaster beautifully. The stars in their courses are backing up our stupendous luck. Some gentlemen of the anarchist persuasion have been blowing up men and women and marble seats in the Plaza Real at Barcelona. Indiscriminate shooting on the part of the troops followed, and cables were sent to all parts to watch for escaping assassins. The affair happened after the Antiguo Mahones sailed, so far as I can make out; but, of course, to the Spanish official mind that is a mere matter of detail. In these cases Spain expects that every man this day will exceed his duty. Weems being the only foreigner on board, and having the looks of a man who would not steal a potato, was naturally spotted at once, and a sub-officer of Carabineros demanded his passport. Weems, not knowing a word of Catalan, looked helpless. An interested mob collected, and stared and made suggestions. None of them could speak a word of English. Weems got pale, and offered the Carabinero half a peseta. Had the bribe been a big one and tendered privately, it might have carried weight; but as it was, the offer was an insult.

"At this point I pushed through the crowd, and offered my services as an interpreter. I can imagine the little worm was never so humbly grateful in his life; but when I told him that his passport was wanted, he was the cocksure schoolmaster ape in a moment. Such a thing was not requisite for travelling in Spain; it was utterly superfluous; I might be ignorant of the fact, as so many people were, but he could assure me it was so. A clerk at a tourist agency (in some provincial town at home) had told him all about the matter. And so he had got no passport. Would I explain these matters to the person in uniform, and inform him that he would be pilloried in the Times if he did not take great care of what he was about.

"As this couldn't well be improved upon, I put it into Spanish, verbatim, and the Carabinero's suspicion grew to certainty. 'Did I know the señor?' 'No, never clapped eyes on him before.' 'But he was a countryman of mine?' With a suggestive shrug of the shoulders, 'I devoutly hoped not.' 'Then it was his duty to make the señor his prisoner.'

"I imparted this information to Weems, who sweated. 'Can't you do anything for me, sir?' he implored. I was afraid I could not, and though I felt pretty sure that he'd be let out of durance vile in about half an hour, I didn't tell

him so. However, as he and his escort were going off, another thought dawned upon me. 'Are you a Mason?' I asked. 'Yes,' said he. 'Then take the tip and make yourself known. I'm not one myself, but I know the fraternity is pretty thick here. Ta-ta.' Now the Freemasons of Mahon are the Halt, the Shoemaker, and the Discontented, and they are banded together solely because they are 'agin the Government;' and so, with our luck at its present premium, if they don't assist to keep Weems laid by the heels longer than otherwise would be the case, I'm a Deutcheman."

"Poor devil," said I. "What a state of mind he'll be in!"

"'Twon't kill anybody, and it'll do him good. Besides, he thoroughly deserved twice as much as he's got."

"That's a fact; and I must say you've paid the score cutely."

Haigh grinned. "I've Irish blood in me, old chappie," said he, "and that means a natural taste for amateur conspiracy and general devilment. But don't let's stay jawing here any longer. We're both due for a good jaunt ashore, and there's a bran-new tick here to guarantee us every mortal thing (bar one) which we want. And for that one, which is almost always a ready-money commodity, it will do us good to wait till we've tapped the late blessed Raymond's bank."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TWO EVENINGS.

For a rapid, short-lived acquaintanceship, above all other animals upon this terrestrial sphere, commend me to the Continental drummer. To commence, he is always easy to chum with quickly, and always ready to make the first advances. He is a salted traveller. He knows what is the best of everything, how to get it, and, moreover, how to get it cheaply. He never plagues you with "shop," or secondhand guide-book extracts, or sentiment about scenery and sunsets. Cheeriness and bons mots are part of his stock-in-trade; brazen good-fellowship is his strong specialty.

Haigh and I went up to our hotel, asked for a bedroom, and in Spanish style got a suite of apartments. We were just in time for dinner, and, having arrived en prince in our own vessel, were going to be billeted amongst the habitués of the place—garrison soldiers, petty "proprietors," and priests—who sat round the superior table in the big room. There we should have been in company that was vastly respectable and prodigiously slow. But nearer the street entrance was another smaller room, occupied chiefly by the commercial fraternity, and thither we went, the landlord fully comprehending our taste. "Gentlemen do like to have a bit of a fling to rub away the salt, don't they, señores?" said he.

There is no shyness about the drummer. Before we had eaten our preliminary olive, the fat man at the end of the table had struck up conversation with Haigh; and before the sopa was out of the room, my next-door neighbour, a dapper Marseillais in the ready-made clothing line, was calling me amigo. Whilst he helped himself from amongst the red sausages and beans and beef and pork and other trifles on the dish which held the next course, the fat Cuban sketched out a plan for the evening; and as he doused his salad with full-flavoured oil, my little Frenchman endorsed the proposal of the flaxen-haired timber agent opposite that they should stand treat. And while we munched our burnt almonds for dessert, some one ordered in a bottle of bad sherry (which, being imported, is naturally thought more of than the good country wine), and we agreed that we were all dear friends, and had known one another intimately for a matter of ten years. And then we rerolled fresh cigarettes, got our hats, and went to a café, six of us, where we crammed our petits verres with sugar-knobs and lighted them, meanwhile drinking bitter black coffee till the blue demon of the brandy should have flickered away. You know the style; it's the usual way of beginning.

After some half-hour's stay in the café we separated—Haigh and the Cuban going off to a dance, whilst the little Frenchman carried me off elsewhere. He had not defined our destination very clearly, and I had not made inquiries, caring little where I went; but I was a little put out at finding myself, after passing a guard of soldiers who stared curiously, and going down many flights of steps, in an anarchist's club.

Perhaps the government of his most Catholic Majesty Alfonso XIII. can hardly be termed paternal; but that was nothing to me. Politics I abhor, and anarchistic politics I particularly loathe. But as beating an abrupt retreat would have been rude, and as unnecessary rudeness is not one of my characteristics, I made the best of it, and stayed and looked about me.

One room of the place had been fitted up as a kind of chapel, with ecclesiastical candles and other properties on a table at the farther end, with portraits of Mazzini, Gambetta, Prim, and other worthies of the Red Kidney on the walls, and with orderly pews on either side of the central aisle. In this cellar temple a preacher was just winding up a fervid discourse on the comparative merits of melinite and blasting gelatine as we came up, and a minute later I was being introduced to him. I think he was the leanest man I ever came across. He stood good six feet high, and couldn't have weighed more than seven stone. You could almost see the bone of his face through the thin covering of skin; and if one might judge from the fact that his smart black frockcoat fitted like a stocking, it was fair to surmise that he was actually proud of his leanness. One got the idea that all the nourishment of his body had gone out into his long white beard.

We went out of the general hall into a smaller room, where we sat and smoked.

Taltavull, my new acquaintance, was simply charming. Till that night I had thought that an anarchist could only attain to his peculiar creed through the most comprehensive ignorance; but this man had arrived at the result through the diametrically opposite path. He spoke almost all European languages with fluency, and knew *Lingua Franca*, Arabic, and Sanscrit. I never met any one so widely read; nor was his reading superficial; and he possessed a memory that refused nothing. He could quote verbatim page after page of such writers as Schopenhauer, Voltaire, Mazzini. And far better than this, he had studied men of every grade in the living flesh. What his nationality was I couldn't say, though I should guess him as either a Pole or an Italian; but it is certain that he had had the constant entrée to places where a man of his opinions would presumably be looked upon with round-eyed horror. And yet he owned to never concealing his views from any man. "The sublime importance of our end, Monsieur Cospatric," said he, "justifies

any means taken to attain it. We are associated with dynamite? Justly. Dynamite is a deplorable necessity."

If Taltavull had merely kept on in this strain, I should have put him down as one of those human paradoxes a man is bound to meet if he vagabondizes much, and should have forgotten him and his gruesome schemes and ideals by the next day. But he touched upon a theme which, in view of the purpose which had brought us to Minorca, made me cock my ears with a new interest.

"It is this dynamite," he said, "that is at once our strongest weakness and our greatest weapon. Were it not for terrorism, the official upholders of old régimes would crush us out of existence as venomous reptiles. For instance, you noticed a guard of soldiers at the door as you came in? At the least disturbance down here those men would fire mum-chance amongst the throng, and be delighted at the chance of doing so. You see our school of thought is recognized, and though hated it is respected. They, thanks to their dread of certain reprisals, recognize the truce so long as we are not engaged in active and open war against society. This is a great advance, monsieur, is it not?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"You are not in sympathy with us?"

"Not in the very least," I told him frankly. "Your principles are far too explosive for my taste."

Taltavull waved a bony hand deprecatingly. "The universal complaint, monsieur. It is the one great drawback to our Cause that we have as yet discovered no means of propagating it save only by the theory of devastation. It is only strong men and, I regret to say it, desperate men who can accept the gospel of dynamite. There are teeming millions of others ready enough to blow up society as it is at present constituted, but who shrink from the only means we have to propose."

"Then in your heart of hearts," said I, "you must know that you can never succeed."

The man smiled. "If even dynamite were taken away from us, I should not despair of success, monsieur. With it I am confident; the end is only a question of time. But I hope to hasten the consummation. There is another method, which if attained and properly applied, could, I most strongly believe, reduce society to one dead and happy level. And, monsieur, I believe the Fates have chosen me to be the prime instrument in this matter. I shall

invent or refind the talisman, and then it will be in my own hands to sweep out the grades from all the people of the earth, and tear down all their laws. Think of it!"

"By Jove, señor," said I, "universal anarchy! That's a strong order."

"It is possible, though, and I believe probable. With my talisman it can be done. I have thought over every tittle of the means through patient years of waiting, and I am confident that I, and I alone, can uproot all existing institutions when once I have this trivial lever."

Taltavull was stalking up and down the room like a long black spectre. He had forgotten my presence. His fanatical schemes enwrapped his mind completely. There was a minute's silence, and then I said half jokingly,—

"They'd make you king of the anarchists."

I must have repeated his thoughts, for he replied instantly in a half-whisper, "They must;" but perhaps remembering that the admission was a damaging one, he stopped in his walk and addressed me with folded arms and lowered brow.

"I beg of you to spare me such jest, Monsieur Cospatric. This is the one subject I have at heart; it has occupied my life-work; to it I have surrendered fortune, station, everything. Whether or no I look for a recompense cannot interest you."

"Oh, all right," said I; "sorry I spoke. A comprehensive ignorance of all brands of politics must be my excuse."

He stared at me thoughtfully for a minute, and then: "I fear you think me a visionary, monsieur, or even worse, a trifler with men's lives. If you are illiberal, you may deem me no better than a common murderer. Our need is misunderstood, misrepresented. But I will not attempt to defend it with you now—some other time perhaps. Let me tell you of my great hope, and then you will understand how little it has to do with the bloody holocausts we are so unfortunately associated with." And then this strange creature began to unfold a scheme of policy which seemed to me the maddest my ears had ever listened to, and yet with cogent method in its madness. Briefly, he wanted to produce diamonds in huge quantities, and sow them broadcast over the globe. As gems they would then be no longer valuable. Castes would cease to exist. And then governments could be stamped out.

Viewed in the light of after recollection, the whole thing seems absurd, even paltry. But as I heard it then, declaimed with hot, earnest fluency by an

enthusiast who had spent long, clever years over his case, it appeared to prove itself up to the hilt. Of course his arguments must have been warped, and his premises utterly false; but so cleverly were they compiled that I could not detect the flaws, and in spite of the outcry of common sense, which shouted "Wrong, wrong, wrong " at the close of each period, I felt myself agreeing implicitly to every clause. And when at length he stopped, exhausted with his own enthusiasm and vehemence, I nodded a tacit agreement, and questioned nothing.

"You must wonder," he went on, after a little pause, "what brings me to use this world-forgotten spot as a workplace; why I come to a town where there are eight women to one man, to an island whose whole energy is not equal to that of the smallest city on the Continent. Have you heard of Raymond Lully? Yes? Then you may remember that he was born at Miramar in Mallorca, and lived much of his life in these Balearic Islands. It was an old journal of his which I found in Rome that first gave me the embryo of my idea. I went round to Barcelona, and crossed to Palma. In the Conde de M—'s library I found in other manuscripts mention of the same thing. Beyond doubt that queer mixture of a man—missionary, fanatic, quack, what you will—had made diamonds as far back as the year 1280. He owned to having stumbled across the Recipe accidentally. Like other alchemists of his time, the transmutation of metals was his aim, and the crystallization of part of his graphite crucible was quite a matter of chance; but it occurred most surely; and he analyzed the why and wherefore, and wrote down the method of working in a place where he says it would last for all time unless he chose to divulge it."

"Great heavens!" said I, jumping up, "then you've got it?"

The anarchist smiled sadly. "I have searched and searched and searched, and have had others on the quest for me. But so far our efforts have been all unsuccessful. I can understand your excitement"—("Thank my several stars you can't," thought I, settling back into my chair)—"You think my great regeneration is already in commencement? You may even have had trivial qualms about your own relatives' trinkets? No, Monsieur Cospatric, the time has unfortunately not yet come."

"You cannot expect me to condole with you."

"You say you are a non-combatant, and that is better than I could have expected. You English as a rule are singularly averse to our propaganda. But wait and see how affairs order themselves."

"It will be a long time to wait. I'm afraid you'll never find the Recipe."



I had risen to my legs to say good-bye. Taltavull gripped my hand in his bony fingers. "You don't know me, Monsieur Cospatric. We anarchists never give in. I shall not cease searching for this Recipe till I find it, or until I learn for certain that it has been destroyed. Buenas noches."

"Good-night," said I, and went out into the moonlight. My little Frenchman had gone long ago, and so I strolled alone down the steep cobbled street, conning over many things. Verily this life is full of strange coincidences.

Haigh was at the hotel. I met him coming out of the room vis-à-vis to ours across the passage. We went in to our quarters, and sat in wicker-lined rocking-chairs (relic of the time when the Yankee had Port Mahon for a rendezvous), and he told me many things. "But," he concluded, "it was the music that drove me out. Those dark-eyed factory girls were just fine, and la marguerita as a dance perfection. But the orchestra was an addition I couldn't stand at any price. It was something too ghastly for words. All the brass sharp and the strings screechy. So I just skipped, came back here, and forgathered with a lone, lorn Englishman on his first trans-Channel trip. He was a splendid find. Needless to say, he's going to write a book about his travels, and as he seemed eager for information, I gave him a lot. Honestly, he's the most stupendous Juggins it's ever been my fate to meet; and that's putting the matter strongly, for since I've been—er—on the wander, I've come across most brands of fool."

"What manner of man is he to look at?"

"Oh, middle height, tweeds and cap all to match and new for the trip, big brown eyes that look at you dreamily, and a rather Jewish face. Not a bad-looking chap by any means, but oh, such a particularly verdant sort of greenhorn. The only one point on which he showed a single grain of sense was in refusing to play poker with me. He didn't want to offend me; he hoped most sincerely that I should take no offence, but a friend had extracted a promise from him before he left home to play no card games with strangers. The fact was, he was really so unskilful with cards. I wasn't offended, was I? His candour was so refreshing that I could truthfully say I was not."

I tried to talk about my evening, but Haigh would not listen. Said he: "I'm not interested in that particular kind of nonsense. If you haven't embraced the glorious principles of anarchy, old chappie, that's enough to tell. You've met a wise man who's a damned fool, and I've met a fool who, in points, is a wise man; and I prefer my own find. If you'd heard him talking about his book that is to be, you'd have stood good chance of choking with suppressed emotion. It's going to turn out a great success. He will spend quite three

weeks here and in Mallorca, so as to 'do' both islands thoroughly. And then he would like to go to Iviça, but didn't know whether it was advisable to risk it. Could I advise him? Were the people there very savage? Oh, my Juggins, my Juggins, you were something too delicious for words when you got on that tack, evidently wanting authentic adventures to be enlarged upon for the great work, and obviously fearing most tremendously to encounter the same. You won't go to Iviça, I can see that; but I'd bet all I'm worth that the chapter on 'My Adventure with the Brigands' will appear with full detail. I've a bit of imagination myself, and I guess I gave you enough subject-matter to fudge it from most thrillingly."

"Hard lines to stuff the poor wretch too much."

"Not a bit of it, dear boy. The great stay-at-home B.P. will swallow the yarn chapter and verse, and know for certain that poor harmless Iviça is a den of robbers; Juggins will believe it all, smoke, flash, and report, after he has retailed it twice, and will pose as a hero; and I, I've had my amusement. You should hear him talk about the illustrations, too. He can't draw or paint; hasn't a notion of either. And he's never taken a photograph. But a friend advised him to get a hand camera of the 'Absolutely Simple' pattern, and he's been exposing plates right and left. A pro.'s to develop them when he gets home if he can succeed in passing them through the Customs, and if he doesn't get the thing confiscated for getting pictures of fortresses, both of which (he informs me) are mighty and great dangers. And, by the way, that reminds me. He got spilt off a donkey this afternoon, and damaged his nose and jolted up the camera. Being blissfully ignorant of the picture-machine's mechanisms he doesn't like to meddle with it, but 'I'm afraid something's gone inside, Mr. Haigh, because it rattles when I shake it.' So thinking I owed the chap something for the fun I'd had out of him, I said I'd get you to fix it up for him. You've been bottle-washer to a photographer for a bit, haven't you?"

"Something in that line, but I've no tackle here."

"Oh, that's all right. Here's his dark-room lamp, and the shutters to this room are solid. They'll keep out the moonlight."

We swung-to the coverings over the windows, and put a lighted candle behind the cherry-glass shade, and then I took the little camera out of its leather case. It was a cheap quarter-plate, and the jar had started up two of the angles.

"The rest of the illustrations for that book will have to wait till this is coopered up," said I.

"Are the plate-things inside spoiled?" Haigh asked.

"No, they're all right so far as exposure to light goes. However, I'll look. Phew! what a mess! Every blessed one smashed except the last couple. Your man will have to go over his ground again to replace these."

"What's that contrivance?" asked Haigh, who was peering over my shoulder.

"A spare dark-slide to use instead of the big plate-holder. Empty. Look, I'll put the two sound plates in there, and you can tell the Juggins that he can put those in his pocket and take the camera to a photographer man to get mended. Not that I expect that any one can do it here. But he can try."

"All right, thanks. It'll be rather a blow to him, but I must break it gently. Well, ta-ta, good-night. I think you'll own I've picked up most amusement for this evening?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### TALAITI DE TALT.

I woke with daylight, and roused Haigh. "We should get away at once," I said to him. "We've dawdled woefully. If we'd possessed a grain of sense between us we should have started the moment we stepped ashore. Weems may be cooped up still, but that's only guess-work on our parts. It's quite possible he cleared himself directly after you left, and went to the Talayot straight away."

Haigh blinked at me sleepily. "You're in the deuce of a flurry, old man. Been having evil dreams? That's the rancid oil they cook with here. It always has that effect at first. But you'll get used to it soon and like it, and think ordinary oil insipid."

"Oh, confound you, dry up. Look here, we must start at once."

"How?"

"Tramp it. Funds won't run to a vehicle."

"My dear chappie, you don't know the extent of my feebleness. I couldn't walk two miles to save my life. Nature may have intended me for a pirate or a highwayman, because on shipboard or horse-back I can do tolerable service. But the good dame never built me to be a footpad. So if this old pyramid place is to be looted, you must go and do it yourself."

"But, my good fellow, think what there is at stake. Dash it all, man, how do you know I shan't collar the thing and make a clean bolt with it?"

Haigh grinned. "I'll take my chance of that."

"You'd better not. I've never set up for being obtrusively honest."

"Oh, go to Aden."

"But really, I'd take it as a favour if you would come."

"Well, if you make a point of it, I suppose I must, though I fail to see the necessity for a pair of us making ourselves uncomfortable. Look out of window. The sky's Prussian blue, and there isn't a breath of wind. It's going to be a broiling day. However, dear boy, at your behest I'll make a martyr of myself; and if transport is to be procured on tick, I'll overhaul you. Only understand clearly that neither for you nor any one else can I do a physical impossibility. It is absolutely out of the question for me to walk."

That was all I could get out of him, and so I set off, very uncertain as to whether or no he would follow.

I walked out through the clean uneven streets just as the townspeople were beginning to stir, passed under the massive towered gateway in the old walls, and got on to the level road which reaches half-way across the island. The waking hour was earlier here. The hawks and eagles were patrolling the morning air with diligent sweeps. The country-folk were bringing in loads of farm-produce on big brown donkeys and little gray donkeys. These last all gave a courteous "Bon di tenga,"<sup>1</sup> and I noticed that most of them stared at me somewhat curiously. It was not my dress that they looked at—it was my face that drew their stares; and after a mile or so's pacing it was borne in upon me that anxious thoughts had caused my forehead to knit and my mouth to pucker. I made the discovery with some contempt. Haigh had told me more than once that I should never make a gambler, and he was right. In principle I accepted the theory that "what was written was written," but in practice I couldn't help imagining that a ready-penned Fate might be partly erased by much rubbing.

I refilled my pipe and looked around me. Old Lully had shown some nous in choosing a country to carry his secret. There is small fear of Minorca's population ever growing excessive. Not even Connemara can show such stone heaps. The walls which divide up the tiny fields are often ten feet thick; there are rubble cairns on all the many outcrops of rock; there are boulder-girdles round the trees; and yet, despite these collections, the corn and the beans and the grass grow more in stone than soil. One almost wonders that the Minorcan does not build up stone circles round the cows' legs whilst they are grazing. Perhaps the Doctor Illuminatus might have hesitated if his prophetic eye had seen an invasion of British; for the Briton is a destructive animal with pig-like instincts of rootling up everything. But the foreigner's tenure of the soil (and stones) was not a long one, and I fancy that the country's face, save for some of the better roads that seam it, is much the same as it was in the year of our Lord thirteen hundred and nothing.

Now, the Minorcan is not possessed of the slenderest reverence for the prehistoric monuments that spot his island, and if he wanted them for domestic purposes, he would not hesitate to take the top from a duolithic stone altar, or the roofing flags from a subterranean gallery. And he would quarry from the pyramids to find the wherewithal for his pig-yard gateposts without the smallest flush of shame, for vandalism is a word that has no Minorquin equivalent. But the abundance of stone elsewhere has saved the fashioned stone that those dead races piled up when this world was young,

and the gray Talayots squat upon their old sites in undiminished numbers. Indeed, in a way, one might say that there are more of them now than there were in the venerable alchemist's time, for spurious Talayots may be seen in every direction. These latter-day edifices have one advantage over the hoary prototypes. Their purpose is clearly defined. We know that they were not intended for the burial-places of kings, or for temples to conceal sacerdotal rights, or for observatories, or even for granaries. They were simply run up by men who wanted to build shelters for cattle or pigs or sheep on some plan which would expend a maximum of material on a minimum of basement. They simply represent an incident in the perpetual war against the stones, and show the way in which crude minds attain their ends. If Minorca had been peopled by Americans (as once, indeed, nearly happened), light tramways would be laid down in every direction, and the stones carted to the edges of the island, and there tipped into the sea; and then the ground would be free, the farmer rich and unhappy. But as matters are ordered at present, these things are beyond the man of the soil's grasp; and so he remains poor and hard-working and contented.

The broad road led on past whitewashed farm-houses and pink-flowered almond gardens, past peasants and mule-teams scratching up the rocky soil with primitive one-handled ploughs, past patches of brown vine-stumps and gnarled olive-trees squirming out from among the boulders; and close on either hand ran the low wooded hills, with their burden of ilexes still filmy with the morning mists. The road was a road a London suburb might have felt pride in, so smart was the engineering that made cuttings and embankments to reduce the gradients, and culverts to carry off the side-water, and dressed freestone bridges to cross the many streamlets. But at the eighth kilometre post (I think it was the eighth) this road showed itself worthy of the sunny government of Spain by ending abruptly in a fence of wheelbarrows and gang-planks. The continuation was to be gone on with, mañana; meanwhile young wheat had sprouted eight green inches in the track.

At this point the diligence course to Ciudadella branches off to the northward, turning again after a while due west on to General Stanhope's road. But that was nothing to me then. Turning my back upon it, I took another path, in woeful disrepair, which led me down by many windings between high stone walls and straggling clumps of prickly pear. There were few houses to stop the view—only some two or three farm buildings. Cottages can scarcely be said to exist. The labourer either lives in the towns, or else he lodges under his master's roof. But the high walls and the hummocks shut one in, and I was perpetually having to climb one or the

other to make sure of my whereabouts, for my sailing directions to the Talayot had been rather vague ones.

The air was still and close, and already the sun had crept high and was burning fiercely. It was blazing hot, but in spite of that, and the ruggedness of the track, I was walking my fastest. Talaiti de Talt was somewhere close ahead, and the knowledge made me tingle from ear to toe. Forced stoicism wouldn't act.

At last, getting on a rise of the road where I could see over the winding walls ahead, I made out a Talayot sprouting gray from amid its green jacketing, barely half a kilometre away; and from the description given at Mahon, that must be the very one I had worked so hard to reach.

The limit of self-containment was passed. Excitement bubbled over. I picked up my feet and ran for all I was worth.

Just past the bottom of the slope was a small farmhouse, lying a little way back from the road. The Talayot was close beyond. A thought struck me, and I pulled up, panting and, in spite of myself, laughing. A new complication seemed to crop up. From the moment of reading old Lully's journal in the Genovese caffè, it had never occurred to me till then that the Talayot belonged less to me than to anybody else. Now, seeing the whitewashed farm buildings close beside this old pyramid I had come to loot, the idea that the modern owner might raise objections came upon me in a flash; and although the matter was serious enough, as Heaven knows, still its grimly humorous side cropped uppermost, and for the life of me I could not help being tickled.

Of course any one will see that I might have waited till dark, and have done my searching when all the world of provincial Minorca was snugly slumbering. But that idea did not occur to me then, and if it had done, I should not have listened to it. I was far too keen on going ahead without further stoppages. The grasping fingers of Weems loomed always in the near distance.

If I had only possessed a spare dollar or two, the thing would have been simple; but not owning a peseta, I had tremors. Still there was no help for it, and so following the en avant principle, I swung the gate, and walked up between the orange-bushes to the little farmhouse. Two dogs sprang out from somewhere, barking furiously; but I like dogs, and never feared one yet, and that pair were soon reduced to oppressive civility. A small girl appeared, drawn by the uproar; but the sight of a stranger made her bolt mutely within doors. And then a woman came—a fat, tall, slatternly woman,

whose husband was dead (she said), and who owned the farm which circled Talaiti de Talt.

She was garrulous to a degree, and her voice—as is usual with the voices of cats and women out there—was harsh and grating. But I did not dam the flood of her eloquence (outwardly, at any rate), and so she went on till she was tired. Then I thanked her, and blarneyed her as well as I was able, although that wasn't much, as I never have been much of a hand with women. But the outcome of it all was that I might most certainly overhaul the old stone heap (which was her irreverent name for the historical pyramid) as much as ever I chose. And when she had given the permission, it struck me that I could have got it just as easily without having spent an hour and a half in the baking sun-blaze beating about the bush. But then, you see, I was so confoundedly nervous, and didn't guess that beforehand.

However, as I was turning off down the orange grove again, the bulky señora seemed to think that something might be made out of it after all, for she called out to know whether I wouldn't like Isabelita to accompany me—Isabelita being the small girl, then engaged at unravelling a bamboo for a whitewash brush under the shade of the family date-palm. Or was there nothing else she could do for me? Everything of her poor stock was entirely at my disposition. My thanks were profuse—most profuse—but I would not rob her of anything, not even of the hermosita's time. It would be my great pleasure to make that little angel some trifling present as I came back that way toward Mahon; at which time I might also wish to buy an orange or two. So until then.

"Tenga," said the woman, with a large fat smile.

"Bon di, señora," said I, with a sweep of the hat, and turned off down the path and into the road again. Gad! wasn't I feeling jubilant then?

I felt that the woman was following me with her eyes, and didn't dare to hurry; for it seemed to me, so worked up was I, that if I had broken into a run she would have seen at once what I had come for, and would have contrived to get this great thing for herself. The mere fact of my displaying any interest at all in such a useless cumbersome hulk as a Talayot must have filled her with suspicion. But then I had thought of this, and had corrected her when she guessed me for French, telling her my true nationality, knowing that the Continental reputation of the Englishman stands good for any unexplainable eccentricity. And so I clogged my feet with an effort, and walked on, soberly looking ahead of me.



So great was the maze of walls that it was difficult to tell where the road ran for more than a score or so of yards ahead. But at last I traced its sweep close by where a great single-slab altar stood on its massive pillar, with a sacred stone-circle jutting out of the bushes around it. On the other side was the pyramid, sorely broken by man and the weather, but still showing dressed gray stone courses in patches amongst the rank scrub which bristled over it. Even from there I could make out that the general contour of its base was circular, and not square as I had somehow or other expected, and I began to see trouble in finding that side "nearest the sea" where Lully had dug into the entrance-way.

As I drew nearer, the tumbled nature of the stone-work disclosed itself further, and I began to have fears lest the central chamber should have caved in and hidden the Recipe effectually and for always by crumbling its lettering into dust. But then I called to mind other Talayots I had seen before near Mahon and Alayor and Mercadal and Ciudadella, where the entering passage led from aboveground by a rapid incline, and where the cavity, when it existed, had doubtless been near the apex; and from this I took heart, thinking that whether or no there had been a chamber in the upper part of the building, and whether or no it existed still, didn't particularly matter to me. The Diary had certainly pointed to a room stowed away beneath the very keel of the edifice; and as long as that stood firm, the rest might telescope to any extent for all I cared.

By this time my leisurely pace had brought me up alongside the Talayot, which loomed big and squat at the other side of the wall. I turned and looked behind me. The fat woman at the farm was out of sight. Then I climbed the wall, and from the top glanced down the road which led from Alayor, and saw a sight which made me curse like a kicked arriero. Walking briskly up the stony track was a little man in unmistakably British tweeds. "An infernal prying tourist," thought I, "by all the powers of evil. Bear-led by a native, and coming to see Talaiti de Talt for a thousand. If he sees me he'll spot me at once and want to chum, and then he'll get inquisitive and won't go away."

Down I dropped into cover.

## CHAPTER X.

### WITH A THREE-ANGLED HOE.

It is curious how no two people can speak the same words with identical intonation. Perhaps this is noticeable to some men more than to others. I know some folks never forget a face, others a walk; but for myself, though these things may pass from memory, a voice once heard never escapes me. I suppose it is because I have been at much pains to distinguish between sounds. I'm rather musical, you know.

And so as I lay squatted there beneath a sloe-bush, and the tones of a voice grating as those of the corncrake came to me through the chinks in the wall, I knew that Weems was at large once more, and pressing on with his errand.

I might have expected him, and yet his arrival was a bit of a surprise; and on the spur of the moment I could not for the life of me think what was best to do. One couldn't nobble the man, and still I didn't intend that he should read that Recipe. So, being unable to make up my mind to any other course of proceeding, I just cowered quietly where I was and awaited developments. As it turned out, these were not very long in coming. Weems had lifted up his voice to get rid of his guide, and the guide, in eloquent Minorquin, was refusing to understand. At last the schoolmaster, in desperation, translating his arguments into silver, called to mind a word from some American novel, and commanded his attendant to "vamose." Then the native poured out thanks, pocketed the cash after a great show of refusing it, and went; and Weems, waiting till he was out of sight, climbed the wall. He was a bit chary of stepping down amongst the prickly scrub on the inner side, and so as he was taking his time about it, I stood up and watched him. He did not see me till he was firm on his feet again; but when he did slew round, he stepped back with a gasp as though some one had rammed a sail-needle into him.

However, he pulled himself together quickly enough—I give him credit for that—and slipped a hand into his coat pocket, which I noted was bulging with some heavy weight—presumably a pistol. Then he resorted to what I suppose he considered diplomacy, and remarked that it was a lovely country.

"Damn you," said I, "you didn't come here to talk to me about scenery, did you? Because if that's the case, I'd rather you'd quit for a while. I've got some business on hand here that I want to work out alone. So git, you mean little brute."

"And I also have a trifling piece of research to make, for which I desire complete privacy. And this, Mr. Cospatric, is a point upon which I am prepared to insist."

Hereupon out came the revolver, a cheap pin-fire tool, brilliantly nickel-plated. Weems fingered it with unholy awe, and his face began to bleach. He wasn't used to the situation.

"Did you get that thing in Marseille?" I asked.

"No, sir. I procured it from an acquaintance in Mahon this morning. And acting upon his advice, I shall not hesitate to use it if you press me."

The little man's manner as he struggled between dignity, greediness, and common funk was so irresistibly funny that I roared.

"You need not fear my failing to be as good as my word," he snapped out. "They don't hang people in Spain."

"You fool, of course they don't. They garrote. And as the inhabitants of these islands, take them as a whole, are as mild and peaceable a lot as one could find on the face of the globe, a bit of murder would strike them as being in such bad taste that you'd wear the iron collar as sure as you'd earned it. But that's not the point. You're not going to shoot me——"

"Then you will go away."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. You are not going to shoot me, simply because you can't. Man alive, I've been racketing about the evil places of this world ever since I left Cambridge, and this isn't the first time I've looked down the small end of a pistol. If you'd seen as much shooting as I have, you'd just jump with astonishment at the awful big percentage of men who get missed even by good shots, and at short rise. And you! You, you small swab, I can see by the way you're holding it that you've never had a revolver in your fist before this day, much less fired one at a 'live mark. Put the thing back in your pocket, and behave like a rational being."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said Weems, sticking up his left arm, and sighting the pistol over the elbow-joint.

By this time he had got into such a pitiable funk that I was afraid lest out of sheer nervousness his finger might press home the trigger any minute. The chances were big against his hitting me, but I knew that the report would bring spectators, and those I most particularly didn't want. Still, I could not see any means of getting the weapon into my own hands without its going

off. It was impossible to "rush" him. The dozen yards which separated us was one solid tangle of scrub-bushes interwoven with brambles. It would have taken at least forty seconds to tear through them, and in that time he could most assuredly snap off all six chambers, however big a duffer he might be. This would bring up some of the country people without fail; and besides, out of the six, he might fluke one shot into me. About that last possibility I didn't trouble my head much, as it was remote; but the other was a fatal objection. A good satisfactory row with the natives would effectually upset the apple-cart for both of us.

So I put it to him squarely that, come what might, I didn't intend to go and leave the coast clear for him; and that if he fired a shot, whether or not he jugged me and tasted el garrote into the bargain, he would most assuredly not get hold of the Recipe.

These points seemed to strike him as strong ones; and as, being unused to such strong emotions, he was by this time in very nearly a fainting condition, he saw fit to ease the strain from his nerves by beginning to treat for terms. How much would I go for? He had bills in his pockets for francs and pesetas, which amounted in all to eighteen pounds four shillings and some odd pence English. That was the absolute sum-total of all he possessed out of England. If he handed it over, would I promise to depart forthwith?

I think it caused him no real surprise to learn that I would do nothing of the kind.

"Look here," he went on, "I'll tell you what I'll do as well. I'll send you a ten-pound note from England when I get back there, if you'll give me your address."

"Oh, go to the devil!" said I, beginning to get in a fury with him. "If you're on for bargaining, I'll give you my bill for five hundred at two months to clear out."

"You can't expect it, Mr. Cospatric——"

"Of course I can't expect you to sell your chances for a mess of pottage; still less need you have thought me idiot enough to do such a thing. Now look here, you are new at the scrapping game, whereas I am not by any means. So in case of a tussle the odds are big that you'll finish underside. And, besides, if you have a bit of a whip-hand over me, I'd have you remember that until I've got my terms, you are standing under a Damocles arrangement which may tumble on your hat at any moment. And it doesn't

take much of a wizard to tell that your nerves aren't good to stand that strain for over-long."

"The heat——"

"Oh yes, the heat's making you sweat streams, and sending your face chalky-green, and setting your knees to play castañetas in cachucha time. We'll call it the heat. Anyway, it's exposure to an atmosphere that you aren't accustomed to, and it doesn't suit you. You'd better try a change, or else you'll topple off in a faint—perhaps you'll die. Now look here: it's just foolery to let this Dog-in-the-Manger Company hold the stage any longer. Let's recast it, and play 'The Partners.' Come, what do you say? It's only a three-part piece, and there's a thumping good treasury to draw upon."

"Three parts!" shrieked Weems, lifting up his pistol on to his elbow again, where it gleamed like a dancing mirror in the hot sunshine. Then as another thought struck him, he lowered the weapon to his side once more, and broke out into the ghost of a smile. "Oh, I see. Yes, of course. Two for me, Mr. Cospatric, and one for you. That's much more right and proper."

I chuckled, and mentioned that one Haigh and myself were going shares over this matter, and that I didn't intend to see Haigh defrauded; and then the battle of words began over again.

By this time I was so thoroughly sick of the brute's meanness that I made up my mind stubbornly not to give way a single peg. He argued, he prayed, he commanded, he threatened; he appealed to all my better feelings individually and then collectively; but it was no good. All that he could get out of me was an assurance that he might feel himself very lucky if he fingered the proffered third, and a threat that if he didn't accept it quickly he'd find himself empty-fingered altogether—and probably minus a sound vertebral column into the bargain. And in the end he sobbed out an agreement to the terms, and then flopped down amongst the bushes, deadly sick.

This last development I was not altogether unprepared for, and, had it seemed good to me to do so, I might have taken advantage of his plight to grab the nickel-plated weapon and repudiate the treaty—as he most assuredly would have done by me had the positions been reversed. But overreaching that kind—euphemistically termed "keen business instinct" by some—has never been among my catalogue of acquirements (more's the pity), and so I just hung round till he had disburdened his stomach and recollected his wits a bit, forbearing to interfere either by word or deed.

"It's the heat," he explained at last.

"We'll log it down as such," said I, to prevent argument, "and for God's sake don't let us squabble any more. If you're right again, we may as well turn-to and get at the cache without further dawdling. You have a spade, I suppose?"

"A spade! Oh dear, oh dear! what an oversight. If you'll believe me, Mr. Cospatric, I never remembered that digging implements would be required till this moment. The excitement of the last few days——But don't let us speak of that now. We must use your spade in turn."

I laughed. "It strikes me we're a pair of first-class fools. I haven't got one either. We both put out from Mahon in such a flaming hurry that accessories never got a thought. Well, we must get one here if we can, though that's doubtful, seeing that the native hoe, which is pick and shovel combined, is the popular instrument hereabouts. However, I'll go and see if something can't be got. Give me a couple of pesetas, will you?"

"What for?"

"Why, to hire the thing, or buy it if needs must."

"But why should I pay——"

"Damnation man, because I don't own a brown cent. Go scout for a tool yourself if you care to. I'm not keen on the job. Only you don't speak the language, and I thought you'd prefer to sit still and recruit a bit more before beginning to bustle about again."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said he, and counted out the money in copper and small silver.

I turned to the Talayot, and climbed to its top. Two fields off, towards clustered Alayor, a man was guiding a single-handed plough drawn by a small ox and a sixteen-hand mule. Scrambling down again, I went in a bee-line across the intervening walls. The ploughman saw me coming, and nothing loath, pulled up his team and desisted from scratching the furrow any further. A chat was just the thing he wanted.

I could not get clear of him for a good half-hour, and in the end was only able to raise what I expected—to wit, a broad-bladed triangular hoe with a short crooked handle. However, as we did not propose to go in for any systematic navvying, and as there was nothing better to be got, back I went with it, and found Weems quite alive again, and on the prowl for what he could find.

"The soil has been turned up here in places," said he, pointing, "and this is just the side where, according to Lully's diary, the entrance passage lies. And if you notice, there are other patches rooted up yonder, and again yonder."

"Pigs," said I. "This island's celebrated for them, and so is Mallorca. Black, elegant, well-to-do swine, that are exported to Spain in steamer-loads. They're the most celebrated breed of porkers in Europe. But never mind them now. Which do you spot as our point of commencement?"

"Somewhere between where we are standing and that palm-bush."

"Very well, then. We'll set to work at the other side of this fallen wall-stone; and here goes for the first drive."

For a while we took spell and spell about at the hoe, working like fiends. I had stripped to the vest at the first set-off, and by degrees Weems let his eagerness overpower dignity till he had discarded a similar number of garments. There was not a breath of air stirring, and the sunbeams poured down upon us in a brazen stream. Being used to hard work, I naturally could do the larger share; but to give the little schoolmaster his due, he did stick to it for all he was worth; and though he did drop more than one hint that such physical toil was degrading to a man in his station, he didn't try to shirk doing his just portion.

The ground was desperately hard to get through. There was very little soil. What we came across chiefly were stones fallen from the sides of the Talayot woven together by a network of roots. Over these we hacked and sweated and strained, and tore our hands and wrenched our sinews. And by degrees the heap of big stones and smaller stones and rubble and earth and other debris grew larger amongst the bushes, and our jagged pit sank deeper.

Those hours were the only ones in which I ever felt the smallest respect for Weems. He hadn't chucked away his bless-you-I-know-best air by any means. For instance, scorning example, he plucked a prickly pear off a clump that grew out of the Talayot, and sucked the pulp out of the skin in spite of seeing me devour one in other fashion. And then he complained of the damnableness of a needle-sown palate. Also he persisted in following his own theories about the extraction of the large stones, although these seldom came off. But he stuck at work like a Trojan, and one can't help having some respect for a man who keeps his thews in action.

Whilst the white sun burned to overhead, and whilst it fell half-way to the water again, did we hack and grovel and wrench, till our pit was well-nigh twelve feet deep, and we were beginning to have dismal forebodings that we

were either delving in the wrong place, or that Raymond the philosopher had lied most unkindly. But at last, when we were both nearly sick with weariness and growing disgust, we came upon a flat stone which rang hollow when the hoe struck it, and in an instant our hopes sprang to a feverish height again.

Weems tugged at the edges of the stone, screaming and swearing in his excitement; but it had lain in that bed for many ages, and would not budge for such puny efforts as his. From the lip of the pit I was bawling at him to come up out of the way; but not until he had strained himself well-nigh senseless would he unlock his fingers from their grip, and even then he would not voluntarily resign his place. But I could not wait. Sliding down into the pit, I hoisted him on to my shoulder and gave an upward heave, and then turned-to with the hoe, battering savagely.

The flagstone was of granite, and I doubled up my weapon but scarcely splintered the hard surface. So the edges had to be dug round laboriously; and even then, when thoroughly loose, the weight was so great that I could scarcely lift it. But at last the great slab was heaved up on edge, and below there lay a hole whose blackness almost choked the falling sunbeams. The sight of it—or the wet earthy smell which came through—somehow made me shiver.

I looked up. Weems was craning over the edge of the pit, his eyes goggling, and lips drawn back from his clenched teeth. He looked unpleasant, to say the least of it, and a thought dangerous as well. There was a bit of the wild beast peeping out somewhere.

"Come along," said I.

"How can we see?"

"Oh, I forgot that. Feel for matches in my coat pocket."

"I've better than matches. A candle; what do you say to that?"

Still he stayed glowering at me.

"Well, why the devil don't you go and get it, man?" I asked.

"Oh yes, to be sure," said he, and disappeared.

"You'll go mad, my son," thought I, "if your delicate nerves are kept under this strain much longer," and leaned back panting against the side. The fellow seemed to take a long time hunting for what he wanted, but at last I heard the sound of his footsteps and looked up.



Lucky for me did I look up then too, for my eye caught a glint of the white sunshine as it was reflected off some bright surface, and with the inspiration of the moment I stepped into the opening at my feet and fell noisily through amid a small avalanche of rubble. Picking myself up, I looked out from the darkness, and saw, as I expected, Weems standing at the brink above nervously fingering the nickel-plated revolver.

"What have you got that blasted thing for?" I sang out.

"Oh, you see—er—there's no knowing what one might meet with down there—er—and it's well to be ready—er—in case——"

"You lying little viper."

"Oh, I assure you——"

"Thanks, I want none of your assurances. But I'll give you one. If you put a foot below here, I'll cave in your head with this hoe."

Then he began to whine; and then, as I was stubborn, he swore to shoot me as I came out, which I believed him quite capable of doing; and so matters were again at a deadlock.

"Very well," said I at last. "As I won't trust you an inch beyond my sight, heave that revolver down first, and then I won't touch you. If you stick to it, I know you'll try to make cold meat of me in the hopes I shan't be found down here."

"But you might shoot me, Mr. Cospatric—by accident, of course."

"Make your dirty little soul comfortable on that score. If I wanted to be quit of you, I've got ten fingers quite capable of squeezing the life out of your miserable carcass."

"Still, I think I'll unload it first, if you don't mind."

"Go ahead," said I, "if it amuses you." And out came the cartridges one by one, and then the weapon was tossed down to me. One hand grip on the barrel and another on the stock, a good strong pressure of the wrists together, and that gaudy little weapon was effectually spiked.

"I may come in safety now?" asked Weems, after watching this operation with a groan.

"You won't be touched by me if you behave yourself, although you do deserve half-killing. But mind, if I catch you playing any more pranks, I

shall just do as I said—strangle you. See those fingers? They're lengthy, and they're ve-ry strong. Sabe?"

Down he came, heralded by a brown tricklet of soil and a few stones. He knelt at the edge of the opening for a moment, and I saw his white face peering down with "funk" writ big all over it. But he soon mastered his scruples, and dropped through on to the flooring beside me, though a nervous upward lifting of one elbow showed that he wouldn't have been surprised at getting a blow. However, I didn't meddle with him, but only bade him curtly enough light that candle.

The sulphur match spluttered and stank, and I'm blessed if his fingers didn't tremble so much when it came to lighting the wick that he dropped the burning splinter altogether. I grabbed the things impatiently enough out of his hands, got a light, and led the way.

The walls beside us sloped in towards the top, where they were bridged by flat slabs some foot or eighteen inches above my head. The passage had been built before men knew of the arch. Under foot the ground was hard and dry, and as I should guess, we passed over some dozen yards of it before we came into the chamber. That was built in much the same way, with the courses overlapping, and the top crowned with a great flat flag instead of a keystone. But with the architecture of the Talayot we bothered our heads little then, and indeed our solitary candle showed it up but poorly. Right opposite the entrance a strip of the wall had been plastered, and at that the schoolmaster and I sprang with a simultaneous rush.

There was some writing on it!

Steadying the flame in the hollow of my hand, I held it near and withdrew the guard.

"Good God," shrieked Weems, "what's that!"

The one word I saw was—Hereingefallen, scrawled in white letters, and on the ground beneath was a piece of billiard chalk. There was nothing on the plastered surface beside, except the scratchings of a knife-blade. Some one had been there, read the Recipe, and then obliterated every letter.

In a flash these things occurred to me, and I turned to see my companion collapse on to the ground like an empty sack. It required an effort to avoid following his example. The shock was a cruel one.

The thing had been there. The old diary had lied in no single item. And here the treasure had been snatched away from us when it was almost within our

grasp. And—then came the most strange conclusion of all—by some one who knew we were to follow.

Haigh was out of the question. He knew no German. It was no elaborate joke of his. But who could it be? I sat down on the earthen floor with my head between my fists trying to think it out. Hereingefallen! Yes, "sold" indeed. But who, who, who had done it?

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RED DELF AMPHORA.

The candle, stepped in a puddle of wax, burnt up steadily. There wasn't the ghost of a draught in the place. The walls were dry-built, but their thickness was so great that no breath drove in from the outside, and the air of the chamber was heavy and earthlike. The place was bone-dry. I picked up the billiard chalk, and felt that the green paper wrapping was crisp and stiff. The name of Rolandi et Cie. was printed upon it, but there was nothing which told me whence it came or how long it had been there. Only that scribbled word Hereingefallen on the newly-scraped plaster seemed to fix a date on the spoiler's visit. It appeared to me that no one would have taken the trouble to chalk up a jibe unless he had good reasons for supposing that some one else would come after to read and appreciate it. And yet this was only a guess. The whole affair was too mysterious to make out any settled theory from the slim data which lay before me.

I got up, and went down the entrance passage, taking the candle with me. Going on past the place where we had broken in, I found marks where another roofing flag had been moved and replaced. It was under the spot where we had noted the torn-up turf, and I came to a conclusion that the sleek black pigs of Minorca had been maligned. But—well, what was the use of puzzling on? Much best to shrug the shoulders, say "Kismet," use strong language according to taste, and accept for granted that every man's fate was writ big upon his forehead.

A blurred noise of moaning came down the passage-way from the black heart of the Talayot. "That other poor devil's coming to his senses again, and is feeling lonely," thought I, and retraced my steps. The little man was talking a bit incoherently, whimpering to himself the while, and mopping his face with a clammy pocket-handkerchief. He was a tolerably poor sight.

"Look here, my son," said I: "you've lost your starch, and you'd better go home."

"Whatever did I come for?"

"Why, to grab something that you've missed, and that I've missed too. It's best to be philosophical over it, and clear out quietly and not gossip. Personally, I can do all the necessary ridicule myself. I'm not over-ambitious about spreading the tale, and getting indiscriminate chaff thrown in from all four quarters of the compass."

"Then you think there is no hope of getting the Recipe at all."

"The event is with Allah, and I am not in his confidence."

"I must request you not to be profane in my presence, Mr. Cospatric."

"H'm! I'm feeling as if a little profanity would do me good just now."

"Then let me use the word 'blasphemy.' I object strongly to having my ears polluted by it. Blasphemy——"

"Oh, curse you," I broke out savagely, "stow that rubbish. After coquetting with murder, you've little call to preach about minor morals. I guess we're both fairly rabid just now, and if nagging is your favourite safety-valve, you'd better screw it down; otherwise you'll get hurt."

We stood there facing one another, the candle feebly illuminating us up to the knees, the upper parts of our bodies showing only in dim outline. For a good five minutes neither spoke. At last Weems announced his intention of departing, and was promptly given leave to go anywhere from hell upwards. He went down the passage-way, but, being too short to reach the gap in the roof, asked for assistance. I blew out the candle and went and hove him up, and afterwards climbed to outer air and sunshine myself. He was standing by the lip of the pit, clenching and unclenching his fists, shivering, sweating, and periodically groaning.

A thought struck me, and I promptly gave him the benefit of it without reserve.

"We're in a nice pickle, Mr. Weems, aren't we? You've spent a lot of the money you're so close-fisted about, and will have to travel cheap if you mean getting home again. And I'm in a ten times worse fix. I've chucked up a steamer-berth at Genoa; I'm on a God-forsaken island where there's next to no sea-traffic; and I've run up debts with no prospect of repayment. It looks a bit as if jail's somewhere very close under my lee. And whom have we to thank for it? Why you, my sportsman, and no one else."

"Great heavens, what do you mean?"

"Why, that word Hereingefallen shows that the chap who looted this Talayot knew we were on the track; and as I haven't mentioned a word about the affair to any one except Haigh, it stands to reason you've split."

"I assure you, Mr. Cospatric——"

"Oh, very likely you didn't do it on purpose. But you've got into conversation with some smart fellow, who's pumped you carefully without letting you get an inkling of what he's got hold of."

"Upon my word of honour as a gentleman, sir——"

"Faith, gentleman! your word of honour! What's that worth?"

"I must say you are very—very—er—rude. I would have you remember that I am a graduate of Oxford, and as such——"

"Of course take brevet rank as 'gentleman.' An 'M.A. and a gentleman.' Lovely!"

"And you," shouted the little man, with a sudden spasm of rage—"you who presume to lecture me are a man who has been expelled from Cambridge, a man of no means and no profession, a blackmailer—a—a——"

He spluttered and stopped for want of epithets.

"Blackleg," I suggested, "chevalier d'industrie, and all the rest of it. Very well; I'll admit the whole indictment if it pleases you. And"—I laughed, and stopped to load and light a pipe—"and now let's stop slanging one another like a pair of drabs in a sailor's pothouse, and go our several ways. I'm sure I don't want to see your face again, and I don't suppose you're anxious to feast your eyes on mine."

"I'm not," said Weems.

Those were the last words I heard him speak. We climbed the roadside wall to set off, he towards Alayor, and I by the way I had come, and, so far as I know, never set eyes upon one another again.

I strolled heavily on, musing sourly enough to myself, and feeling utterly dispirited. There had been moments when life had appeared to me to be of a very dusky gray, but never before had I seen it all black, with no single tinge of lighter colour. I looked back over my vagabond existence, and thought what a hopeless muddle it had been. Even Weems was to be envied, although his trade was the one trade on earth which I most thoroughly loathed.

In fact, till I opened the main road to Mahon the blue devils were in full possession, and made the most of their time. But there a flash of memory pulled me up all-standing, and caused me to give hoots of joy and delight, and sent me to the right-about whence I had come, at a very different pace.

It was late that night when I dragged my feet up the hotel stairs to our quarters; and as I had fed on nothing that day save prickly pears (which have but a transient effect on the stomach) and oranges (which are not

much more filling), I told Haigh to order a big dinner, at the same time mentioning that I hadn't got the Recipe.

"The feeding-hour's past, dear boy," said he, blinking at me anxiously, "and the regular meal's over. I'm afraid I've strained our credit a bit to-day. Don't you think the best thing we can do is to stroll down to the cutter, fill your tummy on corned horse there, and help me slip moorings unostentatiously after dark? I'm afraid our spec. has rather missed fire here, and I don't want to expiate the offence by a spell of carcel. You see I've kept out of that so far during these vagrom years, and I don't want to break record before it's necessary."

I laughed boisterously. "Prison be damned! Look there!" And I pulled out of my jacket pocket a little two-lugged red earthenware pot, and poured out a chinking heap of something that glinted with many colours in the lamplight. "Look there! Essence of rainbows, a good half-pint. Who says half a loaf isn't better than no bread?"

"Good Lord!" said Haigh. And after a pause, "Who have you been robbing?"

"Grub first, and then yarn. I've borne the burden and heat of the day, and I'm very nearly cooked."

"But are you sure they ain't duffers?"

"Duffers, your grandmother! Look at 'em."

"Can't see very clearly to-night, dear boy. Day's been a bit wet, thanks to my Juggins and his kind efforts. But I'll soon find out." And off he went to the window with a handful of the crystals, and scratched the glass with them, satisfying himself that they were really diamonds.

"Michael Cospatric," said he, "'tis a great man y'are, and I'll just go down and let on to the landlord in confidence that you're an American marquis travelling incognito."

The resources of the hotel had distinct limits, but Haigh's influence and eloquence strained them to the very verge that night. I did not merely feed—I dined; and in consequence spoke of the day's heat as glorious sunshine, saw only the humours of Weems's freaks, and even passed over the disappointment at the loss of the Recipe without painting it in over sombre colours. It isn't in my nature to be miserable or morbid when I've either a good meal under my belt or the means of getting others stowed within my pockets; and so being possessed of both these desiderata, I freely admitted to Haigh that this terrestrial life was thoroughly well worth living.

"One thing is clear," said Haigh, as I relit my pipe after finishing a full and exhaustive account of the day's doings—"Weems hasn't been pumped. You've bawled the story abroad yourself."

"How's that, and where?"

"In the caffè at Genoa. You said there was a man sitting beside you?"

"Not beside, but comparatively near—say a dozen yards off. Yes, I remember him—a good-looking fellow in coloured pince-nez. But he'd 'no Sassenach.' Weems had been talking to him just before, and had found out that. And so as he and I spoke in nothing else but English, I don't see how the other could have made out what we were jabbering about."

"Do you always parade all your accomplishments, dear boy? Not much. I also never make fifty breaks at billiards before a mixed audience. And your friend with the spectacles was the same. Moreover, he saw that Weems was a garrulous little beast, and not inviting to talk to. So he just followed the John Chinaman trick and said 'No sabe,' and listened unnoticed."

"Commend me for a most particular greenhorn."

"Not of necessity. It's an easy mistake to fall into, dear boy. And, besides, I don't know that you were trapped that way, after all; it's only a guess on my part."

"By Jove, you must have hit upon the right thing, though, and for this reason. I only told Weems about the Recipe. I kept back the item about specimens being buried under the writing, as a sort of *bonne bouche*; and as matters turned out, never told a soul about it. So, you see, the man who looted the Talayot could certainly not have overhauled the Diary, or he would never have left this little red urn full of gems. I found it where Lully buried it six hundred years ago, the lid waxed over, and stamped with an alembic and the man's own family coat of arms. Gad, I wonder where that signet ring's got to now."

"Never mind that trifle, old chappie. We've got enough of the gentleman's family jewellery to be able to do without a trumpery gold ring. It's the rest of the legacy that I've got my covetousness upon now. Where's that gone to? You didn't happen to inquire of your farmeress person whether she'd had any other visitors with archæological tastes during the last few days?"

"I didn't; but I don't think she knew of any one being about on that tack, or she'd have told me about it. The woman was garrulousness personified."



"Still there's no harm in returning there to-morrow and pushing inquiries a little further."

"Not the least. It stands to reason some one has been inside the Talayot; and thanks to this island being a small one, with a good average of inhabitants to the acre, we should, if we push inquiries far enough, find out who the explorer was and when he went there."

With that we left the subject, and Haigh went on to relate what a day he'd had with the Juggins before that worthy finally tore himself away to catch the Mallorca steamer; which topic, being treated with a humorous touch, kept us in merriment for the rest of the evening.

Next day I lazed, and Haigh, taking his turn on duty, rode down to the neighbourhood of Talaiti de Talt, and brought back news that mystified us still further. The good woman who owned the farm knew nothing about the matter, neither did the ploughman from whom I had bought the three-angled hoe; but a stonemason in the cemetery above Alayor reported as follows:—

He had seen three men, strangers, come up the road from Ferreiras and walk down that towards Alayor. The time was after midnight, and as he had finished the work which had detained him so long—to wit, opening a vault for the reception of a fresh tenant on the morrow—he strolled homewards after them. But as they passed on straight through the town he got a bit curious, and, keeping out of sight, followed astern, along the narrow country roads which led to nowhere special. He saw them pull up before the great tumble-down Talayot which stands opposite the big stone altar, and watched them produce lantern, shovel, and pickaxe, and begin to dig; after which, feeling that his interest had evaporated (so he said), or, more probably, being oppressed with sleepiness, he returned to Alayor, and soon had his head under the bedclothes.

Now this was all understandable enough; but when that inquisitive tombstone artificer deliberately affirmed, in spite of many attempts to shake his memory, that the spoiling of the Talayot had taken place on the night immediately preceding our arrival in Mahon and the arrival of his most Catholic Majesty's mail steamer Antiquo Mahones, then it seemed to Haigh and myself either that somebody was lying most blackly, or that we ourselves could not believe certain of our own senses which we had hitherto considered strictly reliable. For during the gale there had been absolutely no steam communication with Mahon from the Continent, and to Ciudadella steamers never run at any time.

"Of course," said Haigh, slowly swinging round the contents of his glass and blinking thoughtfully at them—"of course there's the cable, which nine days out of ten is in working order. And as this show seems to be run on lines suitable for some place half-way between Egyptian Hall and the Bethlehem Institution, we need be surprised at precious little. But the idea of your caffè friend with the spectacles cabling across for some one here to copy the Recipe for him and send it back by post is a leetle too strong. Of course the chances are several millions to one against his knowing a soul in the island, much less the address of such a person; but even supposing that did occur, and he had an intimate friend here, we'll say, for the sake of argument, at Ferreiras, why should he trust that friend? He must see the friend would understand that the opportunity was one which would not occur again in several score of lifetimes; and he might lay his boots on it that the friend, be he never so confidential and honest, would not fail to profit by the matter for his own ends. Because, you see, this earth is peopled by human beings and not archangels. And besides this trifling objection, doesn't it strike you that the message would never land in the confidential friend's fingers at all?"

"I don't quite see that."

"It's simple, though. The message is handed in at Genoa. I think there's a through wire from there to Marseille. Thence it goes to Valencia, by which time it has been overhauled by at least three telegraph clerks and all their intimate friends. One cable crosses to Iviça, another continues on to Mallorca, and a third crosses to this island. Knowing the weakness of the Spaniard for making his work as cumbersome as possible, it's a small estimate to say that the message is—or ought to be—fingered by at least six more men before it gets to the delivering office. And do you suppose that out of all those poor devils of telegraph clerks there wouldn't be at least one who would forswear his vows and pocket the information? No, no; 'tisin't good enough. If your man was smart enough to eavesdrop, you can lay to it he wasn't a sufficiently stupendous idiot to shout his secret down a telegraph wire."

"There's such a thing as cipher, though."

"There is," said Haigh dryly; "but I think we can make bold to leave that out of the calculations. The odds are piled up star-high, as it is, against Mr. Spectacles having a confidential agent here at all whom he would be inclined to trust with such a job. But when you suppose that the pair of them have a ready-arranged cipher in full working order, why, then, infinity is a small figure for the chances against it. Cabling is out of the question, old chappie. In fact, set alongside of that the idea of flying across carries ordinary probability with it."

"And as," I added, "the port captain at Ciudadella wires that he has had no single incoming vessel during the last ten days, and we know that none have come into Port Mahon except the fleet and the Antiguo Mahones and ourselves, we've arrived at the most unpickable deadlock that two grown men ever scratched their heads over."

"That," said Haigh, "is about the size of it; and so I vote we just let the Recipe slide, and enjoy ourselves on the other goods the gods have kindly provided. Come across to the next room. The conductor of the opera company's staying there, and if the opera company's rank bad, the conductor, at any rate, is a musician."

## CHAPTER XII.

### A PROFESSIONAL CONSPIRATOR.

Up till that time I knew nothing of Haigh's gifts in the musical line, and a bit of a revelation was in store for me. It did not come all at once. The conductor of the opera company ("reputado maestro D. Vincente Paoli" the lean handbills styled him) opened the concert, and it was not until he and Haigh had some difference over the accentuation of a note in an air from Bizet's *I Pescatori di Perle* that my shipmate strode over the piano stool.

The old professional's face was amusing to watch. Good-natured contempt for amateur theory was very plainly written on it at first. That gave way to surprise and wonder; and then these merged into undiluted admiration.

Haigh had given his version of the disputed passage, and then saying, "This is rather a fine bit too," had played through the Moor's fierce love song; after which, without any words being spoken, he verged off into other melody which we could appreciate even though we failed to recognize its origin. It was all new to us, and after a while we began to see that the player was his own composer.

He peered round from time to time, glancing over his shoulder at our faces, and once stopped to ask if we were bored.

"No, go on," said Paoli. "I never heard music like that before. It is new. I do not say whether I like it. I cannot understand it all as yet, I who can comprehend all that even Wagner wrote. But it is wonderful. Continue.—No, nothing fresh, or my ears will be dazed with surfeit. Play again that—that piece, that study, I know not what you call it, which ran somehow thus"—the Italian hummed some broken snatches.—"It seemed to show me a procession of damned spirits scrambling down the mountains to hell, with troops of little devils blackmailing them on the road. I know not how you call the thing, and like enough I have totally missed its motive; but there is something about it that holds me, fascinates me, and I would hear it again that I may understand."

Haigh grinned and complied, and then he played us more of his own stuff, the most outré that human ears had ever listened to, and we marvelled still further. But having by this time fallen in with his vein, we both of us could appreciate the luxuries he was pouring out.

"Signor," said Paoli enthusiastically, when it was over, "if you chose, you could found a new school of music."

"And call it the Vagabond School, eh?"

"Your airs are wild and weird, I own, but, signor, there is melody in every note of them."

Haigh shrugged his shoulders. "Such melody, maestro mio, as only the initiated can appreciate. You have been a wanderer, maestro, and so has Cospatric; therefore you understand. But the steady, industrious stay-at-homes, the people who think that they know what music really is, and what its limits are, and all about it, what would they say to these queer efforts of mine? They would not even dignify them by the word 'distorted.' They would call them unmitigated bosh, and set me down as a virulent maniac. No, signori, I am not ambitious, and so I shall not lay myself open to that sort of snubbing. Come across to the other room for cigarettes and vermouth."

And there we sat till the melancholy chaunt of the sereno outside told us it was five o'clock, and, with the blessing of God, a fine morning.

A certain black box, my one piece of salvage from the wreck at Genoa, came up from the ugly cutter next afternoon, and I am proud to say that my violin added another link between us.

For the next three days we had as good a time as one need wish to enjoy. Every evening after his duties at the theatre were over the old Italian called us round his piano, and we feasted on what we all three loved. And then the opera company took steamer to fulfil an engagement at Valencia. Haigh was for accompanying them. Amongst other reasons he had a bit of a penchant for the soprano's understudy. But I said "No," reminding him of the other business we had in hand, and pointing out how much time had been frittered away already.

"Oh, as to that," said he, "I think we may as well pat the pocket that holds what we've got, and resign ourselves to Kismet with regard to the rest."

"It's scarcely wise to throw the sponge up yet. I am not hopeful, but I don't despair."

"I'm letting the thing drop from my mind. However, if you've an idea, old chappie, let's hear it."

"What do you say to taking up another partner?"

"To what end? I fail to see what use a third would be. Still, give the proposed partner a name."

"Taltavull."

"Phew! I say, I rather bar meddling with politics, especially the white-hot explosive politics that he affects."

"So do I. I hate 'em. Still, if there's anybody able to ferret out where that Recipe's got to, and make the present holder disgorge, that long, lean, respectable-looking anarchist is the man. To begin with, he has a far cleverer head on him than either of us can run to, and from what I told you about his theories, he'll be as keen as knives when once he's shown the scent."

"But the man's not more than human," objected Haigh. "I don't see that he'll be able to squint farther through a brick wall than either of us could."

"He has more chances, for this reason: he's mixed up with social undercurrents whose flow we can neither trace nor follow. These will take him to places where we could not get, and show him things that we could not find."

"Which fine metaphor boiled down signifies that you want to bring the man into partnership because he is a professional conspirator."

"Put it that way if you like. Also you must not forget that you and I are at present dead-locked."

"So that we have all to gain and nothing to lose. Precisely; old man, you've put it in a nutshell. The only other thing is, do you think Taltavull would play fair?"

"We must risk that. It isn't a matter one could make out a paper agreement over, and sign our names to across a charter-party stamp. But I think, from what I saw of him, Taltavull is not the man to do an unfair thing to any one who treats him well. But, as I say, we must be prepared to risk it."

"All right then," said Haigh; "so far as I'm concerned, I'm quite willing. You do the recruiting. We might call ourselves the Raymond Lully Exploitation Company, Limited."

I went out there and then about the errand, and found Taltavull at his own house, sitting in a huge stuffed armchair. He was reading *L'Intransigeant*, and marking in blue pencil the points where he considered its racy blackguardisms were not sufficiently pungent.

The furniture of a Spanish sitting-room is made up, as a rule, of whitewash on the walls, and a good supply of eighteenpenny rush-seated chairs scattered about the tiled floor. This is on account of the climate, which at

times makes all appearances of coolness to be highly appreciated. But the anarchist was not a Spaniard, nor an Italian, nor anything else so narrow. He was a man of no nationality, and cosmopolitan, and sublimely proud of that expansiveness. Consequently, he had taken his ideas of furniture from a more northern island, and had his room well crammed with massive mahogany and dark oak, with the upholstery in dull crimson velvet. To be sure, no style could be more unsuited to the climate, but then, on the other hand, it was a standing witness of his emancipation from all restraint. The thing might bring him discomfort, but that was a secondary matter, and he was prepared to suffer for his faith's sake. Certain hard and fast principles always came first with him, and in the heavy mahogany and the hot plush velvet none of them were violated.

He put down his paper when I was announced, and said he was glad to see me; and I honestly believe that the phrase of welcome was no empty one, even before he knew what I had come about. He seemed—I say it without conceit—to have taken a fancy to me at our first meeting.

The gist of my tale came out pretty rapidly, although I skipped no details, but waded through chapter and verse; but before it was half told, Taltavull had sprung up from his seat, and was pacing backwards and forwards over the thick carpet, fiercely waving his long arms, and looking for all the world like a mechanical frock-coated skeleton. I broke off, and asked half-laughingly if I had offended him.

"I deem you, señor," cried he, "the greatest benefactor that my cause and I have ever known. I shall feel myself standing to the chin in your debt, whatever your conditions may be."

And with that I went on to the end of the yarn.

"Señor Cospatric," said he, when the last had been told, "it is directly contrary to the tenets of our creed to assist one individual—much less two—in piling up wealth beyond the due proportion. But it is also our fixed maxim to deal honourably with those who do the like by us. You, Don Miguel, are one of our enemies, a passive one, it is true, but none the less an enemy, because you are not for us. Also I see with sorrow and certainty that you will never become a convert. There is something in your blood, some hereditary taint of conservatism, which forbids it. But for all that, you shall find that we anarchists can keep faith with our opponents. You shall have your rigid eighteen months' monopoly of the diamonds before we begin to stir the market and set about revolutionizing the world."

"Always supposing you can manage to finger the Recipe, which, as we stand at present, seems a by no means certain thing."

"Pah, amigo, you are half-hearted. I"—he struck his narrow chest fiercely—"shall never think of defeat. From the outset I shall go into the business with intention to succeed. Of my methods you may not learn much, for to those beyond the pale we lock out secrets. But could you know how far our brotherhood extends, and how deep is the responsibility with which each member is saddled, you would have more faith in the mighty weapon whose hilt I, Taltavull, grasp between my fingers."

"Don't you go and involve Haigh and myself in a political row."

"No word of what is happening will pass outside the bounds of our own clique."

"I just mentioned the matter, y'know, because you anarchists have got the reputation of not sticking at much."

"My dear Don Miguel, a statesman in your own islands once evolved the policy of Thorough. We have adopted the selfsame principle. Nobody and nothing must stand in the way of our ends. We stand up for humanity in the mass. Bourgeois society is bound to go under. And to hasten its downfall any one of our members is proud to offer himself as a sufferer, or as even a martyr to death, for the Cause. We aim at producing a state of society in which men may live together in harmony without laws. You must see that we are merely extreme philanthropists, and that our motives are pure in the extreme. And, amigo, you must disabuse your mind from the vulgar illusion that we are nothing but a band of brutal assassins who murder only through sheer lust for blood."

I started some sort of apology, but he cut me short.

"My dear fellow, you haven't put my back up in the very least. A man is bound to misunderstand us unless he is on our side; because if he does understand and appreciate, and has any claim to the title of man, he could not help being an anarchist. But now let us drop the question and get to the work of the more immediate present. I am going to the telegraph office first. Let me accompany you back as far as your hotel."

"When shall I see you again?" I asked, as we parted at Bustamente's doorway.

"When I find where the Recipe is."



"And that will occupy how long? A week?"

Taltavull laughed. "You will see me to-morrow afternoon at the latest," said he.

Confidence is said to be infectious, but I can't say that my hopes were very highly excited by Taltavull's sanguineness of success. As to Haigh, he had scoffed at the idea of tracing up the Recipe from the first, and all I could tell him about the new power on the scent would not change his cheerful pessimism. "The whole loaf we are not going to get, dear boy," was his stated opinion; "and we may as well be contented with the crumbs we've grabbed, and enjoy 'em accordingly. There's the dinner bell. Let's go and make merry with the drummers."

However, true to his word, and not a little to our surprise, Taltavull turned up about four the next afternoon and told us that he had been successful. There was a little subcutaneous pride to be noted as he made the announcement, for, after all, he was a human man as well as an anarchist, and had done a thing which we deemed very nigh impossible. But he kept this natural exultation under very modestly, saying that all credit that might be due was owing not to him, but to the great organization. We were merely offered a proof, he said, of what the anarchist body could encompass when once their machinery was put in motion. And then, having given us the broad fact, he proceeded to show out details. Or rather, to be strictly accurate, he gave us a string of results, without any hint as to how they had been arrived at, a certain amount of mystery being the salt without which no secret society could possibly exist.

Put briefly and in its order of happening, the story ran as follows:—

The raider, as we had already faintly surmised, was none other than the man with the spectacles in the Genovese caffè. His name was Pether—N. Congleton Pether; he was of Jewish extraction, and he was stone-blind. He had been much in Africa, and it was in the southern part of that continent that an accident deprived him of his sight. The injured eyeballs had been surgically removed, and artificial ones mounted in their stead. The man was clever in the extreme in hiding his infirmity; for a week none of the hotel people where he was staying in Genoa even guessed at it. Casual acquaintances scarcely ever detected the missing sense.

English being his native tongue, Pether had naturally lost no word of the discussion over Weems's manuscript, and directly the little schoolmaster and myself had left the caffè he had beckoned his servant Sadi, who was within call, and had gone off on his arm towards the harbour. There he

threw money about right and left, and the information he wanted was given glibly. A freight steamer consigned to some senna merchants would be sailing for Tripoli at noon on the morrow. To the skipper of this craft he betook himself, and bargained to be set down unostentatiously in Minorca. It would mean a very slight deviation from the fixed course, and what he paid would be money into that skipper's own pocket. You see Pether knew how to set about matters. Had he gone to the shipowners, he would as likely as not have failed, or at any rate been charged an exorbitant fee; but by applying to a badly paid Italian seaman who was not above cooking a log, he got what he wanted for a thousand-franc note.

The senna steamer made for neither Ciudadella nor Port Mahon. Her doings were a trifle dark, and she did not want to be reported. But her skipper was a man of local knowledge, and remembered that there were three small harbours on the northern coast of Minorca, used exclusively by fishermen and contrabandistas. Further, being a man of guile, he understood the ways of the outpost Carabiniere. He knew that if an open boat were seen to come into one of these village harbours from somewhere out of vague seaward darkness, the local preserver of the king's peace and the king's customs would not be rude enough to look in that direction. That uniformed worthy would understand that some gentleman in the neighbourhood wished to land a cargo, probably of smokable tobacco, free of duty. He would know that if he interfered, he would probably test the chill sensation of dull steel jabbed between the shoulder blades before many days were over. He would expect that in the ordinary course of events judicious short-sightedness would be rewarded by notes for many pesetas, and American tobacco in generous quantity. And he would reroll and smoke his Government cigarette, placidly non-interferent, thanking his best saint for the happy time to come.

And in fine it was managed in this very fashion. The senna steamer hove-to in the twilight some three miles off-shore, and a boat put into the tiny sheltered bay of Cavalleria just two hours after nightfall. The boat scarcely touched the beach. She disgorged herself of two passengers and a small lot of luggage, and departed whence she had come in scared haste.

A Carabiniere, with his back ostentatiously turned to the newcomers, leaned on his rifle, whistling mournfully. Sadi wrapped a greasy note round a pebble, and chucked it to the man's feet, whence it was transferred to the pocket of his ragged red trousers without comment, and then the pair took their way up past the carvel-built fishing-boats into the straggling village street.

Cavalleria has no regular fonda, or even casa, but there is a shop where they sell wine, and black tumour-covered sausages, and white bread, and alobra beans, and Scotch sewing cotton. The whole village knew of their arrival, and were gathered in this shop to meet them when they came in. Few questions were asked. The Spaniard of the lower orders has a most Hibernian weakness for anything smacking of conspiracy, or any enterprise which is "agin' the Government." Pether saluted the audience with one mysterious grin, which they appeared to consider as fully explanatory, and then inviting them all to drink with him, put down a peseta,<sup>2</sup> and received much change in greasy bronze. "Dos reales" was the price of that piece of lavish entertainment, the old twopence-halfpenny still holding sway in out-districts against the more modern decimal notation.

And then a guide was wanted.

Every able-bodied man amongst the villagers offered his services for nothing. His time and all that he possessed was entirely at the disposition of the señores. The choice was embarrassing. But at last one rope-sandalled hero was selected, and the trio set off into the night between the great rubble walls. The most of their luggage had been left to go to Mahon by mule pannier on the morrow. They only took one small box with them, slung by a strap over Sadi's shoulders. But the guide carried pick and shovel.

They struck the main road and held on along it till they reached the cemetery, and there struck off through Alayor, and on down the narrow lanes to Talaiti de Talt. Sadi and the Spaniard dug, and being used to the exercise, and working in the cool of the night, deepened their pit rapidly. Only the stars watched them at their labours. Pether was not able to look on; he could only listen.

As day was beginning to gray the sky the entrance tunnel was unroofed, and down the two foreigners dropped into it, Sadi leading. The man of the soil feared ghosts and crouched at the lip of the hole. Also, being ignorant of all other tongues save Minorquin, he understood no word of what was being said beneath him.

But of a sudden a noiseless light of blinding whiteness flared out from the inside of the Talayot; and after an interval of black-velvet gloom it flashed out again. His fears still were strong, but curiosity trampled them under foot, and the man in the rope sandals dropped noiselessly on to the floor of the tunnel. Again the intense white glare shone out, and the watcher saw words of writing on the farther wall of the Talayot, and him of the spectacles holding his wooden box so as to face them. Afterwards, by the light of a candle, he who had made the flashes scraped this lettering from the plaster

with his knife, and his companion, laughing, scribbled something else on the blank place. And then, as the cold earthy atmosphere was beginning to make him sweat, the son of the soil climbed out again.

"Great Cæsar!" exclaimed Haigh, when the narrative had reached this point. "I'm beginning to have an inkling of how it was all worked out. If that chap photographed the inscription by magnesium flashlight, I verily believe I know where the plates—But don't let me interrupt yet. Finish the tale first."

And so Taltavull went on.

The uncanny sights which he had witnessed impressed the Cavalleria fisherman mightily, and when he received a valuable banknote, he helped fill up the hole and departed, fully determined to hold his tongue. The man with the spectacles said that evil would assuredly befall if he spoke of the things he had seen, and that fisherman believed him implicitly.

The two raiders walked rapidly down the narrow lanes till they came upon the broad road at that point where it is interrupted by a hedge of wheelbarrows and gang planks. Coming down the other branch road opposite to them was the zinc-roofed diligence, which had left Ciudadella in chill darkness at a quarter to five. At their sign the driver brought the ramshackle conveyance to a stand, and they squeezed into the stuffy interior. Then with an arre-e-ee, and an impartial basting with the short whip, the four wretched horses got into their shamble again, and forty minutes later were climbing in and out of the clean dry holes in Calle Isabella 2<sup>a</sup> at Mahon. They only had one hitch in their enterprise. During one of these bumps in the uneven street the door flew open, and the camera fell out on the cobble stones with a thud and a sound of splintering glass.

"And I thought that man a Juggins," said Haigh, "and imagined I was blarneying and greening him ad libitum, whilst all the time he was bamboozling me—me—me, gentlemen. But, Señor Taltavull, are you perfectly certain the fellow is blind? I think you must be mistaken there."

"He is stone-blind; but, as I told you, he is marvellously clever at concealing it. You are by no means alone in being deceived."

"But, amigo, he looked at me when we were talking, and pointed out things about the room, and, in fact, used his eyes the whole time. Brown eyes they were, and good to look upon."

"I tell you he is very, very clever, and as his great conceit is to hide his infirmity, he uses all his wit to do it. Sadi, his servant, had helped him to

explore the room beforehand, so that he knew exactly where everything lay. And the sound of your voice would tell him where to direct his gaze during a conversation. But call to mind anything where immediate vision was necessary. Did you never ask him to read a letter or anything of that kind, and not notice (now that you are reminded of it) that he somehow or other evaded doing so?"

"No, no—— By Jove, yes, I did though. I asked him to play cards, and he wouldn't from conscientious motives or some rot of that kind."

"There you are, then."

"Right. Of course he couldn't see the pips. And this was the man I thought I was having on for a Juggins. And this is the man who has got the Recipe for Diamonds locked up in a photographic double dark-back. That is, unless he's taken it out and got it developed."

"So far as I can make out," said the anarchist, "the negative is still undeveloped. Pether took it to Palma, and he has it there now, not daring to trust it in a photographer's hands, and not being able to develop it himself. Señores, I believe it will be for us to unlock that tremendous mine of potential energy. Mallorca, I regret to say, is too strictly Catholic to be a profitable sowing ground for our propaganda, but we have scattered adherents here, and these are working their best for us. But our presence in that island is imperatively demanded. Unfortunately, the next steamer does not sail for two days."

"Then we'll take the cutter," said Haigh. "Wind's in the sou'-sou'-east and lightish, but if it holds as it is we should make Alcudia Bay by early tomorrow morning, and from there could hit off the railway at La Puebla and get to Palma."

And to this Taltavull and I agreed.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### AT A MALLORQUIN FONDA.

Our preparations for that short sea trip were few and simple. Taltavull exchanged three small diamonds for cash, which enabled us to settle outstanding accounts; Haigh procured a basket of bread, hard-boiled eggs, and vermouth bottles; I made two or three chandlery purchases, and gave the rigging a bit of an overhaul. It was in the gloaming when we got the anchor, and night when we stood out between the dismantled old fort and the obsolete new one at the harbour's mouth, and got into open water.

Wind was fresh at first, and the ugly cutter's stem hissed through the water like red-hot iron; but as the moon rose into a steel-blue sky amongst bright white stars, the breeze dropped till it scarcely gave us steerage-way. Haigh sat smoking at the tiller throughout the night; Taltavull and I patrolled the narrow decks, chatting. We none of us felt inclined for sleep.

Dawn came with a flash of vivid green, the sulphur-coloured disc hard upon its heels. We were then off the south-western corner of Minorca, with the high ground on the northern parts of the sister island standing up clearly against the horizon. Even from that distance we could make out with the glasses a watch-tower on the peninsula which divides Pollensa Bay from Alcudia. Up there the sentinels of those naked slingers who loved wine and women when the world was young had peered over the blue sea for a first sight of Roman or Carthaginian pirate galley.

"Happy times when those men lived," said the anarchist; "there were few laws to trouble them."

"Happy indeed," echoed Haigh, "for a boy with a taste for liquor and ladies, and who thought unlimited head-breaking a pleasing diversion."

In the middle of the channel a steamer passed us on her way to Algiers. She was the Eugène Perrier, the very Transatlantique Company's boat that had put us on our course again during that wild, tearing race from Genoa.

The fact was pointed out, and we looked her over again as one looks at an old friend who has rendered a big service.

"Bit of a change this day from that, isn't it?" said Haigh.

"About as big as they make 'em," I admitted.

"I'm not so sure that I care for it, though," said he. "It had its strong points that trip."

"Especially when it was over," I agreed. "Yes, it's fine to look back at."

"It has one or two memories that will stick. You trying to catch up the slits in the mainsail as fast as the wind slitted them, with the knowledge that we'd probably go to glory if you got behind; I shan't forget that. And I think the face of that man we laughed at on the brig will stick. Also one or two other items. But as you say, old chappie, it's nicest to look at from beyond."

The day flushed hotly as it wore on, and still the breeze kept light. We slid through the water slowly, leaving scarce a trace of wake behind us. Haigh smoked and drank vermouth; Taltavull busied himself below with dealing, on paper, with tremendous sums of money; I bathed at intervals, diving from the bowsprit end, and climbing aboard again by the lee runner.

It was a lazy, dreamy passage that of ours across the channel, and most enjoyable withal; but there was a strong lure dragging us on, and I think all of the ugly cutter's complement were unfeignedly glad when she opened up abeam both of the high headlands which bound Alcudia Bay. There is one lighthouse, on the northernmost cape, and we passed another on an island about half-way in, both in mocking contrast to the old round sandstone tower which rears itself amongst the palmetto scrub about a mile outside the puerto. What that old crumbling castle was for it is difficult to see, for in the days when it was built there was no known artillery which would throw a ball half-way across the shallow bay.

"The lazaretto," said Taltavull, pointing to a grim, gray fortress farther along the shore, with high limestone walls, and lookout towers at the corners. "Heaven help the poor cholera-stricken wretches whose fate it is to be boxed up in that prison! It helps to show, however, what a rabid hatred the Mallorcans have of all manner of disease. Read George Sand's book about the island if you want to understand that. She brought Chopin here long ago, and wintered with him at the Valledemosa Convent, hoping to save him from consumption. The people in the village there are as hospitable as any in the world as a general thing, but they ostracized these two because of their dread and loathing for sickness, and deliberately tried to starve them out."

"Brutes," said Haigh.

"I think," commented the anarchist, "that they'd a perfect right to act as they did. They chose to, and that was sufficient. That's my creed."

"Poor creed," said Haigh. "Cospatric, stand by with that mud-hook, and we'll bring to by the schooner here. It's getting very shallow."

We brought up to an anchor, snuggled down, and then hailed a boat and got put ashore where the fishing craft were riding to their bowfasts, and discharging scaly rainbows on to the stone quay. The inevitable Carabinero gave us an examination, and then we made our way up from the little port village through beanfields and vineyards and oliveyards, past an old Roman amphitheatre on to the double-walled town.

Very Asiatic in appearance is Alcudia as one approaches it, with its yellow and white houses, its domes, its crumbling amber walls, with ragged date-palms scattered here and there, and dusty green clumps of prickly pear scrawming about everywhere. But as a walled city its days are done. The massive gateway with its pitting of Saracen round-shot has no guard. The two fosses are planted thickly with grotesquely gnarled olive-trees. The streets are clean and the houses are in good repair, but there is a lazy old-time air about the place that would clog the hurrying feet of even a sight-seeing American.

We fetched up at the casa and had dinner, which commenced with a dry soup of ochre-coloured rice. It was a curious meal all through, and across the little well-yard we could watch the cooking done in earthen pipkins of various sizes, each over its own charcoal fire. Then we went into the café—an irregular room, with the roof partly supported on arches, concrete floor, and heavy odour of rancid oil and Government tobacco—and sat on rush-bottomed chairs round a little deal table to sip our cognac and discuss on the next move.

"Now that we are coming to close quarters," said I, "it's beginning to be borne in upon me that our proceedings are very lawless."

"Anarchistic, to say the least of it," observed Haigh.

"We are simply acting on the principle of the 'greatest good for the greatest number,'" said Taltavull. "Pether is one; you are two, and I flatter myself that I and my Cause make an important third; the interests of the one must go under in favour of the interests of the three."

"Which being interpreted," said I, "is, that if A has a watch, and B, C, and D are poor men with pistols, the watch of necessity changes hands. It may be natural enough from your point of view, but it's devilish like highway robbery from mine."

Taltavull shrugged his shoulders hopelessly. "I shall never convert you, amigo," said he.



"I tell you what it is," said Haigh. "Señor Taltavul's conscience is satisfied, and so much the better for him. You and I, Cospatric, are too poor to afford the luxury of consciences. Pether, it seems, has this Recipe in the form of an undeveloped photographic negative. Perhaps he had no particular title to it in the first instance; but then, on the other hand, nor had we. Correctly speaking, I suppose the thing either belonged to the owner of the Talayot, or else, as treasure-trove, should revert to the crown. But on the glorious principle of 'no catchee no havee,' I think we may leave these two last out of consideration. Under ordinary circumstances, I should have barred jumping on the chest of a man who is afflicted with blindness; but as this particular individual has seen fit to humbug me to the top of his bent, I shall waive that scruple. Señor Taltavull, I'm with you in this to anything short of justifiable manslaughter. And Cospatric——"

"Won't pin himself, in spite of that scrawled insult of Hereingefallen," I cut in. "So that's how we all stand. And now easy with the debate, for if I'm not a lot out in my reckoning, there's a pair of cars coming in through the glass door yonder that understand English."

We stood up and bowed, foreign fashion, as the newcomer seated herself at a table near us, and she had soon drawn Haigh and the anarchist into conversation. She had just purchased a Majolica bowl, under repeated assurance that it was a piece of the genuine old lustre-ware. My two companions (as I learnt with surprise) were enthusiasts and experts on the subject, and they both assured her that the specimen she had procured was undoubtedly spurious. It seems there is a factory at Valencia where the bogus stuff is made, and a large trade is done in it with the curio-collectors. And, moreover, every house on the island has been searched by local pottery-fanatics, and every scrap of the authentic lustre-ware stored in their salons or museums. Afterwards, they went on to the vexed topic as to whether the ware had ever been manufactured in the island at all. Haigh was of opinion that it had been made in Valencia, and carted over to Italy in Mallorcan craft, which were in the Middle Ages great carriers in the Mediterranean. This would easily account for the name Majolica. Taltavull held that it was a genuine product of the island, though he was bound to admit that no remains of manufacturing potteries had as yet been discovered. And so they went at it hammer and tongs, deduction and counter-deduction, proof and counter-proof; and the owner of that glittering mauve-marked bowl which had started the discussion threw in a well-considered word here and there to keep the argument well alive.

Women are not in my way to talk to, but I sat in the background watching this clever stirrer-up of conversation for want of anything better to do. She

was a woman with dark hair, just tinged with gray, with features that would have been pleasant enough if they had not been a trifle over-hard. She was neatly but not showily dressed, and wore a little jewellery of a ten-years-back fashion. She retained her hat and jacket, and one got the idea that she habitually wore them, except in bed.

In fact, she was one of that cohort of masterless women who are so copiously spread over the Continent. You find them from Trondjhem to Athens, from Nishni to Cadiz, seldom far from the beaten track, never under breeched escort. They speak three popular languages fluently, and usually know some out-of-the-way tongue such as Gaelic or Albanian or a Czech patois. This one seemed quite at home with Mallorquin. They generally display the bare left third finger of the maiden; but even when that critical digit is gold-fettered, you are not always satisfied that they have ever called man husband. They always carry guide-books, note tablets, patent medicines, and hand-satchel. They are very reticent about their own affairs, and correspondingly curious about yours. And finally, if one may hazard a generalizing guess, they mostly seem to hail either from the New England States or the south of Scotland.

Probably because I showed no desire to cultivate her acquaintance, she began to throw out stray questions for my answering, not about the cream and mauve lustre-ware—about which I knew nothing—but on other points.

"It's a strange thing," said she, "how nations like the Spanish which have beautiful languages are always cursed with harsh voices to speak them with. I wonder if the converse holds true?" So I had to mention Norsk and Norwegians.

And, again: "All the peasantry in Mallorca seem to know one tune and one only, in a minor key, with a compass of three whole tones. It is not unmusical, but, like the sereno's chant, it is hard to catch." As I happened to know the air, the least I could do was to dot it down in her note-book when she asked me to. The book flew open as she passed it across the deal table-top, and showed the name "Hortensia Mary Cromwell" written on the flyleaf.

And then she found out that we had come across from Port Mahon in a yacht, and discovered besides that I was a sailor and vagabond by trade, and fairly drew me. To an appreciative listener I can always talk about the sea, and the sights of the sea, and the smells of the sea, and what those men do who make their livelihood by journeying across the big waters. And as this Cromwell woman spoke back intelligently about these matters, I liked her, and sat there talking when the others went out to make a call. Nor

did the experience weary me, for when they returned after midnight, we were sitting vis-à-vis, with our feet on the edge of the brazero, talking still.

There was no nonsense about her. She was a salted traveller, and had seen and done many things, and we had a score of tastes and sympathies in common. It isn't often I'd give two sous to speak to any woman a second time; but I liked her, and said, when she went upstairs, that I hoped we'd meet again, meaning what I said.

Taltavull's lean face was gloomy and threatening that evening. He told me that his correspondent in Palma had been arrested.

"The poor man's only crime was that of spreading our propaganda," said he, "and his only real enemies were the swarming priests. He naturally spurned their warnings with contempt, as every true anarchist must do, and continued sowing the good seed amongst his Roman Catholic neighbours. And so the Bishop went to the Captain-General, and our Cause was given another martyr."

"Sad," said Haigh, "isn't it?"

"I shall write them a fair warning," continued Taltavull, with a frown, "and if the poor fellow is not instantly released I shall give orders to blow up the Cathedral, the Lonja, and the Moorish palace where the Captain-General resides. I do not think that they will press matters to extremes after that. The Cathedral is one of the finest specimens of Gothic ecclesiastical architecture extant in the Spanish dominions; the Exchange is certainly the finest piece of Gothic secular work in the world; and the old Saracen palace is a thing these miserable bourgeois set immense store upon. It would be a tremendous blow to take them away, but if they press me I shall not spare the lesson. I've already wired our head office in Barcelona for a consignment of dynamite."

"I wish you hadn't such confoundedly destructive notions, old chappie," said Haigh. "It's the one drawback to you as a companion. Good-night, and give me a day's warning when you're going to blow anything up!—Good-night, Cospatric—or, rather, good-morning."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HEREINGEFALLEN!

It did not seem that I had been very long turned in when Haigh came to my bedroom and woke me.

"Come across to my room," said he, "and see our anarchist shipmate in the process of going crazy."

"Whatever do you mean?" I asked, sitting up.

"I don't quite know whether I mean what I say, but anyway, come and see for yourself."

So I flung off the quilted coverlet, and pattered over the tiled floor on my bare feet, and across the corridor, and saw the anarchist dressed in his long black frockcoat, and apparently in nothing else. He was dancing with fury, reeling out a continuous string of the most venomous Spanish oaths—which, by a peculiar irony of a man of his creed, are drawn almost exclusively from an ecclesiastical basis—and at intervals pounding with one bony fist at a crumpled letter which lay in the palm of the other.

Had I not witnessed the fact with my eyes, I should not have imagined it possible that he could so lose his self-possession. I knew him to be a man of strong emotions, but I had always believed him capable of keeping them under iron control.

"We have been fooled, laughed at, betrayed!" he screamed. "The wretch that holds the Recipe has been playing with us. 'Us' do I say? He might have played with you and been forgiven. You are but tools; you do not even belong to the inner brotherhood. But he has trifled with me; he has dared to make sport of me—Taltavull—whose edicts have caused thrones to totter, whose hand will soon sweep all thrones away. That can never be forgiven. He cannot live and expiate that insult."

From one of his pockets the old man drew a revolver and held it up, resting the barrel on a crooked arm, and aligning the sights at an imaginary enemy.

"You two, my comrades, must help me in this just vengeance."

"Not much," said Haigh, peering at him coolly through half-shut eyes. "I've put my name down for a little gentle highway robbery; but if ordinary murder is to be added to the scheme, you may transfer me to the retired list. I'm not burdened with many scruples, but making cold meat of a gentleman

for the small crime of sticking to his own property happens to be one of them."

"And the woman who has helped him, and who has also put shame on us?"

"My dear fellow, you can't expect me to indulge in fisticuffs with a lady—especially one with such a catholic taste in Majolica lustreware."

Taltavull stamped and swore afresh. "And this insult—will your cold northern blood permit you to swallow that unresented?"

"My swallowing power has its limits, Mr. Taltavull; so slow down. There's an old adage about thieves quarrelling, and we three should do best by not falling out with one another. Come, let's try back a bit. What the devil is this eighteen-cornered insult you're so furious about?"

Taltavull thrust the letter into his hand, and stalked away to the window muttering in his beard.

I looked over Haigh's shoulder, and read with him:—

"Fonda Forget-what, Alcudia, Mallorca,

"Tuesday morning, 1.37 a.m.

"Most worthy Señores,—Once more let me write 'Hereingefallen,' and if two of you fail to appreciate its delicate and subtle import, I am sure that the polyglot Mr. Michael Cospatric will courteously interpret.

"Your arrival here came to me, I own, as a trifling surprise. I had not expected such pressing attention.

"It may please you to learn that I nearly joined your conclave during the course of last evening. Mrs. Cromwell's prolonged absence made me anxious, and I descended the stairs from our joint sitting-room, and I was within an ace of entering the café where you were all four seated to inquire after her whereabouts. But, with my hand on the latch of the door, a sound met my ear which caused me to pause. It was the well-known mellow voice of my friend Mr. Haigh, raised in argument. I recognized it in an instant. It is a conceit of mine to study voices, and a peculiar talent never to forget them.

"To enter might have caused unpleasantness. Being a man of peace, I consequently forbore to enter, and waited in my room till Mrs. Cromwell returned. You had been most generously profuse in your explanations. From one or another of you she gathered all there was to know. Señores, you have

been most solicitous after my humble welfare. Señores, I would have you accept my most profuse thanks.

"I regret that the pressure of circumstances forbids my taking formal leave of you. But at an early hour this morning, when you will still be stretched upon your virtuous pallets, Mrs. Cromwell and I set off for the port of Soller. We shall have our morning coffee at Pollensa, and eat our lunch at the convent of Nuestra Señora del Lluch. And there we shall leave the carriage. But we shall not spare time to pay our devotions at the shrine of that celebrated black virgin. Mules will be waiting to take us through the ilex forests, and down the cañon, and over the high mountain track, and down that cleverly-built pass-road to the lovely valley of Soller.

"Do you know Soller, señores—the prettiest little valley in Europe, full of the scents of the orange and the lemon trees with which it is planted? No? then visit it when you have the chance. I regret that we shall not be there to receive you. But we go on to the little port of Soller, where a felucce is lying stern-on to the quay waiting for us. By nightfall we shall be in the lift of the swell, standing out between the lights at the tiny harbour's mouth.

"Our destination? Señores, believe me, I blush for joy whilst I write. Mrs. Cromwell is about to honour me by adding her hand to the heart she has already bestowed upon me.

"As regards that undeveloped negative, which Mr. Cospatric (with the skill acquired when he was bottle-washer to a photographer) so kindly put into the portable dark slide, my wife will take lessons in the art in some quiet town on the mainland, and when sufficiently skilled in technique will develop out its secret, and share with me the great reward.

"I do not know that I am indebted to M. Taltavull for any matter, but I should be sorry to leave unrequited the interest he appears to take in my welfare. If he will send his address to 'Poste Restante,' Cannes, Monte Carlo, or Hyères, I shall be proud to send him a delicate wedge of our wedding cake. I trust, however, he knows my name; for here I shall only sign myself, señores, your infinite superior,

"L'Aveugle."

"That's delicious," said Haigh when he had finished reading.

"But the insults, señor," said the anarchist, turning round again.

"Beautiful!"

"Have you read those burning gibes?"

"The humour of the thing's transcendental."

"Señor Haigh, look at that letter calmly."

"I am doing. Isn't the satire something lovely? My mellow voice! Ho, ho, ho! And Cospatric's experiences as a photographer's bottle-washer! Grand!"

The anarchist began to stamp about in a new access of fury, and so Haigh changed his tone.

"Laugh when you're licked, my dear fellow," said he. "Believe me, it's the best way, and Lord knows I ought to be an authority."

"We're differently constituted, señor."

"Faith, I grant that same's true."

"This loss means more to me than it does to you."

"You are making it do so, certainly. But there, for God's sake, don't let's be asses enough to quarrel. Here, smoke."

We all three lit cigarettes, and there was a silence for some minutes. Then Haigh broke out again,—

"Phe—ew!" he whistled. "Have they gone posting to Soller after all?"

"Eh?" said Taltavull.

"I mean, isn't this all a blind? Wasn't that letter written just to put us on the wrong track? Why should the man have taken the trouble to make all that long screed just for the sake of jeering, when he wouldn't be here to see what effect his smart sarcasms would have? Besides, if he showed his route, he might think we could work the telegraph wires and get him and his blessed felucce stopped in Soller Port till we came up. Now, here or Palma are the orthodox outlets to this island. What's the best way to Palma?"

"La Puebla, and rail from there."

"Bet any one an even ten pesetas that Mr. Pether has cleared by the early train from La Puebla."

"The same road leads out of here till it branches, whether one is going to Pollensa or La Puebla," exclaimed the anarchist, with a fresh access of

excitement. "I can wire friends at both places, who can find out for me which way they have gone. I will go and do it at once."

He rushed away to the stairhead till Haigh shouted, "Put on your trousers, man, first!" and then he turned to his own bedroom.

"He don't take a whipping well," said I, as the gaunt figure disappeared.

"Ruffle a fanatic," said Haigh, "and you'll soon see that he's all superfluous nerves and useless springs."

[There breaks in at this point an extract from the life-history of Mr. N. C. Pether, which bears upon the main narrative. It is told by himself.]



## CHAPTER XV.

### CAMARADERIE.

... Again I distinguished the Belgian drummer's steps coming aft along the deck planks. "They are all so sick below," said he, "that I could endure it no longer." He sat down on the saloon skylight beside me. "You see that low hummocky island we are coming to, out yonder on the port hand? Cabrera, monsieur, where they say Hannibal was born, and where they hope and expect M. Blanc's successors will find a resting-place for their tables when France and Italy hound them out of Monte Carlo. I was over in Cabrera the other day. I ran across in the little packet from Palma. There's a lovely harbour there—almost as good as the one at Mahon; and the place holds two hundred people, who are planting vines and building fortifications. My faith, it will be a heavy change if they make that into the fashionable gambling hell of Europe.

"You are regarding the island—you see its contours; now shut your eyes.

"Messieurs faites vo' jeu.'—There's the big fast Steamer that has just run over from Marseille in ten hours with a full passenger list of French, English, Russians, and Americans. Few have braved the sea-trip just to idle about the casino as they used to do near Monaco. These are men and women who have come for hard business at the tables, and who for the most part expect to break or be broke.

"There is a gorgeous hotel awaiting them at the head of the harbour, where they dress and dine, and then out they go, down the avenues of rustling date-palms (which bear electric lamps amongst their ochre fruit-clusters), and so on, to the most sumptuous building in the world, the new Cabreran casino.

"It differs hugely from the old temple of chance on the edge of the Continent—that enfer sur terre set amid a paradis. There is no ornate concert-room here, or theatre or opera house. There is not even a salon for gossip and smoke and exercise. The whole is one enormous salle de jeu, and the clink of gold against yellow gold is the only instrumental music. The cartwheel five-franc piece is nowhere permissible now, and at the rouge et noir tables hundred-franc notes are the smallest stake. There is a change in everything except in the croupiers and the chefs, and the actual tables and machinery over which they preside. Even the atmosphere is new. The old dry heat is no more. In its place is a moist warmth, heavy with the scent of heliotrope and tuba roses. It seems as if one of the scent factories at Hyères had staved its vats somewhere close at hand. Change everywhere.

Mesdemoiselles les cocottes——But I weary m'sieu' with my twaddle. 'Rien ne va plus.' The farce is over.

"Regard that brown promontory yonder, the easternmost horn of Palma Bay. With permission take my lunette. So; now you cannot fail to see. A ship of the Romans laden with pottery struck there in time past, filled, and went down in deep water. The fishermen often bring up in their nets unbroken pieces from her cargo, crocks and pipkins identical in shape and texture with those the islanders use to-day. Ah, m'sieu', but they are ignorant, these Mallorcans, and happy in their ignorance. Food is so easily gained that none need starve; they have the best climate imaginable, free from the sirocco which plagues Algeria, and from the mistral which kills one on the Riviera; they are too indolent to meddle with politics; they live in a lotus-land of beauty and ease. We should despise them, monsieur, but I fear many of us will envy their lot."

The Antiguo Mahones was threading her way through a fleet of small fishing-boats, as I could tell by the reduced speed, the hooting of the siren, and the constant and prolonged rattle of the steering rods. Soon she would bring up to the quay in Palma harbour. Why should I not get ashore there and work out the hard problem that was engaging me?

So far I had made no scheme of ultimate route. The meeting at the Mahon hotel with that cheery chevalier d'industrie Haigh, and the knowledge that that more robust brigand, his blustering, heavy-fisted partner Cospatric, was close at hand, had given me little leisure to plan far ahead. All my time was occupied in thinking how to fool the one and keep out of sight of the other till I could make escape from their immediate vicinage.

But having once cleared from the island, it seemed to me that all probable danger of our future meeting was passed; at any rate, Mallorca would be the most unlikely spot to run foul of them in. So when the commercial traveller had turned away to look after his own affairs again, I got hold of Sadi, and told him to pull our traps together and pay up what we owed.

Sadi turned and set about fulfilling the order without a question. That is the best of Sadi. He never wants to know the why or wherefore of anything. Within limits he is the perfection of a servant for a man such as me.

I had trusted Sadi with many things, and so far he had never failed me. I felt sure that he liked me, which was more than I would have said for any other member of the human race. But all the same, if he had seen it worth his while to rob or betray, I'd a pretty strong notion that blood instinct would prove too strong, and he'd do it. You see, Sadi's mother was half Arab, half

Portuguese; his father was all Portuguese—jail-bird Portuguese; his youth had been spent in Marquez, which is on Delagoa Bay; and these things do not breed immaculate honesty calculated to stand every strain.

I may have wronged Sadi. As I say, he never failed me. But I felt that there might reasonably be a limit to his faithfulness, and to let him have the solving of that inscription which I carried about my person locked in a fleckless photographic plate might very well have outstepped that limit. It would have been a heavy test on an archbishop's honesty.

So I did not intend to employ Sadi about this matter except as a last resort. I wished to let this, the most valuable secret the world contained, be known to no one except myself, if it could be so contrived. I desired to get it stored within my brain alone, and then to destroy the only other trace of it that was existent.

Yet labouring under my peculiar disadvantage, the task appeared a hopelessly impossible one.

As I went down the gang-plank and ranged up against Sadi's elbow, walking with him past the wine casks and other litter on Palma quay, it seemed to me that after all I should have to accept the risk and recruit this companion's aid. But such a decision was far too momentous to be hurriedly jumped at. The Recipe was safely locked in the yellow-green film. To most of the world its very existence was unknown, and I did not think that either Haigh or Weems or Cospatric would ever guess the manner in which it had been carried off and transferred to an invisible shape. Yes, the dark slide and its contents seemed safe in my possession, and as we entered the sacking-floored carriage that was to take us up to our Fonda, I registered a resolve concerning it. Pace accidents, I would cudgel my own resources for one entire year before I gave in and sought external aid.

At the Fonda de Mallorca I took, in Spanish fashion, a three-roomed suite, and for one entire day did not move out of their whitewashed fastnesses.

I sat thinking, thinking, and thinking, and felt my brain grow duller with every effort.

"This will not do," I told myself. "I am used to fresh air, and sunshine, and the sound of voices, and I must live amongst all these as usual if I am to puzzle out this riddle. The answer, the key, if it comes at all, will arrive in a snap and a sudden, and won't be got at by tedious pondering in an uncomfortable hermitage."

So the next morning I spent on the roof chatting with a girl who was hanging out clothes to dry on the roof adjoining, sniffing the scent of the oranges which came from a roof-garden across the street, toasting myself under the hot sun, and getting fanned by the sweet sea-air that poured up over the housetops from the curved bay beyond.

A bell clanged below, and I went down the steps to luncheon. The landlord, according to his wont with strangers who were entered as Señor and not as Don, intended that I should join the drummers' mess; but I was in no particular mood for that racy assembly just then, and bade Sadi take me to the dining-room at the other end of the house, where I sat down amongst garrison officers, proprietors come in from the country, and members of that bachelor fraternity which lived at the club opposite, and had their two principal daily meals here. They all knew one another, and had their well-worn cycle of conversation. They were tolerably cultured men, who rose superior to patois, and spoke pure and beautiful Castilian.

No one addressed me, and I did not open my mouth for speech. Probably it never dawned upon them that I understood a word of their tongue. We Anglo-Saxons abroad have not a reputation for being polyglot, and I never advertise my own small linguistic attainments unless specially called upon to do so. I do not care particularly for the trouble of talking myself, and one scores sometimes by a taste for silence. I made rather a good point that way once in a certain Genovese caffè.

When that desayuno had progressed as far as cold pickled tunny, which came as a fourth course, we had an addition to the party. There was a light pattering of feet along the tiles to the doorway, and I felt the men around me bow—as they bowed to each newcomer. I joined them in the salute, and heard with surprise, as the fresh arrival went round by the table-head, the rustle of skirts—of tweed skirts, or else of rough serge, I could not be certain which.

She took a seat opposite to me. The waiter placed before her a basin of soup. It was a Mallorquin soup, which consisted for the most part of slices of bread and a few slips of greens soaked in a very thin stock, with an egg broken over the whole so that the boiling mixture poached it lightly. Also there was a little oil added—native rancid oil. This sounds very nasty, but like the taste for olives, if a taste for that soup is once developed, it fascinates. Myself, I like this soup. The woman opposite did not. She told the waiter to take it away, naming it by its proper Mallorquin name.

"The arte de cocina of our island is not for every one's palate, I fear, señora," observed one of the men beside her. "It is not every foreigner who takes to it like your countryman vis-à-vis."

Till then I had been uncertain of her nationality, though I had had my suspicions of it, for the Anglo-Saxon walk differs from the gait of the southern nations; but on this slender introduction we dropped into conversation, and spoke in English of those desultory matters which one does chat upon to a casual hotel acquaintance.

We others had ended our meal before she was midway, and the Spaniards had finished their cigarettes and coffee before she rose.

"You say, sir," said she, when she pushed the dish of burnt almonds finally away and rolled her napkin into its ring—"you say, sir, that you are staying here some time. So am I. It is my happiness to know the island well. If I can be of any use to you, command me. I see, with regret, that you are blind."

I'm afraid I frowned angrily. She had touched me on my only sore point. "Madame," I said, "I congratulate you on your clear-sightedness. I flatter myself that I conceal my blindness from most people. I dare lay a heavy wager that none of the others who have been sitting round this table has so much as guessed at it."

"I had—that is, I knew some one intimately, sir, whose eyesight had been destroyed. So you see I naturally noticed trifles about you which would escape others. But you may trust me not to mention a word about it. Adios, señor, y diez mil perdons."

She rose and bowed. I did the same. I was angry with the woman and yet attracted by her, and at the same time ashamed of being so. I suppose these three conflicting emotions combined to make me careless. Anyway, the next thing that happened was that I, who never stumbled, found myself blundering over a rush-seated chair, and sweeping two dessert-plates from the table as I clutched out to preserve my balance. The waiter, who was in the room, rapped out a good round obscene oath of surprise. Nothing but the woman's action could have prevented his discovering my infirmity. She laughed amusedly, and said in Spanish, "Why, señor, one might think you were blind. You should look to your path even when you are very polite." And then she drew near me at the corner of the table, and rested her elbow against mine as skilfully and unobtrusively as Sadi himself could have done it.

"You see, I know better than to grip you by the arm," she said, dropping into English again.

"You have a skill and tact that not one in a million possesses. I am deeply grateful." We were at the foot of the stone stairs. I had my hand on the slim iron rail.

"You will be able to get back to your rooms now?"

"Perfectly."

"Then again buenas."

"Adios. But shall I not see you again?"

She laughed quietly. "Whenever you please, sir. I shall probably be staying in this hotel for some time yet."

"Would you," I began, and felt myself to flush as I spoke, though no novice at chatting with most kinds of women—"are you in a hurry, that is? Would you come out into the patio down the passage yonder and sit awhile? We shall find some hammock chairs, and if the glare off those tall white walls hurts you, there is an awning to pull down."

She assented very gracefully, and we sat there for a couple of hours, afterwards strolling out past the great amber-coloured cathedral, and on to the walls, whilst the sun sank into the water beyond the little lateen-sailed fishing-boats that dotted the bay. With clever, unobtrusive tact she made herself my eyes. Into her talk she infused the tale of the quick and the still things we passed in our stroll, never entering into pointed descriptions, but rather mentioning them in her chat as though they were of interest to herself alone.

And afterwards, in the evening, she was kind enough to come to a box I had secured at the opera-house—a building which is almost equal to La Scala—and I had the delight of seeing Balfe's "The Talisman" acted, as well as of listening to the music.

She was a woman of perfect self-reliance. She had seen men and women and places. She knew well how the restrictions of society were ruled, but she was quite capable of mapping out her own line of conduct to suit her own ideas. At least I deduced as much, though we exchanged no single word upon the subject. There had arisen between us a camaraderie that for me was delightful. Sadi was good, but his companionship had its limits. She was all Sadi was, and more. It would be a poor compliment to say she was everything a male comrade could be. She was woman through it all. She was thoughtful, bright, amusing, resourceful.

Yet we never verged beyond the bounds of mere camaraderie, nor do I think that either of us wished to do so.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CRUELLY INTERRUPTED.

For the life of me I cannot say now who proposed it. I think the scheme must have been evolved spontaneously between us. But the fact remains that next morning saw Mrs. Cromwell and myself driving out through the city puerto by the railway station and the Plaza de Toros, and out along the level road across the plain, towards the hills that skirt it. She knew the island thoroughly—knew every inch of it, one might say—and understood and appreciated the people of all grades. I could not have found anywhere a more interesting companion.

The old Mallorcan nobility, the oldest in Europe, are but little in evidence. They stay indoors, and outside their old palaces one hears little about them. Even in Palma, where times change but slowly, times have changed for them. They are woefully hard up—the result of heavy gambling in a past generation, and the depreciation of land in this. Indeed, with one exception, all classes down to the peasants are poor; but they are not unhappy. It would be impossible to find a race more contented with their lot. There is no absolute poverty. Bean porridge can be got almost for the asking, and if one eats bean porridge enough, one is not hungry. Their other wants are very few, and they are easily supplied. So that, practically speaking, every one, even the very poorest, is well off.

Life for the Mallorcan does not consist of making money. He rather goes to the other extreme, and takes it as meant for doing nothing in, for chatting, for smoking indifferent cigarettes, for strolling about under a melodramatic black cloak with crimson plush lining, and for other enjoyments. He has no marked objection to money when it comes to his hand, but he will neither stoop nor climb to gather it. Allah has given him a lovely and fruitful island, with a perfect climate, and a store of philosophical contentment, and a theory of life called the mañana theory which utterly eliminates hurry. He wisely does not try to go against these things that Allah has arranged, and consequently most of his time is spent in rigorous far niente.

It is only the women of Mallorca who work when they have got nothing else to do. In these frequent intervals they whitewash their dwellings and neighbourhood generally, which gives sanitation and neatness.

Of the only wealthy class in Mallorca she seemed reluctant to speak. They were converted Jews, locally known as Chuetas. I found she had somehow imbibed a notion that I too was a Jew; but when I emphatically denied the



impeachment, and said that I strongly hated Jews, she told me about these Chuetas.

They are the Christianized lineal descendants of those Spanish Jews who in the old days disliked the alternative *auto da fé*, and preferred to 'vert. To-day they are a caste distinct to themselves, intermarry, and are loathed by all the other natives with a great loathing, and have no communications with outsiders except upon business. Needless to say, this last item is a large one, and in reality accounts for all the others. The Mallorcans are an easy-going race, and if they get hard cash to-day, repayment is a matter for *mañana*, and therefore unworthy of consideration. And so the Chuetas have contrived to get the upper hand all through the country. They might be forgiven for neglecting to toil and spin, for that is the custom in general favour; but the other idiosyncrasy rankles, and from noble to *puta*, every soul hates, abhors, and detests them. A man, an Englishman, who had not entered the island till middle life, told how he came there with tolerant notions, and thinking the treatment of these tribesmen unjust, cultivated the acquaintance of many of them. But he said he soon had to give them up. Their language, their thoughts, their sentiments, their mode of life, were alike disgusting. He understood why that low-grade *puta* who had been offered marriage by a wealthy Chueta had spat in his face by way of answer. They were utterly unfit to associate with. It was the old tale: kick a dog for centuries and he becomes an utter cur, and cur he will remain for centuries to come. And yet by a ghastly irony, the most devout of the devout Palman Catholics is the hated and despised Palman Chueta.

The mules were dragging our carriage across the plain whilst she told me these things about the people, and at intervals she served me as eyes to note the beauties that we passed. There were orchards of almond-trees that seemed from a distance to be bearing a crop of snowflakes, till one came nearer and could distinguish the delicate pinks and mauves of their blossom; there were bushy *alobras* with rich green foliage; oranges, bearing the last of that juicy crop which, when fresh gathered, melts in the mouth like ice; olive-trees, with dry gray leaves and trunks so grotesquely gnarled as to suggest arboreal pain. The hot sun above, dappling the young corn and filling the stone water-conduits with soft tree-shadows; the tinkling twitter of unseen birds; the repose everywhere, made up a charm which my poor words refuse to utter. And yet she made me feel it all, and more besides.

We approached the cup-edge of the mountain. To a Spaniard all trees except fruit-trees mean so many cubic feet of wood for building or charcoal. As Spain and Italy both know, climates change when the forests go, and the

crops suffer from long droughts or heavy deluges which sweep the soil bodily away in spite of laboriously-built stone terraces or concrete-lined water ducts. But that is for mañana. The timber is wanted for to-day, and down it comes. Yet from a merely scenic point of view this ruthless axemanship is hardly to be deplored where we were then. The rocks were bare, save for scattered dark-green dottings of pine or ilex perched where they could not readily be come at; they were full of fantastic shadows; they were shaven, gray, and rugged; they were unspeakably grand.

The crags closed in as we went on, and the hiss of the stream which had neared the road began to drown the bird-songs. Some of the hills beside us were clothed with green shrubs, and some were gaunt and bare, of homely gray splashed with red. Ahead there was a wee white house, apparently balanced like an eagle's nest in an inaccessible eyrie. The orchards had gone, but the stony land was still scratched up to receive crops, and laboriously terraced to keep the soil from being swilled into the sea.

The hills pressed farther together into a rocky gorge, with the rut of the road perched high on one side, and the stream brawling away fifty feet below. Goats with tinkling bells were flitting about the crags like so many brown flies. One began to wonder whether the road was not a cul-de-sac, and whether Valledemosa did not lie in some other direction. There seemed absolutely no outlet except for wings.

But with an angle of the gorge one opened out a new scene. Another wide valley lay ahead of us, through which the road wound steeply, past women gathering the purple olives from the turf beneath the trees, past laden orange-trees, and sprawls of prickly pears, and fields of sprouting beans.

And then we came to two yellow gate-posts, on one of which was the date 1063, whilst the other bore this inscription: "vitæ in introitu ædis sanctæ exus."

"Valledemosa is here," said my companion, "the village beside that convent where Madame Dudevant brought Chopin to die, and from which she took him away full of new life. The mules will bait here. It is for you to say whether we go on or return to Palma."

"From the day when I lost my eyes to this day," was my reply, "I have never known what it was to see the shapes that God has builded on the face of the earth, or the colours with which He has painted them. Mind, I have never whined for the sight that was taken away from me. I have accepted my Kismet, and have made it as bright as thought and contrivance could manage. I believe, without egotism, that there are few blind men who have

trained themselves to be as conscious of their surroundings as I am. But my powers have great limitations. However preternaturally sensitive a man may be to all manner of sounds, he cannot tell everything from sound alone, not even though his sense of touch besides is laboriously refined. Without the gift of sight there must always be (so I had been forced to decide) a black gaping hiatus which it seemed that no human power could fill. Of my helpers, till yesterday, Sadi was the only one who showed the least fraction of talent; yet even his best efforts could scarcely throw a glimmer through the cloud.

"But to-day you have done what I believed no breathing person could do. You have worked a miracle. You have made me to see as with mine own old eyes. Heaven grant that this is not all a dream to be waked up from."

We spent that night at the Archduke's hospitar at Miramar—near Raymond Lully's birthplace—where free housing is given to any passer-by for three days, with olives, salt, and oil, the typical trio, provided. In the evening I told her across the brazero a tale that had never crossed my lips before, the tale of how I had lost my eyes. I took her in my story to the south of Africa, and led her out over green rolling veldt to a hawthorn-crowned kopje, where we lay out of sight amongst the bushes. I explained to her that I was a diamond merchant, and that I was waiting there for men who were to bring me stones for sale. And then I told how, instead of those I expected, others came out of the soft black tropical night, in turn mistaking me also for some one else. They thought I was there for I.D.B.—I, an honest trader—and not daring to kill, had loaded their guns with rock-salt. I told her how the first charge had struck me full in the face and destroyed my sight for ever; how I had got up and fled shrieking away, and then lay hid for days in a clump of karoo-scrub nursing my hideous pain, and wishing for the death which would not come. And then I sketched to her the way that Sadi had found me, and nursed me, and been with me in all those groping after years, paying full tribute to his devotion.

When I had finished she said she wanted to ask me one question, if she might do so without offence.

"Nothing you would say," I replied, "can annoy me."

"Then tell me, Mr. Pether, were you a registered diamond merchant out there?"

"I was. I swear I was. Had I been there for Illicit Diamond Buying I should have deserved all I got, and more besides. But after being blinded, where was the use of trying to retaliate? of proving it was all a mistake? of pressing

for a money recompense? Imprisoning a man, or fining him, or even blinding him in turn, could not restore my eyes."3

And then I went on to tell her how it was a pure platonic love for diamonds themselves that had turned me to trade in those lovely stones; how their iridescent glitter delighted my eye, and how the very act of handling them in their dull, rough, uncut state was a joy to me that almost amounted to monomania. The theme pleased her, and she asked me to go on. I had not spoken of diamonds once during all those long years of darkness, and to discourse about them again to any one who took the obvious interest in them that she did was for me an indulgence nothing short of delicious. And when we parted for the night, and I found myself once more alone, I was almost surprised that I had said nothing about this new enterprise in the diamond industry which fortune had thrown in my way. "I feel sure," I told myself, "that she will share this great secret. She is the one person in this world for me to trust. But I cannot part with it yet. Besides, I have only known her two days. Time enough when we get back to Palma."

We went out afoot after breakfast next morning, and during all that day I revelled in the beauties of Miramar, the finest piece of cliff and coast scenery in Europe. There is one of the many watch-towers here, a gray old building whose architect was dead before the Pharaohs or even the Phœnicians began to pile stones together, and yet the old citadel has not bent one inch to all that string of time. We ascended half-way outside up a ladder, and entered a small domed chamber. Then we climbed together on to the roof, which is half a covered sentry-house, half a balustraded lookout post. We could hear the rattle of the surf creaming away twelve hundred feet below, and could look down almost sheer into the many-hued blue water; and behind there were mountains rising steeply up into the clouds. The view was incomparable.

Then we went down again, winding along a narrow path that was edged with flowering heath, and gained a jutting crag which seemed almost to overhang the water; and going on farther amongst the wind-brushed pines, we came to another spot which we had previously viewed from above. It was a little round stone oratory perched on the crest of a jutting pinnacle, and linked to the main rock by a narrow causeway which rested on a slender arch. It was lit by a lantern in the roof, and over the altar was the marble effigy of a man of years.

I do not know why it was, but as we stood on the balcony outside that tiny chapel, leaning over the rail, and listening to the murmur of the woods beside and of the waters beneath us, I almost felt impelled to there and then show my companion that little wooden case I carried in my breast-pocket,

and tell her of the vast and wonderful secret it contained. In fact, I believe it was the very greatness of the impulse which made me resist it. I am the last man to be called superstitious, but it seemed to me then that old Lully's shade was hovering near his birthplace, and was busying itself in my direction. I did not like the guidance, and so resisted it; and directly afterwards we strolled back across the bridge, and on through the woods again.

I cannot, I will not tell in detail how the next few days passed. The little idyl concerns no one but myself—and one other—and there is no reason to desecrate them by bawling its delicate folds abroad. Suffice it to say that we went on through Deya to Soller, and then taking mules, climbed the mountain passes to the convent of Nuestra Señora de Lluch.

"You can stay here if you choose," observed my companion, as our mules drank out of the fountain basin in the courtyard. "Inside the big doorway yonder is written up 'Silencio' and 'Vir prudens tacebit,' but the monks are not overstrict, and, like the Archduke at Miramar, they offer free hospitality to all wayfarers. If you have never stayed in a convent of this kind before, the experience will amuse you."

"And you?"

"Oh, I shall go on to Pollensa, and you can join me there, if you choose, tomorrow."

"But why not remain here?"

She laughed. "I'm afraid I belong to the anti-monkish sex. True, they might offer me house-room—I do not say they wouldn't—but I do not care for putting myself in the way of being refused."

"Then," said I, "I don't think a convent is very much in my way just at present. I will push on for Pollensa too."

And so thither we went together, covering the short distance to Alcudia on the afternoon of next day.

But at Alcudia there was a rude awakening, and, thanks to a woman's wit, a narrow escape awaiting me. It turned out that Cospatric and Haigh had added brains to their own council in the form of a scoundrelly anarchist, and were hot-foot upon the trail. Mrs. Cromwell heard my name mentioned as she came back into the café from some small errand in the town, and instead of returning to the sitting-room upstairs, ordered coffee and sat down near three strangers who were talking in English. She was soon in

conversation with them, and from one and the other cleverly elicited the whole tale of their adventure. They seemed overjoyed, poor fools, to discover in her tastes for pottery, music, and tattooing, and waxed garrulous without the smallest suspicion. Much was incomprehensible to her, but she sat on there far into the night, thinking that what she could learn might be of service to me.

Made anxious by her absence, I had descended the narrow stairs to inquire after her, and nearly burst in upon their conclave. A recognition of their voices made me pull up with my fingers on the latch, and then return with a cat's tread to the place whence I had come.

A week ago my first impulse would have been to evacuate the spot there and then, so that even if I were followed, my start would be a good one. But the last few days had changed me much. From being absolutely self-reliant, I had grown to be curiously dependent again. I shrank from taking a flight alone. And, moreover, there was another thing that held me back: I could not bear to rush away so suddenly from my companion. It seemed to me that if I deserted her then, I should never see that woman more; and rather than that should befall, I was prepared to brave anything. So I waited in that bare, whitewashed sitting-room, and waited and waited till she came, fearing desperately for the safety of my great treasure, yet determined to expose it to any risk rather than beat retreat alone.

It was a torturing vigil.

The clocks had long struck midnight, and the sereno had several times raised his dirge-like chaunt in the street outside, before my companion came to me. She wasted no time in preliminaries. I think she could see by my outward expression that I knew how danger threatened, and so she told in as few words as possible what she had learnt. "I hope you can understand it," she said at the conclusion. "I confess the most is gibberish to me, but it seemed to concern you, and so I thought would be interesting."

"I am deeply grateful. But let me explain."

"Don't think it an obligation, Mr. Pether. There seems to be some little mystery about the matter, and I do not want to pry into your affairs."

"I wish you would."

"Why?"

"Because then I could feel that you took an interest in me."

"Believe me, I do—a deep interest."

I groped and found her hand. It pressed mine with a slight tremble.

"You pity me because I am blind."

"I am deeply grieved for your misfortune."

"Ah"—I dropped the hand, and sighed regretfully—"only pity. But, then, what else could I expect?"

"What would you have?" she asked softly.

"I had hoped for love. I had prayed that I might be loved, as I love."

And then? Why, honestly, I do not know how it came about, but in a minute or so each knew concerning the other all there was to tell.

"I should not even mind resigning the Recipe now that I have got you," I told her.

"Ah, but," she said, with a little laugh, "if we are going into partnership, you and I, the interests of the firm must be looked after. There is no packet leaving the island for two days, so you must wire Sadi in Palma to hire a steamer and have it ready for us. The train leaves La Puebla at 7.55. We will go down to meet it by that."

"But Cospatric and his friends will most certainly go by the same train."

She put her lips to my ear and whispered, and then we laughed, and I took paper and pen and wrote a long letter.

She read over my shoulder.

"Admirable. Monsieur l'Aveugle, your friends will either stay here and rave, or else start on a wild-goose chase across the mountains to Soller. And we, you and I, Nat, we will go far away, away to——"

She did not finish the sentence. She stooped and kissed me instead.

[Michael Cospatric again resumes speech.]

## CHAPTER XVII.

### VENTRE À TERRE.

"Now," said Haigh, as the anarchist reappeared dressed, and tore away down the stairs, "it seems to me a reasonable supposition that there's movement in front of us to-day, and so it's as well to prepare for it. I'm not a breakfast eater myself, and coffee and cognac will be all I can manage; but I'd advise you, as you are talented in that direction, to stow away as much solid food as you can lay your hands upon. The Lord knows what wild paper-chase that frock-coated idiot will try to lead us on when he turns up again. That is always supposing he does turn up, for, to tell the truth, I shouldn't be surprised if he made a bolt of it at this stage of the proceedings, and just played on for his own hand. And to let you into a secret, dear boy, I shouldn't be very savage if he did sell us in that way. We've got some good plunder as it is, and there'd be a devil of a lot of bother with one thing and another if we set about to collar the rest."

"I can't say," I observed, "that I should object to being a billionaire myself. I've never tried the sensation, and I dare say there are drawbacks to it; but still, after a man's been beastly hard up all his days, he doesn't mind going to a little trouble to make a big haul."

"You're energetic, old man; I'm not, and that's the difference between us. When I've specie in my pocket, I've never been in the habit of exerting myself to grab more till that's spent. I adopt the principle which obtains hereabouts, and shrug my shoulders, and say, 'Mañana.' However, if you're still on the gathering tack, I'm on for helping you to the limit of my small ability. Only, as I say, I'm not wonderfully keen on it from my own point of view."

We breakfasted at leisure, the one sketchily, the other with emphasis, according to our appetites, and had just lit tobacco when the swing-doors of the café clashed and the anarchist rushed in.

"I have ordered a carriage," he exclaimed. "Come at once; we must meet it at the stable. There is no time to drive round here. We shall barely catch them as it is."

"Ho, ho!" said Haigh placidly; "so you've hit off the trail, have you? Pollensa and Soller, is it?"

"No, señor; your guess was a true one. They drove off to catch the Palma train at La Puebla. But come at once, or I must go alone."



So we went off with him to the establo, climbed into a sacking-floored shandrydan, and rattled boisterously through the narrow streets of Alcudia. Once on the broad level road beyond the walls, the driver, who had already received his orders, made the cattle stretch out into a canter, and the pace was pretty smart. But it did not equal Taltavull's impatience, and every minute or so out went his head and beard bidding the driver to hasten and hasten; and the driver, crouched there in his little penthouse, rumbled out fierce arr-e-ees, and prodding forth a blue-sleeved arm beneath his blanket, lashed the scraggy mules into a gallop.

"Good for any one with a torpid liver this," said Haigh.

"Señor," exclaimed the anarchist, "how can you have the face to speak of trivialities at such a moment? Is it nothing to you what we have at stake?"

"On the contrary, it is decidedly something. But I don't let that confounded Recipe worry me unduly, as you appear to do. Cospatric, give me a match—there's a good fellow."

The old man glowered on him sourly, and turned to urge the driver for increased speed.

We flew past the brown vine-stumps, and the mule-gins above the wells, and the many ducts and gutters which drain the marshes, our animals steaming as they strained at the traces, and the driver jerking about like some frenzied jumping-jack as he forced them on. The pace was almost racing pace, and to be in a race always warms one's blood. I began to share Taltavull's excitement. He was looking at his watch ever and anon, at each time crying that we should have scarcely time to meet the train. And yet it was evident that the mules could go no faster.

I cast about me for some means of increasing the pace, and I was not long in hitting off an idea. It was not very brilliant, but I thought it worth sharing, and so spoke,—

"Look here, Monsieur Taltavull: if we chuck some of the ballast overboard, the mules will have less to drag, and we shall go faster. The only thing is, have we enough money with us to afford it?"

"Explain, explain! I cannot understand your barbarous sentences."

"Why, we can smash off the lid and most of the sides of this ramshackle Noah's ark till it's as light as a Kentucky trotting wagon. The only thing is, we must pay the driver cash down, or he may object and stop, and we shall lose time that way."

The anarchist unbuttoned his waistcoat, and, ripping away the lining, brought out a sheaf of notes. "A man," said he, "who never knows one minute whether he may not be arrested and have his pockets cleared the next, should never be without these. Señor Briton, use your big strength and tear away all that seems you good. I will satisfy the driver."

"Hooray!" shouted Haigh. "If there's one thing I do love, it's destruction. Cospatric, I'll bear a hand here. Now, then, heave with those big shoulders of yours; tear and rip; splinter and smash; don't spare; the thing's got no friends. Use your feet, old chappie, if you want to; all's fair here. Faith, look at that worthy farmer toting up his mule-cart load of seaweed for manure!" He broke off into a roar of laughter, and hove a cushion right against the man's gaping mouth as we tore past. "If he doesn't go home and report us to his wife and cronies as stark staring maniacs, I'm a Scotsman. Whoop! work away, Don Miguel. There's more joy over one brick hove through a windowpane than in a whole house furnished on the hire system. Ain't we making a bally wreck of it? Good business! Wrench away the back of this seat, and I'll lug off the steps. Arr-e-ee! Send those beasts along, Pedrillo. Make 'em burn the ground."

The lust for destruction, when once thoroughly lit in an able-bodied man, is not an easy flame to extinguish, and in consequence we went ruthlessly on with the dismantlement of the carriage, till even Taltavull, hardened destructor as he was himself, was fain to call upon us to leave off.

"But don't you think," said Haigh, "that we might just snap the thing in two amidships, and leave the hind wheels and all the back part behind? It would ease the load by at least three hundred-weight, and I think we could all perch on the foot-board in front. I'm sure the pole would keep it right side up."

However, it was judged that quite enough was done already; and though Haigh seemed inclined to argue, further freaks were put a stop to by another incident turning up.

The pace had slackened.

Taltavull shrieked for the driver to quicken, and the driver used the butt of his whip-stock with true Southern mercilessness.

"Why, that poor brute of a near mule has a stone in its shoe," Haigh called out. "It's going dead lame."

"I know," said Taltavull. "It's a great nuisance, but it can't be helped. The stone may be knocked out again."

"The stone won't be knocked out again. It's jammed firmly in, and gets set tighter every time it touches ground. The mule's in awful pain."

"I can't help that."

"By God, I can though. Here, pull up."

"Señor Haigh, you must be mad."

"I may be that, but I'm hanged if I'll sit here and see that poor miserable mule tortured. Here, Cospatric, stand by to grab this elderly person if he interferes.—And now, Mr. Cochero, pull 'em up in their tracks or I'll do it for you."

The driver did as he was bade willingly enough, and Haigh nipped down and levered out the stone with his knife. I stayed where I was. I had my arms full. To be accurate, they were wrapped round the third member of our trio, who was wriggling like a demon, and foaming at the mouth in his wrath.

But after all the halt was only a short one. "All clear," shouted Haigh, thirty seconds after he had descended. "Arr-e-ee, and away you go, my tulip. Not much time lost there, Señor Taltavull, after all."

The anarchist favoured him with the most poisonous look of hatred that I ever beheld, and spoke with shut teeth: "If we fail through this halt, Señor Haigh, look to yourself."

"Thanks," replied Haigh, squinting at him coolly enough; "I'm quite capable of doing that same, so think well before you play any pranks."

We didn't talk much after that, but squatted upon our ruin like three bears, the mules meanwhile being sent along for all they were worth. It would be hard for me to say how long we took over the passage, as I didn't clock it, but I dare bet that we covered the ground in record time for a four-wheeled conveyance.

Only once Haigh spoke. "If we miss this 7.55 train, when's the next?" he asked.

"Five fifty-five in the afternoon," returned Taltavull gloomily.

"Surely there's a train out of La Puebla before. The service can't be as fragmentary as all that."

"Yes, another train leaves there at 2.45 for the San Bordils Junction; but it doesn't go through, and there is no connection on."

"And how far is it by road to Palma?"

The old man did not know, and so I mentioned that the fifty-five kilometre post was by the quay at Alcudia Port.

"Oh, come," said Haigh, "that isn't so bad after all;" but what he meant I did not understand, as he relapsed into silence again. But we were pulling in the last knots very rapidly then, and presently we passed the cemetery, and got into the wished-for La Puebla. We tore through the place with the one casualty of a small black porker run over and left squalling in the road, and pulled up before the station in time to see the 7.55 train steam out along the metre-gauge track.

Taltavull rushed into the waiting-room, and tried to storm the barricade, offering threats, money, anything to have the train stopped, if only for three seconds, whilst he got on board. But the officials were stolid and obdurate; they were unaccustomed to hurry and flurry, and they refused to do anything to help him; and the old man came out to us again, wringing his bony hands, and using language that was plaintive and powerful alternately.

Meanwhile Haigh had shown unwonted activity. The populace of La Puebla, roused by our furious passage through the town, had followed hot-foot after us to stare at the ragged vehicle, and to throw ten score of questions at the driver, who, from a casual acquaintance of most of them, had sprung into a public character. So hurried had the summons been that many of them—of both sexes, save the mark—had apparently run out of doors in the apparel which served them under the bedclothes. Through this crowd Haigh shouldered his way, with a leery grin which seemed to win every heart (more especially the female ones), and went over to a double-muled carriage that was drawn up in front of the little casa across the way. It was a private carriage, and the coachman naturally did not own the animals; but Haigh flourished under his nose three hundred-peseta notes, and before that mine of wealth the man's honesty fell. With his own hands he started untracing his cattle.

Seeing what was in the wind, I stepped down and with ready help from the crowd set free the jaded animals that had brought us so far; and before our frock-coated companion had well emerged from the station again, we had picked him up and were off once more as hard as we could pelt. He was a goodish man at plotting and planning beforehand, that same Taltavull; but when it came to brisk action, he wasn't always prompt enough. A bit of a reverse seemed to daze him.

"It's money that makes the world go round," remarked Haigh after we had got beyond the cheerful howls of the crowd, and our two fine mules had settled down to a steady hand-gallop. "If you look, you'll just see the tail end of the train swinging out of sight round that curve. If we have any luck, and the engine yonder doesn't forget its dignity and exceed the orthodox Spanish crawl, we should overhaul 'em before they make the next station. Our present pace is distinctly good. It's a clinking fine pair this I've requisitioned, and from the condition they're in, it's plain to see they haven't been rattled along like this for a longish time. I guess somebody'll be wrath when he sees the two screws his coachy has swapped for them. However, the resultant ructions are for mañana, and suffice it for the present we're having a regal time. Come, cheer up, Monsieur Taltavull; you aren't half enjoying yourself."

"It is terrible this uncertainty," groaned the old man, the words being jolted out of him in gasps. "We do not know whether or no the wretches are in that train after all. We may even be racing away from them. Señores, you have been too precipitate."

"Precipitate?" rejoined Haigh; "not a bit of it, amigo. Both 'wretches,' as you are pleased to style them, are in a drab-lined first-class compartment in the middle of the centre coach. I saw Madame Cromwell looking at us through the window, and took off my hat to her. She bowed, and mentioned our presence to M. l'Aveugle. So you see they understand our game, and see that we have tumbled to theirs. Three A.B.'s to a clever woman and a wily blind man. The latter combination is slightly the weaker of the two, and therefore is allowed start according to the ordinary handicap. Nothing could be fairer. I'm open to back either side for a win in anything up to ten carats of diamonds."

Bar accidents, it seemed to me certain that we must overtake the train; but as we went along, the Book of our Fate read otherwise. Apparently that was the only day in the record of the world when a Spanish train had run true to time, and with anything approaching speed. There was only one explanation for it: our rivals must have "got at" the engine-driver. However, be that as it may, we hung very closely on to their heels, and always viewed them when the course of the line was at all straight.

Indeed, at the junction of the Manacor branch the train was still in the station as we drove up outside at a furious gallop; but before we could get in and past those infernally placid officials, she steamed out again, and we had a desperate run along the platform for nothing. At least, Taltavull and I did. Nothing could induce Haigh to pick up his feet for anything quicker than a walk.

We lost ground over this excursion, as the old man was so infernally blown with the sprint that he could scarcely totter back to the carriage; and by the time we had got under way again, the tail of the train was a good two kilometres ahead. But the mules were all the better for the short breather, and entering gamely into the spirit of the thing, stretched out into a long swinging lope that kept the chase from gaining a single inch.

It was their frequent halts at the little wayside stations that helped us on, and if we had only had the gumption to fly on past the junction when we were level, we should have been able to board the train at the next stop without hurry. However, we only discovered that afterwards, and as the mistake once made could not be rectified, we held grimly on.

Hills bothered us a little at times, and the windings of the road added to our handicap; but when at last we came down to the semicircular plain on whose edge Palma stands, we thought we saw victory ahead.

"There's between eight and ten kilometres to do," said Haigh, "and as it's all on the flat and straight, we should, with luck, be home first, and waiting to meet them."

"Don't you be too cocksure," said I. "It isn't all over but the shouting by a very long chalk. If you notice, there's been some rain falling here, and down on the flat there's been a lot by the look of it. I'm afraid that will mean heavy going for our wheels."

As we got down to the level this evil prophecy showed itself a true one. There was gluey mud on the well-made track often three inches deep, and though our driver flogged industriously, the tired mules were seldom able to muster up anything better than a lumbering canter. We had the train in sight all the time, and could see that we were dropping astern at every stride. It was very mortifying.

But as the race neared its close Fortune again pulled a string in our favour. A distant whistle screamed, and we saw the train gradually bring up to a standstill alongside a signal-post. The respite was not for long, for the barrier was soon withdrawn, and she steamed into the station; but it had enabled us to see the pair we were chasing come sharply out of the buildings, enter a carriage, and get driven away through the gate into the city.

"What now?" demanded Haigh.

"On after them," exclaimed the anarchist.

"What! in this rattletrap?"

"Of course," said I.

"But everybody will stare."

"Oh, what the devil does that matter?"

"Why, for myself, I must say that in a fashionable place like this, with a lot of girls about, I—Hullo! that settles it, though."

"What?"

"Look ahead, dear boy. There's a heavy cart just shed a wheel slap-bang in the middle of the puerto. The way will be blocked for an hour at least."

"Out we get then, and follow 'em to earth on foot. Thank goodness, the streets are very crowded, so their carriage won't be able to get along at more than a foot's pace."

Our pursuit was not very rapid. Haigh flatly refused to move at anything beyond a smart walk, saying that he should collapse if he did. I could have run them down if I had wished, but had no hankering for a row in the public streets, and so stayed with my shipmate. And Taltavull we kept with us whether he liked it or not. I do not think, though, that he was very keen to race on alone. "They cannot get out of the island, señores," said he, "as no steamer leaves to-day, and they must understand by this that they cannot escape us. I suspect that they will go to the Fonda de Mallorca, and await us there to treat for terms."

So we wound our way down the narrow, busy streets (wherein every fifth building was put to ecclesiastical uses), and finally landed out into the head of the Calle de Conquistador, where another surprise awaited us.

The hotel is in the middle of the hill, and as we arrived in sight of it we saw our two birds, accompanied by a dark-complexioned chap (whom I took to be Sadi, Pether's confidential valet), get out of the vehicle which had brought them so far, into another smarter one, which drove off at a rapid pace as soon as they were under the tilt.

Taltavull started wringing his hands. "What now? what now?" moaned he.

"The Lord knows," said I. "Where's the nearest hack-stand? Say, quick."

"At the bottom of the street."

"Well, here's a tram going down. Up you jump."

The three of us hung on the tail-board, and rode to the bottom of the Calle de Conquistador, where we exchanged to the most likely-looking vehicle we could see.

"You saw that carriage that just rushed by down towards the harbour?"

"Sí, señor," grinned the driver.

"Then after it like blue hades, and there's a hundred pesetas for you when we're alongside."

"Ah, señores, muchos grac——"

"Drive, you scoundrel; don't talk."

Away we went again, clattering, jolting, rattling, till the teeth of us were fairly loosened in their steps. Sharp to the right it was, past the Longa, and on by the tram-lines alongside the old walls; then an S-turn; and then a sweep round to the left; always with the tram-lines beside our tires. We were heading out for the white suburb which is beneath the Bellver Castle, and what harbourage the fugitives could hope to find in that direction we couldn't for the life of us imagine. But that was their affair. Our business—or the business we made for ourselves—was to get within speaking range.

Up the hill we spun, and through the pretty suburb, with its orange-trees, and its tattered palms, and its sprawling clumps of prickly pears; and past Porto Pi, the silted-up Carthaginian harbour; and then, leaving population and tram-lines behind, we opened out on to the magnificent road that sweeps round the western horn of Palma Bay. But always at a fixed distance in front of us hovered a billowing halo of amber-coloured dust, which no frenzied strain on our part could bring a metre nearer.

Once where the road wound in stately zigzags down the cliff of a slope, our driver took the ditch and cut an angle, heading across the rough ground which intervened; but the pace had to be lessened, and the carriage was nearly wrenched to pieces, and the experiment was not repeated. We had lost time by it.

And so the race continued, and the monotony of it dulled our interest in surroundings.

We thought only of the conclusion. Where the actual winning-post could be we had given up trying to conjecture. "It seems," Haigh remarked once, "that those two fools have made up their minds to race round this five-franc bit of



an island for so long as we three fools choose to chivy them. It's a mad set-out whichever side you take it from, and the fun's evaporating. I don't know what you chaps are going to do, but the next chance I see I'm going to get down for a drink. I'm parched within an inch of dissolution."

How long this state of things went on I can't tell. I was bruised by the bumping from hat to heel, and was much engaged in fending myself against further abrasions. But at last a sharp cry from the driver roused me to look out of one of the window-ports, and I saw that we had opened out a small bay that was backed by a high rocky island of red and yellow stone. One end of the island showed a curious profile of a man's face, and I recognized it as Dragonera; but what the bay was called I didn't remember, though I had a sort of dim recollection of an anchorage for small craft there.

Anchorage it was sure enough too, for as we rose the inlet further, I saw a small screw boat riding there to some sort of moorings and lifting languidly to the swell. She was an ex-yacht, Cowes or Clyde built for a wager, of the sort one sees in small Mediterranean ports for the petty coasting traffic; a lean, slender craft of some eighty or hundred tons register, with all her pristine smartness thoroughly submerged in southern happy-go-lucky squalor. There was a faint gray pencil of steam feathering away from her escape-pipe, and as we drew nearer I saw she had hove short, and was ready to break her anchor out of the ground at a moment's notice.

Another cry from the driver called off my attention. The carriage ahead had stopped; its three passengers had descended, and hand in hand were running over the rough ground towards the shore. A small dinghy was waiting for them at the edge of the shingle. So there had been method in their mad scurry after all.

Our driver cursed and arr-e-e'd and forced his cattle into a scrambling gallop, and we drew up with the deserted carriage, whose mules were standing straddle-legged, and panting as though they were going to burst. He pulled up there, but Haigh snatched hold of the reins through the front window, and turning the animals off the road, sent them with a yell into the palm scrub that fringed it. The poor beasts took fright and sprang off at fresh gallop, the carriage leaping and bumping after them like a tin kettle at a dog's tail, till at one jolt stronger than the rest it lost balance, and fell over with a splintering crash to its side.

We were all heaped over to leeward amongst a tidy heap of wreckage; but we soon managed to scramble out, and saw the fugitives making rapid going towards their boat.

"Now, Cospatric, ye wiry divil," shouted Haigh, "run for all you're worth, and put Pether in your pocket."

Off I started, and measured my length twice in the first fifty yards. The ground was awfully uneven, and the palmetto scrub so thick that one could not see where to tread. The trio ahead were close upon their boat, and it seemed to me an absolute certainty that I should be too late. But a fresh crashing amongst the spiky shrubs behind made me turn my head, and I saw the absurd figure of the old man charging down on a mule that he had cut adrift. He passed me like a flash, his face glowering like a fiend's, and he reached the shingle just as the dinghy had got two boat-lengths away.

The passengers were encouraging the two sailors at the oars to every exertion; but Taltavull pulled up as his mule's feet splashed in the water, and whipping out a blue revolver covered the two rowers and sharply bade them stop. They eased in the middle of a stroke, and raised their oar-blades, glistening and dripping.

"And now, Señor Pether, I hold you covered. I am a dead shot, and if you carry the Recipe a yard farther away you bring your fate upon your own head. I, Taltavull, swear it."

I saw Mrs. Cromwell lean over and cover the blind man's body with her own. Sadi also made a movement, apparently for the same purpose. But Pether waved them both back. He slipped a hand into his breast-pocket, and brought out the little mahogany case.

"Here it is, Señor Taltavull. You'll share the contents with your two friends?"

"Yes," exclaimed the old man, stretching out his bony hands; "I have promised."

"Then there you are, Señor Taltavull," said the other quietly. He deliberately drew back the shutter, exposed the yellowy-green film to the full sun-glare, and flung it from him with a sideways jerk.

It flew circling to the anarchist's feet; and for a moment we were all so paralyzed with the action that no one spoke or moved. Sooner than share or surrender, the man had deliberately destroyed the Recipe for good and all.

The anarchist was first to act. Slowly I saw him raise his weapon, and as if fascinated I could not move to interrupt him. With a leathery grin of cruelty he had brought it to bear, and in another moment there would have been murder done. But at that instant a flash of something brown shot by, and Taltavull and his mount were bowled over amongst the palmettos.

A cavalry reinforcement had arrived. Haigh had cut loose another of the mules, and had deliberately ridden the old man down.

"It's an old polo trick," said he, with a pleased grin. "Useful when a man persistently crosses you; quite simple when you know it.—Good-afternoon, Mrs. Cromwell.—Afternoon, Juggins, dear boy. Let me congratulate you on drawing this game. I thought we were going to gather in the beans.—Eh, what's that?"

Taltavull was sitting up amongst the scrubs, and was shaking a trembling fist at the boat and snarling out the word "iconoclast."

Mrs. Cromwell gave an order, the boat backed in to the shingle, and we found ourselves shaking hands with one another, as if we were dear friends who had always worked for one another's welfare.

"Mentone and Paris will be our neighbourhoods for winter and summer," said Pether, "and you two men must contrive to beat us up somehow and compare notes over this mutual score."

"Ladies are seldom averse to jewellery," said Haigh. "Will Mrs. Cromwell deign to accept from Mr. Cospatric and myself this small packet of diamonds, to be mounted as she sees fit?"

In fact, for the space of half an hour we were fulsomely civil to one another; and then they bobbed off in the dinghy, and the yacht took them I know not where; and we, after putting Taltavull in one of the carriages, drove off ourselves to Palma in the other.

"Faith," said Haigh, "it's a different man I am this day from when I saw you first in Genoa, old chappie. But after all this fresh air and exercise I must really go on the rampage for a bit. Come now, Palma for a few days, and then we'll hark back to the ugly cutter and go off somewhere else. Where shall we go?"

"Note which way the wind blows, and start before it."

"Right," said Haigh. "There's nothing like having definite plans beforehand."

**THE END.**