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KIDNAPPED.
THE ADVENTURES OF DAVID BAILEY IN THE YEAR 1751.
BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Chapter XII Continued.]

"Who is he?" cried Alan. "Well, and I'll tell you that. When the men of the clans were broken at Culloden and the good cause went down, and the horses rode over the fetlocks in the best blood of the north, Ardsheel fled like a poor deer upon the mountain—he and his lady and his bairns. A sair job we had of it before we got him shipped; and while he stail lay in the heather the English rogues that could nae come at his life were striking at his rights. They stripped him of his powers; they stripped him of his lands; they plucked the weapons from the hands of his clansmen that had borne arms for thirty centuries; aye, and the very clothes off their backs—so that it's now a sin to wear a tartan plaid, and a man may be cast into a jail if he has but a kilt about his legs. One thing they could nae kill. That was the love the clansmen bore their chief. These guineas are the proof of it. And now in three steps a man, a Campbell, redheaded Colin of Glenuire—

"Is that him you call the Red Fox?" said I.

"Will ye bring me his brush?" cried Alan fiercely. "Ah, that's the man. In he steps and gets papers from King George, to be so called king's factor on the lands of Appin. And at first he sings smail, and is hail fellow well met with Sheamus—that's James of the Glens, my chieftain's agent. But by and by, that came to his ears that I have just told you; how the poor commons of Appin, the farmers and the crofters and the boumen were wringing their very plaids to get a second rent and sent it over seas for Ardsheel and his poor bairns. What was it ye call it, when I told ye?"

"I called it noble, Alan," said I.

"And you little better than a common Whig!" cries Alan. "But when it came to Colin Roy, the black Campbell blood in him ran wild. He sat gnashing his teeth at the wine table. What! should a Stewart get a bite of bread, and him not be able to prevent it? Ah! Red Fox, if ever I hold you at a gun's end, the Lord have pity upon ye!" Alan stopped to swallow down his anger. "Well, David, what does he do? He declares all the farms to let. And thinks he, in his black heart, 'I'll soon get other tenants that'll overbid these Stewarts and Maccolls and Macrobs (for these are all names in my clan, David), and then,' thinks he, 'Ardsheel will have to hold his bonnet on a French roadside!'

"Well," said I, "what followed?"

Alan laid down his pipe, which he had long since suffered to go out, and set his two hands upon his knees.

"Aye," said he, "ye'll never guess that! For these same Stewarts and Maccolls, and Macrobs (that had two rents to pay, one to King George by stark force and one to Ardsheel by natural kindness), offered him a better price than any Campbell in all border Scotland; and far he sent seeking them—as far as to the sides of the Clyde and the cross of Edinburgh—seeking, and fleecing, and begging them to come, where there was a Stewart to be starved and a redheaded hound of a Campbell to be pleased!"

"Well, Alan," said I, "that is a strange story, and a fine one too. And Whig as I may be, I am glad the man was beaten."

"Him beaten?" echoed Alan. "It's little ye ken of Campbells and less of Red Fox. Him beaten? No; nor will be till his blood's on the hillside! But if the day comes, David, man, that I can find time and leisure for a bit of hunting there grows not enough heather in all Scotland to bid him from my vengeance!"

"Man, Alan," said I, "ye are neither very wise nor very Christian to blow off so many words of anger. They will do the man ye call the Fox no harm, and yourself no good. Tell me your tale plainly out. What did he next?"

"And that's a good observe, David," said Alan. "Troth and indeed they will do him no harm, the more's the pity! And barring that about Christianity (of which my opinion is quite otherwise, or I would be nae Christian), I am much of your mind."

"Opinion here or opinion there," said I, "it's a kint thing that Christianity forbids revenge."

"Ah," said he, "it's well seen it was a Campbell taught ye! It would be a convenient world for them and their sort if there was no such a thing as a lad and a gun behind a heather bush! But that's nothing to the point. That is what he did."

"Aye," said I, "come to that."

"Well, David," said he, "since he could nae be rid of the royal commons by fair means, he swore he would be rid of them by foul. Ardsheel was to starve; that was the thing he aimed at. And since then that fed him in his exile would nae be bought out right or wrong, he would drive them out. Therefore he sent for lawyers and papers and red-coats to stand at his back. And the kindly folk of that country must all pack and tramp, every father's son out of his father's house, and out of the place where he was bred and fed, and played when he was a callant. And who are to succeed them? Bareleggit beggars! King George is to whistle for his rents; he manna do with less; he can spread his butter thinner; what cares Red Colin? If he can hurt Ardsheel he has his wish; if he can pluck the meat from my chieftain's table, and the bit toys out of his children's hands, he will gang hame singing to Glenuire!"

"Let me have a word," said I. "Be sure, if they take less rent, be sure government has a finger in the pie. It's not

this Campbells' taut, man—it's his orders. And if ye killed this Colin tomorrow, what better would ye be? There would be another factor in his shoes as fast as spur can drive."

"Ye're a good lad in a fight," said Alan, "but, mna, ye have Whig blood in ye!"

And with this Alan fell into a muse, and for a long time sat very sad and silent.

CHAPTER XIII.
THE LOSS OF THE BRIG.



It was the spare yard I had got hold of.

It was already late at night, and as dark as it ever would be at that season of the year (and that is to say it was still pretty bright), when Hoseason clapped his head into the roundhouse door.

"Here," said he, "come out and see if ye can pilot."

"Is this one of your tricks?" asked Alan.

"Do I look like tricks?" cries the captain. "I have other things to think of—my brig's in danger!"

By the concerned look of his face, and above all by the sharp tones in which he spoke of his brig, it was plain to both of us he was in deadly earnest, and so Alan and I, with no great fear of treachery, stepped on deck.

The sky was clear; it blew hard and was bitter cold; a great deal of daylight lingered, and the moon, which was nearly full, shone brightly.

Altogether it was no such ill night to keep the seas in, and I had begun to wonder what it was that sat so heavily upon the captain, when, the brig rising suddenly on the top of a high swell, he pointed and cried to us to look. Away on the lee bow a thing like a fountain rose out of the moonlit sea, and immediately after we heard a low sound of roaring.

"What do ye call that?" asked the captain gloomily.

"The sea breaking on a reef," said Alan. "And now ye ken where it is, and what better would ye have?"

"Aye," said Hoseason, "if it was the only one."

And sure enough just as he spoke there came a second fountain farther to the south.

"There!" said Hoseason. "Ye see for yourself. If I had kent of these reefs, if I had had a chart, or if Shuan had been spared, it's not sixty guineas—no, nor six hundred, would have made me risk my brig in sic a stoneyard! But you, sir, that was to pilot us, have ye never a word?"

"I'm thinking," said Alan, "these'll be what they call the Torran rocks."

"Are there many of them?" says the captain.

"Truly, sir, I am nae pilot," said Alan. "but it sticks in my mind there are ten miles of them."

Mr. Riach and the captain looked at each other.

"There's a way through them, I suppose?" said the captain.

"Doubtless," said Alan; "but where? But it somehow runs in my mind once more that it is clearer under the land."

"So?" said Hoseason. "We'll have to haul our wind then, Mr. Riach; we'll have to come as near in about the end of Mull as we can take her, sir, and even then we'll have the land to keep the wind off us and that stony yard on our lee. Well, we're in for it now and may as well crack on."

With that he gave an order to the steersman and sent Riach to the fore-top. There were only five men on deck, counting the officers. These were all that were fit or at least both fit and willing, for their work, and two of these were hurt. So, as I say, it fell to Mr. Riach to go aloft, and he sat there looking out and hailing the deck with news of all he saw.

"The sea to the south is thick," he cried, and then after awhile, "it does seem clearer in by the land."

"Well, sir," said Hoseason to Alan, "we'll try your way of it. But I think I might as well trust to a blind fiddler. Pray God ye're right."

"Pray God I am!" says Alan to me. "But where did I hear it? Well, well, it will be as it must."

As we got nearer to the turn of the land the reefs began to be seen here and there on our very path, and Mr. Riach sometimes cried down to us to change the course. Sometimes indeed none too soon, for one reef was so close on the brig's weatherboard that when a sea burst upon it the lighter sprays fell upon her deck and wetted us like rain.

The brightness of the night showed us these perils as clearly as by day, which was perhaps the more alarming. It showed me, too, the face of the captain as he stood by the steersman, now on one foot, now on the other, and sometimes blowing in his hands, but still listening and looking and as steady as steel. Neither he nor Mr. Riach had shown well in the fighting, but I saw they were brave in their own trade, and admired them all the more because I found Alan very white.

"Ochone, David," said he, "this is no the kind of death I fancy."

"What, Alan!" I cried, "you're not afraid?"

"No," said he, wetting his lips, "but ye'll allow yourself, it's a cold ending."

"By this time, now and then sheering to one side or the other to avoid a reef, but still hugging the wind and the land, we had got around Iona and begun to

come alongside Mull. The tide of the tail of the land ran very strong and threw the brig about. Two hands were put to the helm, and Hoseason himself would sometimes lend a hand; and it was strange to see three strong men throw their weight upon the tiller, and it, like a living thing, struggle against and drive them back. This would have been the greater danger had not the sea been for some while free of obstacles. Mr. Riach besides announced from the top that he saw clear water ahead.

"Ye were right," said Hoseason to Alan. "Ye have saved the brig, sir; I'll mind that when we come to clear accounts." And I believe he not only meant what he said, but would have done it; so high a place did the Covenant hold in his affections.

But this is matter only for conjecture, things having gone otherwise than he forecast.

"Keep her away a point," sings out Mr. Riach. "Reef to windward!"

And just at the same time the tide caught the brig and threw the wind out of her sails. She came round into the wind like a top, and the next moment struck the reef with such a dunch as threw us all flat upon the deck, and came near to shake Mr. Riach from his place upon the mast.

I was on my feet in a minute. The reef on which we had struck was close in under the southwest end of Mull, off a little isle they call Erraid, which lay low and black upon the larboard. Sometimes the swell broke clear over us; sometimes it only ground the poor brig upon the reef, so that we could hear her beat herself to pieces, and what with the great noise of the sails, and the singing of the wind, and the flying of the spray in the moonlight, and the sense of danger, I think my head was partly turned, for I could scarcely understand the things I saw.

Presently I observed Mr. Riach and the seamen busy around the skiff, and still in the same blank ran over to assist them, and as soon as I set my hand to work my mind came clear again. It was no very easy task, for the skiff lay amidships and was full of lamper, and the breaking of the heavier seas continually forced us to give over and hold on, but we all wrought like horses while we could.

Meanwhile such of the wounded as could move came clambering out of the fore scuttle and began to help, while the rest that lay helpless in their bunks harrowed me with screaming and begging to be saved.

The captain took no part. It seemed he was struck stupid. He stood holding by the shrouds, talking to himself and groaning out aloud whenever the ship hammered on the rock. His brig was like wife and child to him. He had looked on day by day at the manhandling of poor Ransome, but when it came to the brig he seemed to suffer along with her.

All the time of our working at the boat I remember only one other thing—that I asked Alan, looking across at the shore, what country it was, and he answered it was the worst possible for him, for it was a land of the Campbells.

We had one of the wounded men set off to keep a watch upon the sea and cry us warning. Well, we had the best about ready to be launched when a man sung out pretty shrill, "For God's sake, hold on!" We knew by his tone that it was something more than ordinary, and sure enough there followed a sea so huge that it lifted the brig right up and canted her over on her beam-ends. Whether the cry came too late or my hold was too weak I know not, but at the sudden tilting of the ship I was cast clean over the bulwarks into the sea.

I went down and drank my fill, and then came up and got a blink of the moon, and then went down again.

Presently I found I was holding to a spar, which helped me somewhat. And then all of a sudden I was in quiet water and began to come to myself.

It was the spare yard I had got hold of, and I was amazed to see how far I had traveled from the brig. I hailed her indeed; but it was plain she was already out of cry. She was still holding together, but whether or not they had yet latched the boat I was too far off and too low down to see.

While I was hailing the brig I spied a tract of water lying between us, where no great waves came, but which yet boiled white all over and bristled in the moon with rings and bubbles. Sometimes the whole tract swung to one side like the tail of a live serpent; sometimes for a glimpse it all would disappear and then boil up again. What it was I had no guess, which for the time increased my fear of it, but I now know it must have been the roost or tide race which had carried me away so fast and tumbled me about so cruelly, and at last, as if tired of that play, had flung out me and the spare yard upon its landward margin.

I now lay quite becalmed, and began to feel that a man can die of cold as well as of drowning. The shores of Erraid were close in. I could see in the moonlight the dots of heather and the sparkling of the mica in the rocks.

"Well," thought I to myself, "if I cannot get as far as that it's strange!"

I had no skill of swimming, Essen water being small in our neighborhood, but when I laid hold upon the yard with both arms and kicked out with both feet I soon began to find that I was moving. Hard work it was, and mortally slow, but in about an hour of kicking and splashing I had got well in between the points of a sandy bay surrounded by low hills.

The sea was here quite quiet, there was no sound of any surf, the moon shone clear and I thought in my heart I had never seen a place so desert and desolate. But it was dry land, and when at last it grew so shallow that I could leave the yard and wade ashore upon my feet I cannot tell if I was more tired or more grateful. Both at least I was, tired as I never was before that night, and grateful to God as I trust I have been often, though never with more cause.

CHAPTER XIV.
THE LAD WITH THE SILVER BUTTON, THROUGH THE ISLE OF MULL.



Dracting a knife from his rags he squatted back and grinned at me.

The Ross of Mull, which I had got upon, was rugged and trackless, being all bog and brier and big stone. There may be roads for them that know that country well; but for my part I had no better guide than my own nose, and no other landmark than Ben More.

I aimed as well as I could for a smoke I had seen, and with all my great weariness and difficulty of the way came upon the house at the bottom of a little hollow about five or six at night. It was low and longish, roofed with turf and built of unmortared stones, and on a mound in front of it an old man sat smoking his pipe in the sun.

With what little English he had he gave me to understand that my shipmates had got safe ashore, and had broken bread in that very house the day after.

"Was there one," I asked, "dressed like a gentleman?"

He said they all wore rough greatcoats; but, to be sure, the first of them, the one that came alone, wore breeches and stockings, while the rest had sailors' trowsers.

"Ah," said I, "and he would have a feathered hat?"

He told me no; that he was bare headed like myself.

At first I thought Alan might have lost his hat, and then the rain came in my mind, and I judged it more likely he had it out of harm's way under his greatcoat. This set me smiling, partly because my friend was safe, partly to think of his vanity in dress.

And then the old gentleman clapped his hand to his brow and cried out that I must be the lad with the silver button.

"Why, yes," said I in some wonder.

"Well, then," said the old gentleman, "I have a word for you that you are to follow your friend to his country by Torrosay."

He then asked me how I had fared, and I told him my tale. A south countryman would certainly have laughed, but this old gentleman (I call him so because of his manners, for his clothes were dropping off his back) heard me all through with nothing but gravity and pity. When I had done he took me by the hand, led me into his hut (it was no better) and presented me before his wife, as if she had been the queen and I a duke.

The good woman set out bread before me and a cold grouse, patting my shoulder and smiling to me all the time, for she had no English, and the old gentleman, not to be behind, brewed me a strong punch out of their country spirit. All the while I was eating, and after that, when I was wrinking the punch, I could scarce come to believe in my good fortune, and the house, though it was thick with the pent smoke and full of holes as a colander, seemed like a palace.

The punch threw me in a strong sweat and a deep slumber. The good people let me lie, and it was near noon of the next day before I took the road, my throat already easier and my spirits quite restored by good fare and good news.

Thought I to myself, "If these are the wild highlanders I could wish my own folk wilder."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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