

shallow for the boat, we threw the rope ashore, and pulled away, and at last landed our prize. It was a most horrible-looking wretch—one of the skate kind. A fellow who has seen the tail, and is up in that sort of thing, calls it a fine specimen of the 'Raia Myliobatis.' Fine or not, it was a beast, and I don't wonder at Scipio's mistake. Scipio, however, was quite agreeable to pull away with a will at the tail that had given him such an ugly cut; but I pulled his ear, and told him that now the devil was gone he must get the chain up; and sending him off with the boat, he managed to find it at the fourth dive, and brought it up between his toes."

"Dat's so, massa. Dis ere foot bring dat chain up."

"The old fellow, when he got his chain and ring back, embraced me, embraced Scipio, swore by the Prophet he was our slave for ever, and acted like a man possessed; and then we went home rejoicing. He quite regained his spirits and energies, and in less than a month all was done: the machinery worked splendidly, and the land was under water in less than ten days. The old Turk gave Scipio his wife, whose curry you took such a liking to at dinner: he gave me, too, just twice the sum I had bargained for, and enabled me to come home here and make those arrangements I spoke of."

"But the ring, my dear boy; the ring!"

"Oh! ah! the ring. I forgot. We cut open the stomach of the monster, and there, mixed up with broken shells, and fish-bones, and gravel, we found this ring, which, of course, I appropriated to my own especial use. It might have been one of the rings that was worn by a pursuing prince when Israel fled, or it might have been the ring of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, for all that I know. How it came there I can't tell any more than you can; but there it was—and here it is. And now, if you like, we'll go and taste Kate's coffee."

FRAXINUS.

SENT TO GRAN MORFEW.

Concluded.

WE slept in a mighty room, attended by Emma, who roused us at six next morning, with the news that a post-chaise was already at the door, and the Principal stamping about in a fury at our delay. He was indeed in a horrible humour—scolding and muttering; and though he had breakfasted himself, hardly allowed us time to take a mouthful of milk and water. But his worst behaviour was when Emma, with her bonnet on, and a bundle in her hand, offered to accompany us. He actually stormed at her "officiousness," as he called it; and it was only when the stiff butler condescended to beg that she might be allowed to go with us the first stage, that the Principal sullenly gave away.

Once past the lodge, and in the high-road, Mr. Pinkerton withdrew, and Pigwiggan returned. Out came a little basket of choice provisions. Emma was invited in to breakfast, and with many blushes, came. Considering whither we were proceeding, it was as merry a party as you could wish to see—but there was no resisting the Principal's fun. The butler's "first stage" was wholly forgotten, and Mr. Pigwiggan seemed to have paid about twenty post-boys, in jackets of every hue, when he suddenly called out: "As I'm a living creature, here we are!"

We dashed through a little village—up by a by-road—through a grove—across a lawn—up to the door of a large red building, matted with creepers, and looking more like a comfortable farm, than "The Misses Hollabone and Skimpin's Seminary for Young Ladies." A fat spaniel lay in the porch, and did not rise, but uttered a lazy bark, which, being accompanied by a wag of the tail, might be taken as a welcome. As we drove up, a pyramid of faces—all on the broad grin—appeared in one of the windows.

"Ha! she hasn't starved 'em all!" said the Principal gravely, as he got out of the chaise.

"Mith! Pigwiggan! Mith! Pigwiggan!" cried Gracie, scrambling out hastily at the risk of her neck.

He turned.

"Now, mind, 'ou don't run away, as 'ou did yesterday," continued Gracie, lifting her small finger, with a grave cautioning expression.

"Pigwiggan will stay as long as you want him," replied the Principal with twinkling eyes. "Here's Miss Hollabone."

Before our hearts had time to throb at the approach of the terrible schoolmistress, there hopped into the room (for she was slightly lame) a rosy little dame, as broad as she was long—which was probably about four feet two. Her face won us on the instant; and when she clasped us both together in her kind soft arms, the tears of pity standing in her eyes, all misgiving vanished at once and for ever.

"Well, Cousin Dorcas—you terrible ogress—here's another brace of victims for you," said our conductor. "Gobble them up as soon as you please; they're in fine condition, eh?"

Miss Hollabone laughed merrily.

"Well, pretty fair," and she took Gracie on what she called her knee.—"Oh, come in, Sally."

A neat, plump maiden, who had been hesitating at the door, now entered, bearing a tray, on which were tea, hot cakes, and sandwiches.

"Hallo, cousin already? This won't do, you know, said the Principal, as if uneasily. "If Gran Morf—"

"I can't help it, cousin," replied our mistress humbly; "Miss Skimpin would never forgive me. Tea and toast are her department—Sally knows it. I never pamper the children" ["Ahem!" said Mr. Pinkerton.]; "but Miss Skimpin insists that, coming off a journey, food, instant food, is essential. So, dears, as the things are here—"

And truly, if all three of us did not carry out Miss Skimpin's views, it was not the fault of Dorcas Hollabone.

Just as we had finished tea, Mrs. Skimpin made her appearance. She was tall and thin; and evidently the manner model of the establishment—the responsibilities of that office imparting a slight restraint and stiffness to her movements and conversation. After greeting us kindly she added: "The children, my dear, are getting so impatient, that, after fruitlessly entreating them to observe a more tranquil and becoming demeanour, I withdrew from a scene that threatened to become unseemly.—Your cousin, sir," she continued, turning to Mr. Pinkerton, "has lately inaugurated a custom, which she considers conducive to the general health and well-being of the school—an hour's blind-man's-buff before retiring to rest. I, as she is aware, entertain different views on this—Hark, my dear," added the good lady hastily, as a buzz from the distant schoolroom reached our ears. "Do run, I entreat you; and, Dorcas—Dorcas, dear!" (calling after) "remember, they have lost a good ten minutes already. That must be remembered!"

Although too fatigued to join in the sports, Gracie and I were introduced for a few minutes to the mirthful scene, and made acquainted with many of our future schoolmates. These appeared to number about thirty—all, without an exception, plump, good-humoured, and happy.

Emma undressed us, as usual, and we were on the point of getting into bed, in the cozy little chamber allotted to us, when Miss Hollabone hopped in, followed by Sally, carrying a warming-pan.

"Stop, dears. Let Sally—humph!—I never coddle children; but if Miss Skimpin knew that this wasn't—that's right, Sally—and the night is chill. Comforts their tiny toes."

She gave us each a warm and comfortable kiss, and bustled away.

Everybody—the Principal and all—was up early next morning, and out on the sunny lawn. This was an institution of Miss Hollabone's (who held that, after prayer, the first moments of the day should be devoted to the enjoyment of its Creator's best gifts), and was opposed in theory, but carried out in practice, by Miss Skimpin, with all the zeal with which those good souls loved to shift upon each other the responsibility of indulgences in which they took an equal delight.

Then followed an hour's quiet schooling, when the sound of a deep mellifluous bell announced breakfast. The Principal met and led us in.

Poor Gracie began to look a little grave, for the chaise was already seen coming to the door. To lose her Pigwiggan was bad enough; but Emma—our own dear faithful nurse, companion, friend! We were both crying bitterly, as Mr. Pinkerton led us up to a table, behind which two maids were dispensing tea, cakes, muffins, &c., to the hungry multitude. My eyes being blurred with tears, I did not notice who gave the breakfast into my hand, till a familiar voice whispered: "My sweet Miss Milly, don't you see?"

Emma, our own Emma! dressed the very counterpart of Sally; and working away among the cups and plates, as if she had been in the service of Misses Hollabone and Skimpin twenty years, instead of as many minutes!

This was Pigwiggan's doing. Gracie's look gave him eloquent thanks.

And now this kind friend prepared to take his leave.

"Be good, darlings," he said, as he walked towards the carriage: "I shall hear of you often: watch over you always. Never write to Gran; she does not deserve—desire it, I mean—but to Pigwiggan as often as you please. God bless you, my Mildred—you also, my Gracie. I had a Gracie once; you shall surely see her, one blessed day." He paused, then, with his pleasant smile, called out: "Farewell, Cousin Dorcas; lots of pupils to you! But twelve pounds a year; board, washing, education, masters, books, feasting, frolic, and blindman's-buff—how can it pay?"

"It pays us very well!" returned Miss Hollabone, with a beaming smile, as she waved adieu.

And so it did; but the profit made by those dear ladies was treasured in a safe no thief can injure.

It is needless to describe the happy period (nearly five years) passed in this house of peace. As Gracie and I became acquainted with our companions, we soon discovered that one and all of them were, like ourselves, either devoid of a home at all, or dependent upon harsh, unloving relatives, whose only object was to keep them in existence, upon terms as moderate as nature could possibly be prevailed on to accept.

Twelve pounds per annum was the price demanded by the Misses Hollabone and Skimpin, and exacted with an inflexibility that would have surprised their debtors less, could the latter have dreamed that every child of us stood this covetous firm in four times the amount! Miss Hollabone, perhaps, had her own secret reasons for insisting upon her rights in certain cases (I know she never allowed Gran Morf a day), yet I have known her forget such debts altogether! All I can say is, it was lucky for Misses Hollabone and Skimpin that they had each an independent fortune of their own!

In spite of the indulgence shewn us you must not suppose that either idleness or insubordination was allowed to prevail. Under the quiet mastery of love, education in all that was needful for an active useful life went steadily forward, and gave true zest to the innocent pleasures Miss Hollabone (in deference to Miss Skimpin) and Miss Skimpin (in consideration of Miss Hollabone) were never weary of providing.

One only event is worth recording. It was in the third year of our school-life that a gentleman, who stated, incidentally, that he had become resident in a neighbouring town, sent in his card, and begged permission to renew a former acquaintance with Gracie and myself.

"Shew the gentleman into the parlor, Sally," said our mistress. "Mr Septimus Slithers, Sol."—You know him, my dears?"

Know him! That we did. After Pigwiggan, who but Mr Slithers filled the most honoured place, beside the donkey, in memory's hall? In another minute, we were exchanging cordial congratulations, and the frankest expressions of surprise at the liberties time had taken with our personal appearances, since we last met.

Mr Slithers looked sleek and well, and hastened to inform us that he had settled in the coun-