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HOWARD FALCONER,

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From Dickens' Household Words.

A Gallop For Life.

It was hot, burning hot, hot enough for Bengal, a few weeks ago, when a party of us were sitting in the shade of a clump of trees beside the brook that rattles down from the lake, with the unpronounceable name on the big hills behind Tremadoc. Some of our party (they were from town, and lately arrived) had been haymaking in the field, which is not quite so steep as the roof of St. Paul's, but steep enough to tempt a roll or two in the fresh, sweet hay; two had been fishing in the lake; while a trio, lazy and romantic, had just been reading, with occasional intervals of discussion, during which it was wonderful the number of bottles of porter they had managed to empty, out of the three dozen put to cool in the hollow of the brook bank for the amateur haymakers. By a universal vote, we had lunched under the trees on all manner of comestibles, including a wonderful salad of cold turbot, for want of a lobster. We were very happy and very warm, except the idlers. After luncheon some went to sleep; I am afraid some smoked; but no one scolded, and no one argued. As the evening crept on, the tide went down in the bay, and for miles there was nothing to be seen but a desert of yellow sand—real yellow sand, where Ariel's friends might have danced with pleasure. We watched the sea receding, until only a dim waggling line on the horizon told us where the waters of Port Maloe were to come from, at the turn of the tide.

Everybody seemed deliciously lazy; no one could be called or coaxed into haymaking again. To be half of us, open air work was something new; to the other half, the rattle of new arrivals from town was wonderfully refreshing, after the vegetation of a Welsh village. So gossiping, with a little singing, a little story-telling, and, I am afraid, a little flirting, the day wore out, the moon rose up, and presently, up a hundred channels, before us, the sea began to flow back, and sparkle below us, as we sat on the turf, on the hillside beside the rustling torrent.

At length the conversation turned on rides across the sands, on the shores of the Solway, and the perils of Morescombe Bay. One quoted the adventure in "Redgummet," another of Sir Arthur Wardour and Lovell in the "Antiquary"; a third, the story of the narrow escape of Madame D'Arley, near Ilfracombe; but we were all piped with the antea-erogation, when Alfred Aubrey, the master-of-fest, with a romantic name, said, between the whiffs of a genuine Manilla, "I once had a narrow escape myself, crossing the Dee, on just such a night as this, on that galloping a race with time and tide is no joke."

"Come," cried Carry Darling, the self-pleated distasteful orator of *Freeze* parliament, "what will you do, you have been talking nothing these three days but fishing and politics; put down your filthy tobacco, and tell us that—for you owe us a story." So Aubrey knowing that he had a Napoleon in petticoats to deal with, began with fewer excuses than customary in such cases, as follows:

About twenty years ago, after a fatiguing London season, I was stopping at the decayed port and bathing village of Parkgate, on the Dee, opposite the equally decayed town and castle of Flint. It was a curious place to choose for amusement, for it had, and has, no recommendation except brackish water, pleasant scenery at high water, and excessive dullness. But to own the truth, I was in love, desperately in love, with one of the most charming, provoking little sylphs in the world, who, after driving me half crazy in London, was staying on a visit with an uncle, a Welsh parson at dreary Parkgate. Not that it was dreary to me when Laura was amiable; on the contrary, I wrote to my friends and described it as one of the most delightful watering places in England, and, by so doing, lost forever the good graces and legacies of my Aunt Grump, who travelled all the way from Brighton on my description, and only stayed long enough to change horses. One sight of the one street of tumble-down houses, in face of a couple of miles of sand and shingle at low water, was enough. She never spoke to me again, except to express her contempt for my opinion.

Our chief amusement was riding on the sand, and sometimes crossing to Flint at low water. You know, of course, that formerly the Dee was a great commercial river, with important ports at Chester, Parkgate, and Flint; but in the course of time, the banks have fallen in, increasing the breadth at the expense of the depth; so that at Parkgate, where formerly the Irish packets sailed, the fisher-gigs can walk over at low water, merely tacking up their petticoats in crossing the channel, down which the main channel of fresh water flows.

But although this broad expanse of sand affords a fine footing, at low water, for the whole way across, except just around Flint, where there are several quicksands, when the tide turns in certain states of the wind, the whole estuary is covered with wonderful rapidity; for the tide seems to creep up subterraneous channels, and you may find yourself surrounded by salt water when you least expect it.

This was of no consequence to us, as we were never tied for time. I was teaching Laura to ride, on a little Welsh pony, and the sands made a famous riding school. I was much amused when I think of the little rat of a pony she used to gallop about, for she now struggles into a Brougham of ordinary dimensions with great difficulty, and weighs nearly as much as her late husband, Mr. Alderman Mallard. In a short time, Laura made so much progress in horsemanship, that she insisted on mounting my hackney, a full-sized well-bred animal, and putting me on the rat-pony. When I indulged her in this fancy—for of course she had her own way—I had the satisfaction of being rewarded by her roars of laughter at the ridiculous figure I cut, ambling beside her respectable uncle, on his cart-horse (b), with legs close to the ground, with my nose peering over the little Welshman's shaggy ears, while my fairy galloped around us, drawing all sorts of ridiculous comparisons. This was had enough, but when Captain Egret, the nephew of my chambermaid's husband, a handsome fellow, with "a lovely grey horse, with such a tail," as Laura described it, came up from Chester to stay a few days, I could stand my rat-pony no longer, and felt much too ill to ride out; so I stood at the window of my lodgings with my shirt collar turned down, and Byron in my hand opened at one of the most murderous passages, watching Laura on my chestnut, and Captain Egret on his grey, entering over the deserted bed of the Dee. They were an agreeably handsome couple, and the existing state of the law on manslaughter enabled me to derive no satisfaction from the hints contained in the "Glaucor" or the "Cassid." Those were our favorite books of reference for young England in those days—indeed we were all amateur pirates, and fellows in theory; but when I had been cast down in disgust at the debased state of civilization, which prevented me from challenging Captain Egret to single combat, with Laura for the prize of the victor, instead of a collar in Chester Castle, my eyes fell on an advertisement in a local paper, which turned my thoughts into a new channel, of "sale of bloodstock, Hunters and Hackneys, at Plas," near Holywell.

I determined to give up murder, and buy another horse, for I could ride as well as the Captain; and then what glorious *retrospect* I could have, with my hand on the pommel of Laura's side-saddle. The idea put me in good-humor. Regimental duties having suddenly called Captain Egret, I spent a delightful evening with Laura; she quite approved of my project, and begged that I should choose a horse "with a long tail and a pretty colour," which is every young lady's idea of a horse should be.

Accordingly I mounted my chestnut on a bright morning of July, and rode across to Flint, accompanied by a man to bring back my intended purchase. It was dead low water; when, full of happy thoughts, in the still warm silence of the summer morning, looking my eager horse hard in, I rode at a foot-gallop across the smooth, hard, wax-marked bed of the river. There was not a cloud in the sky. The sun, rising slowly, cast a golden glow over the sparkling sand. Pat-pat-pat, went my horse's feet, not loud enough to disturb the busy crows and gulls seeking their breakfast; they were not afraid of me, they knew I had no gun. I remember it; I see it all before me as if it were yesterday, for it was one of the most delicious moments of my life. But the screaming gulls and whistling curlews were put to flight, before I had half crossed the river's bed, by the cheerful chatter, laughter, and fragments of Welsh songs sung in chorus by a hearty crowd of cockle and muscle gatherers, fishermen, and farmers' wives, on their way to the market on the Chesley side—men, women (they were the majority), and children on foot, on ponies on donkeys, and in little carts. Exchanging good humored jokes, I passed on until I came to the ford of the channel, where the river runs between banks of deep soft sand. At low water, at certain points, in summer, it is but a few inches deep; but after heavy rains, and soon after the turning of the tide, the depth increases rapidly.

At the ford I met a second detachment of Welsh peasantry preparing to cross, by making bundles of shoes and stockings, and tucking up petticoats very deftly. Great was the fun and splashing, and plenty of jokes on the *Saxons* and his red horse going the wrong way. The Welsh girls in this part of the country are very pretty, with beautiful complexions, a gleam of gold in their dark hair, and an easy graceful walk, from the habit of carrying the water-pitchers from the wells on their heads. The scene made me feel anything but melancholy or ill-humored. I could not help turning back to help a couple of little damsels across, pillion-wise, who seemed terribly afraid of wetting their flannel at the foot ford.

Having passed the channels, the wheels and footmarks formed a plain direction for a safe route, which, leaving Flint Castle on the right, brought me into the centre of Flint, without any need of a guide. The rest of my road was straight-forward and commonplace. I reached the farm where the sale was to take place, in time for breakfast, and was soon lost in a crowd of country squires, Welsh parsons, farmers, horse-dealers and grooms.

Late in the day I purchased a brown stallion, with a strain of Arab blood, rather under-sized but compact, and one of the handsomest horses I ever saw before or since, very powerful, nearly thorough-bred. When the auctioneer had knocked him down to me, I said to one of the grooms of the establishment who was helping my man—handing him a crown piece at the same time—

"As the little brown horse is mine with all

faults, just have the goodness to tell me what is his fault?"

"Why, Sir," he answered, "he can walk, trot, gallop or jump, first rate, surely; but he's very awkward to mount; and when you are on, he'll try uncommon hard to get you off, for two minutes; if you stick fast, he will be quiet enough all day."

"Thank you, my man," I replied, "I'll try him directly."

Just before starting I found the chestnut had a shoe loose, and had to send him to the nearest village, two miles off. I had promised Laura to return by eight o'clock, to finish a delightful book we were reading aloud together, until the fit between Captain Egret had interrupted us. You may judge if I was not impatient; and yet with fifteen miles to ride to Flint, I had no time to spare.

My friend, the groom, saddled the Brown horse, and brought him down to the open road to me. He trotted along, with shining coat and arched neck, snorting and waving his great tail like a lion. As he pluffed and paraded sideways, along, casting back his full eye most wickedly, every motion spoke mischief; but there was no time for consideration; I had barely an hour to do fifteen miles of rough road before crossing the river, and must get to the river-side, cool. I had intended to have ridden the chestnut, who was experienced in water, but the loose shoe upset all that arrangement.

Without giving him any time to see what I was about, I caught him by the mane and the reins, and threw myself from a sloping bank into the saddle, and, although he dragged the Groom across the road, I had both feet in the stirrups before he burst his hold. Snorting fiercely, he bucked and plunged until I thought the girls would sneer; but other horsemen galloping past enabled me to bustle him into full speed, and in five minutes he settled down into a long, luxurious stride, with his legs under his hanches, that felt like a common cart, but really devoured the way, and swept me past everything on the road. Up hill and down, it was all the same, he bounded, like a machine full of power on the softest steel springs.

Two miles were soon past, and we reached Holywell; up the steep hill and through the town, and down the steep narrow lanes, we went, and reached the level road along the shore leading to Flint, without halt, until within two miles of that town; then I drew bridle, to walk in cool.

By this time the weather, which had been bright all day, had changed; a few had drops of rain fell, thunder was heard rolling in the distance, and a wind seemed rising and murmuring from the sea.

I looked at my watch as we entered the town; it was an hour past the time when I intended to have crossed—but Laura must not be disappointed, so I only halted at the inn long enough to let the brown wash his mouth out, and, without dismounting, rode on to the guide's house. As I passed the Castle, I heard a hand playing; it was a party of officers, with their friends, who had come up on a picnic from Chester.

When I reached the cottage of old David, the guide, he was sitting on the bench at the door, putting on his shoes and stockings; and part of the party had met me in the morning, as they passed, and "You're late, master; you must hurry on to cross to-night." David was beginning to dissuade me; but when I threw him out a shilling, and trotted on, he followed me, patting down the beach.

"You must make haste, master, for the wind's getting up, and will bring the tide like a roaring lion—it will. But I suppose the pretty lady with the rosy face expects you. But where's the red horse? I wish you had him. I do not like strange horses on such a time as this—indeed, and I do not," he added. But I had no time for explanations, although David was a great ally of ours. I knew I was expected; it was getting dusk, and Laura would be anxious, *Thopd*.

Pushing briskly along we soon reached the ford of the channel, so calm and shallow in the morning, but now filling fast with the tide; dark clouds were covering the sky, and the wind brought up a hollow murmuring sound.

"Now get across, young gentleman, as fast as you can, and keep your eye on the wind-mill, and don't spare your spurs, and you will have plenty of time; so good evening, God bless you, young gentleman, and the pretty lady too," cried David, honestest of Welsh guides.

I tried to walk the brown horse through the ford where it was not more than three or four feet deep; but he first refused; then when pressed, plunged fiercely in, and was out of his depth in a moment. He swam boldly enough, but obstinately kept his head down stream; so that, instead of landing on an easy, shelving shore, he came out where all but a perpendicular bank of soft sand had to be leaped and climbed over. After several unsuccessful efforts, I was obliged to slip off, and climb up on foot, side by side with my horse, holding on by the flap of the saddle. If I had not dismounted, he would probably have rolled back together.

When I reached the top of the bank, fashion, with a strain of Arab blood, rather under-sized but compact, and one of the handsomest horses I ever saw before or since, very powerful, nearly thorough-bred. When the auctioneer had knocked him down to me, I said to one of the grooms of the establishment who was helping my man—handing him a crown piece at the same time—

"As the little brown horse is mine with all

the bridle go and swim back to David. But when I looked at the stream, and thought of Laura, the idea was dismissed. Another tussle in which we ploughed up the sand in a circle, was equally fruitless, and I began to think he would keep me there to be drowned, for to cross to Parkgate on foot before the tide came up, seemed hopeless. At length, finding I could not get to touch his shoulder, I seized the opportunity when he was close to the bank of the stream, and catching the curb sharply in both hands, backed him half way down nearly into the water. Before he had quite straggled up to the top, I threw myself into the saddle, and was carried off at the rate of thirty miles an hour toward the sea.

But I soon gathered up the reins, and, firm in my seat, turned my Tartar's head toward the point where I could see the white wind-mill gleaming through the twilight on the Chesley shore.

I felt that I had not a moment to spare. The sand so firm in the morning, sounded damp under the horse's stride; the little stagnant pools filled visibly, and joining formed shallow lakes, through which we dashed in a shower of spray; and every now and then we leaped over or plunged into deep holes; at first I tried to choose a path, but as it rapidly grew darker, I sat back in my saddle, and with my eyes fixed on the tower of the wind-mill, held my horse firmly into a hand gallop, and kept a straight line. He was a famous deep-chested long-striding little fellow, and bounded along as fresh as when I started. By degrees my spirits began to rise; I thought the danger past; I felt confidence in myself and horse, and shouted to him in encouraging triumph. Already I was in imagination landed, and relating my days' adventures to Laura, when with a heavy plunge down on his head, right over went the brown stallion, and away I flew as far as the reins, fortunately first grasped, would let me. Blinded with wet sand, startled, shaken, confused, by a sort of instinct, I scrambled to my feet almost as soon as my horse, who had fallen over a set of salmon net stakes. Even in the instant of my fall, all the horror of my situation was immaterially visible to me. In a moment I lived years. I felt that I was a dead man; I wondered if my body would be found; I thought of what my friends would say; I thought of letters in my desk; I wished I were dead. I thought of relatives to whom my journey was unknown, of debts I wished paid, of parties with whom I had quarrelled, and wished I had been reconciled. I wondered whether Laura would mourn for me, whether she really loved me. In fact, the most serious and ridiculous were jumbled altogether, while I mattered, once or twice a hasty prayer; and yet I did not lose a moment in remounting. This time my horse made no resistance, but stood over his heels in a pool of salt water, and trembled and snorted—not fiercely but in fear. There was no time to lose. I looked around for the dark line of the shore; it had sunk in the twilight. I looked again for the white tower; it had disappeared. The fall and the rolling, and turning of the horse in rising, had confused all my notions of the points of the compass. I could not tell whether it was the clouds from the sea, or the dizzy whirling of my brain; but it seemed to have become black night in a moment.

The water seemed to flow in all directions round and round. I tried but could not tell which was the sea, and which the river side.

The wind, too, seemed to shift and blow from all points of the compass.

"Then," I said to myself, "be calm; you are confused by terror; be a man; and pride came to my rescue. I closed my eyes for a moment, and whispered, "Oh Lord, save me." Then with an effort, calmer, as though I had gulped down something, I opened my eyes, and stood up in my stirrups and peered into the darkness. As far as I could see, were patches of water eating up the dry bits of sand; as far as I could hear, a rushing tide was on all sides. Four times in different directions I pushed on, and stopped when I found the water rising over the shoulders of my horse.

I drew up on a sort of island of sand, which was every minute growing less, and gathering all the strength of my lungs, shouting again and again, and then I roared; but there came no answering shout. Suddenly a sound of music came floating past. I could distinguish the air; it was the military band playing "Home, sweet home." I tried to gather from what quarter the sound came; but each time the wind instruments lay out loudly, the sounds seemed to come to me from all directions at once. "Ah!" I thought, "I shall see home no more." I could have wept, but I had no time; my eyes were staring through the darkness, and my horse plunging and rearing, gave me no rest for weeping. I gave him his head once, having heard that horses, from slips sunk at sea, have reached land distant ten miles, by instinct; but the alternation of land and shallow and deep water confused his senses, and destroyed the calm power which might have been developed in the mere act of swimming.

At length, after a series of vain efforts, I grew calm and resigned. I made up my mind to die. I took my handkerchief from my pocket, and tied my pocket-book to the D's of the saddle. I pulled my rings off my fingers, and put them in my pocket—I had heard of wreckers cutting off the fingers of drowned men—and then was on the point of dashing forward at random, when some inner feeling made me rest another steady

glance all around. At that moment just behind me something sparkled twice, and disappeared, and then reappearing, shone faintly, but so steadily, that there could be no doubt that it was a light on Chesley shore. In an instant my horse's head was turned around. I had gathered him together, dug in the spurs, and crying from the bottom of my heart, "Thank God!" in the same moment, not profusely but with a horseman's instinct, shouting encouragingly, and dashed away toward the light. It was a hard fight; the ground seemed melting from under us—now struggling through soft sand, now splashing over hard, now swimming, (that was easy,) and now and again half leaping and half falling, but never being held of my horse or sight of my reason; we forced through every obstacle, until at length the water grew shallow and shallower; we reached the sand, and passing the sand, rattled over the single high-water-mark—and I was saved! but I did not, could not stop; up the loose shingles I pressed on to the light that had saved me. I could not rest one instant, even for thanksgiving until I knew to what providential circumstance I owed my safety. I drove up at a fisherman's hat of the humblest kind, built on the highest part of the shore, full two miles from Parkgate; a light which seemed faint, when close to it, twinkled through a small latticed window. I threw myself from my horse and knocked loudly at the door, and as I knocked, fumbled with one hand in my soiled pocket for my purse. Twice I knocked again, and the door, which was unhaspelled, flew open. A woman, weeping bitterly, rose at this rude summons; and at the same moment I saw on the table the small coffin of a young child, with a rush light burning at either end. I owed my life to death.

The *Irish Exiles*.—The following is a passage from a remarkable statement in the *Carroll Examiner* of May 18, bearing upon the continued flight of the population from that part close to the newly adopted land of the Irish Celtic race.

Each week sees the departure on an average of 600 persons, the majority of whom are young men and women 20 and 30 years of age. To imagine the effect of this drain upon the community, we might instance that if these 600 were drawn from a town like that of Branter, there would hardly be a young man or woman left in it. The actual numbers are greater than the population of many large villages, and a fortnight's draught at that rate would utterly depopulate so considerable a town as Millstreet. Remembering that almost every one of these persons is of a condition to be of value to the community—the men as farm-labourers or mechanics; the women, either in agricultural labor, as servants, or still more important, as the healthy mothers of strong children; it is easy to conceive how terrible is the loss to the country.

Nothing can impress this on the mind so strongly as actually witnessing the crowd preparing for their departure. Among the entire crowd there is not the slightest indication of sorrow or misery; not a single ray on the back of any owner indicates that he or she is flying from poverty, not a weak limb or pale cheek—scarcely a wrinkled face indicates that the country is getting rid of a burden. Sturdy, athletic young men, healthy and strong girls—often of extraordinary beauty—form the great bulk of this departing crowd. On Thursday week we witnessed no less than four hundred such preparing to take their departure in the Edinburg, Captain Kennedy, one of the vessels of the Liverpool, New York, and Philadelphia line. A rumor had spread shortly before the arrival of the ship that a certain number would be excluded for want of accommodation, and the despair evinced by those who thought themselves shut out was as great as if they were told they had lost every hope. When the ladders came to bear away the passengers, there was a frantic rush even on the part of those whose places were secured, as if they fancied some untimely interruption would shut them out. The news that all could be taken was received as if some precious gifts had been showered among them.

ALL THE DECEIT.—The legality of this claim by the Republicans was amply demonstrated at their recent Convention in Chicago. They have ever been persistent in a plying the opprobrious epithet of "Whiskey Democracy" to the Democratic party, and insisting that (Republicans) are the only "true blue" and decent party in the field. Let us compare minutes of the late Conventions at Charleston and Chicago. At Charleston, during the session of the Democratic Convention, not a drunk man was seen in the street; not a street fight occurred; and though the Democratic party disagreed amongst itself, and failed to make a nomination, yet no personal ill-feelings were manifested. But look at Chicago; the last week has been one of continual drinking and street rioting; no less than six rows, fist-cuffs and knock-downs occurred in one day in whiskey saloons among delegates. It is said that a number of delegates were apprehended at houses of ill-fame; some were required to keep the peace, others were arrested and tried for street rioting; and to "cap the climax," the wigwag placed in nomination for the highest office in the gift of American people, "a retired whiskey seller."—All the decency! No more call as "Whiskey Democracy," for the whiskey portion has attached itself to the Republican party.—*Exchange*.

THE BODY AVENGER.—By too much sitting the body becomes unhealthy, and soon the mind. This is Nature's law. She will never see her children wronged. If the mind, which rules the body, ever forgets itself so far as to trample upon its slave, the slave is never generous enough to forgive the injury, but will rise and smite his oppressor. This has many a monarch mind been dethroned.—*LOGGERS*.

A Day-dawn View of a Railroad Car.

Night passengers will appreciate the following admirable sketch of the interior of a car at day-break. It is from the *Chicago Journal*.

"Long before we hear the roar of wheels, we see the glimmer of the glowing light