

to Diana; what courage and presence of mind he shows in an accident or a row.

O deep-read in Homer! that unclassical friend of yours is just the man that your Homer, if he lived, would feast his eyes upon! (We know they say he was blind, but was he?)

Follow him still, you may hear his bold, tameless voice among the first at some Alma or Balklava, you may even see him still and soldier-like aboard some sinking *Birkenhead*; or you may find him, easy and hearty among the naked courtiers of some African king, near the source of the Nile! Who would have thought it? Poor, stupid, big, burly Brown has turned out a hero!

And is it not often our stupid, school-boy Browns, that become our Wolfes, our Clives and our Spekes? When the dull boy has risen to be a great man, pedagogic spectacles are wisely rubbed, and the "unacknowledged gifts" are dimly remembered. All the other practical gifts, large and small, industry, perseverance, prudence, all, in fact, which the subject may suggest, we can only commend to the quiet consideration of the reader.

We feel just at present like the student, who in his eagerness for knowledge, would not wait till his fellow-student had found the snuffers, (somebody had not the household "gift" of leaving those ancient indispensables in the right place) but snuffed the candle, *more liberrime*, with his finger and thumb;—but alas! aimed too low. On his friend's darkly remonstrating, he solaced himself by quoting from Horace "*Brevis esse laborem, obscurus fio*." We are afraid that the fate of that hasty bookworm awaits us, and can only hope that our indulgent reader, will as merrily, excuse our obscurity, as he (above quoted) excused his sudden tenebrecation. The "Saturday Reader" (all success to it!) is not our only care, and we feel that unless we be brief, even at the risk of but half educating our *ides*, other things to which we are "in duty bound" would be left undone.

In conclusion we recall the words of the hero-saint, "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet shew I you a *more excellent way*;" and that way,—call it what we will,—charity, love, Christian goodness,—is the only true key to unlock the casket that contains what is divinely in the head and heart and hand of humanity. Perhaps Charles Kingsley thought of it, when he penned these lines:

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever  
Do noble things, but dream them, all day long,  
And so make life, death and that vast for ever,  
One grand, sweet song."  
J. R. CLERK.

### SAVED BY 'DOCTOR'.

THE episode I am going to relate occurred at a place not two hundred miles from the township of Horsham, Victoria, Australia. Where the exact locality is, I have no intention of divulging; but if any of my readers are acquainted with the part of the world I refer to, they will remember that there exists one or two large streams within the wide radius I have named. Beside one of these rivers there was standing, about twenty years ago, a hut, which was known at the Homestead as the Deep Water Station; and it was here that my lot placed me as hut-keeper. I lived at the Deep Water Station for two years.

I purpose to alter the names of all concerned in the tragedy I am going to relate. One of the actors is still living, and at this present Christmas is occupying a prominent position among the colonists of Victoria. My reasons for concealing locality and names will be obvious as my tale proceeds.

If readers of the following story wish to know who I am, I will gratify their curiosity so far as to state that I was born in the north of England. My father was a retired tradesman. He gave me a fair education, but I never fulfilled the expectations formed of me. This night, while I write, I can shew nothing to prove that I ever succeeded in the world. I am a poor clerk, struggling for a bare existence, and sometimes struggling with a wild strong impulse to wander

and work through the country, as I often did before, near the scenes of my former experience. I like the red sunset and the wide plains as much as ever; I like the glow of the sunlight among the guarded queer trees; I like the rippling rays on the water—the waving shadowy grass of the silent hills—the bright still moon—the wilderness, away from towns; I like Australian life, but not among the dusty streets, or near to white sweltering roads. For twelve years I followed these impulses faithfully, and enjoyed my bush-life; with little profit, it is true, but with much of pleasure. All that I have to shew for all my wanderings and hardships, as I write, is a long ugly scar across my breast, and I am going to tell you how I got it.

I remember I was sitting at the hut (the Deep Water Hut) one summer afternoon, looking for the coming of "Long Mat." The sun was passing away blood-red behind a range of dim blue hills; long shadows were fast spreading, the deep water-hole had lost the light; the hills behind the river were just tipped with a crimson glory, and the stars seemed dropping like silver specks on the paling sky. Long Mat, the shepherd, was later than usual.

The darkness had not quite fallen before I recognized the bleating of the flock in the distance, and soon afterwards, the white fleeces of the sheep appeared from out of the sombre shadows of the trees. I had just walked inside the hut to prepare supper, when the quick muffled fall of a horse's feet became audible. I knew the canter well, and came to the door to wait the arrival of Mr. S—, the owner of the station. He galloped up to the hut, with a cheerful "Good-evening, Bill;" and, as usual, came inside to ask me if I wanted anything, and to light his pipe.

"I can't stay long with you this time, Bill," he said pleasantly, but with a little anxiety; "the black-fellows are about again. I hope your gun is in good order. Do you want any powder or lead?"

"We have quite enough," I replied, "both Mat and myself; but there's no bullets, I'll run them to-morrow. Mat's rather late this evening; but the flock's not far off; they'll be home in a quarter of an hour; I saw them past the belt before you came."

At this instant the shadow of a man darkened the door, and Mat entered.

"Good-evening," he said quietly to Mr S— and myself. "The sheep's feedin' home all right, sir, but there's a few missin'." One of my marked eyes is gone, and I can't see two of the crawlers."

"You'll pick them up to-morrow, Mat," replied the strong pleasant voice of the squatter. "Bill says you've enough powder and lead. The blacks are about, do you know that?"

Without waiting for an answer, Mr. S— proceeded to undo his horse, and was about to mount, when Mat (who was an American) said: "I guess you had better stop to-night, sir."

"Why?"

"Injuns is close up. One of the sheep I spoke of was speared."

"I heard there were black-fellows about," said Mr S—, delaying to mount; "but the ride is safe enough; I've got my rifle with me."

"They're too close," responded the shepherd, after filling a pannikin of tea, and, contrary to his custom, standing his gun against the table.

We looked at him enquiringly. He kept his eyes wandering over and around the flocks while he explained: "Wall, you see, sir, after seein' the spear-wound in the crawler, I looked about me purty sharp, but couldn't see nothin' till I was leavin' the belt there, when I sighted one of the varmint wrigglin' through the grass like a snake. I was goin' to give him a pull, but I saw another wriggle in his wake, and then another; and," continued the narrator, with something like a glow of pleased anticipation, "they ain't far off now, I reckon."

He had scarcely uttered the words when he lifted both hands and struck Mr S— full on the chest with enough force to drive him to the extreme end of the hut. At the same instant a spear whizzed through the open doorway, and quivered in the slabs behind.

"By gum!"

More remarks were drowned by a loud quivering snort from the poor horse; a moment after, and he rolled heavily across the hut-door, completely blocking up the entrance.

Mat muttered away: "First rate for us coons! Yed better bar the door, Bill. Doctor! Doctor! Doctor! Psi! Psi! Here, lad." The dog leaped on the Shepherd. "By gum," he said "I thought he was outside."

By this time Mr S— was coolly reconnoitring through the loopholes. He had let down the window, and was preparing for action as unconcernedly as the shepherd.

These quiet brave men inspired me with confidence, and I remember thinking, as I threw water on the fire so as to extinguish all light, that the black-fellows had met with their match. By this time the moon was up, and its light was gradually growing on the landscape. At first, we could discern the outline of the trees, and then, as the night gathered, the white scared grass between the shadows. There was a long time of silence. Mat, Mr. S—, and myself had our barrels through the loopholes, and were closely watching for any movement outside. The convulsive shudderings of the horse had ceased, and there was a painful silence. The squatter and Mat were like two statues, and notwithstanding the quiet breathing of the dog and the croaking of frogs along the river, there seemed to me to be a frightful significance in the silence that was brooding above these sounds. Every instant I was expecting a rush from the outside, but there was not a sign or sound to betray the presence of any enemy. The sheep were camping quietly round the hurdles. Silence—the bright moon—the white fleeces mingling with the colour of the grass—the still shadows of the trees—the far black forest—the spectral tracery of the branches in the moonlight. The silence was terrible. One of the outside wethers rose and walked forward a few yards, then commenced stamping quickly on the ground.

"Darn my eyes!" said Mat, for the first time breaking the silence, "if the 'Ole Parson ain't sighted one of the niggers."

The 'Ole Parson was a patriarch wether that was afflicted with the foot-rot, and usually fed on his knees.

"So he has, and, by gum, there's a crowd: the whole tribe hev come to visit.—Not enough in shade, boss," concluded Mat, after another interval, and in a hard whispering tone.

The next moment, the first report rang out into myriad echoes. A shrill death-shout followed, as the dark figure of a man leaped with a sudden force from his ambush and fell prone, gurgling out blood and broken words.

"Now, boss," said Mat, looking out, but still charging; "fifty yards to the right of the hurdle."

Boss (Mr. S—) changed the direction of his gun, and fired. The human figure seemed to sink down so quickly, so calmly, so helplessly, that I felt a strange thrill of pity.

"He's fixed, safe as houses: let's physic another or two, and maybe they'll make tracks," again muttered the shepherd, in a tone of repressed gloom. "Cook, why the devil don't you shoot? Squint round that first block to the right of the wattle."

Looking in the direction indicated by Mat, whose eyes seemed everywhere, I saw the figure of a man partially visible against the ground. He was evidently sheltering himself from the other two guns; but owing to my silence hitherto, he must have been of opinion that the portion of the hut where I stood was unoccupied. I took steady aim at the black-fellow, and fired. For an instant, I could see nothing through the smoke, but it cleared almost immediately. Just as the shepherd said: "Don't shoot again—he's fixed," I saw the poor wretch staggering wildly towards the hut, and then falling with a dull sound. God forgive me, it was very like murder. This was the first life I had ever taken. The next thing I remember was Mr. S— asking me if I had run any bullets.

"Not one."

"Have you any in the hut?"

"Not one."

Mat informed us that we were "tres'd," much