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**BERLIN CREAMERY**  
38 Benton St.

## MARY ANERLEY

By R. D. Blackmore; in 20 Chapters

But in those rough and dangerous times, when thousands of people were starving, the view of a pistol-butt went further than sternest aspect of strong eyes. Geoffrey Mordacks well knew this, and did not neglect his knowledge. The brown walnut stock of a heavy pistol shone above either holster, and a cavalry sword in a leather scabbard hung within easy reach of hand. Altogether this gentleman seemed not one to be easily attacked by daylight.

No man had ever dreamed as yet of coming to this outlandish place for pleasure of the prospect. So that when this lonely rider was described from the washing-field over the low wall of the lane the women made up their minds at once that it must be a justice of the peace, or some great rider of the Revenue, on his way to see Dr. Updown, or at the least a high constable concerned with some great sheep-stealing. But not that any such crime was known in the village itself of Flam-borough, which confined its operations to the sea; but in the outer world of land that malady was rife just now, and a Flam-borough man, too fond of mutton, had farmed some sheep on the downs and lost them, which was considered a judgment on him for willfully quitting ancestral ways.

But instead of turning at the corner where the rector was trying to grow some trees, the stranger kept on along the rugged highway and between the straggling cottages, so that the women raised their arms and turned round to take a good look at him over the bramble and furze and the wall of chalky flint and rubble.

"This is just what I wanted," thought Geoffrey Mordacks. "Skill makes luck and I am always lucky. Now, first of all, to recruit the inner man."

At this time Mrs. Theophila Precious, generally called "Topsy," the widow of a man who had been lost at sea, kept the "Cod with a Hook in his Gills," the only hostelry in Flam-borough village, although there was another toward the landing. The cod had been painted from life—or death—by a clever old fisherman who understood him, and he looked so firm and stiff and hard, that a healthy man, with purse enough to tire of butcher's meat, might grow in appetite by gazing. Mr. Mordacks pulled up, and fixed steadfast eyes upon this noble fish, the while a score of sharp eyes from the green and white meadow were fixed steadfastly on him.

"How he shines with salt water. How firm he looks, and his gills bright as a rose in June. I have never yet tasted a cod at first-hand. It is early in the day, but the air is hungry. My expenses are paid, and I mean to live well for a strong mind will be required. I will have a cut of that fish, to begin with."

Inditing of this, and of matters even better, the rider turned into the yard of the inn, where an old boat (as usual) stood for a horse-trough and sea-tubs served as buckets. Strong sunshine glared upon the oversailing tiles, and white buckled walls, and crumpled lintels; but nothing showed life, except an old yellow cat, and a pair of house-martins, who had scarcely time to breathe, such a number of little heads slipped out with a white flap under the eaves of each, demanding momentous victualing. At these the yellow cat winked with dreamy joyfulness, well aware how fat they would be when they came to tumble out.

"What a place of vile laziness," grumbled Mr. Mordacks, as he got off his horse, after vainly shouting "Hostler!" and led him to the byre which did duty for a stable. "York is a laxy hole enough, but the further you go from it, the lazier they get. No energy to movement, no ambition anywhere. What a country! what a people. I shall have to go back and enlist the washer-women."

A Yorkshireman might have answered this complaint, if he thought it deserving of an answer, by requesting Master Mordacks not to be so over-quick, but to bide a wee bit longer before he made so sure of the vast superiority of his own wit, for the long heads might prove better than the sharp ones in the end of it. However, the general factor thought that he could not have come to a better place to get all that he wanted out of every body. He put away his saddle-bags and a sword, in a rough old sea-chest with a padlock to it, and having a sprinkle of chaff at the bottom, then he calmly took the key, as if the place were his, gave his horse a rackful of long-cut grass, and presented him a I, with a lovely aspect, at the front door of the silent inn. Here he made noise enough to stir the dead; and at the conclusion of a reasonable time, during which she had finished a pleasant dream to the simmering of the kitchen pot, the landlady showed herself in the distance, feeling for her keys with one hand, and rubbing her eyes with the other. This was the head-woman of the village, but seldom tyrannical, unless ill-treated, Widow Precious, tall and square, and of no mean capacity.

"Young mon," with a deep voice she said, "what is the deen' wi' aw that clatter?"

"Dinner, madam; dinner at the earliest moment. I have ridden far, and my back is sore, and my substance is calling for renewal."

"Ate, ate, ate, that's t' van of aw menkina. But ye mas coom in, and crack o' it."

"Madam, you are most hospitable; and the place altogether seems to be of the description. What a beautiful room! May I sit down? I perceive a fine smell of most delicate soup. Ah, you know how to do things at Flam-borough."

"Young mon, ye can ha' nune of you potty. Yon's for mesell and t' childer."

"My excellent hostess, mistake me not. I do not aspire to such lofty pot-luck. I simply referred to it as a proof of your admirable culinary powers."

"Ye's beeg words. What'll ye hev to ate?"

"A fish like that upon your sign-post, madam, or at least the upper half of him; and three dozen oysters just out of the sea, swimming in their own juice, with lovely melted butter."

"Young mon, hast the gotten t' brass? Them 'at aates offens forgets 'ecklin'."

"Yes, madam, I have the needful in abundance. Ecce signum! Which is Latin, madam, for the stamps of the king up n teet'y guineas. One to be deposited in your fair hand for a taste, for a sniff, madam, such as I had of your pot."

"Na, na. No tokkins till a' aimed them. What ood your warship be for aiting when a' bolleth?"

The general factor, perceiving his way, was steadfast to the shoulder-cut of a decent cod; and though the full season was scarcely yet come, Mrs. Precious knew where to find one. Oysters there were none, but she gave him boiled limpets, and he thought it the manner of the place that made them tough. After these things he had a duck of the noblest and best that live anywhere in England. Such ducks were then, and perhaps are still, the most remarkable residents of Flam-borough: Not only because the air is fine, and the puddles and the dabbings of extraordinary merit, and the wind fluffs up their pretty feathers while alive, as the eloquent pouter by and by will do; but because they have really distinguished birth, and adventurous, chivalrous, and bright-blue Norman blood. To such purpose do the gay young Vikings of the world of quack purr in (when the weather and the time of year invite, equipped with red boots and plumes of purple velvet, to enchain the coy lady ducks in soft water, and eclipse the familiar and too legal crane. For while they revel in the drake of scene, the luxury of unsalted mud and scarcely rippled water, and the sweetness and culture of tame dilly-ducks, to whom brilliant bravery, as well as an air of romance and billowy peril, commends the sire seductively. The respondents tire of the pond is grieved, sinks his unappreciated bill into his back, and vainly reflects upon the vanity of love.

From a loftier point of view, however, this is a fine provision; and Mr. Mordacks always took a lofty view of everything.

"A beautiful duck, ma'am; a very grand duck!" in his usual loud and masterful tone, he exclaimed to Widow Precious. "I understand your question now as to my ability to pay for him. Madam, he is worth a man's last shilling. A goose is a smaller and coarser bird. In what manner do you get them?"

"They gets their own sells wi' the will of the Lord. What will your warship be for aiting, come after?"

"None of your puddings and pies, if you please, nor your excellent jellies and custards. A red Dutch cheese, with a pat of fresh butter, and another Imperial pint of ale."

"Now, you is what I call a man," thought Mrs. Precious, having neither pie nor pudding, as Master Mordacks was well aware; "aisy to please, and a knoweth what a wants. A' mought a' been born i' Flam-bor'. A' maa baide for a week, if a' hatht okkins."

Mr. Mordacks felt that he had made his footing; but he was not the man to abide for a week when a day would suit his purpose. His rule was never to beat about the bush when he could break through it, and he thought that he saw his way to do so now. Having finished his meal, he set down his knife with a bang, sat upright in the oaken chair, and gazed in a bold yet pleasant manner at the sturdy hostess.

"You are wondering what has brought me here. That I will tell you in a very few words. Whatever I do is straight-forward, madam; and all the world may know it. That has been my character throughout life; and in that respect I differ from the great bulk of mankind. You Flam-borough folk, however, are much of the very same nature as I am. We ought to get on well together. Times are very bad—very bad indeed. I could put a good title of money in your way; but you tell the truth without it, which is very, very noble. Yet people with a family have duties to discharge to them, and must sacrifice their feelings to affection. Fifty guineas is a tidy little figure, ma'am. With the famine growing in the land, no parent should turn his honest back upon fifty guineas. And to get the gold, and do good at the same time is a very rare chance indeed."

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