

THE SMUGGLER'S LEAP.

As before mentioned, Dora rode a little in front, with Ashley beside her, pointing out the beauties of the wild scenery through which we passed, and occasionally laying a hand upon her bride to guide the mule over some unusually rugged portion of the almost trackless mountain. M'Dermot and I were walking behind, a little puffed by the steepness of the ascent; our guide, whose name was Cadet, a name answered to by every second man one meets in that part of France, strode along beside us, like a pair of compasses with leathern lungs. Presently the last-named individual turned to me—

"Ces messieurs veulent-ils voir le Saut de l'ou Contrabandiste?" said he, in the barbarous dialect of the district, half French, half patois, with a small dash of Spanish.

"Le Saut du Contrabandier, the Smuggler's Leap—that is that?" asked Dora, who had overheard the question, turning round her graceful head, and dazing us—me at least—by a sudden view of her lovely face, now glowing with exercise and the mountain air.

The smuggler's leap, so Cadet informed us, was a narrow cleft in the rock of vast depth, and extending for a considerable distance across a flank of the mountain. It owed its name to the following incident:—Some five years previously, a smuggler, known by the name of Juan le Negre, or Black Juan, had, for a considerable period, set the custom-house officers at defiance, and brought great discredit on them by his success in passing contraband goods from Spain. In vain did they lie in ambush and set snares for him; they could never come near him, or if they did it was when he was backed by such a force of the hardy desperadoes carrying on the same lawless traffic, that the douaniers were either forced to beat a retreat, or got fearfully mauled in the contest that ensued. One day, however, three of these green-coated guardians of the French revenue caught a sight of Juan alone and unarmed. They pursued him, and a rare race he led them over cliff and crag, across rock and ravine, until at last they saw with exultation that he made right for the chasm in question, and there they made sure of securing him. It seemed as if he had forgotten the position of the cleft, and only remembered it when he got within a hundred yards or thereabouts, for then he slackened his pace. The douaniers gained on him, and expected him to desist from his flight, and surrender. What was their surprise and consternation when they saw him, on reaching the edge of the chasm, spring from the ground with lizard-like agility, and by one bold leap clear the yawning abyss. The douaniers uttered a shout of rage and disappointment, and two of them ceased running; but the third, a man of great activity and courage, and who had frequently sworn to earn the reward set on the head of Juan, dared the perilous jump. He fell short; his head was dashed against the opposite rock, and his horror-struck companions, gazing down into the dark depth beneath, saw his body strike against the crags on its way to the bottom of the abyss. The smuggler escaped, and the spot where the tragic incident occurred was thenceforward known as "Le Saut du Contrabandier."

Before our guide had finished his narrative, we were unanimous in our wish to visit its scene, which we reached by the time he had brought the tale to a conclusion. It was certainly a most remarkable chasm, whose existence was only to be accounted for by reference to the volcanic agency of which abundant traces exist in Southern France. The whole side of the mountain was cracked and rent asunder, forming a narrow ravine of vast depth, in the manner of the famous Mexican barrancas. In some places might be traced a sort of correspondence on the opposite sides; a recess on one side into which a projection on the other, would have nearly fitted, could some Antaeus have closed the fissure. This, however, was only here and there; generally speaking, the rocky brink was worn by the action of time and water, and the rock composing it sloped slightly downwards. The chasm was of various width, but was narrowest at the spot at which we reached it, and really did not appear so very terrible a leap as Cadet made it out to be. On looking down, a confusion of bush-covered crags was visible; and now that the sun was high, a narrow stream was to be seen, flowing, like a line of silver, at the bottom—the ripple and rush of the water, repeated by the echoes of the ravine, ascending to our ears with a noise like that of a cataract. On a large fragment of rock, a few yards from the brink, was rudely carved a date, and below it two letters. They were the initials, so our guide informed us, of the unfortunate douanier who had there met his death.

We had remained for half a minute or so gazing down into the ravine, when Ashley, who was on the right of the party, broke silence.

"Eshaw!" said he, stepping back from the edge, "that's no leap. Why, I'll jump across it myself!"

"For heaven's sake!" cried Dora.

"Ashley!" I exclaimed, "don't be a fool!"

But it was too late. What mad impulse possessed him I cannot say; but certain I am, from my knowledge of his character, that it was no foolish bravado or schoolboy desire to show off, that seduced him to so wild a freak. The fact was, but for the depth below, the leap did not look at all formidable, not above four or five feet, but in reality it was a deal wider. It was probably this deceitful appearance, and perhaps the feeling which Englishmen are apt to entertain, that for feats of strength and agility, no men surpass them, that convinced Walter of the ease with which he could jump across. Before we could stop him, he took a

short run, and jumped.

A scream from Dora was echoed by an exclamation of horror from M'Dermot and myself. Ashley had cleared the chasm and alighted on the opposite edge, but it was shelving and slippery, and his feet slipped from under him. For one moment it appeared as if he would instantly be dashed to pieces, but in falling he managed to catch the edge of the rock, which at that place formed an angle. There he hung by his hands, his whole body in the air, without a possibility of raising himself; for below the edge the rock was smooth and receding, and even could he have reached it, he would have found no foot-hold. One desperate effort he made to grasp a stunted and leafless sapling that grew in a crevice at not more than a foot from the edge, but it failed, and nearly caused his instant destruction. Desisting further effort, he hung motionless, his hands convulsively cramped to the edge of rock, which afforded so slippery and difficult a hold, that his sustaining himself by it at all seemed a miracle, and could only be the result of uncommon muscular power. It was evident that no human strength could possibly maintain him for more than a minute or two in that position; below was an abyss, a hundred or more feet deep—to all appearance his last hour was come.

M'Dermot and I stood aghast and helpless, gazing with open mouth and strained eyeballs at our unhappy friend. What could we do? Were we to dare the leap, which our far more active and vigorous than ourselves had unsuccessfully attempted? It would have been courting destruction, without a chance of saving Ashley. But Dora put us to shame. One scream, and only one, she uttered, and then, gathering up her habit, she sprang unaided from her mule. Her cheek was pale as the whitest marble, but her presence of mind was unimpaired, and she seemed to gain courage and decision in the moment of peril.

"Your cravat, your handkerchiefs!" cried she, unfastening, as she spoke, her long cashmere scarf. Mechanically, M'Dermot and myself obeyed. With the speed of light and a woman's dexterity, she knitted together her scarf, a long silk cravat which I gave her, M'Dermot's handkerchief and mine, and securing—how, I know not—a stone at either extremity of the rope thus formed, she threw one end of it, with sure aim and steady hand, across the ravine and round the sapling already referred to. Then leaning forward till I feared she would fall into the chasm, and sprang forward to hold her back, she let go the other end. Ashley's hold was already giving; feeble, his fingers were torn by the rock, the blood started from under his nails, and he turned his face toward us with a mute prayer for succour. At that moment the two ends of the shawl fell against him, and he instinctively grasped them. It was a moment of fearful suspense, as he would know so hastily made resist the tension of his weight! They did so; he raised himself by strength of wrist. The sapling bent and bowed, but his hand was now close to it. He grasped it; another powerful effort, the last effort of despair, and he lay exhausted and almost senseless upon the rocky brink. At the same moment, with a cry of joy, Dora fell fainting into her brother's arms.

Of that day's adventures little remains to tell. A walk of a mile brought Ashley to a place where a bridge, thrown over the ravine, enabled him to cross it. I omit his thanks to Dora, his apologies for the alarm he had caused her, and his admiring eulogy of her presence of mind. Her manner of receiving them, and the look she gave him when, on rejoining us, he took her hand, and with a natural and grateful courtesy that prevented the action from appearing theatrical or unusual, pressed it to his lips, were anything but gratifying to me, whatever they may have been to him. She seemed no way displeased at the freedom. I was most confoundedly, but that Walter did not seem to observe.

The incident that had occurred, and Dora's request, brought our excursion to an abrupt termination, and we returned homeward. It appeared as if we were doomed to be a day of disagreeables. On reaching the inn, I found a letter which, thanks to my frequent change of place, and to the dilatoriness of continental post-offices, had been chasing me from town to town during the previous three weeks. It was from a lawyer, informing me of the death of a relative, and compelling me instantly to return to England to arrange some important business concerning a disputed will. The sum at stake was too considerable for me to neglect the summons, and with the worst possible grace I prepared to depart. I made some violent attempts to induce Ashley to accompany me, talked myself hoarse about fox-hunting and pleasant-shooting, and other delights of the approaching season; but all in vain. His passion for field-sport seemed entirely cooled; he sneered at foxes, treated pheasants with contempt, and professed to be as much in love with the Pyrenees as I began to fear he was with Dora. There was nothing for it but to set out alone, which I accordingly did, having previously obtained from M'Dermot the plan of their route, and the name of the place where he and his sister thought of wintering. I was determined, so soon as I had settled my affairs, to return to the continent and propose for Dora.

Man proposes and God disposes, says the proverb. In my case, I am prepared to prove that the former part of the proverb lied abominably. Instead of a fortnight in London being, as I had too sanguinely hoped, sufficient for the settlement of the business that took me thither, I was detained several months, and compelled to make sundry journeys to the north of England,

I wrote several times to M'Dermot, and had one letter from him, but no more. Jack was a notoriously bad correspondent, and I scarcely wondered at his silence.

Summer came—my lawsuit was decided, and sick to death of briefs and barristers, parchments and attorneys, I once more found myself my own master. An application to M'Dermot's London banker procured me his address. He was then in Switzerland, and was expected down the Rhine, and letters to Wiesbaden would find him. That was enough for me; my head and heart were still full of Dora M'Dermot; and two days after I had obtained information, the "Antwerpen" steamer deposited me on Belgian ground.

"Mr. M'Dermot is stopping here!" I inquired of, or rather affirmed to, the head waiter at the Four Seasons hotel at Wiesbaden. If the fellow had told me he was not, I believe I should have knocked him down.

"He is in. You will find him in the Curusal gardens with Madame's sear."

Off I started to the gardens. They were in full bloom and beauty, crowded with flowers and frauleins and foreigners of all nations. The little lake sparkled in the sunshine, and the waterfowl skimmed over it in all directions. But it's little I cared for such matters. I was looking for Dora, sweet Dora—Dora M'Dermot.

At the corner of a walk I met her brother.

"Jack!" I exclaimed, grasping his hand with the most vehement affection, "I'm delighted to see you."

"And I'm glad to see you, my boy," was the rejoinder. "I was wondering you did not answer my last letter, but I suppose you thought to join us sooner."

"Your last letter!" I exclaimed, "I have written three times since I heard from you."

"The devil you have!" cried Jack. "Do you mean to say you did not get the letter I wrote you from Paris a month ago, announcing—"

I did not hear another word, for just then, round a corner of the shrubbery, came Dora herself, more charming than ever, all grace and smiles and beauty. But I saw neither beauty nor smiles nor grace; all I saw was, that she was leaning on the arm of that provokingly handsome dog, Walter Ashley. For a moment I stood petrified, and then extending my hand, "Miss M'Dermot!" I exclaimed.

She drew back a little, with a smile and a blush. Her companion stepped forward.

"My dear fellow," said he, "there is no such person. Allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Ashley."

If any of my friends wish to be presented to pretty girls with twenty thousand pounds, they had better apply elsewhere than to me.—Since that day I have foreworn the practice.

The End.

MADE THEMSELVES CHIMNEYS.

Famous Smoking Contests in Which Many Cigars Were Consumed.

Smoking is the temperate as well as the contemplative man's recreation, and great smokers are loath to exhibit their tobacco-consuming abilities by engaging in smoking contests. Still, however, there have been some curious tobacco races. In 1723 there was a great smoking contest at Oxford, England, a scaffold being erected in front of an inn for the accommodation of the competitors. The conditions were that anyone, man or woman, who could smoke three ounces of tobacco first, without drinking or leaving the stage, should have a prize of twelve shillings.

"Many tried," said Hearne, "and 'twas thought that a journeyman tailor of St. Peters in the east would have been the victor, he smoking faster than and being many pipes before the rest, but at last he was so sick 'twas thought he would have died and an old man that had been a builder and smoking gently came off the conqueror, smoking the three ounces quite out, and he told me that after that he smoked three or four pipes the same evening."

About forty years ago a gentleman agreed to smoke a pound weight of strong cigars in twelve hours. The 100 cigars making up the pound were all to be smoked down to one-inch butts. The match was decided on a Thames steamer, plying between London and Chelsea, and by taking up his position well forward the smoker had the full benefit of the wind. The contest began at 10 a.m., and in the first hour the smoker consumed sixteen cigars. After nine hours smoking eighty-six had been disposed of, and with three hours to go and only fourteen to smoke the baker of time gave in. The winner declared that he felt no discomfort during the contest and finished off the 100 cigars that evening. More recently a solid cigar case and 200 cigars were offered to the smoker who consumed most cigars in two hours. Food, drink, and medicine were forbidden. There were seventeen entries. After the first hour ten competitors retired. The winner, who smoked without pause from start to finish, reduced ten large cigars to ashes in the two hours, while his nearest competitor only finished seven. The people of Lille are inveterate smokers, and to decide the championship of the town a smoking contest was held. Each competitor was provided with a pipe, fifty grammes, about an ounce and three-quarters, of tobacco and a pot of beer. The one who smoked the tobacco first was to be the winner. At the signal the air was filled with clouds of smoke. In thirteen minutes a workman 45 years of age had reduced his weed to ashes, while seven minutes later the second man finished his little smoker. After such heroic smoking matches it is scarcely necessary to mention the American contest, in which the winner smoked 100 cigarettes in six hours and thirty-five minutes.

Young Folks.

"PROMISE NOT TO TELL."

"But you must promise never to tell a single, solitary soul," said Kitty impressively.

"Deed an' double deed I won't," cried Etta, with equal solemnity.

"Well, I don't think we ought ever to speak any more to Edith Blye, the new girl at school, for her father was a murderer and I guess he was hung for he killed her mother. I heard my mamma an' sister Nelly talking about it, when I came in yesterday, an' they shut right up; you know how funny grown ups acts when we young ones are about. So mean!"

"Oh, my goodness me! oh, how awful how dreadful how!"—but Etta's adjectives gave out and she could only stare at the narrator of this terrible tale.

"Yes," reiterated Kitty, proud of the interest she had excited, "ain't it shocking—but you must not tell, promise me."

"No, 'course I won't, an' I won't speak to Edith ever any more. I don't want to be 'quainted with any little girls whose father kills people."

"But you promise you won't tell." Again Etta promised and the little friends soon forgot, at least for the time being the story so glibly told and so eagerly believed in the more exciting amusement of pasting monograms upon their new fans.

About a month after this thrilling history, Mrs. Lennox came in with a very grave expression, and holding in her hand a letter, called Kitty to her.

"My dear," she said, "I have heard today a most astounding story of scandal and falsehood which is supposed to have started with you, or at all events from the girls at your school."

Oh, mamma, cried Kitty, "what is it, I never tell falsehoods, an' I don't exactly know what scandal is."

Mrs. Lennox drew Kitty to her side on the sofa, and replied, "Do you know that Mr. Blye has returned from abroad and has indignantly taken Edith from school on account of the cruel way the children have treated her, and the remarkable stories they have spread about him?"

"Mr. Blye," exclaimed Kitty, in surprise, "why I thought he was hung dead for killing Edith's mamma."

"Just as I feared," sighed Mrs. Lennox, "my darling, this is the story with more or less additions told all over the village, which started in school and has been traced to you, and now alas, your sister and I are involved and I have just heard from Mr. Blye's lawyer, calling me to account and demanding an explanation of the report."

Kitty colored guiltily. "It's all Etta's fault. She promised not to tell an' she went right off to May, an' May told Jeannie, an' Jeannie, Nannie, an'—"

"But," interrupted Mrs. Lennox indignantly, "how could you tell Etta any such tale and say that your mother or sister knew it?"

Kitty hung her head.

"I must have a full explanation. The thing is most serious, to say nothing of the unkindness and cruelty to poor little motherless Edith, and the sinful gossip. Nelly and I are placed in a most unenviable position. I certainly never told you or any one that Mr. Blye was hung, or that he had killed his wife. Now think, my dear child, just what you said."

Kitty now remembered only too well, and with sobs related how she had overheard her mother and sister talking, and had understood her mother to say that Mr. Blye had killed his wife.

"Then" answered her mother, aghast, "from a partly overheard conversation and a thoroughly misunderstood one, this miserable gossip is spread abroad. Now listen to me, Kitty, and I hope you will fully see the sin and danger of such careless talk. Mr. Blye was nearly drowned in a sailing party, about two years ago, and Edith's mother who was very delicate, was made so ill, first by the anxiety, and then by the shock of seeing him brought home unconsciousness, that she died very suddenly, and that I suppose is what Nelly and I were speaking about when you came in."

"But you stopped when you saw me," murmured Kitty, trying to excuse herself.

"And upon such a slight foundation all this trouble has been caused; poor Edith made miserable for a month, and her father and ourselves put in this most embarrassing, mortifying position." "Still," added Mrs. Lennox more kindly, as she saw that Kitty had at last realized what she had done, "if it will be a lesson in the future, that you must never repeat an overheard conversation, or indulge in unkind gossip, the experience will be well worth it, dearly as it has been bought."

TRUTHS FOR GIRLS.

Never mind about the dimples if there's sunshine in your smile.

At least one little act of kindness a day and an easy pillow at night.

Vacation planning is all right, but don't let the summer dreams interfere with school duties.

Neatness of dress first, and style may come as an afterthought.

One frown a day when she's in her teens will wrinkle a girl's forehead like a crane by the time she is 20.

Try to make yourself as agreeable to your brother as if he were some other girl's brother. It will pay to win his boyish confidence.

KILL YOUR FISH.

Always kill fish as soon as they are taken from the water by a shasty blow with a baton or stick on the back of the head.

"They keep better, eat better, and are in all respects better than those that suffer just before dying."

The best fishermen in Europe and America know this—the suffering of any animal just before dying always tends to make the meat unwholesome and sometimes poisonous.

The writer recalls well when he was a boy a Welshman and his family in the same village piled fishing as his business. He and his boys each carried a wooden mallet, and as fast as fish were drawn in, each was killed at once. Another fisherman asked why he did it. He answered, "Would you eat a cow's meat that died a natural death?"

"Of course not."

"Neither would I eat a fish's meat that died a natural death."

THIMBLE BEES.

Thimble bees are a form of entertainment which bid fair to be popular during the summer months. At these affairs each girl brings her fancy work and sews diligently for a couple of hours, while one of the number reads aloud or tells some interesting story. Tea is served at 5 o'clock and the afternoon ends with pleasant chat.

Weak and Nervous.

THE CONDITION OF A YOUNG LADY OF WELLAND.

Subject to Frequent Headaches, Was Pale and Emaciated and Grew so Ill She Could Barely Walk.

From the Tribune, Welland, Ont.

Miss Hattie Archer, of Welland, an estimable young lady, whose acquaintance extended among a large number of citizens of the town, has the following to say regarding the virtues of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People:—

In the fall of 1897 I was taken very ill, I was nervous, weak and debilitated. At this time the least exertion caused great fatigue. My appetite was poor and I was attacked with frequent sick headaches. I gradually grew worse until I was so weak I could barely walk through the house. I was very pale and emaciated and finally became entirely incapacitated. Various medicines were resorted to but gave no relief. Later I was treated by two of the best physicians of the town. One said my blood was poor and watery. I followed his advice for some time but did not improve. Then the second doctor was called and he said he could help me, but after thoroughly testing his medicines without benefit, I gave it up, and despaired of ever getting well. My grandmother had been reading at that time much about Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and persuaded me to try them. That was about January, 1898. From the first the results were really marvelous, being far beyond my friends' expectations. After taking five boxes I can stand more fatigue than I could for two years. I have gained weight splendidly; can take my food with a delightful relish, and again feel cheerful, healthy and strong. I would further say that the change is wholly due to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I hope that my testimony will prove beneficial to other girls similarly afflicted.

The experience of years has proved that there is absolutely no disease due to a vitiated condition of the blood or shattered nerves, that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will not promptly cure, and those who are suffering from such troubles would avoid much misery and save money by promptly resorting to this treatment. Get the genuine Pink Pills every time and do not be persuaded to take an imitation, or some other remedy from a dealer, who for the sake of extra profit to himself, may say is "just as good." Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure when other medicines fail.

GOLD IN A MATTRESS.

Hoarded His Savings for Years—A Part Workingman Nearly Lost Them in the End.

A Paris workingman, living in the Rue Perceval, has been the victim of a disagreeable misadventure. Unknown to his wife, he had economized, after ten years of saving, nearly £600. To put this sum, as he thought, in safety he had sewn it up in a cloth bag, and then hidden the bag in a mattress.

His wife, who was unaware of the existence of the hoard, decided that the mattress needed cleaning, and to this end undid it at both ends, preparatory to taking out the stuffing. She hung the mattress thus opened, out of the window, with the result that the precious bag fell into the street. It was picked up by a little girl, who ignorant of the value of its contents, was induced to part with it to two young rogues to whom she had confided her find.

For three days the boys were busy spending the unexpected windfall as fast as they could, but the workman, who had at last learned what had happened, told the police of his loss, and the two lads were arrested.

WIND VS. WIND.

Wattles—I was in a hurricane once. Miss Caustique—I suppose you talked it into a zephyr.