

trees were first planted, and wondering how long it might be since the ocean or the lake left those shells, now turned to stone, that we found in the roots of the great tree which the last storm had laid low,—wondering, too, how long it would be before all this interminable silent grove, would give place to the dwellings of living men, and the decent temples of God,—and feeling that this itself, this mighty forest, fit only with the “still small voice” of its rustling leaves, was yet the grandest temple for the silent heart’s devotion—a temple not made with the hands of men. And that forest, too, I have seen it, when the winds of heaven bent its stoutest monarchs, as if they were but saplings, and men fled to their dwellings, and the very wild birds sought shelter with them. And it is all gone now. The reign of the sylvan giants is past. Ripe grain waves in their place, and hardy men receive thankfully the blessings which heaven has permitted them to win with wholesome toil. There was a moral in those pathless woods, but a more hopeful one may be read in the fertile field, and in yon healthy group surrounding the farm-house door, and in those well-laden orchard trees.

Yes, I hear what you say, sir:—“If the auld body had nae mair to say the noo, what’s he yammerin’ on about?” Well, well, I’ll moralise no more. I know the practise is not a popular one, and takes too much time and space, your readers may think, in these railroad days; but let me tell you, if ever you grow so old, or so world-wrought, that you can remember the home of your youth and manhood, without a chastened thought, then have a care, sir,—there will be a hard place growing on your heart, which your doctor cannot cure. Enough: in a month’s time, I may be fit to fill some more space in your little book, and if so, dry stubborn facts ye shall have, plain and strong as this old staff of mine.

R.

THE CHRONICLES OF DREEPDAILY.

No. 3.

THE UPSHOT OF BEAU BALDERSTON’S ADVENTURE.

Has it ever been your lot, oh most gentle of readers, to witness a stripling reduced to the buff, on a *snellish* May morning, in the act of committing his person to the embraces of a stream? We shall suppose, for the sake of illustration, that it is the classic Molindina which meandereth through the Royal Burgh of Dleepdaily. If you have ever been cognizant of such a phenomenon you must needs have noted the coy hesitation of the raiment-

denuded stripling to quit the bosom of mother earth. Gingerly doth he touch the surface of the water with his big toe, as if apprehensive that a shark or a krakan lay in ambush to drag him to the bottom, and the chances are great that he will resume his divorced garments without having performed the meditated ablution, were it not that he dreads a castigation from the hands of his maiden aunt, Grizzel. At her stern command, he hath sought the Rubicon; and, from behind a whin-stone dyke, where she hath modestly intrenched herself, she shrilly threateneth birchen pains and penalties in the event of the tyro’s running counter to her fiat!

Now, I, Peter Powhead, find myself at this epoch of time, much in the predicament of the mythical youngster above referred to! The impatient public imperatively demandeth that I should forthwith dive into the pool of Beau Balderston’s unheard of catastrophe, but timorous nature urgeth me to postpone the undertaking. Nor is it any marvel that this should be the case. There is something so super-humanly astounding in the circumstances which I have become bound to record, that a more valorous hand, than I can lay claim to, might well become palsied when assuming the historiographer’s grey goose quill!

But what must be, must be, as Miss Peggy McSpinster said when she consented to become the better half of Captain Bottlenose, the one-legged Greenock skipper;—and so, having screwed my courage up to the writing point, I proceed to plunge into the middle of my theme!

At the breaking off of our last communing, good patrons, I left Monsheer Nong-tong-paw in the act of commencing his cantrips. Fain would I enumerate in detail the wonders that he wrought; but I have got a character—such as it is—to lose, and I doubt not that if I were to rehearse a tythe of what I witnessed on that preposterously-memorable night, this sceptical generation would book me forthwith as a legitimate son of the primitive deceiver! It is necessary, however, that I lay before you a sample of the Pythagorean’s doings; and, accordingly, I select some of the least incredible of the lot.

Inter alia, (to use the heathenish jargon of the law tribe,) he produced a pack of his master Mahoun’s books, inviting the company