

MEERSCHAUM.  
BY HENRY KENDRICK.

She answered that she had none at all, and continued, like a true daughter of France with money in her purse, that if he could not keep her, they, her grandfather and grandmother, would be most certainly able to keep her. It was not an English way of putting the case, but it was most certainly practical.

So golden days came for poor Meerschbaum. M. Escrot sent him to a college at Southern to learn navigation. "That science, in its rudiments, is not difficult. We have learned it three or four times ourselves, and can say with a safe conscience that we know nothing about it now. Meerschbaum, however, assimilated navigation, and Lieutenant Maury, of the United States navy, having appeared on the scene shortly before, Meerschbaum followed his theories, hanging on his words.

His examinations were passed splendidly. There was a slight difficulty about his obligations to the Royal Navy, but they were easily got over. He went into the Reserve, Ninette and he were to be married when his parents came home. They were expected every day.

The weather got dim and wild early that year. It stood at north, then at east, backing steadily against the sun. Meerschbaum, full of life, Maury, and Fitzroy, told them that a great storm was coming. Ninette and he walked across the sands to Broadstairs; the boatmen were ready for any thing there.

The great south-westerly storm of those days came on them more suddenly than they had thought for; it came on a rapidly rising barometer. From the glacial position of 27.10 the barometer went up to 29.0. At three o'clock the Captain was upon them. There came a flying, almost green-colored, cloud from the direction of Calais, and after that no one knew much more until all was over. The wind drove the sea in masses of foam toward the land, as darkness came on it was evident that all the lights in the Channel were useless on such a night as this. Their own North Foreland was invisible, and the lights even in their own castle were dim spots.

In the horrible roar and confusion one young man kept his head. Toward midnight Michael Durnford went out and tried to rally the boatmen. They were at first disinclined to go with him, for it was useless.

"I tell you," he said, "that there is a ship close to us. I have heard the voices of the people on board her."

A man came staggering through the surf, holding tight to a woman. Then a woman came, holding a baby; and then others reeling in the wash, which was now beginning to slip up with the ebb. All Kingstons were out at once, and up to their waists in water. Michael Durnford pulled a man out of the water and asked him what it was which had wrecked.

"The Aurora," the man said. "Michael Durnford. She is on her side on the reef there. He is going to stop till the reef, and his wife with him."

M. Escrot and Ninette knew nothing of what was happening. In the swirl of the storm, they once or twice held the door partly open, and peered into the wild night. The waves were headed, but she wrapped up her head, because Michael always kissed her eyes before they separated. She had her hands and said, "Let us thank God that our boy is not at sea."

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