

"It's more than I have done for many a day worth speaking of."

And Amyas sat down in his rags to a good supper, while Mrs. Hawkins told him all the news which she could of his mother, whom Adrian Gilbert had seen a few months before in London; and then went on naturally enough, to the Bideford news.

"And by the by, Captain Leigh, I've sad news for you from your place; and I had it from one who was there at the time. You must know a Spanish captain, a prisoner——"

"What, the one I sent home from Smerwick?"

"You sent? Mercy on us! Then, perhaps, you've heard——"

"How can I have heard? What?"

"That he's gone off, the villain!"

"Without paying his ransom?"

"I can't say that; but there's a poor innocent young maid gone off with him, one Salterne's daughter—the Popish serpent!"

"Rose Salterne, the mayor's daughter, the Rose of Torridge!"

"That's her. Bless your dear soul, what ails you?"

Amyas had dropped back in his seat as if he had been shot; but he recovered himself before kind Mrs. Hawkins could rush to the cupboard for cordials.

"You'll forgive me, madam; but I'm weak from the sea; and your good ale has turned me a bit dizzy, I think."

"Ay, yes, 'tis too, too heavy, till you have been on shore awhile. Try the aqua vitæ; my Captain John has it right good; and a bit too fond of it, too, poor dear soul, between whiles, Heaven forgive him!"

So she poured some strong brandy and water down Amyas' throat, in spite of his refusals, and sent him to bed, but not to sleep; and after a night of tossing, he started for Bideford, having obtained the means for so doing from Mrs. Hawkins.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW SALVATION YEO SLEW THE KING OF THE GUBBINGS.

"Ignorance and evil, even in full flight, deal terrible back-handed strokes at their pursuers."—HELPS.

Now I am sorry to say, for the honor of my country, that it was by no means a safe thing in those days to travel from Plymouth to the north of Devon; because, to get to your journey's end, unless you were minded to make a circuit of many miles, you must needs pass through the territory of a foreign and hostile potentate, who had many times ravaged the dominions, and defeated the forces of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and was named (behind his back at least) the King of the Gubbings. "So now I dare call them," says Fuller, "secured by distance, which one of more valor durst not do to their face, for fear their fury fall upon him. Yet hitherto have I met with none who could render a reason of their name. We call the shavings of fish (which are little worth) gubbings; and sure it is that they are sensible that the word importeth shame and disgrace.

"As for the suggestion of my worthy and learned friend, Mr. Joseph Maynard, that such as did 'inhabitare montes gibberosos,' were called Gubbings, such will smile at the ingenuity who dissent from the truth of the etymology.

"I have read of an England beyond Wales, but the Gubbings land is a Scythia within England, and they pure heathens therein. It lieth nigh Brent. For in the edge of Dartmoor it is reported that, some two hundred years since, two bad women, being with child, fled thither to hide themselves; to whom certain lewd fellows resorted, and this was their first original. They are a peculiar of their own making, exempt from bishop, archdeacon, and all authority, either ecclesiastical or civil. They live in cots (rather holes than houses) like swine, having all in common, multiplied without marriage into many hundreds. Their language is the dross of the dregs of the vulgar Devonian; and the more learned a man is, the worse he can understand them. During our civil wars no soldiers were quartered upon them, for fear of being quartered

amongst them. Their wealth consisteth in other men's goods; they live by stealing the sheep on the moors; and vain is it for any to search their houses, being a work beneath the pains of any sheriff, and above the power of any constable. Such is their fleetness, they will out-run many horses; vivaciousness, they outlive most men; living in an ignorance of luxury, the extinguisher of life. They hold together like bees; offend one, and all will revenge his quarrel.

"But now I am informed that they begin to be civilized, and tender their children to baptism, and return to be men, yea, Christians again. I hope no *civil* people amongst us will turn barbarians, now these barbarians begin to be civilized."*

With which quip against the Anabaptists of his day, Fuller ends his story; and I leave him to set forth how Amyas, in fear of these same Scythians and heathens, rode out of Plymouth on a right good horse, in his full suit of armor, carrying lance and sword, and over and above two great dags, or horse-pistols; and behind him Salvation Yeo, and five or six north Devon men (who had served with him in Ireland, and were returning on furlough), clad in head-pieces and quilted jerkins, each man with his pike and sword, and Yeo with arquebuse and match, while two sumpter ponies carried the baggage of this formidable troop.

They pushed on as fast as they could, through Tavistock, to reach before nightfall Lydford, where they meant to sleep; but what with buying the horses, and other delays, they had not been able to start before noon; and night fell just as they reached the frontiers of the enemy's country. A dreary place enough it was, by the wild glare of sunset. A high table-land of heath, banked on the right by the crags and hills of Dartmoor, and sloping away to the south and west toward the foot of the great cone of Brent-Tor, which towered up like an extinct volcano (as some say that it really is), crowned with the tiny church, the votive offering of some Plymouth merchant of old times, who vowed in sore distress to build a church to the Blessed Virgin on the first point of English land which he should see. Far away, down those waste slopes, they could see the tiny threads of blue smoke rising from the dens of the

*Fuller, p. 398.

Gubbings; and more than once they called a halt, to examine whether distant furze-bushes and ponies might not be the patrols of an advancing army. It is all very well to laugh at it now, in the nineteenth century, but it was no laughing matter then; as they found before they had gone two miles farther.

On the middle of the down stood a wayside inn; a desolate and villainous-looking lump of lichen-spotted granite, with windows paper-patched, and rotting thatch kept down by stones and straw-banks; and at the back a rambling court-ledge of barns and walls, around which pigs and barefoot children grunted in loving communion of dirt.

At the door, rapt apparently in the contemplation of the mountain peaks which glowed rich orange in the last lingering sun-rays, but really watching which way the sheep on the moor were taking, stood the innkeeper, a brawny, sodden-visaged, bleary-eyed six feet of brutishness, holding up his hose with one hand, for want of points, and clawing with the other his elf-locks, on which a fair sprinkling of feathers might denote: first, that he was just out of bed, having been out sheep-stealing all the night before; and secondly, that by natural genius he had anticipated the opinion of that great apostle of sluttishness, Fredericus Dedekind, and his faithful disciple Dekker, which last speaks thus to all gulls and grobians:—"Consider that as those trees of cobweb lawn, woven by spinners in the fresh May mornings, do dress the curled heads of the mountains, and adorn the swelling bosoms of the valleys; or as those snowy fleeces, which the naked briar steals from the innocent sheep to make himself a warm winter livery, are, to either of them both, an excellent ornament; so make thou account, that to have feathers sticking here and there on thy head will embellish thee, and set thy crown out rarely. None dare upbraid thee, that like a beggar thou hast lain on straw, or like a traveling peddler upon musty flocks; for those feathers will rise up as witnesses to choke him that says so, and to prove thy bed to have been of the softest down." Even so did those feathers bear witness that the possessor of Rogues' Harbor Inn, on Brent-Tor-Down, whatever else he lacked, lacked not geese enough to keep him in soft lying.

Presently he spies Amyas and his party coming slowly over the hill, pricks up his ears, and counts them; sees

Amyas' armor; shakes his head and grunts; and then, being a man of few words, utters a sleepy howl—

"Mirooi!—Fushing pooale!"

A strapping lass—whose only covering (for country women at work in those days dispensed with the ornament of a gown) is a green bodice and red petticoat, neither of them over ample—brings out his fishing-rod and basket, and the man, having tied up his hose with some ends of string, examines the footlink.

"Don vlies' gone!"

"May be," says Mary; "shouldn't hav' left mun out to coort. Maybe old hen's ate mun off. I see her chocking about awhile agone."

The host receives this intelligence with an oath, and replies by a violent blow at Mary's head, which she, accustomed to such slight matters, dodges, and then returns the blow with good effect on the shock head.

Wheron mine host, equally accustomed to such slight matters, quietly shambles off, howling as he departs—

"Tell patrico!"

Mary runs in, combs her hair, slips a pair of stockings and her best gown over her dirt, and awaits the coming guests, who make a few long faces at the "mucky sort of a place," but prefer to spend the night there than to bivouac close to the enemy's camp.

So the old hen who has swallowed the dun fly is killed, plucked, and roasted, and certain "black Dartmoor mut-ton" is put on the gridiron, and being compelled to confess the truth by that fiery torment, proclaims itself to all noses as red-deer venison. In the meanwhile Amyas has put his horse and the ponies into a shed, to which he can find neither lock nor key, and therefore returns grumbling, not without fear for his steed's safety. The baggage is heaped in a corner of the room, and Amyas stretches his legs before a turf fire; while Yeo, who has his notions about the place, posts himself at the door, and the men are seized with a desire to superintend the cooking, probably to be attributed to the fact that Mary is cook.

Presently Yeo comes in again.

"There's a gentleman just coming up, sir, all alone."

"Ask him to make one of our party, then, with my compliments." Yeo goes out, and returns in five minutes.

"Please, sir, he's gone in back ways, by the court."

"Well, he has an odd taste, if he makes himself at home here."

Out goes Yeo again, and come back once more after five minutes, in high excitement.

"Come out, sir; for goodness' sake come out. I've got him. Safe as a rat in a trap, I have!"

"Who?"

"A Jesuit, sir."

"Nonsense, man!"

"I tell you truth, sir. I went round the house, for I didn't like the looks of him as he came up. I knew he was one of them villains the minute he came up, by the way he turned in his toes, and put down his feet so still and careful, like as if he was afraid of offending God at every step. So I just put my eye between the wall and the dern of the gate, and I saw him come up to the back door and knock, and call 'Mary!' quite still, like any Jesuit; and the wench flies out to him ready to eat him; and 'Go away,' I heard her say, 'there's a dear man;' and then something about a 'queer cuffin' (that's a justice in these canters' thieves' Latin); and with that he takes out a somewhat—I'll swear it was one of those Popish Agnuses—and gives it her; and she kisses it, and crosses herself, and asks him if that's the right way, and then puts it into her bosom, and he says, 'Bless you, my daughter;' and then I was sure of the dog; and he slips quite still to the stable, and peeps in, and when he sees no one there, in he goes, and out I go, and shut to the door, and back a cart that was there up against it, and call out one of the men to watch the stable, and the girl's crying like mad."

"What a fool's trick, man! How do you know that he is not some honest gentleman, after all?"

"Fool or none, sir; honest gentlemen don't give maidens Agnuses. I've put him in; and if you want him let out again, you must come and do it yourself, for my conscience is against it, sir. If the Lord's enemies are delivered into my hands, I'm answerable, sir," went on Yeo, as Amyas hurried out with him. "'Tis written, 'If any let one of them go, his life shall be for the life of him.'"

So Amyas ran out, pulled back the cart grumbling, opened the door, and began a string of apologies to—his cousin Eustace.

Yes, here he was, with such a countenance, half foolish.

half venomous, as Reynard wears when the last spadeful of earth is thrown back, and he is revealed sitting disconsolately on his tail within a yard of the terriers' noses.

Neither cousin spoke for a minute or two. At last Amyas—

"Well, cousin hide-and-seek, how long have you added horse-stealing to your other trades?"

"My dear Amyas," said Eustace very meekly, "I may surely go into an inn stable without intending to steal what is in it."

"Of course, old fellow," said Amyas, mollified, "I was only in jest. But what brings you here? Not prudence, certainly."

"I am bound to know no prudence save for the Lord's work."

"That's giving away Agnus Deis, and deceiving poor heathen wenches, I suppose," said Yeo.

Eustace answered pretty roundly—

"Heathens? Yes, truly; you Protestants leave these poor wretches heathens, and then insult and persecute those who, with a devotion unknown to you, labor at the danger of their lives to make them Christians. Mr. Amyas Leigh, you can give me up to be hanged at Exeter, if it shall so please you to disgrace your own family; but from this spot neither you, no, nor all the myrmidons of your queen, shall drive me, while there is a soul here left unsaved."

"Come out of the stable, at least," said Amyas; "you don't want to make the horses Papists, as well as the asses, do you? Come out, man, and go to the devil your own way. I shan't inform against you; and Yeo here will hold his tongue if I tell him, I know."

"It goes sorely against my conscience, sir, but being that he is your cousin, of course—"

"Of course; and now come in and eat with me; supper's just ready, and by-gones shall be by-gones, if you will have them so."

How much forgiveness Eustace felt in his heart, I know not: but he knew, of course, that he ought to forgive; and to go in and eat with Amyas was to perform an act of forgiveness, and, for the best of motives, too, for by it the cause of the Church might be furthered; and acts and motives being correct, what more was needed? So in he went; and yet he never forgot that scar upon his cheek;

and Amyas could not look him in the face but Eustace must fancy that his eyes were on the scar, and peep up from under his lids to see if there was any smile of triumph on that honest visage. They talked away over the venison, guardedly enough at first; but as they went on, Amyas' straightforward kindness warmed poor Eustace's frozen heart; and ere they were aware, they found themselves talking over old haunts and old passages of their boyhood—uncles, aunts, and cousins; and Eustace, without any sinister intention, asked Amyas why he was going to Bideford, while Frank and his mother were in London.

"To tell you the truth, I cannot rest till I have heard the whole story about poor Rose Salterne."

"What about her?" cried Eustace.

"Do you not know?"

"How should I know anything here? For heaven's sake, what has happened?"

Amyas told him, wondering at his eagerness, for he had never had the least suspicion of Eustace's love

Eustace shrieked aloud.

"Fool, fool that I have been! Caught in my own trap! Villain, villain that he is! After all he promised me at Lundy!"

And springing up, Eustace stamped up and down the room, gnashing his teeth, tossing his head from side to side, and clutching with outstretched hands at the empty air, with the horrible gesture (Heaven grant that no reader has ever witnessed it!) of that despair which still seeks blindly for the object which it knows is lost forever.

Amyas sat thunderstruck. His first impulse was to ask, "Lundy? What knew you of him? What had he or you to do at Lundy?" but pity conquered curiosity.

"Oh, Eustace! And you then loved her too?"

"Don't speak to me! Loved her? Yes, sir, and had as good a right to love her as any one of your precious Brotherhood of the Rose. Don't speak to me, I say, or I shall do you a mischief!"

So Eustace knew of the brotherhood too! Amyas longed to ask him how; but what use in that? If he knew it, he knew it; and what harm? So he only answered—

"My good cousin, why be wroth with me? If you really love her, now is the time to take counsel with me how best we shall—"

Eustace did not let him finish his sentence. Conscious

that he had betrayed himself upon more points than one, he stopped short in his walk, suddenly collected himself by one great effort, and eyed Amyas from underneath his eyebrows with the old down look.

"How best we shall do what, my valiant cousin?" said he in a meaning and half-scornful voice. "What does your most chivalrous Brotherhood of the Rose purpose in such a case?"

Amyas, a little nettled, stood on his guard in return, and answered bluntly—

"What the Brotherhood of the Rose will do, I can't yet say. What it ought to do, I have a pretty sure guess."

"So have I. To hunt her down as you would an outlaw, because forsooth she has dared to love a Catholic; to murder her lover in her arms, and drag her home again stained with his blood, to be forced by threats and persecution to renounce that Church into whose maternal bosom she has doubtless long since found rest and holiness!"

"If she has found holiness, it matters little to me where she has found it, Master Eustace: but that is the very point that I should be glad to know for certain."

"And you will go and discover for yourself?"

"Have you no wish to discover it also?"

"And if I had, what would that be to you?"

"Only," said Amyas, trying hard to keep his temper, "that if we had the same purpose, we might sail in the same ship."

"You intend to sail, then?"

"I mean simply, that we might work together."

"Our paths lie on very different roads, sir!"

"I am afraid you never spoke a truer word, sir. In the meanwhile, ere we part, be so kind as to tell me what you meant by saying that you had met this Spaniard at Lundy?"

"I shall refuse to answer that."

"You will please to recollect, Eustace, that however good friends we have been for the last half-hour, you are in my power. I have a right to know the bottom of this matter; and, by Heaven, I will know it."

"In your power? See that you are not in mine! Remember, sir, that you are within—within a few miles, at least, of those who will obey me, their Catholic benefactor—but who owe no allegiance to those Protestant

authorities who have left them to the lot of the beasts which perish."

Amyas was very angry. He wanted but little more to make him catch Eustace by the shoulders, shake the life out of him, and deliver him into the tender guardianship of Yeo; but he knew that to take him at all was to bring certain death on him, and disgrace on the family; and remembering Frank's conduct on that memorable night at Clovelly, he kept himself down.

"Take me," said Eustace, "if you will, sir. You, who complain of us that we keep no faith with heretics, will perhaps recollect that you asked me into this room as your guest, and that in your good faith I trusted when I entered it."

The argument was a worthless one in law; for Eustace had been a prisoner before he was a guest, and Amyas was guilty of something very like misprision of treason in not handing him over to the nearest justice. However, all he did was, to go to the door, open it, and bowing to his cousin, bid him walk out and go to the devil, since he seemed to have set his mind on ending his days in the company of that personage.

Whereon Eustace vanished.

"Pooh!" said Amyas to himself: "I can find out enough, and too much I fear, without the help of such crooked vermin. I must see Cary; I must see Salterne; and I suppose, if I am ready to do my duty, I shall learn somehow what it is. Now to sleep; tomorrow up and away to what God sends."

"Come in hither, men," shouted he down the passage. "and sleep here. Haven't you had enough of this villainous sour cider?"

The men came in yawning, and settled themselves to sleep on the floor.

"Where's Yeo?"

No one knew; he had gone out to say his prayers, and had not returned.

"Never mind," said Amyas, who suspected some plot on the old man's part. "He'll take care of himself, I'll warrant him."

"No fear of that, sir," and the four tars were soon snoring in concert round the fire, while Amyas laid himself on the settle, with his saddle for a pillow.