

## DASHING DICK.

## THE LIFE STORY OF A MACPIE.

By Rev. W. Edward Edmunds.

(Continued from Last Week.)

## Chapter XII.—A Sussex Highway.

We spent the whole winter in Brighton, and each week Guido added something to his little store. True, his earnings were small as compared with his salary as circus-performer, yet he had no cause for complaint, and our life was not an unhappy one. I have many pleasant memories of those months in Merrie England, and I don't wonder that English hearts throughout the world, should at times grow sick with longing, for that dear Motherland called "Home." And now the breath of spring was in the air. As day by day the gentle southern breeze blew in from across the channel, the land awoke as from sleep, and I was reminded of those beautiful words I had heard the dear old rector read from a good Book long ago—"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come. Amid this gradual transformation of Nature, Guido grew restless and impatient. The balmy breezes, so it seemed to him, blew straight from sunny Italy, and he had not the power to resist their softly persistent appeal. At last he could restrain himself no longer. "Dicky," he said, "We must go. I do not wish to reach home till the time appointed, but I cannot remain here. I want to feel that I am daily getting nearer, and no matter how slowly we travel, I shall feel that we are accomplishing something. It is not far from here to Newhaven, where we can take passage to Dieppe in France. Once on the Continent, we can travel by train, diligence, or on foot as the mood takes us. But I have decided to remain no longer in Brighton, and by starting early to-morrow morning,

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By courtesy of "The Sunday World."

The Right Rev. John Sheepshanks, D.D., who lately resigned the See of Norwich.

we can reach Newhaven in time to take the night-boat to Dieppe." The next day found us again on our travels. The country-side was looking its loveliest and the budding trees and hedges were vocal with the sweet song of birds. Primroses and butter-cups lined the smooth broad highway, and tiny rivulets sang a song of spring. In the fields hardy labourers whistled cheerily as they dug their spades into the yielding soil, while the ploughman chirruped briskly to his heavy-footed steeds. Now and then a hare or rabbit would dart under the hedge, or perhaps a bright-hued pheasant would startle us by his shrill and sudden cry. Motors with their trailing clouds of dust would rush by us with a roar, and perhaps a grey-haired road-mender would look up and touch his cap. Occasionally we would come upon a cluster of labourers' cottages, and merry children would drop us an old-fashioned curtesy, as they hurried by on their way to school. Our road lay along the base of the Downs, and about mid-day we reached the foot of a long hill with an old ruined castle at the top. Rows of ancient houses overlooked the quiet streets, and the stolid inhabitants regarded us with a curious stare. This was Lewes, the county town of Sussex, and here we ate our noon-day meal, and rested until quite late in the afternoon. The shadows of the Downs had begun to lengthen when we resumed our journey, and as we passed a towering lime-stone cliff with a white monument overlooking the quarry below, we turned to the right, and followed

the well-travelled London highway. Our road lay parallel to the railway-line, and at short intervals trains would rush past and disappear in a little groove some distance beyond. At sunset we crossed a narrow, winding river, and stopped for a short time to refresh ourselves at a little shop by the wayside. The good woman in charge chatted with my master, and gave him a good deal of intelligence about the district through which we were passing. The little village nestling among the trees to the left was Clyde, where a British Admiral and a Field-Marshal lived side by side. The flag which we had noticed flying above the tree-tops of a beautiful park was on the beacon above "Firle Place," the ancestral home of the Gage's. The old sixteenth century church was Beddington Parish Church, and Newhaven was just eight miles away. Guido thanked the good-natured woman for her information, and after bidding a cheery good-evening, again took to the road. As we followed the course of the winding Ouse, whose waters flow into the sea at Newhaven, we suddenly came upon a band of Gypsies making camp for the night. Children dressed in tattered and ragged garments, chased one another over the green, and the dogs set up a furious barking on our approach. Over a blazing fire of sticks a dark-eyed woman was preparing a stew, and two or three men lounged about on the grass. It was a picturesque scene but we had no time to linger. Night was falling, and on the hills above a shepherd was

folding his little flock. A nightingale began to sing in a shady grove near by, and as we listened enraptured to her sweet song, we rounded a shoulder of the Downs, and Newhaven stood straight before us. The lights of Seaford gleamed out on our left, and far out to sea, a constellation of moving stars marked the course of an ocean-liner moving silently down the channel. Newhaven is but a small seaport town, and we had no difficulty in making our way to the pier. Our boat, under full-steam, lay waiting the arrival of the last train. A shrill whistle soon announced its coming, and on its arrival the passengers poured forth from its crowded compartments. Guido silently joined the throng and went on board the steamer. In a few minutes she was under way, and as the harbour-light glided farther and farther away behind us I closed my eyes, and knew no more.

(To be Continued in our Next.)

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