THE SEVERED HAND.

(BY FREDERICK TALBOT.)

CHAPTER I.

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER.

"I am a pionoer, and I love a stitch fish; with a hook preferably, although I heartily enjoy the annual drawing of the big pond in Shaire Sahe's park. Now, many of my friends despise sea-fishing; a dull mechanic business, they say, accompanied by much elbow work that a kitchen maid might keep up her nose at, in the way of preparing bait, and so on. But I don't agree with them. The change of life, the naive talk of the fishermen, the charm and variety of the sea, the novelty of gazing vessels; the excitement of the unknown as you haul in your lines, ignorant of the finny treasures that the next moment may bring reluctantly to light from the great mysterious storehouse of the deep; yes, every year, when Autumn time comes round, I leave my smug roatory in the midland counties, and, drawn by the soft wooing of the ultramarine waves, I establish myself in a little out-of-the-way village on the Eastern coast, and betake my self assiduously to sea-fishing.

In this hamlet, nearly every year, I take up my quarters with my old friend, Jem Bolt the fisherman. His cottage lies under one of those sandy hills, and is rather more comfortable accommodation than other houses. It contains, in addition to a couple of rooms on the ground floor, an upper chamber quaint enough, although rather inadequate for the accommodation of a zealous fisherman like myself. Jem is a widower with an only son, who is away at sea most of the year. A niece keeps house for the old man, and looks after his lodger.

A few years ago, I was staying at my accustomed quarters with Jem Bolt. It was the early part of October, and we had been through a good deal of rough boisterous weather; and seemed now to be entering on a spell of more pleasant seasons. We were lucky enough with our long sea-lines, and were catching a good many fish; whiting by the hundred, coming in scores, and a few lordly cod. Our plan generally was to start early in the morning, and, with the tide, row to the northward, with the last of the ebb-tide, and to get out our lines with the first of the flood. Besides fishing from the boat, we would lay out a couple of long lines, with a hundred and fifty hooks on each, from buoy, which we moored over the bank.

On this particular morning, we are starting ready for our fishing ground. There is a fine fresh breeze, and we hoist sail and away, the water curling and foaming in our wake. Arrived at our station, we lose no time in getting out our lines. It is no little trouble and takes up some time to bait these four hundred hooks, and when that is done, and our buoys are set with our long lines attached to them, and our boat is riding at anchor, gently tilting to the long, low swell, it isn't half a bad thing to have a pipe and a suspicion of Glenmutchkin. It puts a warmer mist somehow on the morning, this procured, and screens the rawness with which the sea breathes on one, from the time of the sun has somewhat infected us.

Yesterday a steamer had been lying there a long low steamer, with a couple of black funnels, a rough, untidy sort of craft, with a roughish, dirty-looking crew. The engineer seemed to be the only decent person on board, and we had exchanged greetings with him, and for the hands I had listened and heard the *Echo* the night before. The steamer was in ballast, and her nose tilted high in the air, so that a part of her lower sheathing was visible about the bows. Her hull was painted black, her bottom encrusted with weeds and barnacles, and, if a landsman may venture to give an opinion, somewhat foul. She had made several attempts to clear off, but hitherto the wind, through her being so light and offering such a purchase to it with her stuck-up nose, had been too strong for her. This morning, however, we found that she had got away. Favoured by the slight change in the wind she had gone off, no doubt with just night's flood. She had carried away a little, enough for she bore no name, although there were vestiges of an effaced inner plion on her stern. More curious still, when we asked our friend the engineer, we found that he no more knew her name than we. "We call dogs—" "He'd only jes a shipped, he said, "and he didn't think she'd been regularly christened."

Well, to return to our fishing; by the time our lines were smoked out we were ready to haul up our lines, and as we pulled up, the fish kept coming to them, glittering and twinkling in the water like the dingle-dangles on a Christmas tree. I remember Jem Bolt was in a fine humour for a good day. The old man was evidently hitting off fish, and he did somehow at once to row round to the buoys so clear the lines of the fish already, through his nets, caught, and re-bait the hooks. So, leaving our mooring-rope fastened to a buoy, we pulled away for our lines. As soon as we secured the buoy, and I landed the first line, I felt by the tug that we had hooked a big fish. I tempered my joy outwardly to Jem, who felt it gravely, and handed it back. "A eighteen-pound cod, that's one, sir; I lay a pound." And away we hauled.

Presently I saw a ugly white tally glisten in the water, and Jem and I simultaneously exclaimed, in accents of rage and mortification, "A dog, by jings!"

A dog-fish, you know, is the horror and aversion of all sea fishermen. I don't suppose he has got a friend in animated nature, but as for that he's quite competent to take care of himself. Nothing can eat anything he comes across if there is only room to get outside it. However, I am not going to write a sixty-two volume treatise upon him; there over had a dog on your line you won't want any description of him; but, if you are unacquainted with the creature, you may take my word for it, that he is a nasty, unfashionable-looking fish, with fine sticking out his cleverly wing fins like a mother, a Fourth of the shape of a parenthesis, in a very ugly hide, like a shark's, and a sharp spine on his back that will give you a shrewd sting if you are not cautious in handling him. His back is of a slight chocolate dun, with spots upon it, and his prominent dermonical eyes are of a bright green.

This rascally fish had wrapped my line round him like a garment; he was enfolded in a labyrinthine tangle of hooks and lines, never before had I beheld such a detestable dog, or such a regular shackle in a line. He was about a stone and a half, and Jem and I had a nice job to haul him in. He lay there at last, at the bottom of the boat, panting and grinning—but grinning other people's teeth, he had left a sickly smile on his face—with a fendish scare upon him, as I have never noticed in any other fish, which have, for the most part, simply a vacant, bewildered look when hauled ashore. But our dog looked through his vengeful green eyes with a fierce grumone air, not expecting quarter, but determined to give as good as he got. Their brains, he added, are proverbially small, and he was no exception to the rule. Jem and I, after a long consultation, decided that the Executive Committee should be empowered to make a grant of money and entomology, and other subjects of practical importance to farmers, which money be spent in prizes to be given amongst the different Granges as they deem it expedient, say once in three months.

We recommend the setting apart in each Grange of at least one acre of land for testing for social enjoyment and intellectual improvement.

We recommend that the Executive Committee take steps to obtain an expression of opinion from subordinate Granges as to the advisability of establishing an institution for the education of farmers' daughters which institution shall be practical in all its branches, such as cooking, dairy, also a practical knowledge of horticulture and floriculture, as well as the ordinary branches of education, could be taught.

FOURTH DAY.

The fourth day's proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Patrons of Husbandry, were opened by W. M. G. W. Hill making the usual calling the meeting to order at 9 o'clock.

The Secretary's report which offered the following recommendations and information was then read:—Since the last report there has been some permanent uniform business transacted, which will, we trust, give satisfaction to those with whom they dealt, that better rates would be carried out in good faith. The present business transactions have been entirely satisfactory from a business point of view, and demonstrate the advantage of members not carrying on the business of buying and selling among themselves directly and that for cash, and thus bringing the country and the town liberal and were now complaining that they had not live up to the principles they professed, but that members were generally doing business with the Grange, to those manufacturers, through agents, and that of selling, duty of members of the Grange principle, it was suggested that the Executive Committee be empowered to adopt such measures as might be carried into effect thoroughly. At the request of several members he also suggested that some means be instituted to address public meetings in the interest of disseminating and explaining the principles of the Order. At the time of the last session, October 27th, 1875, there were on the books of subordinate Granges, and in 29 Divisions, with a membership of 8,598. During the year the Granges had been organized, and a steady growth had been going on, now there are 139 Subordinate Granges, 2 Divisions Granges, and a membership of about 4,000, an increase of 30 Subordinate Granges, 11 Division Granges, and 11,000 members. Subordinate Granges in Ontario, as present 109 Granges in Ontario, 10 in Quebec, 7 in Brunswick, and 4 in Prince Edward Island. In regard of the committee on Subordinate Granges and amendment to By-laws of the Order recommended and adopted as amended.

The report of the Committee, approving of report of the Executive Committee, approving of the following questions, was adopted:—Whether the Executive Committee have received from various parties to start manufacturing stores, and if so, what encouragement should be given. So far as the members of the Executive Committee could ascertain, there was a very favourable idea of the establishment of such stores, and we see no objection to their establishment. Recognizing this, they had framed a plan which was submitted to the Grange for consideration. The question of forming an insurance company had been favorably received by some of the members of the Grange, and they had supplied for assistance. Offers from a number of companies to form such a company, and the Executive Committee had been instructed to refuse, and they strongly recommended the formation of an insurance company in connection with the Grange. With regard to the petition to the Government to remove the duty from coal oil and impose a duty on American grain, the matter had been dropped, as for the present the Government had pointed out that five thousand names had been obtained, arrangements had been made with grain merchants, and a scheme submitted to them favourably received whereby farmers could go direct to central grain dealers. Offers from cities in various branches of business had been seriously made for direct dealing with them, and the favourably received, and were giving very encouraging answers. They recommended that one should be set apart to pay the expenses of a delegate from Nova Scotia, and, the report was called attention to the fact that the improvement of the Grange had been recognized by those who held important positions, as instances of the calling the W. M. Legislative committee.

The Committee on Foreign Relations and Correspondence submitted the following report for consideration, which was adopted:—"It is

Comic Clippings.

(From Punch)

TESTAMENTARY OBLIGATIONS.—"Cute little Girl (who has heard conversation between her Papa and Uncle, on the import)—Uncle, have you made your will?" Uncle (startled)—"Eh?" "Cute Little Girl—"Cause I hope you haven't forgotten my dolls!"

THE PATRON SAINT OF RAILWAYS.—St. Christopher.

"MIXED COMPANY."—Scene—the ball-room of a fashionable watering place. Lady (to Highflyer)—"Do her partner, during a pause in the valse)—"A—I can't help thinking I've met you before!" The Partner—"Yes, my lady, many's the pair of white satin shoes I've had the pleasure of treading on!" Her ladyship's cool cut—"Go to the Jerusalem Arcade!" And—sinking his voice to a lacerating whisper—"I mean that a very respectable fellow than yours, my lady, I never yet 'old in my 'and!"

BEWARE OF FALSE TEETH WITH GUTTA-PERCHA PLATES.—Master Alec (who is fond of dogs)—"There's no mistake about your being shipwrecked, Mr. Bumbledick!" Mr. Bumbledick (not displeased)—"And how did you find that out, my boy?" Master Alec—"Why, I mean you've got a black roof to your mouth!"

(From Punch.)

FRIENDLY ATTENTION.—Loving Husband—"Matilda Ann, though I love you most dear, 'tain' newly married you may not know that 'ajlin is a very dangerous time when you sees me talkin' to a strange gentleman at the corner of the street you won't, 'ajlin him the eye so hard." Fond Wife—"Lawks, Henry, I wouldn't a took such a liberty if I'd known he were strange. I thought he were a friend o' yours."

Why is Turkey like a theatrical manager? Because she wants a peace that will last a long time.

OFF THE SLEEPERS.—It is to be hoped that the members of the Ministerial Redstock inquiry will wake up the railway authorities. At any rate, it has had the effect of arresting Sleep.

What is the difference between horse-racing and going to church? One makes men bet, the other makes them better.

A FRESH START.—First Swell—"Well, Charlie, how jolly blue you look, what's the matter?" Second Swell—"Bad news, old fellow; my aunt, who is ninety-two next birthday, is going to live at Hyde-Park Barracks ninety-two perhaps; and here I've been looking out for her money for the last ten years!"

(From Judy.)

A GOOD IDEA.—Somebody has appealed to the Social Science Association to inquire, not upon the higher education of women, but to take in hand the problem of Secretaries's wives. If those ladies who persist in wearing long trains in the streets would take their dresses in hand themselves, and shorten them up out of the dirt, world is not be a good deal better than bothering the British Association!

Half-breed Lands in Manitoba.

SCRIP AND PATENTED.

It is likely, according to announcement of the Dominion Parliament, that, during the summer of 1876, the half-breed reserves in Manitoba, some fifty-one Townships (1,400,000 acres) will be patented to the grantees.

These plots, of 100 acres each, lying near Red and Assiniboine rivers to Poplar Point westward; beyond Selkirk on the north, and nearly as far Rencontre towards the south—making in all the most valuable tract of land in the North-West. The allotments are of 200 acres, and 200, 600, 800 acres), to the heads of families and old settlers, located in anywhere in Government lots, will also, it is promised, be distributed to them on the close of the present session of Parliament. Half-breeds, who have not patented scrap, both scrip and patent, will then be thrown upon a market unable, from its limited capacity, to absorb the property so suddenly and absurdly low prices. It is almost certain that these lands may then be purchased at from twenty-five to fifty cents per acre, or at all events, less than one dollar.

A. W. Burrows, Winnipeg, Manitoba, will undertake, for intending investors, the purchase of land scrip, after Patents are delivered, and guarantee satisfaction. He possesses unusual advantages for this business. He has lived in Manitoba since 1871, and is thoroughly acquainted with the settlers and half-breeds, through his former connection with the Hudson's Bay Company. At a time when the original census of the inhabitants was revised, by personal attendance of the census, he was the basis of these grants. He is also fully aware of the value and quality of all the lands referred to.

City lots in Winnipeg, and other town plots, also river front and quarter section farms for sale on favourable terms. Address

A. W. BURROWS,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

References—Messrs. Morton, Phillips & Monkman, Barristers, Toronto.
Messrs. Walker, Cassels, & Pennock, Barristers, Toronto.
Mr. J. H. Flock, Barrister, London.
Messrs. Gilman & Holton, Merchants, Montreal.

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TWO SMALL PEOPLE.—Two of the smallest people in the world for their ages, says the Philadelphia *Times*, which are twelve years and twelve months and twelve years respectively, were introduced to the faculty and students at the Jefferson Medical College yesterday. Senorita Lucia Zarata, a sprightly brunette, is a fairer specimen of womanhood. She weighs five pounds in her elegant street costume, which includes complete female garb, from a bonnet down to the modern gaiter, the latter being less than three inches long. It was explained that she was born at San Carlos, near the City of Vera Cruz, Mexico, and that her parents were both large and healthy persons. She speaks Spanish fluently and understands a smattering of the English tongue. Gen. Mite will be twelve years old on the 6th of October. He was born at Green, Chenango County, New York, his parents bearing the name of Flint, the father, who accompanies his diminutive, weighing 171 pounds and the mother 125 pounds. At his birth the General weighed two and one-half pounds. His avordupois now nine pounds; height twenty-four inches. He is a blonde. The General wore a full ball-room costume, consisting of black silk coat and pantaloons, white vest, and necktie. During his visit to the college the little fellow talked freely and was quite intelligent. He was not treading on the trail of her ladyship's dress, was busily engaged in a game of dominoes with a gentleman.

Presented to the Lilliputians to the admiring assemblage Prof. Gethohl said that he had in the shape of an irascible Custom-house Collector.

That night, when I went out on the beach to smoke a pipe, I found that all the recovered fragments of wreckage had been stacked in a large pile, over which a boat-guard man was watching, pacing to and fro along the beach.

"Yes," said the man, in reply to a remark of mine; "it is a queer thing about this wreck. It was a trifle coarse last night, but nothing to signify; and there might be a bit of a haze, but not to call think; I don't know what they were about to lose their ship. Do we know who she was? Why, yes, sir, a board came ashore with her name on, and the water-casks too."

"Ah! you've got the water-casks, then?" I remarked.

"Oh, yes, sir, there ain't no difficulty about them," said the coast-guard, chuckling; "that's generally the last thing a foreign ship goes adrift in. Well, sir, I'm a farmer."

"Well, what does it matter?" said I; "what's the odds about the bit of rope?"

"Look here, sir," said he, and he came passing, Master Brown, and if a body said anything to you, he would, like, you'd be bound to keep it close."

"Well, yes," I replied, "if anything was told me in the strictest confidence, I should never reveal it; but I'm only a fisherman now, you know, Jem."

"I wasn't prey to promise me," he said, after a pause of silence, "as ye'll not say anything about what I found in the boat."

"But, Jem," I said, "I can't promise anything of the kind. There's murder been done, I believe, since I saw you last, Jem, and if I hold my peace, the very stones would cry out."

"Let 'em cry," said Jem, "but don't you say nothin'. Leave here, sir," he went on, leaning his hand on my shoulder, and turning into a whisper, "that thar bit of rope, sir, was I'aile the dead man's hand. 'Twas the night afore the gale, I was lying in the bay here again, sir," he continued, speaking in an eager, appalling kind of way; "suppose you've seen a lighter with a black hull tane to run a weseel down, and suppose, for the sake of argument, that I'm on board the man, as your craft was all yaw and your mates had to live pooz. Well, it's a dark night and you're all fast asleep, and I've been fishing and fighting for your lives on the mighty deep, day and night, rain and blow, a lighter has run down, and, when you're drunk with sleep, you and your mates, I'm obliged to get a boat, and go out fish, and a stagging wind right shind you, and your craft is leaping over the waves, through the rain and the darkness, and I row to your touch, but no'er a shiver in your sails, and your heading right straight for home. Well, I'm within a fathom of the dons, and yes soon to see the lights of the Jerusalem Coffee-house, and I'm thinkin' of the harbour mouth. And then there's a shock and a crash, and you're pitched forward on your bowsprit, and your hull is half it's over in a moment; there's a boat gone here and a block there, and your sails is lashing about like mad, and the black great waves sweeping ye from stem to starn! and your masts snapping like reeds, and the other minute you're safe again, and running with the wind, and yew peer out into the darkness, and there's a boat alongside, but the water foaming and lathering about ye, and yew feel as if ye had a drop-scene, first, as you've saved your own skin, and then as there's nobody to tell us yew've run another down—for, mark ye, sir, I'm a-talkin' of what's found out. Why, if yew was in the right of it yel be ruined among the big ships; they'd be down on ye like a hawk. Well, anyhow, yew're clear of it, ye think; yew're a-sort knowing nothin' about it but your own safe, and yew go to your berth and hold their lives accordingly. And just afore daylight, I'm off to my lines, and I haul right out from the sea, and lo and behold, as you clap eyes over the weesel's side, then yew see a lighter with a black hull and a rope; not one of your own chaps, but a furrier, with a bit of good face about his mark. Then all of a sudden it crosses upon you what it means to have him come aboard; and yew make yourself the first thing as comes to hand—"

Jem had described the scene as if he saw the whole affair, and, as he paused, I asked, in a low voice, "Was it a little fair-haired man, with a fresh-coloured face, and, the sailor's mark between his brows? shoved in strong, rigid lines; he seized the boat-hook as I spoke, and I found he had caught his hand; "What would ye do, sir? Jem, don't tell me," he shouted sharply and fiercely.

"Why, hand the man aboard, and then go down on your knees to God for saving a fellow-creature had been saved."

"Ay, that's what I should do," whispered Jem, leaning his hand on my shoulder, and drawing the back of his hand across his eyes. "Yes, I do believe that's what I should do, and a-most any of my comrades, mariners, or fisherman. But then, sir, if there was a man, perhaps, who had come out of the out of the Bible, sir—a brother, or if you said a son, perhaps, oh, what would you do yourself, sir?" Jem's voice was quite a wail—a low, hoarse wail, as he spoke, and he leaned his face on his hand, and sobbed like a woman.

"Jem," said I, "I'm a fisherman, sir, and I'm a sailor, sir, and I'm a fisherman, sir, and I'm a sailor, sir, and I'm a fisherman, sir, and I'm a sailor, sir, and