

Now, Richard Rogers had a brother, who also had been considered a sort of genius in his youth. He was of a wild and restless disposition in those days, and his acquaintances were wont to call him by the name of Jack the Rambler. But it is a long road that has no turning: he had now been many years at sea: was the captain of a free-trader: and as remarkable for his steadiness and worldly wisdom, as he had been noted for the wildness of his youth. There was a mysterious spot in the captain's history, which even his brother Richard had never been able to unriddle. But that spot will be brought to light by and by.

George opened the door, and the stranger entered. He was dressed as a seaman; and Nelly drew back and appeared troubled as her eyes fell upon him. It was evident she had set him down in her mind as an unlucky first-foot: he was not, indeed, the most comely personage that one might desire to look upon on a New Year's morning; for he was a squat little fellow, with huge red whiskers that almost buried his face, his bulky head was covered with a sou-wester, and his eyes squinted most fearfully. Nelly could not withdraw her eyes from the man's eyes; she contemplated the squint with horror! Such eyes were never in the head of a first-foot before! She was sure that something no canny would be the upshot.

"Tak a seat, sir; tak a seat, sir," said Richard, addressing the sailor; "fill out a glass, and mak yourself at hame. Nelly, bring a clean tumbler. And ye hae a letter frae my brother, the captain, sir," added he, anxiously: "how is he? where is he? when did ye see him?"

"I left him at Liverpool, sir," replied the queer-looking sailor; "and as I intended to take a run down overland to Lenth to see my old mother, 'Bill,' says he to me, (for my name's Bill, Bill Somers;) well, as I'm saying, 'Bill,' says he, 'you'll be going past the door of a brother of mine, and I wish I were going with you;' (and I wish he had, for not to say it before you, sir, there an't a better or a cleverer fellow than Captain Rogers, in the whole service, nor a luckier one either, though, poor fellow, he has had his bad luck too in some things; and it sticks to him still, and will stick to him;) however, as I say, said he to me; 'Bill, here is a bit of a letter, give it to my brother; it concerns my nevy, George;' (yes, George, I think he called him.) So I took the letter and set off, that is, some

days ago; and I arrived at the public house a little from this, about four hours since, and intended to cast anchor there for the night but having taken a glass or two, by way of ballast, I found myself in good sailing-trim and, having inquired about you, and finding that you lived but a short way off and that the people in the house said, it being New Year's times, you wouldn't be moored yet, I desired the landlady to fill me up half a gallon, or so, of her best rum, that I mightn't come empty-handed; for that wouldn't be luck, ma'am, I reckon," added he, squinting in the face of M<sup>r</sup>. Rogers, who now looked at his eyes, and row at a large bottle, which he drew from beneath a sort of half-great-coat or monkey jacket. Nelly was no friend to spirit drinking; nevertheless she was glad that her first-foot, though he did squint, had not come empty-handed.

The letter was handed to Mr. Rogers, who, having broke the seal, "Preserve it, Richard!" said Nelly, "that's a lang epistle I dare say the captain's made his will int'—what does he say?"

"It's a kind, sensible weel-written letter," said Richard, "for John was a genius a' l' days; and there is nae a: out a will int' the ye're aware o'. But there's nae secret int' George will read it."

The letter was then given to the genius who read as follows:

"DEAR PICK,—As one of my crew, B. Somers, who has sailed with me a dozen years is going down to Scotland, and will pass ye way, I take the opportunity of writing to ye and lettin' you know that I am as well as person, who has as much cause to be unhappy as I have, can desire to be. The cause of the unhappiness you don't know, and few know—but I do, and that's enough. I have ma' some money—perhaps a good deal—but that of no consequence. I once thought that might have *them* of my own flesh and blood to inherit it; however, that was not to be. It is a long story, and a sad story—one that ye know nothing about, and which it is of no use to tell you about now. As things are, my nevy, George, is to be heir to whatever mone, goods, and chattels I possess."

As her son read this, Nelly thought that was nonsense, after all, to say that a squat first-foot was unlucky.

"Read on, George," said his father, "and take heed to what your uncle says."

The boy resumed the letter, and again read,