

DECEMBER 11, 1909.

strange how they would all cry they could tell, and then, when were put to it, how they failed, re are only a few things in this id as slippery as a riddle's answer— here, 'tis there—and yet 'tis gone a one seeks to grasp it even for a ment. 'Twas small wonder, then, ussanna should be called upon to ly to her own questions and should e them for their lack of wit. Judith, was ready with her favourite riddle:

My lover's will
I am content for to fulfil;
Within this time his name is framed,
Tell me then how he is named?

Only, having little respect for their lities, she would not give anyone a nce to speak, but shouted out the ation in a high, triumphant voice:

His name is William; for in the first e is Will, and in the beginning of the ond line is I am, and then put them e together, and it maketh William.

n this way the door of their mirth as once more set ajar and the fun and ly broke forth again.

All too soon Tom Combe was forced halt, and after bidding them good- e and taking leave of Master Shako- e and Ned, who would be away be- e in the morning, he darted off to e home. Katharine Rogers was the xt to drop out of the little company e came to her door in High Street, e was more than a trace of sadness e her glance and in her heart as she e Ned good-bye, and wished him a py dote in London town, while a e of regret crept into her voice as e said farewell to the man.

He glanced at her upraised, winsome e, grown suddenly grave with the ill of separation.

"Nay, sweet maid," he said, cheerily, e not so east down; it to be merry st becometh thee. We'll have many odly walks and talks together yet I w."

She clung to his hand tremulously, at trusting herself to speak, then with quick kiss on Hammet's cheek she eed away.

A few minutes later Ursula and Hum- e—the latter half asleep—were e over to their parents in Bridge- e street, and after that it was a short- e stance to the home in Henley Street, e only a step or so beyond to the ehuines' house whither little Tom dis- e appeared in a trice with a noisy who- e parting. The others lingered in the eakespeare garden, reluctant to go e. The sun had set, but the stars e e radiant with light, and the glow e e little rose, golden clouds were flitting e and e in the soft ether, like e wind-loosened leaves of some won- eous heaven-born flower.

Susanna leaned her cheek against her e's arm.

"It hath been a brave, brave day," e cried, with happy eyes. "Canst e all what is my thought?"

"I prae thee what, my little riddle- eonger?"

"I faith I have had my heart's con- e," she whispered.

"He touched her bright hair tenderly. e 'Say'st thou so, sweet rose of May? earry, I'll let thee into a secret—eend e me thy phrase. Methinks I must e e my phrase and I would speak the e."

"Hark!" Judith interrupted, "there's e same whistle I heard this noon. I evel now what it may mean—'tis e assing strange."

There was a cessation of the light ealk and laughter at the child's request, e nd on the soft air there was borne to e the listening group two long, shrill e notes. Judith stood half turned in the e direction whence the sound had come, e hand raised, compelling silence. In e short interval of quiet no one spoke, e when the notes were repeated, and again e was a short pause which was e followed by a cuckoo's call.

"'Tis hard by," Ned said, indifferently; e believe 'tis some signal. The e all e notes, whom canst read no mystery there- e. Boys are e'en off for a e."

"It seemeth to say, 'Remember— e—remember—'" Judith persisted. e e e. "Why, that's a signal's meaning any e," Ned laughed; 'tis to stir some- e's memory."

TO BE CONTINUED.



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LORNA DOONE.

B. R. D. BLACKMORE.

CHAPTER I.

ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION.

If anybody cares to read a simple tale told simply, I, John Ridd of the Parish of Oaro, in the County of Somerset, yeoman and church-warden, have seen and had a share in some doings of this neighborhood, which I will try to set down in order, God sparing my life and memory. And they who light upon this book should bear in mind not only that I write for the clearing of our parish from ill-fame and calumny, but also a thing which, I trow, appear too often in it, to-wit—that I am nothing more than a plain unlettered man, not read in foreign languages, as a gentleman might be, nor gifted with long words (even in mine own tongue), save what I may have won from the Bible or Master William Shakespeare, whom, in the face of common opinion, I do value highly. In short, I am an ignoramus, but pretty well for a yeoman.

My father being of good substance, at least as we reckon in Exmoor, and seized in his own right, from many generations, of one, and that the best and largest, of the three farms into which our parish is divided (or rather the tithed part thereof), he, John Ridd, the elder, church-warden and overseer, being a great admirer of learning, and well able to write his name, sent me, his only son, to be schooled at Tiverton, in the County of Devon. For the chief boasts of that ancient town (next to its woolen staple) is a worthy grammar-school, the largest in the west of England, founded and handsomely endowed in the year 1004 by Master Peter Blundell, of that same place, clothier.

Here, by the time I was twelve years old, I had risen into the upper school, and could make bold with Euclid's and Cæsar—by aid of an English version—and as much as six lines of Ovid. Some even said that I might, before manhood, rise almost to the third form, being of a persevering nature; albeit, by full consent of all (except my mother), thick-headed. But that would have been, as I now perceive, an ambition beyond a farmer's son; for there is but one form above it, and that made of masterful scholars, entitled rightly "monitors." So it came to pass, by the grace of God, that I was called away from learning while sitting at the desk of the junior first in the upper school, and beginning a Greek verb.

My eldest grandson makes bold to say that I never could have learned Greek, ten pages further on, being all he himself could manage, with plenty of stripes to help him. I know that he hath more head than I—though never will he have such body; and I am thankful to have stopped betimes, with a meek and wholesome head-piece.

But if you doubt of my having been there, because now I know so little, go and see my name, "John Ridd," graven on that very form. Forsooth, from the time I was strong enough to open a knife and to spell my name, I began to grave it in the oak, first of the block whereon I sat, and then of the desk in front of it, advising as I was promoted from one to other of them; and there my grandson reads it now, at this present time of writing, and hath fought a boy for scolding at it—"John Ridd his name"—and done again in "winkeys," a mischievous but cheerful device, in which we took great pleasure.

This is the manner of a "winke," which I here set down, lest child of mine or grandchild dare to make me up any promises; if he does I shall know the mark at once, and score it well upon him. The scholar obtains, by prayer or price, a handful of salt-petre, and then with the knife wherewith he should rather be trying to mend his pens, what does he do but scoop a hole where the desk is some three inches thick. This hole should be left in the middle, and the circumferent dug more deeply. Then let him fill it with salt-petre, all save a little space in the midst, where the boss of the wood is. Upon that boss (and it will be the better if a splinter of timber rise upward) he sticks the end of his candle of tallow or "rat's tail," as we called it, kindled and burning smoothly. anon, as he needs by that light his lesson, lifting his eyes now and then, it may be, the fire of the candle lays hold of the petre with a spluttering noise and a leaping. Then should the pupil seize his pen, and, regardless of the nib, stir bravely, and he will see a glow as of burning mountains, and a rich smoke, and sparks going merrily; nor will it cease, if he stir wisely, and there be good store of petre, until the wood is devoured through, like the sinking of a well-shaft. Now well may it go with the head of a boy intent upon his primer, who betides to sit thereunder! But, above all things, have good care to exercise this art before the master strides up to his desk, in the early gray of the morning.

Other customs, no less worthy, abide in the school of Blundell, such as the singeing of night-caps; but though they have a pleasant savor, and refreshing to think of, I may not stop to note them, unless it be that goodly one at the incoming of a flood. The school-house stands beside a stream, not very large, called "Lowman," which flows into the broad river of Exe, about a mile below. This Lowman stream, although it be no fond of brawl and violence (in the manner of our Lyan), yet is wont to flood into a mighty head of waters when the storms of rain provoke it; and most of all when its little co-mate, called the "Taunton brook"—where I have plucked the very best cresses that ever man put salt on—comes foaming down like a great roan horse, and rears at the leap of the hedge-rows. Then are the side encom- passed, the vale is spread over with looping waters, and it is a hard thing for the day-boys to get home to their suppers.

And in that time, the porter, old Cop (so-called because he hath copper boots to keep the wet from his stomach, and a nose of copper also, in right of other waters), his place it is to stand at the gate, attending to the flood-boards grooved into one another, and so to watch the torrent rise, and not be washed away, if it please God he may

help it. But long ere the flood hath attained this height, and while it is on waxing, certain boys of deputy will watch at the stoop of the drain-holes, and be apt to look outside the walls, when Cop is taking a cordial. And in the very front of the gate, just without the archway, where the ground is paved most handsomely, you may see in copy-letters done a great P. B. of white letters. Now it is the custom and the law that when the invading waters, either fluxing along the wall from below the road-bridge, or pouring sharply across the meadows from a cut called "Owen's ditch"—and I myself have seen it come both ways—upon the very instant when the waxing element lapses though it be but a single pebble of the founder's letters, it is in the license of any boy, so ever small and undisciplined, to rush into the great school-rooms, where a score of masters sit heavily, and scream at the top of his voice, "P. B."

Then, with a yell, the boys leap up, or break away from their standing; they toss their caps to the black beamed roof, and haply the very looks after them; and the great boys very no more the small ones, and the small boys stick up to the great ones. One with another, hard they go, to see the gain of the waters, and the tribulation of Cop, and are prone to kick the day-boys out, with words of scanty compliment. Then the more look at one another, having no class to look to, and (boys being no more left to watch) in a manner they put their mouths up. With a spirited bang they close their books, and make invitation the one to the other for pipes and foreign cordials, recommending the chance of the time, and the comfort away from cold water.

But, lo! I am dwelling on little things and the piousness of the infancy, forgetting the bitter and heavy life gone over me since then. If I am neither a hard man nor a very close one God knows I have had no lack of rubbing and pounding to make stone of me. Yet can I not somehow believe that we ought to hate one another, to live far asunder, and brook the mouth of each of his little ones, as do the wild beasts of the wood, and the hairy outcasts now brought over, each with a chain upon him. Let that matter be as it will. It is beyond me to unfold, and mayhap of my grandson's grandson. All I know is that wheat is better than when I began to sow it.

CHAPTER II.

AN IMPORTANT ITEM.

Now the cause of my leaving Tiverton school, and the way of it, were as follows: On the 29th day of November, in the year of our Lord 1673, the very day when I was twelve years old, and had spent all my substance in sweet-meats, with which I made treat to the little boys, till the large boys ran in and took them, we came out of school at 5 o'clock, as the rule is upon Tuesdays. According to custom we drove the day-boys in brake round down the causeway from the school-porch even to the gate, where Cop has his dwelling and duty. Little it recked us and helped them less, that they were our founder's citizens, and haply his own grandnephews (for he left no direct descendants), neither did we much inquire what their lineage was; for it had long been fixed among us, who were of the house and chambers, that these same day-boys were all "caddies," as we had discovered to call it, because they paid no great for their schooling, and brought their own commons with them. In consumption of these we would help them, for our fare in half-pence; and while we ate their victuals we allowed them freely to talk to us. Nevertheless, we could not feel, when all the victuals were gone, but that these boys required kicking from the premises of Blundell. And some of them were shopkeepers' sons, young grocers, fell-mongers and poultry-fers, and these to their credit, seemed to know how righteous it was to kick them. But others were of high family, as any need be in Devon—Capers, and Bonchers, and Basters, and some of these would turn sometimes and strike the boy that kicked them. But to do them justice, even these knew that they must be kicked for not paying."

After these "charity boys" were gone, as in contumely we called them—"If you break my bag on my head," said one, "whence will you drink to-morrow?" and after old Cop with clang of iron had jammed the double gates in under the scruff-stone archway, whereupon are Latin verses, done in brass of small quality, some of us who were not hungry, and cared not for the supper-bell, having sucked much parliament and dumps at my only charges—not that I grew much wealth, but because I had been much leech for this time of my birth—were leaning quite at dusk against the iron bars of the gate, some six; or it may be seven of us, small boys all, and not conspicuous in the closing of the daylight and the fog that came at eventide, else Cop would have rated us up the green, for he was churlish to little boys when his wife had taken their money. There was plenty of room for all of us, for the gate held nine boys close packed, unless they be fed rankly whereof is little danger; and now we were looking out on the road and wishing we could get there; hoping, moreover, to see a good string of pack-horses come by, with troopers to protect them. For the day-boys had brought us word that some intending their way to the town had lain this morning at Sampford Peveril, and must be in ere night-fall, because Mr. Fagrus was after them. Now Mr. Fagrus was my first cousin, and an honor to the family, being a Northampton man of great renown on the highway from Baron town even to London. Therefore, we would catch the boys were asking my opinion, as of an oracle, about it.

A certain boy leaning up against me would not allow my elbow room, and struck me very sadly in the stomach part, though his own was full of my money. And this I felt so kindly, that I smote him straightway in the face without tarrying to consider it, weighing the question duly. Upon this he put his head down, and presented it so vehemently at the middle of my waistcoat, that for a minute or more my beard seemed dropped, as it were, from my pockets, and my life seemed to stop from great want of ease. Before I came to myself again, it had been settled for us that we should move to the "Ironing-box," as the triangle of turf is called where the two causeways coming from the school-porch and the hall-porch meet, and our fights are mainly celebrated, only we must wait until the conveyer of horses had passed, and then make a ring by candle-light, and the other boys would like it. But suddenly there came round the post where the letters of our founder are, not from the way of Taunton, but from the side of Lowman bridge, a very small string of horses, only two indeed (counting for one the pony) and a red-faced man on the bigger nag.

"Plaise ye, worshipful masters," he said, being feared to enter the gate, "earn'te tell whar our Jan Ridd be?" "Hyr a bee, es fai, Jan Ridd," answered a sharp little chap, making game of John Fry's language.

"Zhow un up, then," says John Fry, poking his whip through the bars at us; zhow un up, and put un aowt."

The other little chaps pointed at me, and some began to halloo; but I knew what I was about.

"Oh, John, John," I cried; "what's the use of your coming now, and Peggy over the moors, too, and it so cruel cold for her? The holidays don't begin till Wednesday fortnight, John. To think of your not knowing that!"

John Fry leaned forward in the saddle, and turned his eyes away from the founder's letters, it is in the license of any boy, so ever small and undisciplined, to rush into the great school-rooms, where a score of masters sit heavily, and scream at the top of his voice, "P. B."

"Oh, us knows that well enough, Master Jan! reckon every Oare-man know that, without go to skool-ull, like you doth. Your mother have kept arl the apples up, and old Betty toorned the pack puddens, and none dare set trap for a blagging, Arl for thee, lad; every bit of it now for thee!"

"He checked himself suddenly, and frightened me. I knew that John Fry's way so well."

"And father, and father—oh, how is father?" I pushed the boys right up as I said it. "John, is father up in town?" As he always used to say for me, and he leaves nobody else to do it.

"Vaytn'll be at the crooked post, tother side o' telling-house. (The 'telling houses' on the moor are rude cottages where the shepherds meet, to 'tell' their sheep at the end of the pasturing season). He couldn't have 'ouze by reason of the Christmas bakkon now, in my time, and zone o' the elder we'd."

He looked at the nag's ears as he said it; and being up to John Fry's ways, I knew that it was a lie. And my heart felt like a lump of lead, and I leaned back on the stay of the gate, and longed no more to fight anybody. A sort of dull cloud hung over me, and I feared to be told anything. I did not even care to stroke the nose of my pony Peggy, although she pushed it through the rails, where a square of broader lattice is, and sniffed at me, and began to crop gently after my fingers. But whatever lives or dies, business must be attended to; and the principal business of Christians is beyond controversy, to fight with one another.

"Come up, Jack," said one of the boys, lifting me under the chin; "he hit you, and you hit him, you know." "Pay your debts before you go," said a monitor, striding up to me, after hearing how the honor lay; "a Ridd, you must go through with it."

"Fight for the sake of the junior first," cried a little fellow in my ear, who had mocked John Fry, and knew all about the aristocrats, and tried to make me know it; but I never went more than three places up, and then it was accidental, and I came down after dinner. The boys were urgent around me to fight, though my stomach was not up for it; and being very stout of waist, I looked down on other of them seeing any cure for it. Not that I was afraid of fighting, for now I had been three years at Blundell's, and foughten all that time, a fight at least once every week, till the boys began to know me; only that the load on my heart was not sprightly as of the hay field. It is a very sad thing, of wisdom, I doubt it is a fond thing to imagine, that boys can do without fighting. Unless they be very good boys, and afraid of one another.

"Nay," I said, with my back against the wrought-iron stay of the gate, which was socketed into Cop's house-front: "I will not fight thee, now, Robin Snell, but wait till I come back again."

"Take coward's blow, Jack Ridd; then striding it for a dozen boys, shoving Bob Snell forward to do it; because they knew well enough, having striven with me ere now and proved to be their master—they knew, I say, that without great change I would never accept that contumely. But I took little heed of them, looking in dull wonderment at John Fry, and Smiler, and the blundering and Peggy. John Fry was scratching his head, I could see, and getting blue in the face, by the light from Cop's parlor window, and going to and fro upon Smiler, as if he were hard set with it. And all the time he was looking briskly from my eyes to the fist I was clenching, and methought he tried to wink at me in a covert manner; and then Peggy whisked her tail."

"Shall I fight, John?" I said at last; "I would an you had not come, John."

"Christ's will be done; I zim thee had better fight, Jan," he answered, in a whisper, through the gridiron of the gate; "there be a dale of fighting

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avore thee. Best wal to begin gude tame laike. Wull the geatman lat me in, to zee as thee hast vair plai, lad?"

He looked doubtfully down at the color of his cowlkin boots, and the mire upon the horses, for the sloughs were exceeding mucky. Peggy, indeed, my sorrel pony, being lighter of weight, was not crusted much over the shoulders; but Smiler (our youngest sledder) had been well in over his withers, and none would have deemed him a pebbled, save of red mire and black mire. The great blunderbuss, moreover, was choked with a dollop of slough cake; and John Fry's sad-colored Sunday-wad had induced with a plume of marsh-weed. All this I saw while he was dismounting heavily and wearily, lifting his leg from the saddle-cloth as if with a sore crick in his back.

By this time the question of fighting was gone quite out of our own discretion; for sundry of the elder boys, grave and reverend signiors, who had taken no small pleasure in teaching our hands to fight, to ward, to parry, to feign and counter to lunge in the manner of sword-play, and the weaker child to drop on one knee when no cunning of fence might baffle the onset—these great masters of the art, who would far liefer see us little ones practice it than them-selves engage, six or seven of them came running down the rounded causeway, having heard that there had arisen "a sung little mill" at the gate. Now, whether that word hath origin in a Greek term meaning a conflict, as the best-read boys asseverated, or whether it is nothing more than a figure of similitude, from the beating arms of a mill, such as I have seen in counties where are no water-mills, but folk make great wind-mills, it is not for a man devoid of scholarship to determine.

Enough that they who made the ring intitled the scene a "mill," while we who must be thumped inside it tried to rejoice in their pleasantry, till it turned upon the stomach.

Moreover, I felt upon me now a certain responsibility, a dutiful need to maintain, in the presence of John Fry, the manliness of the Ridd family, and the honor of Exmoor. Hitherto none had worsted me, although in the three years of my schooling I had fought more than three score battles, and bedewed with blood every plant of grass toward the middle of the Ironing-box. And this success I owed at first to no skill of mine, until I came to know better; for up to twenty or thirty fights, I struck as nature guided me, no wiser than a father long-legs in the heat of a lantern; but I had conquered, partly through my native strength and the Exmoor toughness in me, and still more that I could not see when I had gotten to my bellyful. By now I was able to have that and more; for my heart was down, to begin with; and then Robert Snell was a bigger boy than I had ever encountered, and as thick in the skull and hard in the brain as even I could claim to be.

I had never told my mother a word about these frequent strivings, because she was soft-hearted to neither of them; my father, because he had not seen it. Therefore, beholding me still an innocent-looking child, with fair curls on my forehead, and no store of bad language, John Fry thought this was the very first fight that ever had befallen me; and so when they let him in at the gate, with a message to the head-master, as one of the monitors told Cop, and Peggy and Smiler were tied to the railings till I should be through my business, John came up to me with the tears in his eyes, and says, "Don't thee go for to do it, Jan; don't thee do it, for gude now!" But I told him that now it was much too late to try off; so he said, "The Lord be with thee, Jan, and turn thy thumb-knuckle inward."

It is not a very large piece of ground in the angle of the causeways, but quite big enough to fight upon, especially for Christians, who loved to be cheek by jowl at it. The great boys stood in a circle around me, being gifted with strong privilege, and the little boys had leave to lie flat and look through the legs of the great boys. But while we were yet as one of the monitors told Cop, and Peggy and Smiler were tied to the railings till I should be through my business, John came up to me with the tears in his eyes, and says, "Don't thee go for to do it, Jan; don't thee do it, for gude now!" But I told him that now it was much too late to try off; so he said, "The Lord be with thee, Jan, and turn thy thumb-knuckle inward."

I marvel how Robin Snell felt. Very likely he thought nothing of it, always having been a boy of a hectoring and unruly sort. But I felt my heart go up and down as the boys came round to strip me; and greatly fearing to be beaten, I blew hot upon my knuckles. Then pulled I off my little old jerkin and laid it down on my head cap, and over that my waistcoat, and a boy was prone to take care of them, Thomas Hooper was his name, and I remember how he looked at me. My mother had made that little old jerkin in the quiet winter evenings, and taken pride to loop it up in a fashionable way, and I was loath to soil it with mud, and good words made Robin Snell (mayor of Exeter thrice since that) and he stood very square, and looked at me, and I lacked not long to look at him. Round his waist he had a kerchief busking up

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his small-clothes, and on his feet light pumpkin shoes, and all his upper raiment off. And he danced about in a way that made my head swim on my shoulders, and he stood some inches over me. But I, being muddled with much doubt about John Fry and his errand, was only stripped of my jerkin and waistcoat, and not comfortable to begin.

"Come now, shake hands," cried a big boy, jumping in joy of the spectacle, a third-former nearly six feet high; "shake hands, you little devils. Keep your pluck up, and show good sport, and Lord love the better man of you."

Robin took me by the hand, and gazed at me disdainfully, and then smote me painfully in the face, ere I could get my fence up.

"What be 'bout, lad?" cried John Fry. "But, up, again, Jan, wull'te? Well done then, our Jan boy."

For I had replied to Robin now, with all the weight and evidence of penthe-mineral cesura (a thing, the name of which I know, but could never make head nor tail of it) and the strife began in a serious style, and the boys looking on were not cheated. Although I could not collect their shouts when the blows were raining upon me, it was no great loss for John Fry told me afterward that their oaths went up like a furnace fire. But to these we paid no heed or hap, being in the thick of swinging, and devoid of judgment. All I know is, I came to my corner, when the round was over, with very hard pumps in my chest and a great desire to fall away.

"Time is up," cried head-monitor ere I got my breath again; and when I faint would have lingered a while on the knee of the boy that held me, John Fry had come up, and the boys were laughing because he wanted a stable lantern, and threatened to tell my mother.

"Time is up," cried another boy, more headlong than head-monitor. "If we count three before the come of thee, thou'kest thou art, and must go to the women." I felt it hard upon me. He began to count one, two, three—but before the "three" was out of his mouth, I was facing my foe, with both hands up, and my breath going rough and hot, and resolved to wait the turn of it. For I had found seat on the knee of a boy sage and skilled to tutor me, who knew how much the end very often differs from the beginning. A rare ripe scholar he was; and now he hath ranted up the Germans in the matter of criticism. Sure the clever boys and men have most love toward the stupid ones.

"Finish him off, Bob," cried a big boy, and that I noticed especially, because I thought it unkind of him, after eating of my taffee as he had that afternoon; "finish him off, neck and crop; he deserves it for sticking up to a man like you."

But I was not so to be finished off, though feeling in my knuckles now as if it were a bluntness and a sense of chilblain. Nothing held except my legs,

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and they were good to help me. So this bout, or round, if you please, was foughten warily by me, with gentle recollection of what my tutor, the clever boy, had told me, and some resolve to earn his praise before I came back to his knee again. And never I think, in all my life, sounded sweeter words in my ears (except when my love loved me) than when my second and backer, who had made himself part of my doings now, and would have wept to see me beaten, said:

"Fairly done, Jack, famously! Only keep your wind up, Jack, and you'll go right through him!"

Meanwhile John Fry was prowling about, asking the boys what they thought of it, and whether I was like to be killed, because of my mother's trouble. But finding now that I had foughten three-score fights already, and came up to me proudly, in the quick