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## EVENINGS AT SEA.

In the spring of the year 1838, a vessel sailed from Falmouth, with thirty-two Cornish miners and artisans on board, engaged by different companies for Peru. They were principally young and adventurous men, who were readily induced to change the certainty of hard work and indifferent remuneration at home for the chances of a strange land. Some of them took their families to share their fate, others left them behind, to await their return if unsuccessful, or to follow the next year if fortune should befriended the emigrants.

Among these latter was John Short, a man of about four-and-thirty years of age; his brother-in-law, William Wakeham, two or three years his junior, accompanied him; both were skilled and experienced miners. Mary Short, the wife of the former, remained with old Wakeham, her father, who was a small farmer, living in the neighbourhood of Penzance. She had been married some twelve years before this separation from her husband, and had two surviving children, both of them young and helpless.

Her father had been much angered at her marriage; as in those days her young husband bore no very steady character, and was better known in the room of the ale-house than at the labour-master of the Captain of the mine. Indeed, the father had threatened to turn her out of doors for persisting in keeping acquaintance with the idle miner; and her brother, William Wakeham, a very robust and quick-tempered young man, had beaten her lover severely in a drunken quarrel, originating in the same cause. The injuries were so severe that John Short was carried to an hospital, where his kind-hearted but violent assailant paid him the most careful and anxious attention. A friendship was there forged which resulted in Wm. Wakeham becoming a miner and John marrying his sister. The father was finally and with much difficulty reconciled to both these arrangements.

The young couple toiled on well enough through their hard life; the alehouse was abandoned, and but poor John was sometimes weak and ailing and could not work. Polly had no reason to regret her choice. William, who lived with them, was not quite so steady as they could have wished; he often stayed out all night, and they were not without suspicion that the employment of these hours of darkness was scarcely reconcilable with strict obedience to the very arbitrary game-laws. In short, he was "had up" several times, and more indebted to good luck than either his innocence or any mild weakness of legislation, that he did not become one of those whom we have driven forth from among ourselves to be the founders of that great future empire, whose principal geographical feature is Botany Bay.

But whenever his brother was too ill to go down to the mines he worked double tides; and neither the leathery boots nor shady covert had charms enough to tempt him away, when his sister or her family wanted half the loaf his labour was to purchase. At length hard times came upon the neighbourhood; work was scarce and wages low; the consequence was that the game in the adjoining preserves suffered considerably, and the tap-room of the village alehouse echoed with the voice of sedition and discontent, instead of the coarse but good-humoured gossip and song which had formerly been wont to be heard within its walls. This proved an excellent opportunity for the mining agent to secure good workmen for some speculations there being entered upon in South America. Accordingly, a flaming advertisement in huge red and blue letters was posted up all over the country:—"Speedy fortune to be realized—gold mines of Peru—wanted some steady and experienced miners—high wages—free passages and a bounty."

Poor William Wakeham's literary acquisitions but just enabled him to make out the drift of the offer: Peru or Palestine, it was all the same to him; no change could make him much worse off than he already was. A picture at the top of the advertisement, of a man with a broad-brimmed hat, a pick-axe in one hand, and an enormous money-bag in the other, had great weight with him; and a strong hint from a neighbouring magistrate who presided piteously, quite determined his acceptance of the opportunity, if he could only persuade his brother-in-law to join the venture. After a good deal of argument and many consultations, John Short consented to go. He was threatened with ejection from his cottage for arrears of rent, which the company's promised bounty would be more than sufficient to discharge; but what overcame his greatest difficulty was that he received a promise from the agent that Polly and the little ones should follow them out next spring, for in this present vorage the number of women allowed to accompany the emigrants had been already completed. In the meantime she was to receive a portion of her husband's and brother's wages, which would make her comfortable and independent in her father's house. Poor

thing! she culminated the scheme strenuously; and all the prospects of making their fortune and their present dire necessity, could scarcely induce her to agree to so long a separation.

Her husband and brother embarked after a cheerful but affectionate parting. She went home to her father's, who treated her kindly enough, and cried her eyes out for a week; but then the toils and anxieties of daily life distracted the sadness of her mind, and the strong hope of soon joining her husband again, and of their returning to England in a few years' time, supported her through the tedious interval.

The brothers were astonished at all they saw on board. The ship itself—the rudder—the compass, everything was new to them; they had scarcely ever been out of their own remote parish before, and the strangeness and novelty of what they saw diverted their simple minds for a time even from Poor Polly and her parting sorrow. But when the vessel was once fairly under weigh, and the verdant slopes and woody hills of their fatherland had begun to grow dim in the distance, and the gloomy monotony of the great sea lay around instead, a dreary anxiety possessed their minds, and a vague feeling almost of terror, sank into their stout hearts. They would then have gladly sacrificed all their gilded prospects, to be back-again in their little cottage, with poor Polly and their poverty. It was, however, too late; they could scarcely tell, in the fading light of evening, whether it was a cloud or a dim line of hills which stretched close along the horizon, in the direction where lay the house they had left behind, perhaps for ever.

Before them was the ocean; to then a confused and indistinct idea—unknown and uncertain as their future fate.

I am sorry to say William Wakeham's education had been by no means elaborate. Perhaps he was not altogether to blame for this; for though the masters he had laboured under cared very closely for the development of his stout and vigorous limbs, his moral improvement by no means interested them. But, worse than all, his ideas on theological subjects were exceedingly indistinct—the only religious instruction he had ever received having been in a small chapel of the Ranting persuasion, which, as the only house of worship close at hand, he occasionally attended. Indeed his stock of knowledge on these subjects consisted in a vague notion that the Pope and the Devil were perpetually engaged in mining operations, with explosive intentions, under hopes of parliament.

But there was an instinct of reverence in his rude mind, an impression of awe and love for that God of whom he had heard his mother often speak, many years ago when he was a little child, before her early death. Sometimes in the bright summer nights, when he was labouring in the bowels of the earth, he would rest awhile from his work, and gaze up through the shafts at the blue sky, till the dim but lively memories of the past crowded on his brain. He fancied then that the Great Being looked down from the high Heaven through a million starry eyes, into the deep mine—into his simple heart; and he felt that there was One far greater than the Captain of the workmen, or even than Squire Trebeck the neighbouring magistrate, and to whom the strength of his vigorous limbs was but the weakness of a child.

When, in the summer Sunday afternoon, he rambled on the pleasant surface of the earth, in the fresh open air, with his brother and sister, and felt the warm sunshine, and saw the golden corn, and the lazy cattle, and the trout leaping in the pool; and heard little fidgety birds with very big voices, singing with all their might to tell how happy they were; he felt that He who is great is also good—that He who has all power has boundless mercy too.

But ignorance and evil companions very often led poor William astray; and when temptations pulled one way and his good instincts another, it sometimes ended that he would poach, and drink and fight as much as any of them, and prove very sore and penitent the next morning. John Short was what was called "a good kind of man," with few of the faults or virtues of his brother-in-law. He was quiet, industrious, and a good husband, but of a weakly constitution, and not much character or pugnacity one way or the other. Ever since their first quarrel these two had contended in hearty favour and good will one towards the other. And this friendship helped them through many a pinch, and cheered many a rough day.

It would be needless to follow the miners all through their voyage—to tell at length how they wondered that the sea could be so wide and the world so large,—how the sun, as they went westward, seemed to travel so much faster—and that in spite of all they could do, their great fat watches could not keep up with him;—and how a great storm arose, and blew for three whole days and nights in their teeth, and raised up monstrous waves to drive the vessel back;—then how the calm came, and the sails, wet with the heavy dews, hung idly on the spars, like

Polly's washing on the lines in the back-yard at home.

After many weeks they touched at Rio Janeiro, when they went ashore for a little while to stretch their limbs. They were astonished at all they saw—the vast fleet of ships, the busy quays, the crowd of strange-looking brown people, who were dressed like the man they had seen in the play long ago at Penzance fair, and the queer way they all talked, so that our friends could not understand a word they said; and the priests with loose robes and conical hats, who made them wonder if there were a parliament at Rio, for it would be surely blown up; mules larger than horses, with coats as smooth as satin; and above all, they were astonished at seeing a crowd of very ugly black people, chained hand in hand in one of the squares, tethered for all the world like sheep on the market-green at home. They were fairly bewildered; and when they got on board again they agreed that they could not attend to digging even for gold itself, if Peru were half so foreign a looking place as that.

They have left Rio, and steer along the Patagonian shore; the weather grows colder, the seas more stormy; they pass the gloomy mountains of the desolate and mysterious "Land of fire." Sometimes in the dark and tempestuous nights they can distinguish, far away over the western sea; sudden bursts of volcanic flame issuing from these unknown solitudes, illumining the frowning sky above, and the rocky wilderness around. In a long-continued storm of wind, and sleet, and snow, they double Cape Horn; then in a short time more, as they tend again towards the delightful regions of the tropics, the soft breezes of the Pacific fill their sails, and the calm sea and gentle climate repay them for the storms and hardships they have struggled through.

They touch at Valparaiso for a few days, where their simple voyage is again renewed; and finally, early in August, disembark at Lima, having gone through their long voyage in health and strength. After a short time allowed them to recruit, the emigrants were divided into several parties, and pushed on to the different stations in the interior. The mine which our friends were destined to aid in working, was about ten days journey from the coast. At some remote period of time, it had been worked with great success by the Indians; but it is recent rediscovery by a singular accident, when it passed into the hands of a wealthy English company, it had remained unknown; the secret of its locality having died with the Indian chief, whose hatred of the rapacious Spaniards had caused him to fill up the shaft, and hide all traces by which it could be found. There was a continual ascent; for a few days they passed through comparatively peopled lands, and usually stopped at some village or hamlet by a river's side, where provisions and refreshments could be obtained for themselves and their mules, without trenching on their stores. Indeed the abundant wild fruits, and rich and luxuriant grasses, would have stood them in good stead with but little other assistance.

But the last three days of their journey was through savage and sterile hills, by rocky gorges cut in the hard soil by streams now nearly dry; and the untraced track told them that travellers but rarely intruded on this lonely district. At length they reached their journey's end, and set stoutly to work to erect huts, and establish themselves for the coming winter. Numbers of Indians and half-castes soon joined them to assist in the simpler labours of the mine, and supply the workmen with provisions and other necessities of life. Twelve of the Cornish men were employed in this party. Their first labours were directed to sinking a shaft of considerable depth in the mountain's side, at the place where the discoverer pointed out.

Some months elapsed before the miners arrived at any satisfactory indications of precious ores; but, confident in ultimate success, our friends had got the clerk to write for them to Polly to say "all's well," and that she must not fail to come, as they were now housed and ready to make her and the little ones comfortable in that strange country.

At the time of the expected arrival of the ship which was to bear her, the completion of the great shaft was close at hand; the appearance of the veins of ore was such as to create the most sanguine expectations, and a lay was fixed for finishing off the shaft previous to commencing to raise the precious object of their labours. They worked till late on the evening of the appointed day in boring and tamping for a large blast which was to clear away the last ledge of rock lying between them and the vein of metal.

When the charge was completed, William Wakeham and John Short were left below to fire it. The other workmen were raised up on a stage by the windlass in the usual manner; and with most culpable carelessness hastened off to the spirit-street which had already cured the little settlement with its presence, to make merry for having arrived at this stage of their labours, leaving only a weakly boy of fourteen or fifteen years of age at the windlass. There was some delay in fixing the match; and ere all was ready, the short twilight of these sultry regions had

darkened into night, and William's old friends the stars, looked down on him again through the deep well, as they had often done of yore. Then he and John talked of the old times and the old country, and of Polly's coming soon, and how the little ones would have grown, and how, in a few years, they would all go back home again over that terrible sea, and lay their bones to rest at last under the Cornish soil. They had no business to linger so long over their work; but once they began to talk over such things as these, it was hard to stop them.

Now we have done with this woe-blast Wakeham, as he lighted the fuse, and stepped, with his brother, on to the stage. He then sounded the whistle, the signal for working the windlass to raise them. They rose very slowly—unpleasantly so, indeed, for the fuse would burn but for five minutes. Harry on, wind faster, shouted William. Instead of that the stage stopped altogether, and a feeble childish voice from the top of the deep pit cried "You are too heavy, I can only raise one at a time." Get help quickly, or we'll be blown up," shouted William, now seeing the imminent peril. For some twenty feet below in the dark hole he saw the match burning rapidly down, fizzing and flashing as if running a race with them for life. Get help, again he shouted. But the feeble voice now in a terrified tone, told them that all were gone away, but that one weak boy, But I think I can raise one. There was but a moment to spare—perhaps not even that.

What passed through William Wakeham's mind at that tremendous time no tongue can ever tell. He dearly loved life; his pulse beat in the full vigour of sturdy health; he had learned but little of that hope whose fulfilment "passeth all understanding;" he had never read how the Roman or the Greek sought death in a good cause, and gave their names to brighten history's page, and gain what in our vain human talk is immortality. But that Great Being whose power and love had spoken to him in the bright stars and pleasant fields had planted in the rude miner's breast a good and gallant heart, and in that time of trial he did as brave a deed as ever poet sang. "Good-by, John—look to poor Polly!" One grasp from his brother's hand and he leaped from the stage down into the darkness pit.

Now the windless winds freely up: there is hope for the one left; but the match burns quickly too, and writhes and flashes close down to the charge. Lay on stoutly! lay on!—strain every nerve, weak boy!—on every pull is the chance of a human life! John Short reaches the mouth of the shaft in safety; but before he springs out on the ground he turns one look below. His brother lay motionless on the bottom on one side of the rich vein of metal; at the other the terrible match blazed up just as it reached the charge. Senseless with terror, he fell on his face at the pit's mouth, and the next moment up burst the mine, shooting the rent rock and the heavy clay into the air above.

When John Short recovered himself from his stupor, he looked down the gloomy hole with speechless agony, from whence the heavy sulphurous smoke of the powder still ascended; and as he wrung his hands he cried, "Oh! poor Bill, dear boy, would that I had been there instead of you!" But stop—surely that is a voice—listen closer—yes—God of mercy! he is alive still. Up from the bowels of the earth comes that cheery, hearty voice, not a tone the worse.

How my heart warms as I tell this tale! Would that words came now at my desire to stir up the spirit to love and admiration!—Gallant William Wakeham—noble child of nature—chivalrous boar—hero unstained by slaughter! Were there in the sight of the Omnipotent sight of glory in any human action, surely your brave deed would shine before him in a brighter light than "the sun of Austerlitz" shed upon the bloody field where the power of an empire was trampled in the dust.

Down went the stage—up came Bill blackened and bruised a little to be sure, but not to signify a jot; he had struck his head in falling against the side of the shaft and was stunned by the blow. It so happened, by one of those wonderful contingencies which sometimes occur when, in human eyes, escape seems impossible, that he fell in a corner, protected by the tough metallic vein which projected a little above the level of the bottom. The explosion bent this by its force, instead of shattering it like the surrounding rock, and turned the ledge over him. This in a great measure defended him from the stones which fell back again into the mine. The shock aroused him from the stunning effect of the blow which he had received in falling, and he shouted heartily, "All right, John! all right!"

His reward soon came—Polly and the children arrived safe and well. When she wept with joy and thanked him in her own simple way for having saved her husband for her, he was so happy in their happiness that he would readily have jumped into the bursting mine again, rather than they should be parted any more. When our narrator, the mining agent, left Peru, the brothers were preparing to return to England; they had got on well

enough, and had saved sufficient money to enable them to stock a little farm, near the village in Cornwall where they were born.

By the time this long story was told, it was past the usual hour of going to our beds; but I am ashamed to say that several of our party had already taken a large instalment of their night's rest, and knew no more about our friend William Wakeham than of the man in the moon.

SCARS OF GOLD.—Life has always action; it is our own fault if it ever be dull; youth hath its enterprise, manhood its schemes; and even if infirmity creep upon age, the mind still triumphs over the mortal clay, and in the quiet hermitage among books, and from thoughts, keeps the great wheel within everlastingly in motion.

There are two lives in each of us—gliding on at the same time scarcely connected with each other—the life of our actions—the life of our minds; the external and the inward history; the movements of the frame—the deep and ever restless workings of the heart. History reveals men's deeds, men's outward characters, but not themselves. There is a secret self that hath its own life "rounded by a dream"—unpenetrated, unguessed.

Beautiful is the dying of the sun, when the last song of the birds fades into the lap of silence; when the islands of the clouds are bathed in light, and the first star springs up over the grave of day.

It is proper for all to remember that they ought not to raise expectations which it is not in their power to satisfy, and that it is more pleasing to see smoke brightening into flame than flame sinking into smoke.

HOW TO WEIGH A POUND OF BUTTER.—A pedlar in the Highlands of Scotland, having run short of butter, applied to a farmer's wife for a supply.

"How much do you want?" said the woman.

"One pun' will do," said the pedlar.

"I canna make you a pun'," replied the woman—"I have na a pun' weight."

"Well, what weight have ye?" said the pedlar.

"Two pun'!" said the woman.

"And which is the weight?" said the man.

"O, it's just the tangle," (the tongue).

"Well, said he, 'put one leg in the scale and tither out, and that'll be a pun'."

The woman did as requested, but when it was weighed, she looked doubtfully at the butter, and said, "it looks a pun'."

"O, it's all right, woman," said the pedlar; "how much is it?"

"A saupence," was the reply, which the pedlar paid, and departed rather hastily, lest the woman should discover that "one leg in and one leg out," was not the exact way of weighing a pound of butter.

SALT.—The destruction of worms and insects by the use of salt, is an effective preservative of the beauty of gravel walks. Where worms rise much in the morning, strew a moderate quantity of salt over night if the weather be dry. When your trees or borders are out of crop, strew salt on them to destroy the nests of insects, &c. Insects in old walls might be destroyed in salt brine, and a syringe. On the rough trunk of old trees the same liquid may destroy some eggs today, ed therein in autumn, or larvae; in spring, also, it may be tried in destroying caterpillars, though in some cases salt itself is to be applied.

BEARING OF TREES, IN EVEN AND ODD YEARS.—The editor of the *Boston Cultivator* believes that fruit trees bear most in 'even' years. He has lately made a journey to the western part of Maine, and he states that the crop of apples in that section is very light and of poor quality. He adds—"In the same region we saw good crops last year—confirming our views as to having good crops of apples in even years if the season be favorable, and light crops in odd years, even in good seasons." We suppose 1847 is as "odd" a year in the vicinity of Albany as in the western part of Maine, yet the crop of apples here is greater this season than for many years—almost every tree being loaded to the utmost.

GOOD YIELD OF POTATOES.—Mr. Henry Hall, an Englishman, rented last year one acre and one rood of ground, one and a half miles from Zanesville, Ohio, on one acre of which he raised more than 400 bushels of superior Pink-eye and Mercer potatoes—the result, not of high manuring, but of systematic and thorough cultivation. The spade was the only implement used in preparing the ground. The tubers were planted early, in drills, and very close, and the ground kept perfectly clean. J. TOWNSEND.

TO PURIFY MILK.—It has been successfully proved by experiments, that meat entirely fly-blown, has been sufficiently purified to make broth, and had not a disagreeable taste, by being previously put in a vessel containing a certain quantity of beer. The liquor will become tainted, and have a putrid smell.











