AARON IN THE WILD WOODS

THE STORY OF A SOUTHERN SWAMP

By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE HAPPENINGS OF A NIGHT.

A negro passed along the beaten way leading to the cabins whistling a tune. It was Randall. He heard the others and paused.

"It's your turn to tote," said Aaron.

"Who?" exclaimed Randall.

"The Little Master," replied Aaron.

Randall laughed. Who talked of turns where the Little Master was concerned? When it came to carrying that kind of burden, Randall was the man to do it, and it was, "Don't le' me hurt you, honey. Ef I squeeze too tight, des say de word;" and then, "Whar we gwine, honey? A'on gwine in dar en put dat ar hoss up? Well, fo' he go in dar less all shake hands wid 'im, kaze when we nex' lay eyes on 'im, he won't hear us, nor ef we stoop down and holler good-by in his year."

But, following Aaron, they went toward the lot where the Black Stallion had shown his savage temper during the day.

When Aaron and those who were with him reached the lot fence, which had been made high and strong to keep old Jule, the jumping mule, within bounds, not a sound was heard on the other side.

"Youer takin' yo' life in yo' han', mon," said Randall, in a warning tone, as Aaron placed one foot on the lower rail and vaulted over. The warning would have come too late in any event, for by the time the words were off Randall's tongue Aaron was over the fence. Those who were left behind waited in breathless suspense for some sound—some movement—from Timoleon, or some word from the Arab—to guide them. But for a little while—and it seemed to be a long, long while to Little Crotchett—nothing could be heard. Then, suddenly, there fell on their strained ears the noise that is made by a rushing horse, followed by a sharp exclamation from Aaron.

"What a pity if he is hurt," exclaimed the Teacher.

Before anything else could be said, there came a whinnying sound from Timoleon, such as horses make when they greet those they are fond of, or when they are hungry and see some one bringing their food. But Timoleon's whinnying was more prolonged, and in the midst of it they could hear Aaron talking.

"If horses could talk," remarked Randall, "I'd up'n say dey wuz ca'n on a big confab in dar."

Little Crotchett said nothing. He had often heard Aaron say that he knew the language of animals, but the matter had never been pressed on the lad's attention as it was, years afterward, on the attention of Buster John and Sweetest Susan.

Finally Aaron came to the fence, closely followed by the Black Stallion.

"Man, what do you think?" said the Son of Ben Ali to Randall; "no water, no corn, no fodder since night before last."

"De Lord 'a' mercy!" exclaimed Randall. "Is anybody ever hear de beat er dat? No wonder he cotch dat ar nigger an' bit 'im! When de rascal git well I' gwine ter ax Master ter le' me take 'im out an' gi' 'im a paddlin'—an' I'll do it right, mon."

Mr. Hudspeth made a mental note of this speech, and resolved to find out if Randall meant what he said, or was merely joking.

"Man, give me the Little Master," said Aaron from the top of the fence, "and run and fetch two buckets of water from the spring."

"Dey's water in de lot dar," Randall explained.

"It is dirty," replied Aaron. "The grandson of Abdallah would die before he would drink it."

He leaned down and took Little Crotchett in his arms. The muzzle of Timoleon was so near that the lad could feel the hot breath from his nostrils. Involuntarily the Little Master shuddered and shrank closer to Aaron.

"He'll not hurt you," said Aaron. He made a queer sound with his lips, and the horse whinnied. "Now you may put your hand on him—so." The Arab took the Little Master's hand and placed it gently on the smooth, sensitive muzzle of the horse. The lad could feel the nervous working of Timoleon's strong upper lip. Then he stroked the horse's head and rubbed the velvety ears, and in less time than it takes to write it down he felt very much at home with the Black Stallion, and had no fear of him then or afterward.

Randall soon returned with cool, fresh water from the spring. The Black Stallion drank all that was brought, and wanted more, but Aaron said no. He had placed the Little Master on Randall's shoulder, and Timoleon, when he finished drinking, was taken to his stable and fed, and the broken door propped in such a manner that it could not be forced open from the inside. This done, Aaron returned to the others, relieved Randall of Little Crotchett, though the frail body was not much of a burden, and the three started back to the big house.

"You are still anxious to punish the poor man who was hurt by the horse?" asked the Teacher, as Randall bade them good-night.

"I is dat, suh. I'm des ez sho ter raise welks on his hide ez de sun is ter shine—leas'ways ef breff stays in his body. Ef I'd 'a' been dat ar hoss and he'd done me dat away, I'd 'a' trompled de gizzard out'n 'im. Ef dey's anything dat I do 'spise, suh, it's a low-down, triflin', good-fer-nothin' nigger."

Mr. Hudspeth knew enough about human nature to be able to catch the tone of downright sincerity in the negro's voice, and the fact not only amazed him at the time, but worried him no little when he recalled it afterward, for his memory seized upon it and made it more important than it really was. And he saw and noted other things on that plantation that puzzled him no little, and destroyed in his own mind the efficiency of some of his strongest anti-slave arguments; but it did not, for it could not, reach the essence of the matter as he had conceived it, that human slavery, let it be national or sectional, or paternal and patriarchal, was an infliction on the master as well as an injustice to the negro.

So far so good. But Mr. Hudspeth could no' see then what he saw and acknowledged when American slavery was happily a thing of the past, namely, that in the beginning the slaves who were brought here were redeemed from a slavery in their own country worse than the bondage of death; that, though they came here as savages, they were brought in close and stimulating contact with Christian civilization, and so lifted up that in two centuries they were able to bear the promotion to citizenship which awaited them, and that, although this end was reached in the midst of confusion and doubt, tumult and bloodshed, it was given to human intelligence to perceive in slavery, as well as in the freedom of the slaves, the hand of an all-wise Providence, and to behold in their bondage here the scheme of a vast university in which they were prepared to enjoy the full benefits of all the blessings which have been conferred on them, and which, though they seem to have been long delayed, have come to them earlier than to any other branch of the human race.

The Teacher who played his little part in the adventures of Aaron, played a large part in national affairs at a later day. He saw slavery pass away, and he lived long enough after that event to put on record this declaration: "Looking back on the history of the human race, let us hasten to acknowledge, while the acknowledgment may be worth making, the two hundred and odd years of slavery as it existed in the American republic is a small price to pay for participation in the inestimable blessings and benefits of American freedom and American citizenship." And as he spoke the great audience he was addressing seemed to fade before his eyes, and he found himself wandering again on the old plantation, with Little Crotchett, or walking under the starlit skies, talking to Aaron. And he heard again the genial voice of the gentleman whose guest he was, and lived again through the pleasures and perils of the wonderful year on the Abercrombie place.

But all this was twenty-five years ago, in the future, and Mr. Hudspeth had not even a dream of what that future was to bring forth. Indeed, as he followed Aaron and Little Crotchett from the horse lot to the house, he was less interested in what the years might hold for him than he was in an incident that occurred while Aaron was preparing to take the Black Stallion back to his stall. He was puzzled and wanted information. How did Aaron know that the horse had gone without water and food? He observed that neither Little Crochett nor Randall questioned the statement when it was made, but treated it as a declaration beyond dispute. And yet the runaway had been in the woods, and a part of the time was pursued by hounds. He had no means of knowing whether or not the Black Stallion had been attended to.

The matter weighed on the Teacher's mind to such an extent that when he and his companions were safe in Little Crotchett's room he put the question to Aaron.

"By what means did you know that the horse had been left without food and water?" Aaron glanced at Little Crotchett and smiled. "Well, sir, to tell you would be not to tell you. You wouldn't believe me."

"Are you hurt, master Abercromby?" asked Aaron, and he gently raised the gray mare to her feet.

"O, you go too far—indeed, you do. Why should I doubt your word?"

"It don't fit in with things you know."

"Try me."

"The grandson of Abdallah told me," replied Aaron, simply.

The Teacher looked from Aaron to Little Crotchett. "You must be joking," he remarked.

"Oh, no, he isn't," protested Little Crotchett. "I know he can talk with the animals. He has promised to teach me, but I always forget it when I go to the swamp. There are so many other things to think about."

"Would you teach me?" Mr. Hudspeth asked. His face was solemn, and yet there was doubt in the tone of his voice.

Aaron shook his head. "Too old," he explained. "Too old, and know too much."

"It's another case of having a child's faith," suggested the Teacher.

"Most, but not quite," answered Aaron. "It is like this: The why must be very big, or you must be touched."

The Teacher pondered over this reply for some moments, and then said: "There must be some real reason why I should desire to learn the language of animals. Is that it?"

"Most, but not quite," Aaron responded. "You must have the sure-enough feeling."

"I see. But what is it to be touched? What does that mean?"

"You must be touched by the people who live next door to the world."

The Teacher shook his head slowly, and stroked his beard thoughtfully. He tried to treat the whole matter with due solemnity, so as to keep his footing, and he succeeded.

"Where is this country that is next door to the world?" he asked, turning to Little Crotchett.

"Under the spring," the lad replied, promptly.

"Have you ever visited that country?" the Teacher asked. His tone was serious enough now.

"No," replied Little Crotchett, with a wistful sigh. "I'm crippled, you know, and walk only on my crutches. It is far to go, and I can't take my pony. But Aaron has told me about it, and I have seen Little Mr. Thimblefinger—once—and he told me about Mrs. Meadows and the rest and brought me a message from old Mr. Rabbit. They all live in the country next door to the world."

For several minutes the Teacher sat and gazed into the pale flame of the candle. The wax or tallow had run down on one side and formed a figure in the semblance of a wee man hanging to the brass mouth of the candlestick with both hands. Gazing thus, queer thoughts came to the Teacher's mind. He tugged at his beard to see whether he was awake or dreaming. Could it be that by some noiseless shifting of the scenery he was even now in the country next door to the world? He rose suddenly, shook hands with Aaron, and, swayed by some sudden impulse, stopped and pressed his lips to the pale brow of the patient lad. Then he went to his room, threw open the window, and sat for an hour, wondering what influence his strange experiences would have on his life.

And his reflections were not amiss, for years afterward his experiences of this night were responsible for his intimacy with the greatest American of our time—Abraham Lincoln. It was in the early part of the war that Mr. Hudspeth, one of a group of Congressmen in consultation with the President, let fall some chance remarks about the country next door to the world. Mr. Lincoln had been telling a humorous story, and was on the point of telling another, when Mr. Hudspeth's chance remark struck his ear.

"Whereabouts is that country?" he asked.

"Not far from Georgia," replied Mr. Hudspeth.

"Who lives here?"

"Little Crotchett, Aaron, the Arab, Little Mr. Thimblefinger, Mrs. Meadows, and old Mr. Rabbit." Mr. Hudspeth counted them off on his fingers in a humorous manner.

Mr. Lincoln, who had been laughing before, suddenly grew serious—melancholy, indeed. He talked with the Congressman a while longer, but they knew by his manner that they were dismissed. As they were leaving the President remarked:

"Wait till your hurry's over, Hudspeth. I want to talk to you."

And sitting before the fire in his private office, Mr. Lincoln recalled Mr. Hudspeth's chance remark, and questioned him with great particularity about Aaron and Little Crotchett and all the rest.

"Of course you believed in the country next door to the world?" Mr. Lincoln suggested.

"To tell you the truth, Mr. President, I felt queerly that night. It seemed as real to me as anything I ever heard of and never saw."

"Get the feeling back, Hudspeth; get it back. I can believe everything you tell me about it."

And after that, when Mr. Hudspeth called on the President and found him in a mood between extreme mirth and downright melancholy, he would say: "I was with Aaron last night," or "I'm just from the country next door to the world," or "I hope Sherman won't get lost in the country that is next door to the world."

But all this was in the future, and, as we all know, Mr. Hudspeth, sitting at his window and gazing at the stars that hung sparkling over the Abercrombie place, could not read the future. If it was too late for him to learn the language of the animals, how could he hope to interpret the prophecies of the constellations?

Aaron sat with Little Crotchett until there was no danger that the red goblin, Pain, would put in an appearance, and then he slipped through the window and was soon at the foot of the oak, where Rambler was taking a nap.

He gave the dog some of the food that Little Crotchett had put by for him, ate heartily himself, and then went toward the Swamp.

On the hill he turned and looked back in the direction of Little Crotchett's window. As he paused he heard a voice cry "Hello!" Aaron was not startled, for the sound came from a distance, and fell but faintly on his ears. He listened and heard it again:

"Hello! Hello!"

It seemed to come from the road, half a mile away, and Aaron knew that there was no house in that direction for a traveler or passer by to hail. There was something in his tone that suggested distress.

Without waiting to listen again, the Arab started for the road in a rapid trot. He thought he heard it again as he ran, this caused him to run the faster. He climbed the fence that marked the line of the road, and sat there a moment, but all was silence, save the soft clamor of insects and frogs that is a feature of the first half of the night.

Aaron had now come to a point from which he could reach the swamp more conveniently by following the road for half a mile, though he would have another hill to climb. As he jumped from the fence into the road the cry came to his ears again, and this time with startling distinctness:

"Hello! Hello! Oh, isn't there some one to hear me?"

It was so plainly the call of some one in distress that Aaron shouted an answer of encouragement, and ran as fast as he could in the direction from which the sound came. The situation was so new to Rambler that, instead of making ahead to investigate and report, he stuck to Aaron, whining uneasily. As the Son of Ben Ali ran he saw dimly outlined at the foot of the hill a short distance beyond him a huge something that refused to take a recognizable shape until he stood beside it, and even then it was startling enough. It was the Gray Mare, Timoleon's sister, lying at full length by the side of the road, and underneath her the Son of Ben Ali knew he would find the White-Haired Master. But it was not as bad as it might have been.

"Hurt much, Master?" said Aaron, leaning over Mr. Abercrombie and touching him on the shoulder.

"Not seriously," replied the White-haired Master, "but the leg that is under the mare is numb."

The Gray Mare, after falling, had done nothing more than whinny. If she had struggled to rise the White-Haired Master's leg would have needed a doctor, but if the mare had risen to her feet and started home the doctor would have been unnecessary, for the imprisoned foot was caught in the stirrup.

Well for Mr. Abercrombie that Aaron knew the Gray Mare, and that the Gray Mare knew Aaron. She whinnied when the runaway spoke to her. She raised her head and gathered here forefeet under her, and then suddenly, at a word from Aaron, lifted her weight from the leg, while the foot was taken from the stirrup. Again the word was given, and the Gray Mare rose easily to her feet and shook herself.

"Can you walk, Master?" Aaron asked.

"I think so—certainly."

Yet it was not an easy thing to do. Though the limb was not broken, owing to the fact that the ground was damp and soft where the Gray Mare fell, yet it had been imprisoned for some time, and it was both numb and bruised. The numbness was in evidence now, as the White-Haired Master rose to his feet and tried to walk; the bruises would speak for themselves tomorrow.

"What is your name?" Mr. Abercrombie asked.

"I am called Aaron, Master."

"I thought so, and I'm glad of it. Some day I'll thank you; but now—pins and needles!" The blood was beginning to circulate in the numb leg, and this was not by any means a pleasant experience. Aaron shortened it somewhat by rubbing the limb vigorously.

"Are you still in the woods, Aaron?"

"Yes, Master."

"Well, I'm sorry. I wish you belonged to me."

"I'm wishing harder than you, Master.

"What a pity—what a pity!"

"Don't get too sorry, Master."

"No; it would do no good."

"And don't blame the Gray Mare for stumbling, Master. The saddle's too high on her shoulders, the belly-band too tight, and her shoes nailed on in the dark."

Aaron helped Mr. Abercrombie to mount. "Good night, Master!"

"Good night, Aaron!"

The Arab watched the Gray Mare and her rider until the darkness hid them from view. And no wonder! He was the only man, living or dead, that the Son of Ben Ali had ever called "Master." Why? Aaron tried to make the matter clear to his own mind, and while he was doing his best to unravel the problem he heard buggy wheels rattle on the hilltop. The horse must have shied at something just then, for a harsh voice cried out, followed by the sound of a whip falling cruelly on the creature's back. The wheels rattled louder as the creature leaped frantically from under the whip. The harsh voice cried, "Whoa!" three times, twice in anger, and the third time in mortal fear, and Aaron knew that he had another adventure on his hands.

(To be continued.)

PORPOISE HUNTING.

A Dangerous Sport the Passamaquody Indians Follow.

By VIRGINIA FRENCH.

In the northern part of Maine and in Nova Scotia there are still many Indians of the Passamaquody tribe, and these Indians follow a pursuit that is almost unknown to the outside world. They shoot porpoises. Everybody familiar with the sea has watched these queer creatures. They are less shy about showing themselves than any other inhabitant of the ocean, but to see them tumbling over themselves in their odd, regular way is all the world in general ever has to do with them. The Passamaquody Indians, however, not only shoot them, but make their living mainly out of porpoise, and a living well earned it is, too, for there is no occupation in the world that calls for more bravery, skill and endurance. The money is obtained by selling the oil. The pure porpoise oil brings the Indians about 90 cents a gallon. The oil obtained from the paws sells higher. It is tried out by itself because of its superiority and is valued by watchmakers and others who want an oil of very fine lubricating quality. The Indians eat the porpoise flesh. It is very much like fresh pork, and many white fishermen around the coast like it well enough to give the Indians fresh fish in exchange for it.

There are no game laws to protect porpoises, and the hunting goes on the year around, though the blubber is something like two inches thick in winter against one and a half in summer. But, then, the danger and suffering of the Indian, not the fish, are far greater in cold weather.

Make a guess as to how long a big porpoise is. He does not look, when seen from shore or from a steamer's deck, as if he were seven feet long; but about that he frequently is, and five feet about the girth, and with six or seven gallons of oil in his queer body.

Birch bark canoes are still used by the Indians for this sport, and the way they handle them in the wide, stormy waters of the Bay of Fundy is a revelation as to the seaworthiness of these wonderful little craft. Boys must begin their training as porpoise hunters when they are 10 or 12 years old, going out with an older man in good weather first. The Indians generally go two together, for while shooting the porpoise can be done easily by one in smooth water it is not the shooting, but the landing of him that is the ticklish business. After he is shot he is speared to finish him, and then the Indian runs two fingers in the blowhole, takes hold of the fin with the other hand, lifts the great fellow until at least half his length is above the canoe's gunwale, and then drags him aboard. Imagine doing that in a birch bark canoe on a rough winter sea! Yet a man alone in his canoe under such conditions will often accomplish the feat, and not so rarely be will fail, and lose his life to boot. The usual thing is for two to work together, and then accidents are comparatively rare. A man has to stand up to shoot if the water is rough. Of course, he could not see his game if he didn't. One of these Indians can stand and shoot, and at the same time adapt every movement to the swaying of his boat, keeping her on an even keel with a success that is simply marvelous.

Shooting Porpoises in the Bay of Fundy

There are many sharks in these waters, and there are perfectly authenticated stories of sharks cutting porpoises in two just as the Indians were hauling them aboard, but they don't seem to mind the sharks at all, driving them off with their long spears, when they are too encroaching, with perfect coolness.

Eastport, Me., is the market where the Indians sell most of their oil.

How Wired Glass Is Made.

Wired glass, which is becoming a much desired article in building by reason of its excellent fire-proof qualities, is produced by drawing a wire net through liquid glass and running it through a set of rolls, which joins wire and glass to a plate of uniform thickness. An efficient arrangement for its production consists of a tank furnace, with a slit in each of the two opposite walls and rolls provided in front of them. The working room should be narrower and located lower than the smelting room. In two opposite walls of the working room a horizontal slit is made closely above the level of the liquid glass, the slits being wide enough to allow the passage of the wire net from one side of the wire chamber to the other. As the net is drawn in at one slit and pulled out at the other it passes through the molten glass and comes out covered on both sides with a thick coat of soft glass. The sheet then passes through a set of rollers, which makes it smooth and of uniform thickness. While leaving the rollers the wired glass plate is cooled by ventilators, after which the plate is put into the annealing furnace and straightened. The rolls can be adjusted to produce plates of any desired thickness.—Boston Journal of commerce.

JOHN WESLEY BAREFOOTED.

The Way That Great Teacher Rebuked Vanity and Pride.

By MARGARET HOLMES BATES.

A trifle more than 150 years since John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, organized a Sunday-school in the town of Savannah, Ga. The rules of that Sunday-school were different from those that prevail nowadays. The children were compelled to attend excepting they were ill. A lack of fine clothing was no excuse, and so it happened that many of the boys and girls presented themselves in their classes without shoes or stockings. There are many stories told of the mothers of those days putting the children to bed early on Saturday nights and then washing their clothes, so as to be clean on Sunday.

The colonists were, many of them, too poor to buy shoes, or very much clothing of any kind. But the climate in Georgia is mild, and it is no hardship to go scantily clad.

Human nature, however, as it showed itself in John Wesley's Sunday-school, was the same as it is now. The children who could afford shoes fell into the habit of saying disagreeable things to the barefooted girls and boys. When Mr. Wesley heard of this from the parents of the children whose feet were bare and whose pride was sensitive, he pondered for a while as to what course it would be wisest to pursue. First he thought he ought to insist on all the children coming to the Sunday-school barefooted.

Then he considered lecturing the offenders soundly on the sin of vanity. He did neither; but the next Sunday what was the surprise of teachers and pupils to see Preacher Wesley walk softly into their midst with bare, clean, white feet!

One can fancy that those who wore shoes drew their feet far back under the benches, and the barefooted ones, conscious of being in good company, sat very straight, and looked satisfied and happy.

In the course of the session Mr. Wesley took occasion to speak of the fearfully and wonderfully made human body, and, placing his foot on a convenient chair, he gave a list of the bones, tendons, and joints, with much other anatomical knowledge. He told the school that no human being could possibly make a piece of machinery as marvelous as the human foot.

He remarked further that all the clothing we had to wear was a hindrance to our usefulness. He called attention to the clumsiness and ugliness of shoes and stockings as compared with the natural foot, with its white and pink coloring, the blue veins showing through, and each toe protected by a beautiful, transparent shell, which we called nails.

Even the tan on the feet of children or grown people who ran barefooted all the time spoke of the goodness and kindness of the Creator. This tan was made by the great sun and the soft, odorous winds.

The school thought this little lecture very interesting, and it had a much better effect than a scolding. The children learned a lesson in physiology, while being kindly rebuked for the folly of vanity. It may be supposed, too, that later in life these boys and girls, when finding themselves at a disadvantage, tried to find out if there was not some compensation, even in what seemed to be real misfortunes.

In the regions where John Wesley first labored there used to be many old stories afloat, all proving how full of resources he was, and what a great, generous, simple-minded scholar and Christian he was, too.

Talmage and the Actor.

Here is a story of Dr. Talmage's training by an actor to whom he went when a young man. After telling him to give up the pulpit and use a platform, he picked up a Bible, and asked: "Do you believe in this book, and that the choice of life and death is here?" Mr. Talmage said he did. "Then, why do you read from it and talk from it like this?" and the teacher gave an imitation of average pulpit elocution which his hearer recognized as ludicrously exact. A demonstration of how an actor would read the same passage followed, and the first lesson ended with the pretty epigram: "You ministers express what you believe in such a way that people do not believe it, while we actors express what we do not believe in such a way that people believe we believe it."—Chicago Times-Herald.

The President a Great Smoker.

Secretary Long and Attorney General McKenna are great smokers, but they need not expect to keep up with the tobacco consumption of the President. Mr. Kinley is probably the most continuous smoker who ever sat in the Presidential chair. His intimate friends have fears that the habit, if persisted in, will injure his health. Grant relieved himself occasionally with a "dry" smoke, but Mr. McKinley wants fire at the end of his cigar all the time.—New York Press.

Probably Not.

Angry Father (to his son)—You never saw me getting into a scrape like that when I was a boy.

Flippant Son—No, I don't think I ever did.—Twinkles.

Mickey's Version.

TELLS HIS FATHER ALL ABOUT "APPENDYCUTUS" AND OTHER NEW DISEASES.

It was too early in the season for mosquitoes, but pleasant enough in the evening, after supper, for Mickey Finn and his father to seat themselves on the back stoop and scent the odor of growing things carried to them by the evening breeze. The moon was yellow and full. Mr. Finn was also pretty well loaded with corn beef and cabbage. The sedative smoke of Hod Carriers' Delight had soothed him into contemplative content. The pale moon, the winking stars, corned beef and cabbage, tobacco, and springtime perfumes are sovereign adjuncts to bucolic satisfaction. The time was ripe for quiet, philosophical disquisition.

"Mickey," said Mr. Finn, with fatherly solicitude, "are they t'achin' ye anything new at school these days, me lad? Are ye growin' in 'noledge?"

"Faith, they are, father," replied the boy proudly. "I'm in a new class called the atomy and fizzology class."

"D'ye tell me so," replied Mr. Finn, utterly at a loss as to his son's meaning, but still preserving the gravity of a surgeon. "I wonder do they t'ach atomy here the same as they did in Ballybaeg whin I was a lad?"

"Shure, I dunno, father, if they do, but I do know that atomy t'aches all about dis'ase."

"Begorra, that's quare intirely, so 'tis," exclaimed Mr. Finn. "But tell me this, Mickey, have they invinted any new dis'ases lately?"

"Millia, Murther!"

"Faix, they have," replied Mike oracularly. "The wise min have invinted two horrible diseases—appendycutus and atheromatous degineraishun."

"And what's this appindy-somethin'-or-tother like, Mickey? Does it break out on ye like the measles or the small-pox, or how?"

"No, thin, it do not," replied Mickey. "Ye mustn't know, father, that somewhere inside of ivery man, where ye're all twisted up like the roots of a grapevine, there's a dinky little thing like a warrum the doctors call a vermiform. Well, for all their wisdom the doctors can't find out what this is for, except to make people ax foolish questions. Shure it has no more use in a man's body nor a mosquito. They have another name for this, and it is appendix, do ye mind, which manes stuck on where it oughtn't to be, bein' of no use, like a burdock on a goat. Well, this vermiform has queer thricks intirely. 'Tis hollow, and it jist sits around inside of a man waitin' for a grape seed or a carpet tack, or somethin' small and hard to come along, and swally's the thing, whativer it may be, and thin your name is Dennis."

"Arrah, Mickey, me lad," exclaimed Mr. Finn, "but that's a terrible dis'ase. It's horrible, so 'tis. But where is it?" continued Mr. Finn, anxiously, exploring his ribs and "contagious" regions with his fingers, and already feeling incipient appendicitis.

"'Tis no use feeling for it father," continued little Mike, with a mournful shake of the head. "Ye'll niver see it till the doctors show it to ye."

"And how will they get it?" inquired Mr. Finn.

"They'll cut a hole in yer body and take it out and show it to ye. But that's all the satisfaction ye'll have, for ye'll die anyhow on account o' the hole they cut in ye."

"Millia, murther," exclaimed Mr. Finn, devoutly crossing himself and trying to recall the last time he had swallowed a grape-seed or carpet-tack. "But tell me, what's that other dis'ase ye were sp'akin' about? Is it catchin'?"

"No," replied Mickey, smiling to himself in the darkness at the fear he had inspired in his father. "Atheromatous degineraishun is a dignacious dis'ase intirely, and it's mighty hard on min over forty years old."

"D'ye tell me that, Mickey," cried Mr. Finn in alarm, as he realized that he had already passed his fiftieth yearstone. "And what's the m'anin' o' thim quare words?"

"Now, listen close, father," said Micky, placing his right forefinger in the palm of his left hand; "it's 'noledge I'm givin' ye. The word atheromatous is Greek and it ma'nes chalk. The Greeks have a quare way of wastin' letters, d'ye see, father, whin they use eleven letters where five would do as well; so there ye are, as the bull said whin he tossed O'Shaunnessy over the wall. Now, ye have the half of it explained to yer satisfaction, I hope."

"Yer right, Mickey," said Mr. Finn, admiringly. "Ye'll be a ly'yer one o' these days. But what's the m'anin' o' the other big word?"

"De-gin-era-shun," continued little Mike, "is a quare word, a very quare word. Ye'll notice 'tis longer nor atheromatous. 'De' istaken from the Latin. Ye'll hear the priest say 'De profundus.' 'Gin.' That's a Dootch word, taken from Holland gin."

"Aye, lad," interrupted Mr. Finn. "I have often seen it on the bottles in Brady's."

"Faith, ye did, thin, father," continued little Mike. "I see ye have eddicashun yerself. 'Era' is a Roman word, m'anin' time, and 'shun' is a Yankee word invinted by the titoperance men, m'anin' for ye to go by whisky and lave it alone. Well, now ye have it all explained. Now, whin ye have all thim little words put up agin aich other, cheek by jowl, ye have a word which m'anes ye are losin' yer grip; ye are dyin' of oxyfaction caused by chalk or lime, which is the same thing. Oh, 'tis a horrible dis'ase. Ivery man has it, and ye have it yerself."

"Go long, ye scut ye!" exclaimed Mr. Finn, in alarm. "Don't be tellin' lies, Mickey. I niver had anny sickness in me life, barrin' rhumatiz and a touch of a cowld. Does it give ye anny pain, Mickey?"

"Divvil a pain," replied the amateur physician. "It comes so aisy ye don't notice it. Ivery time ye breathe ye make it worse for ye father. Ould athero-matous is killin' ye by inches."

"Mickey, ye larrup, ye, show me how I have that dis'ase, or I'll l'ave the heavy hand on ye!"

"Well, ye needn't be ballyraggin' me, father," replied Mickey, in a tone of injured innocence. "I'm only tellin' ye what the schoolmaster told me!"

"Did he tell ye that I had the dirty dis'ase?" said Mr. Finn.

"He said that ivery man had it. Now, if ye'll sit down and be aisy, I'll tell ye all about it."

Mr. Finn resumed his seat and an expectant attitude.

"Ye musht know, thin, it's all on account of yer arteries, father," resumed Mickey. "If ye'll put yer hand on yer neck under yer ear ye'll find a pumpin' goin' on. That's yer heart pumpin' yer blood up through an artery to yer brain. Well, whin ye breathe ye take oxy-gin inter yer blood, and oxy-gin is full o' lime that ye're takin' out of the quarry ivery day. The doctors have another name for the lime; they call it calcareous salts. It's the stuff they make clam-shells out of. 'Tis not only air that's full of this lime, but the salt ye eat on yer potatoes is full of it, and wather is fair loaded with it. Did ye iver look at the bottom of the kettle whin 'twas impty, father? Ye'll see 'tis white as if 'twere whitewashed. Well, that's the way yer heart and yer veins is. They're all coated with lime. Shure, father, ye've taken enough lime intil yer body to make a lime man as big as yerself."

"Did the schoolmaster say there was lime in beer?" queried Mr. Finn, anxiously.

"No," replied Mickey, "but he said there was lime in rice, in potatoes, in cabbage, in bread and beans and beef. And if ye kape on eatin' these things, ye'll be that much whitewashed inside that ye'll be hard like the wall and be ossyficated."

"Holy murther!" exclaimed Mr. Finn, "what'll I do for things to ate, Mickey?"

"Ye'll have to ate nothin' but carbonaceious food—that's charcoal. Ye won't like charcoal at first, father, bekase it'll l'ave a quare taste in yer mouth and it'll blacken yer teeth. But the doctors say charcoal is good for makin' hate in yer body, and——"

"What the divvil do I want o' hate in me body and the hate o' the season comin' on?" growled Mr. Finn.

"The next thing ye'll be atin' if ye want to be wan hundred years old," continued little Mike, not noticing the interruption, "is nitroganyous preparations. Things that has gas in thim like niter, d'ye mind. That'll kape yer kidneys and yer epigastrium in workin' order, bekase if yer epigastrium flops, ye're bound for tormint, and nayther prayers or wishes won't save yer."

"Begorra, ye have me crazy, Mickey," exclaimed Mr. Finn, wiping the sweat from his forehead. "And what else have I to take?"

"There's only wan thing more for ye to be takin', father, and that's fosfates."

"For God's sake, what's thim?" exclaimed Mr. Finn, in an agony of apprehension. "Is it worrums, or cotterpillers, or snakes, they are?"

"Arrah, no, father," said Mickey. "Fosfates is dinky little things that ye can't see without a spy-glass, and ye'll get thim in ould bones, pigs' knuckles or mackerel bones, or shad bones, or anny ould bones ye might find in the yaard. They'll nourish yer brain, father."

"And will I have to be atin' thim things ivery day, Mickey?"

"Faith, ye will, father, if ye want to be wan hundred years ould. And besides all I have been tellin' ye, ye'll have to boil the wather ye drink."

Mr. Finn was dazed by this time, but he managed to murmur, "For what?"

"To kill the microbes in it. If ye want to clane house and drive all the whitewash

"Ye Onnatural Son!"

out of yer body, ye'll have to drink bilin' wather wid a taste o' fosforic acid in it to give it a flavor."

"How'll I get the acid yer sp'akin' about?" asked Mr. Finn.

"Why, that's aisy," replied Mickey. "All ye'll have to do is to soak some matches in wather and ye'll get all ye want."

"And won't I have anny beer or whisky or ale or tay?" asked Mr. Finn.

"Divvil a taste," was the inexorable reply. "In the mornin' ye'll have yer cupful o' charcoal and yer glass o' boiled wather. For dinner ye'll have half a cup of niter wid boiled wather, and at night whin yer comin' home nother will have a lot o' bones boiled fer ye—nice little shad bones, full o' fosfates, and mackerel bones tender and juicy. And if mother kills a chicken and makes a polpie wid juice in it that 'ud make yer mouth wather to smell of it, and wid little round dumplin's o' dough in it that yer so fond of, father, and murphies burstin' their jackets wid joy bekase they're so mealy, and hat ye can't ate bekase there's lime in thim, and mother and me pickin' the mate all off the chicken and l'avin' the bones for you bekase——"

When Mickey had recovered from his shock he found himself half-way across the yard and his father standing on the stoop shaking his fist and shouting:

"To the divvil wid yer and yer eddycashun and yer 'pendicutus and yer athero and yer lime! Ye onnatural son! Would ye ate all the mate off the chicken and l'ave the bones for yer poor ould father? Bad luck to ye! Biled bones is it!"

Here Mr. Finn's indignation choked his utterance and he entered the shanty, banging the door so hard that the frail structure shook to its foundations.

ERNEST JARROLD.

Salt for Scouring.

The best way to thoroughly cleanse all pans, tubs and vessels in which greasy dishes and saucepans have been washed, and which have consequently become almost lined with grease, is to scour them with a coarse flanned rag, well damped and covered with coarse salt. This plan is quicker and much more efficacious than scrubbing.—New York Journal.