

# "Geoffrey Heathcote, Esq."

By JOHN FINNIMORE.

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"If it is a mountain pony it will run over this like a fox," said Iuan, "and then you will have to ride after him and catch him. If it is a tall horse I will send him down to that ice, so that he is most likely to roll in a heap."

"Why," said I, "the fellow will be killed."

"And a sword?" said Iuan; "a sword and a pistol? Perhaps they do not kill."

"True," said I, "I might have to use a spear-thrower."

"He also will have good arms," said Iuan, "be sure of that. And Gruffydd will use them, too."

"Gruffydd," I said, "do you mean that big dark man with the sword-cut on his cheek? Why do you name him?"

"And have you not seen him following that old man as a dog follows his master?" demanded Iuan. "He will come as sure as we stand here."

He turned and went up on the gentle slope which rose from the thicket. The crest of the rise was scarce fifty yards from the spot where the ice-trap lay, and from this point we looked out along a flat open stretch, lying silent and desolate under the moon.

"I shall jump from behind this bush and try to beat him from his horse with my gun," went on my companion, but there is no good cover handy, and it is likely I shall miss. Then you must stop in the bottom with your horse and cut him off, if he passes the ice."

"Ay, ay," said I, and beat my hands again, for at present I could handle nothing surely. Then I went back down the hill to look at Whitesock, and found her standing like a lamb under cover of the thick bushes, but making a soft whinny noise for joy to see me again. I walked her gently up and down for an hour or more, without sight or sound of anything happening.

Being unused to such places, I spread the cloak carefully over her, and went up the slope.

Just as I reached the top, Iuan rose out of a patch of brake in which he had settled himself. I saw his beckoning finger against the sky. I ran at once, and he pointed to the distance. The night was still and windless, and the silence intense. I listened eagerly, yet heard nothing. I shook my head, but Iuan wagged his shock of hair with the completest confidence, and bent my ear to its task again. Yes, I had it now. The sound of clinking hoofs, faint and far, and swift, beating on the iron road.

"I am right," said Iuan, "as always right," said Iuan, softly, as proud as cock over the way in which his forecast was coming true. "He is coming, he is coming."

"I will get back to my post, said I, and away I went down the hill. I led Whitesock to the edge of the bushes, and swung myself into the saddle and waited with my eyes fixed upon the ridge above, clear in the moonlight.

The rider was no laggard, for I had been ready but a short time when I heard the clang of hoofs rattling up to the ridge. Suddenly horse and man shot into sight, and upon the instant a dark figure leaped at them with a wild scream. The horseman must have driven his spurs home at the sound of the swift canter was exchanged for a furious gallop. The big, powerful horse he was riding came down the hill with terrific leaps, bound upon bound, and in a moment he was clean upon the trap of ice, and worked to a miracle. The shoes of the horse were somewhat smooth, as we found afterward, and shot out from under him like skates, and down he went, horse and man rolling over and over in a crumpled heap. Iuan had followed hard upon their heels and now ran in and had the horse at once by the head. It got to its feet trembling but unharmed; the man lay quite dead.

In a trice Iuan had secured the horse to a neighboring bush and was back at my side, for I had now come up and was turning the man over on his back.

"Gruffydd it is," said Iuan, "and where is the paper?"

"He is not dead," said I, laying my hand on the messenger's heart.

"Dead!" said Iuan with scorn, "and why should he be dead with falling from a horse? But the senses are out of him and that is very useful for us."

Without another word he turned to his task and deftly stripped off the great horseman's coat in which Gruffydd was wrapped. This he tossed aside as a very unlikely place for a letter to be stowed away in. Next came a very thick woolen doublet, which Iuan whipped off as neatly, and set about searching. He took his long knife and ripped it here and there, but no letter came to light, and after a few moments' search he flung that aside also. In a twinkling and with a dexterity of which I had never seen the like, he had the shirt of Gruffydd off and in his hands, allowing the naked body of the messenger to fall back upon the icy slab of rock as if he was handling a wooden figure.

At the second cut of the knife he gave guttural cries and I saw that he had ripped open a small bag-like fold of the shirt pleated close to the neck and out came a folded letter. He handed it over to me and I had it open at once.

I held it up to the moonlight but could make out nothing. Iuan had flint, steel and tinder and he struck a light. It was all right. We had the letter safe enough. It gave the information which could be gathered from the note of which I had been robbed and was addressed to Sir John Postgate. No name was signed to it, but an ingenious and complicated device was drawn with a pen. This would serve to prove who had written the letter, since the writer alone would know how it was signed; and yet should it fall into the wrong hands no trace of the writer's identity would be furnished.

"This is it," I cried.

"Then there is with us all we are wanting, and Gruffydd is of no more use," said Iuan. He bent over the prostrate half-naked figure, took a handful of the great black hair in his clutch and tossed the head back, baring the hairy throat. Upon this naked throat he laid the edge of his keen sword, and with a turn of his wrist was about to hit it from ear to ear, when I sprang forward and took his arm with both my hands, crying, "No, no!"

Iuan turned his head and looked at me inquiringly for a moment, then rose and thrust his knife into his sheath.

"Yes," said he, "you are right; you are quite right. I am seeing your meaning. If they shall know that Gruffydd is stopped, they shall start some one else, and perhaps we are not there to catch that one."

It was clear that Iuan had not discerned the impulse of humanity which forbade me to stand by and see the poor wretch's throat cut for doing his master's errand and bidding. But his keen wits had furnished a reason for not proceeding with the murder of his man. What better evidence could

be given Sir Arthur that his mission had failed than the finding of the dead body of his messenger. "He must be brought with us," said Iuan, "and forthwith began dressing the man again."

Gruffydd came to his senses as Iuan was fastening his doublet about him, and looked round upon us vacantly, hearing low, uneasy cries. I brought the horse and he was set upon it, after his broadsword and a pair of pistols had been taken from him. Iuan ripped off a strip of the prisoner's coat with a knife and bound his feet together under the horse, then seized the rein and struck away at once into the moorland.

I BECAME A MAN OF THE DUSK

I followed in his steps, for I could not see what else to do. The whole affair was on my account; the man was in a sense my prisoner, and I felt responsible for him. The discovery of the dead body, which Sir Arthur held over my friends had turned my plans topsy-turvy, and I could scarcely ride away to a safe place of refuge with the knowledge that their liberties and lives were hanging in the wind.

"You will follow very carefully," said Iuan over his shoulder, "for there will be places where to go a foot wrong will be to slip into a bog, where you will sink as a stone sinks in water."

Upon this caution I came down and led Whitesock close at the tail of the messenger's horse. At first the path was hard and clean, then we traveled for a long way through places where the frost had not yet gained a complete grip of the marshy track, and crashing through the stiffened surface.

Being unused to such places, I was in my mouth time and again, especially when the surface of the bog for a score of yards round quaked and swayed, and seemed to suck at us, as a sinner to engulf us between its sedgy lips.

But Iuan trod firmly and steadily on, and I followed, and within an hour we came out on the smooth, hard hillside. Iuan now sprang up behind Whitesock and took the reins, urging the powerful horse to a trot, and I swung myself into the saddle and rode alongside.

As I came up, the prisoner turned a sullen eye upon me, and I saw fear and surprise mingled in his glance.

"I tell him not to be frightened," said I; "he will not come to any further harm."

Iuan gave a chuckle of dry contempt, and shrugged his shoulders slightly. He spoke never a word, and I was more and more fortified in my resolution to see the thing through, and do what I could to keep safe a man who was only an innocent instrument in the mischief intended to me.

Mile after mile we trotted over the bare, bleak hills, and wider and wider grew the scene around us. At last Iuan drew rein at the mouth of a narrow wadi, whose entrance was littered by great rocks, and began to bark like a fox. He was answered instantly, and two fellows sprang from their hiding places among the bushes and ran to meet us. At a word from Iuan each of them took a rein and guided the horses through a narrow path, which wound among the masses of stone and led to a smooth patch of greensward set round on three sides by beetling precipices.

One of these latter lay full length in the moonlight and toward it our horses were led. A dozen yards from the gray rock our guides stood still, and Iuan made a sign that I should remain in the saddle and stand in front of their leader, the two assistants pulled Gruffydd down in a very unceremonious fashion and held him by the collar.

"Come this way," said Iuan.

"What about my mare?" I returned.

"Bring her with you, if you like," said Iuan, and I led Whitesock after him.

I now saw that a huge fragment of rock lay at the base of the cliff, but being of the same color and leaving but a narrow gap, it looked, even when close at hand, a mere projection rather than a separate mass. The path between the boulder and the cliff ended but a single passenger, and we walked in file, my stirrups jingling against the rock on either hand as Whitesock stepped cautiously after me.

A black hole, barely the height of a man, received us, and sand crunched under our feet. A red dancing gleam struck into my eyes, and I saw a great fire of turf burning high and painting the wet, slimy walls of a large cavern with bright mirror-like reflections. About a dozen figures, who had been seated round the blaze, sprang to their feet as we entered, but sank down again when they recognized Iuan.

Low strains of the most mournful music hummed through the place, and I saw the dwarf harper bending over his instrument and drawing from it a wailing, melancholy air.

A woman, huddled near him in a crouching heap, continued to utter low, heart broken groans, fitting accompaniment to his music. From two or three bundles laid against the further wall came a covered with skins and tattered rags, cries of pain occasionally burst forth, betraying the presence of the wounded, and I saw myself, at a bound transferred to the center and stronghold of the Red Men of the Dusk.

Without a word to any one, Iuan walked up to the fire and spread his hands to the warmth. "Fierce, curious eyes were turned upon me, and savage cries of rage were uttered as the prisoner was brought forward. His teeth rattled together in fear as he was dragged into the firelight. Iuan looked upon his terror and their hate with a complacent grin. At this instant the woman, whose groans of sorrow had been echoing through the place, was aroused from her torpor by the excitement of her companions. She looked round and saw the captive, for Gruffydd was now bound hand and foot.

With a scream of wild exultation she recognized him as a man from Nant-y-Bryn, and at the same moment I knew that for the woman who had begged in vain for the life of her son. She leaped to her feet, drew a knife, and rushed upon her prey, amid the applauding cries of her friends. I sprang forward just in time and caught her up-lifted arm.

With swift adroitness she changed the knife to her other hand, and was about to aim a blow at me, when I moved aside and the firelight struck full on my face. The knife tinkled at my feet, and she clasped my arms and burst into a flood of speech and tears.

"Old Megan is asking your pardon," said Iuan, who had watched everything with his broad, cruel smile. "She was not knowing you till she saw your face, and she is now saying that there is nothing which could persuade her to do you a mischief."

CHAPTER XVII.

"And this poor wretch who has been brought here, surely you will not put him to death in cold blood?"

"Indeed, I do not care either way," said Iuan, stroking his beard; "yet, to be sure, if he should catch some one again as he did last night, they would not be so quick to hang him if we had a man to hang, too. We could exchange, as they do at the wars."

"And that's a good idea," said I.

"Yes," said Iuan, with a smile of pleased vanity, "and from that instant Gruffydd's life was safe."

Food was now offered us—broiled mutton and oatmeal cakes—while a band of fiddlers was brought out for Whitesock.

A heap of dried rushes and ferns was assigned to me for a bed, and, folded in my cloak, I slept easily and soundly.

Upon my awakening the next morning I rubbed my eyes, and had some difficulty in recollecting where I was. The place looked much the same as on the previous night.

The huge turf fire had been piled up again and was roaring gaily under a natural rock which led to a crack in the hillside above. No daylight ever entered the cavern, but it was lit night and day by the peats and wood, of which a great pile was stacked in the driest corner.

The place was empty save for the wounded red men of the Dusk and Megan, who was crouched within a yard of my couch feeding Whitesock with morsels of oatmeal, which the mare chewed slowly, yet with a relish, as if appreciating the kindness which was meant.

I sprang up and shook myself, and Whitesock whinnied gaily. Megan stepped quickly forward, took my cloak and busied herself with picking from it every bit of fern which clung to its surface, patting it and smoothing it, and showing me every attention in her power. Then she turned to the fire and the hissing of her cookery was filling the place when Iuan entered.

"What is the prisoner?" said I.

"He is safe as you are," returned Iuan, showing his white teeth in a smile. "Did I not say so? But he has been put in one of the other places."

He sat down on a block of wood near the entrance of the cave, and I saw Megan give the book which I had ready, and we ate in silence. For my part, I was busy enough in my thoughts. It was difficult to a degree to decide on my next movements. If I proceeded on my journey, the matters at such loose ends, both as regards the whereabouts of the hands of the Red Men of the Dusk and my friends in hiding, that I should never have known a peaceful moment.

If I went back to Nant-y-Bryn and returned to my friends, it would only serve to acquaint them with the results of my journey, and I would be deeper and more careful plans to come at his ends. I could see nothing for it but to stand still for the present and await the march of events.

Gruffydd brushed the crumbs of oatmeal from my knees when a smart pluck sounded on the floor, and a bare-footed Red Man of the Dusk ran in, his pike trailed in his hand and his breath coming deeply, as if he had run fast and long.

Iuan looked up and listened attentively to the man's story, then glanced thoughtfully into the fire.

"Where has this man come from?" said I.

"From Nant-y-Bryn," replied Iuan.

"Nant-y-Bryn?" I cried.

"Yes," said Iuan; "that old man shall not lift a finger but what I will hear of it, and I keep one or two there watching always."

"But they will be observed," said I.

Iuan laughed scornfully, and waved his hand without deigning to reply; and I remembered the wild tangle of hills and ravines that rose to the north of the house, holding it in full view and affording cover for an army.

"What does he bring?" I asked.

"Owain has ridden away over the hills to the south, and two men with him," answered Iuan.

"Where has he gone?" said I, in wonder.

"I am not sure, but I can guess," returned Iuan, and he fell silent, biting the ends of his long muschace. In a short time he left the cave, and I saw no more of him for some hours. I spent much of this time jangling about the fire, brushing the crumbs of oatmeal from my knees when a smart pluck sounded on the floor, and a bare-footed Red Man of the Dusk ran in, his pike trailed in his hand and his breath coming deeply, as if he had run fast and long.

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The five-gallon can turned out at the Devoe is a marvel of evolution. The present methods of manufacture are almost entirely the work of Herman Miller, known in Standard circles as the "father of the five-gallon can."

The machinery for making the can has been so developed that while, in 1855, when Mr. Miller began his work, one man and a boy soldered 850 cans in a day; in 1880, three men made 8,000, and since 1893 three men have made 24,000. It is an actual fact that a tin can is made by Miller in just about the time it takes to walk from the point in the factory where the sheets of tin are unloaded to the point where the finished article is filled with oil.

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An Unpleasant Truth.

New York Times: A man in this city has social aspirations which have somewhat warped his admiration of his homespun father. The father actually sometimes releases into the bar-barian of eating with his knife, but the man has a little son whose eyes seek and find out the truth. The other day the little boy at dinner put his knife to his mouth, and his mother chided him.

"Mamma, dear," said she, "only stupid people eat with their knives."

"How can you say that, mamma?" cried the child. "Mamma eats with his knife, and he made all our money."

Mr. Winslow's BOOTS FOR CHILDREN: softens the gums, reduces inflammation, relieves toothache, and cures a toothache.

Jehah's Conscience.

Philadelphia Public Ledger: A teacher in one of our city schools defined conscience "as something within you that tells you when you have done wrong."

"Oh, yes," spoke a little lad at the far end of the room; "I had it once this summer after I'd eaten green apples; but they had to send for a doctor."

CONSUMES MANY HIDES.

287,65 Animals Required to Supply the Big Mayer Shoe Factory at Milwaukee.

What becomes of the thousands of hides gathered together annually in this country, and how are they consumed? This question may come to the minds of many stock raisers, but few have any conception of the daily requirements of the single great modern institution like the Mayer Boot & Shoe Company of Milwaukee. This concern made into shoes last year the hides of 287,145 animals. Figure on the basis of 300 working days a year, the hides of nearly 1000 animals were required each day to keep the working force and the machinery in operation.

To supply the demand for the trade during the last year, there were used into shoes the hides of:

41,555 steers,  
21,492 cows,  
38,952 calves,  
133,756 goats,  
49,820 sheep,  
1,740 horses,  
1,020 kangaroos.

If all these animals were placed in single file it would make one continuous line, 273 miles long, or about the distance from Chicago to St. Louis. The number of animals required to supply the hides for each working day, if lined up at the Mayer factory every morning, would reach almost a mile.

To work so large an amount of material into the finished product necessitated the employment of over 600 people all the year round. The wages paid would support every man, woman and child in a city of 3000 inhabitants.

The Mayer factory has