

which the whirlwinds had not pouched. So I awoke them very gently, and shook off the sand, while they rubbed their eyes, and gaped, and knew no more of their danger than if they had been in their own dear beds. Then, with Bardie in my

arms, and Bunny trotting stoutly with her thumb spliced into my trousers, I shaped course for Sker farmhouse, having a strong gale still abaft, but the weather slightly moderating.

CHAPTER XI.—A WRECKER WRECKED.

Near the gate I met Evan Thomas, the master of the house himself, at length astir, but still three parts drunk, and—if I may say so with due compassion for the trouble then before him—in a very awkward state of mind. It happened so that the surliness of his liquor and of his nature mingled at this moment with a certain exultation, a sense of good luck, and a strong desire to talk and be told again of it. And this is the nature of all Welshmen; directly they have any luck, they must begin to brag of it. You will find the same in me perhaps, or, at any rate, think you do, although I try to exclude it, having to deal with Englishmen, who make nothing of the great deeds they have done until they begin to agree with them. And then, my goodness, they do come out! But the object of my writing is to make them understand us, which they never yet have done, being unlike somehow in nature, although we are much of their fathers.

Having been almost equally among both these nations, and speaking English better perhaps than my native tongue of the Cwmri—of which anybody can judge who sees the manner in which I do it—it is against my wish to say what Evan Thomas looked like. His dark face, overhung with hair, and slouched with a night of drinking, was beginning to burn up, from paleness and from weariness, into a fury of plunder. Scarcely did I know the man, although I had so many recollections of evil against him. A big, strong, clumsy fellow at all times, far more ready to smite than smile, and wholly void of that pleasant humor, which almost all my neighbors—though never yet could I find out why—creates a pleasing eagerness for my humble society as punctual as my pension-day.

But now his real staggering manner of coming along toward us, and the hunch-

ing of his shoulders, and the swaggering of his head, and, most of all, the great gun he carried, were enough to make good quiet people who had been to church get behind a sand-hill. However, for that it was too late. I was bound to face him. Bardie dropped her eyes under my beard, and Bunny crept closer behind my leg. For my part, although the way was narrow, and the lift of the storm gave out some light, it would have moved no resentment in me if he had seen (as rich men do) unfit to see a poor man.

However, there was no such luck. He carried his loaded gun with its muzzle representing a point of view the very last I could have desired—namely, at my midships; and he carried it so that I longed to have said a little word about carefulness. But I durst not, with his coal-black eyes fixed upon me as they were, and so I pulled up suddenly. For he had given me an imperious nod, as good as ordering me to stop.

"Wreck ashore!" he cried out in Welsh, having scarce a word of English—"wreck ashore! I smell her, Dyo. Don't tell me no lies, my boy. I smelled her all the afternoon. And high time to have one."

"There is a wreck ashore," I answered, looking with some disgust at him, as a man who has been wrecked himself must do at a cruel wrecker; "but the ebb most likely will draw her off and drift her into the quicksands."

"Great God! speak not like that, my boy. The worst you are of everything. If those two children came ashore, there must have been something better." And he peered at the children as if to search for any gold upon them.

"Neither child came from that wreck. One is my granddaughter Bunny. Bunny, show yourself to black Evan." But the child shrank closer behind me. "Evan