

asked him if he could show me my way across, which he undertook to do, and led me into a marsh."

Ben Halliday laughed. "Well, he's a mischievous devil!" he said, "and as full of spite as a cat. I beg pardon for laughing, sir; but no one in these parts would have trusted Tommy Hicks to guide them. But pray come to the fire, and dry yourself. Here's some broth, quite hot. Poor stuff enough, but it will warm you."

The stranger accepted frankly and willingly the hospitality offered, sat down by the fireside, threw off his knapsack, took a porringer of soup and a lump of bread, and soon was quite at home in the cottage. He talked and laughed with Ben and his wife, he played with Charley, he even stroked the cat when she came purring round his legs. His frank and unceremonious bearing was strong recommendation to the worthy people within; and his appearance was also very prepossessing.

He was a man of perhaps six-and-twenty, and, as has been before said, was uncommonly powerful, though lightly made; one of those thin-flanked, broad-chested men, who have more of the Apollo than the Hercules in their form. His features were straight and fine, with dark-blue

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