

Two of the... I, light... and... the last that whistles... Broad after broad pay their... to our left, right and left, brace... keep tumbling headlong to the... of place. This is, and... for nothing but quickness of... of eye, and judgment of dis... by space, can suc... such shooting as this. The weather... and as we traverse the lone moor... ward way, we keep picking up... and flushing undisturbed... arrive at the Lodge, exulting... of sixty brace of fine, well... dark plumaged moor-fowl. Notwith... the labors of the day, those lonely... by the voice of revelry... night—ay, even till the small... the morning lights were sparkling, and laughter was ringing, under the long, low roof of our mountain home.

Knock, knock, knock, from the impatient knuckles of Hillingdon's London valet, awoke me, some few mornings after my arrival, from that dreamless slumber which follows a hard day's walking, and a good deal of claret. Sleepless Macconas! for whom the tennis-balls bounded by day, the wine-cup flowed at eventide, and the distant fountain murmured at night, that you might taste repose—and all in vain! I think that even you would have slept at St. Helier's Lodge, could you have exchanged the toga for the plaid, the classic buskins for Highland brogues; and, after a day's walking with Major Martingale on the hill, and an evening spent in pledging his lordship with bumpers of 25, have wooed Morpheus in a bed such as that I felt so unwillingly, in reply to the summons of the impatient gentleman's gentleman.

My master desired me to call you, sir, said this exco, he is nearly dressed, and there are several deer in the vicinity of the house, he added, with a degree of imagination that did him credit, as an additional inducement to me to lose no more time. Hillingdon had arrived the previous day. We had heard of deer from a rugged Highlander who had taken an especial fancy to me, and it was agreed that my friend and I should be off at daybreak, and endeavor to account, if possible, for the master-bart of the herd. Away we went accordingly, in the gloaming of early morning, Hillingdon pleased with everything, and, for him, quite excited. Our only guide was the gillie aforesaid, and a long and weary tramp he led us, as we explored every rocky pass, and deep dark woe, with that extra caution so excessively provoking, but so very necessary where red-deer are concerned. Strange to say, Hillingdon, who had never in his life been on a hill before, was the first to perceive deer, much to the admiration of our guide; but he was gifted with extraordinary powers of sight, and had often told me, that when in the desert with the Arabs, he could distinguish objects in that delirious atmosphere more clearly than the hawk-eyed Bedouin himself. The stoical Highlander was now all excitement, as throwing a few heather blossoms into the air to discover how the wind set, he held a rapid consultation in his own mind as to how he was to stalk them, as he called it; and a grim bloodthirsty smile illumined his countenance, as he hit upon the most likely method. And now we began a series of manoeuvres wily as those of an Indian, whilst every posture was put in practice that might dislocate the joints of the human frame. First we ran for a good half-mile stretch over the open, to secure a position to start from, before the deer should move. The ground was deep, the pace terrific, and, as Hillingdon said, the boat-race was nothing to it, then he walked miles in a contrary direction, to get the wind, an operation in which we had some difficulty in preserving our own, then we crept, bent to an angle of forty-five, up the bed of a mountain stream, not yet wholly dry, which introduced us to a friendly corrie, where we could stand upright, and rest our aching joints in concealment, and lastly, we crawled on our bellies, like the serpent, over an interminable space of bare stubby heather, which

and lurching along over the very ground I had marked out for them, and apparently in no great hurry, the very last of the parcel, came the still scathless stag. Like everything else on which bets might be laid and won, I had sedulously practised every kind of shooting, and aiming well in front of him, with perfect confidence in my rifle, I stretched him lifeless on the heather with a bullet through his heart. Hillingdon, who had not an atom of jealousy in his composition, and to whom sport was nothing compared with scenery, was as well pleased as if he had slain a hundred stags himself; and we returned to the Lodge in all the triumph that attends the 'downfall of the deer,' when, in the lack of a regular forest, you can only get the occasional chance of a shot at this seductive quadruped.

Would that we had been satisfied with the head and legs!—the demon of play had never been allowed to enter those mountain solitudes, then would our shooting have been confined to the grouse and the red-deer, and no disgraceful fracas, no bloodthirsty encounter have destroyed the harmony of our morning's pleasure and our evening's glee! However, there's a divinity doth shape and our ends, rough how they come, but they come, and grateful must I ever be to that meeting, which, although, as in most cases of the kind, there were faults on both sides, I greatly fear originated in my own intemperate haste, was innocent of that fatal conclusion which might have left me a corpse, or stamped me a murderer on the spot. Thus it fell out that two friends, in the common acceptance of the term, certainly two daily associates, were placed at ten paces distant, with levelled weapons, thirsting for each other's blood.

I had already spent three delightful weeks with St. Heliers, and, except that we played high in the evenings, and I had lost largely, had enjoyed them to the uttermost, when on coming down to breakfast one cloudy morning, equipped for fishing, and promising myself from the state of the atmosphere a capital day's sport, two letters were put into my hand, one of which the superscription of 'Her Majesty's Service' warned me immediately to read the missive. Alas, the stern requirements of duty exacted my presence in London forthwith, and there was nothing for it but to be off on the morrow. 'Well,' thought I, 'this is a bore, but still it's a change,—and now for the other letter.' As I turned to the direction, I recognized the hand of my old friend and Colonel; and as I sauntered leisurely down to the river I perused the following epistle from Cartouch:—

CROOKFORD'S, Sept. 12, 18—.

My DEAR DIGBY,—How surprised you will be to hear that I am in London; where I had not been very long, as you may believe, before beat up your quarters, and to my disappointment, only found your address in the Highlands instead of yourself. As you are staying with St. Heliers, an old friend of mine, I have no doubt you are in very lively society, but I must write you a stove to tell you the little that is going on in London, and likewise—what I am sure you will be glad to learn—all about myself. To begin with the latter edifying subject, you must know that I am now a "gentleman at large," being for the third time in my military career on half-pay. I could not stand the slowness of the Canadas, nor the sort of young ones the War Office put into the 101st, so I left them to come over and have a season's hunting in England, wherewith to recruit my war-worn frame. I came home through the States, and paid our old friend Sauley a visit. He had a trotting-match coming off, which was a real good thing, and I won an infinity of dollars from a gentleman of Alabama, who paid up like a trump. You remember Levanter, who was in the regiment. I met him likewise; he has found out a dodge at long bowls, which fixes the Yankees to a certainty, and I left him at Baltimore winning their money, chains, watches, and handkerchiefs. He told me one "rowdy" literally played for his shirt, and Levanter winning

good looking, but she says she has excellent principles. She abuses you shamefully, and I had quite a row with her the other night at the Lockleys, standing up for my old pupil. She says you are a rascal, and a gambler, and thoroughly unprincipled, and not to be depended on in any way, and all sorts of things, which I will not repeat. I conclude she is piqued at something you have said or done. I have no more news, as London is at its emptiest. I met a very charming girl the other day at Hastings—a Miss Belmont, whose father is an old friend of mine, and who knew you. If I was young and foolish, I should be in danger, as I think I never saw a nicer girl. However, it would be useless, as she is to be married almost immediately to Sir Angelo Parsons, a man you must have met. How slow a fellow ever could get hold of such a wife is more than I can tell. They say he is very rich, which I suppose explains it.—Ever, my dear Digby, yours very affectionately,

'HENRY CARTOUCH.'

To describe my feelings as I read to the concluding paragraph of this letter, penned in all the cheerful unconsciousness of high spirits and kindly feelings, would be impossible. It never occurred to me to doubt the authenticity of my friend's information, and I felt stunned and stupefied, as I tried to realize the loneliness, the utter misery of my position. And bitterly did I regret the selfishness which had prevented my coming to an understanding with Flora; how did I curse in my very soul the vain, unstable nature that had wavered and procrastinated till it was too late—the despicable heart that was incapable of sacrificing the most frivolous pleasure for all that it held most dear. And now she was lost to me for ever, and I was alone in the world!

Till I felt that she was gone never to return. I knew not that to me Flora was all in all. Those higher principles, the noblest privilege of man, that enabled the Christians to meet with unblenching front, the worst that this world can show, were to me a sealed book and a mystery; and I had nothing, nothing on earth to look to for support and encouragement. The day-dream had melted into air, the bubble had burst, and, spoilt child that I was, I felt capable of wreaking my spite upon every object, animate or inanimate, that might cross my path. I felt as if it would be a relief to battle with the very wind.

Of all sports, probably that of fishing is the one least congenial to such a frame of mind; nor did unsuccessful efforts and broken tackle serve to raise my spirits or improve my temper. Dismissing the venerable Triton who attended me on these excursions, I wandered listlessly along the margin of the still, calm Highland loch, and gave vent to my misery unobserved. What a contrast was all around me to the heart within. The dark massive mountains, the grey clouded sky, the broad smooth waters, unruffled by a breath, all spoke of peace and repose; but the angry spirit that was chafing in my breast turned, loathing, from the quiet of the scene. I pined for action, I longed for excitement. I strove to subdue the restless workings of the mind by laborious fatigue of the body. Faster and faster I walked—I ran—hill after hill I surmounted, and prospect after prospect I turned away from in disgust. It was dark ere I returned to the Lodge, fevered and exhausted, but bearing about with me still the worm that never dies—the gnawing canker of remorse that comes too late.

Why did my spirits rise higher and higher; why was my laugh the loudest, the most frantic in its mirth, when I took my seat at St. Heliers' luxurious board? Why did bumper after bumper that I poured down my unslaked throat, fail to bring forgetfulness, and only serve to raise my craving for excitement to a maddening pitch? The party were jovial as usual. St. Heliers, with his dry, sarcastic humour—Jack Lavish, with his merry, thoughtless laugh—Hillingdon's quiet smile, and Martingale's eternal Newmarket stories, were all as they had ever been, and as, in consideration of my

I lost! I claimed another throw with vehemence, asserted that Martingale's hand had no right to be on the table, and insinuated it was done on purpose; he retorted (not courteously); and a wrangle ensued, which was referred to the party present, who gave it against me, deciding that it was impossible such a thing could have been done intentionally, but recommending that we should draw the stakes. To this we would neither of us consent, and the affair terminated in my losing all control of my temper, and presenting Martingale with a cheque for the money, whilst I informed him that I distinctly begged him to understand I considered it a robbery, but not the less welcome or the more unusual to him on that account! A dead silence ensued after this most unjustifiable demonstration. I saw his fingers quiver, and his fist clenched for an instant; but he curbed his temper in a manner that ought to have made me thoroughly ashamed of losing mine, and lighting a candle, marched out of the room without saying another syllable.

For two long hours did poor Hillingdon sit with me, endeavoring by every argument in his power to prevail upon me to apologise for this unprovoked insult. But I was too obstinate to listen either to the dictates of my own better feelings or the remonstrances of my friend. No, the excitement I lodged for had come at last; in the immediate prospect of a duel my restless spirit found a sort of false repose, and, strange to say, when Hillingdon left my room with a lingering step and clouded brow, to arrange with Lavish an early meeting for the morrow, I felt more composed than at any previous part of that eventful day. I undressed, went to bed, and slept soundly for hours.

Who has not felt the instinctive oppression with which we wake to misery, that our yet half-dormant faculties are unable to realize! Who does not know the steps of gradual torture with which the first dawn of discomfort swells to the full amount of anguish that appears too heavy to be borne! As the faint streaks of early morning found their way into my apartment, I started from that deep slumber of thorough exhaustion, and woke to the realities of my position. Oh, the agony of that hour! ruin and misery stared me in the face—perhaps immediate death; I almost felt as if I could welcome its stroke, and forget all in the grave; but as I dressed, the mental strength which in most men rises with the requirements of the moment, enabled me to look upon my past conduct and present situation with a clearness and fortitude of which the day before I had felt incapable. I knew myself in the wrong as far as Martingale was concerned, and although too proud to confess it, I determined that nothing should induce me to lift my hand against him. I made up my mind to receive his fire, and discharge my own pistol in the air. I felt more comfortable after this resolution, and walked with Hillingdon to the destined scene of combat with a sang-froid and carelessness that surprised even myself.

It was strange that, knowing as I did my antagonist to be an unerring shot, I could not realise the danger of my position. I tried to fancy I was on the brink of another world; I tried to think of the future, but in vain; the most trifling objects arrested my attention, and my mind kept wandering through all the levities and frivolities to which I was accustomed. Is this one of the weaknesses incidental to humanity? Can this powerlessness of mental concentration be the cause of that supreme indifference which we hear of even in criminals on the scaffold?

The mist was curling down the mountain-tops as our seconds 'put us up' at the longest ten paces ever measured by mortal stride, but which we owed to the generous length of Jack Lavish's legs. Hillingdon's lip quivered as he put my weapon in my hand. What hours seemed to elapse ere the signal was given. A sharp whiz, and quick, suppressed resort found me still unhurt, and lifting the muzzle of my weapon, I discharged

grine were invariably denominated in all after-dinner speeches, forgot hard times, hazy weather, and indifferent crops, whilst they poured bumper after bumper down those insatiable and vigorous throats, which still shouted good wishes, health and future prosperity to the young squire. All was hilarity, hospitality, and merry-making. A stranger would have supposed that he saw in that dignified landlord, those hearty retainers, and that princely old hall, the very type of English prosperity and comfort. Alas! alas! the gilding was but upon the surface; the house of Grand was rotten at the core. Look down, Sir Hugo le Grand! fifth baron of the name—look down from the dingy canvas, in the background of which a furious battle is raging, much out of drawing, whereat, trusting in the cumbrous defence of your mail and plate, you are carelessly turning your chivalrous back—look down, and look your last upon a scene of rejoicing that shall never again take place in your old halls. Could you have foreseen the termination of your line, the fate of your posterity, on that triumphant day when, as veracious chroniclers assert, you broke lance in knightly courtesy with the Montmorency, High Constable of France, and kings and emperors, peers and paladins, looked on and signed approval of the gentle and loving passage of arms, you would have wished to exchange the Spanish coat of proof for a silken jerkin; you would have prayed that the Constable's honored weapon, driver home by the arm of that practised warrior, might splinter in your heart. But in the meantime riot and revelry must go on under your very nose; and often are you pointed at and much is your representation criticised for you are the great card of our family, and Sir Peregrine is never tired of talking about the famous Sir Hugo—one of my ancestors, sir, a man who knew his position, and an ornament to the house of Grand.

It was my one-and-twentieth birthday, my coming of age, and I had the evening before arrived from London to assist at the rejoicings which heralded this important period. The duel in the Highlands, a nine days' wonder, and was much fonder of dwelling upon the particulars, and discussing the affair of honor, sir, in which my boy was concerned as a principal, than was agreeable to my boy himself, who, having behaved very badly, had the grace to be ashamed of it. Rapidly as I had journeyed to town from the scene of action, rumor, with he thousand tongues, had preceded me, and had furnished as many versions of the rectitude. Mrs. Man-trap actually made advances towards a reconciliation, I am convinced in the hope that I might give her the earliest and fullest account of the whole business, but miserable as I was about Flora, hampered for money, and disgusted with myself, I studiously avoided the society of that gossiping enchantress. Cartouch was not in town when I arrived—I could hear nothing of the Belmonts—Sir Angelo Parsons I myself saw coming out of Storr and Mortimer, a convincing proof that he, at any rate, was going to be married; and thoroughly sick heart, I was glad when a summons from Sir Peregrine to recall me to Haverley, as the most important item in all his arrangements for festivity.

It was late in the autumn; but a few of those fine days of which summer had hitherto given us our share, seemed to linger yet, and as I drove across the park, a glorious sunset was bathing in its golden light the fine old trees, still unconscious of the approach of the domain. The very deer seemed like familiar friends, and every turn of the avenue appeared to greet me with a silent welcome. Here I had shot my first partridge, there I had jumped my pony over the fence, to the admiration of an Eton schoolfellow. Yonder, where the corner of the lake gleamed through the low wood, had landed my first pike; and in the smooth, peaceful waters, Flint, the keeper, had taught me to dive, float, and swim.

(To be Continued.)