

KIDNAPPED

THE ADVENTURES OF DAVID BALFOUR IN THE YEAR 1731

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

CHAPTER XXV.
I COME TO MR. RANKEILLOR.



"You say you were shipwrecked," said Rankeillor.

The next day it was agreed that Alan should find for himself till sunset, but as soon as it began to grow dark he should lie in the fields by the roadside near to Newhalls, and stir for naught until he heard me whistling.

I was in the long street of Queensferry before the sun was up. It was a fairly built burg, the houses of good stone, many slated; the town hall not so fine, I thought, as that of Peebles, nor yet the street so noble, but take it altogether it put me to shame for my foul tavern.

And as I continued to walk up and down and saw people looking askance at me upon the street or out of windows, and nodding or speaking one to another with smiles, I began to take fresh apprehension that it might be no easy matter even to come to speech of the lawyer, far less to convince him of my story.

For the life of me I could not muster up the courage to address any of these reputable burghers. I thought shame even to speak with them in such a pickle of rags and dirt, and if I had asked for the house of such a man as Mr. Rankellor I supposed they would have burst out laughing in my face. It grew to be high day at last, perhaps nine

the forenoon, and I was worn with these wanderings, and chanced to have stopped in front of a very good house on the landward side, a house with beautiful, clear glass windows, flowering knots upon the sills, the walls new harled (newly rough cast), and a chaise dog sitting yawning on the step like one that was at home. Well, I was even envying this dumb brute when the door fell open and there issued forth a little shrewd, ruddy, kindly consequential man in a well powdered wig and spectacles. I was in such a plight that no one set eyes on me once, but he looked at me again, and this gentleman, as it proved, was so much struck with my poor appearance that he came straight up to me and asked me what I did.

I told him I was come to the Queensferry on business, and taking heart of grace asked him to direct me to the house of Mr. Rankellor.

"Why," said he, "that is his house that I have just come out of, and for a rather singular chance I am that very man."

"Then, sir," said I, "I have to beg the favor of an interview."

"I do not know your name," said he, "nor yet your face."

"My name is David Balfour," said I.

"David Balfour?" he repeated in rather a high tone, like one surprised. "And where have you come from, Mr. David Balfour?" he asked, looking me pretty dryly in the face.

"I have come from a great many strange places, sir," said I, "but I think it would be as well to tell you where and how in a more private manner."

He seemed to muse awhile, holding his lip in his hand and looking now at me and now upon the causeway of the street.

"Yes," says he, "that will be the best no doubt." And he led me back with him into his house, cried out to some one whom I could not see that he would be engaged all morning, and brought me into a little dusty chamber full of books and documents. Here he sat down and bade me be seated, though I thought he looked a little ruefully from his clean chair to my muddy rags. "And now," says he, "if you have any business pray be brief and come swiftly to the point. Neo germino bellum Trojanum orbitur ab ovo—do you understand that?" says he, with a keen look.

"I will even do as Horace says, sir," I

answered smiling, "and carry you in medias res." He nodded as if he was well pleased, and indeed his scrap of Latin had been set to test me. For all that, and though I was somewhat encouraged, the blood came in my face when I added, "I have reason to believe myself some rights on the estate of Shaws."

He got a paper book out of a drawer and set it before him open. "Well?" said he.

But I had shot my bolt and sat speechless.

"Come, come, Mr. Balfour," said he, "you must continue. Where were you born?"

"In Essendean, sir," said I, "in the year seventeen hundred and thirty-four, the twelfth of March."

He seemed to follow this statement in his paper book; but what that meant I knew not. "Your father and mother?" said he.

"My father was Alexander Balfour, schoolmaster of that place," said I, "and my mother Grace Pitarrow; I think her people were from Angus."

"Have you any papers proving your identity?" asked Mr. Rankellor.

"No, sir," said I, "but they are in the hands of Mr. Campbell, the minister, and could be readily produced. Mr. Campbell, too, would give me his word, and for that matter I do not think my name would deny me."

"Meaning Mr. Ebenezer Balfour?" says he.

"The same," said I.

"By whom I was received into his own house," I answered.

"Did you ever meet a man of the name of Hoseason?" asked Mr. Rankellor.

"I did so, sir, for my class," said I, "for it was by his means and the procurement of my uncle that I was kidnapped with eight of this town, carried to sea, suffered shipwreck and a hundred other hardships, and stand before you today in this poor accoutrement."

"You say you were shipwrecked," said Rankellor; "where was that?"

"Off the south end of the Isle of Mull," said I. "The name of the island on which I was cast up is the Island Earraid."

"Ah!" said he, smiling, "you are deeper than me in geography. But so far, I may tell you, this agrees pretty exactly with other informations that I hold. But you say you were kidnapped; in what sense?"

"In the plain meaning of the word, sir," said I. "I was on my way to your house when I was trepanned on board the brig, cruelly struck down, thrown below and knew no more of anything till we were far at sea. I was destined for the plantations; a fate that, in God's providence, I have escaped."

"The brig was lost on June twenty-seventh," says he, looking in his book, "and we are now at August twentieth-fourth. Here is a considerable hiatus, Mr. Balfour, of near upon two months. It has already caused a vast amount of trouble to your friends, and I own I shall not be very well contented until it is set right."

"Indeed, sir," said I, "these months are very easily filled up; but yet before I told my story I would be glad to know that I was talking to a friend."

"This is to argue in a circle," said the lawyer. "I cannot be convinced till I have heard you. I cannot be your friend until I am properly informed. If you were more trustful it would better benefit your time of life. And you know, M. Balfour, we have a proverb in the country that evil-doers are eye-evil dreaders."

"You are not to forget, sir," said I, "that I have already suffered by my trustfulness; and was shipped off to be a slave by the very man that (if I rightly understand) is your employer."

All this while I had been gaining ground with Mr. Rankellor, and in proportion as I gained ground, gaining confidence. But at this rally, which I made with something of a smile myself, he fairly laughed aloud.

"No, no," said he; "it is not so bad as that. Foi, non sum. I was indeed your uncle's man of business; but while you (imberbis juvenis custode remoto) were gallivanting in the west, a good deal of water has run under the bridges; and if your ears did not sing, it was not for lack of being talked about. On the very day of your sea disaster, Mr. Campbell stalked into my office, demanding you from all the winds. I had never heard of your existence; but I had known your father; and from matters in my competence (to be touched upon hereafter) I was disposed to fear the worst. Mr.

Ebenezer admitted having seen you; declared (what seemed improbable) that he had given you considerable sums, and that you had started for the continent of Europe, intending to fulfill your education, which was probable and praiseworthy. Interrogated how you had come to send no word to Mr. Campbell, he deponed that you had expressed a great desire to break with your past life; further interrogated where you now were, protested ignorance, but believed you were in Leyden. That is a close sum of his replies. I am not exactly sure that any one believed him," continued Mr. Rankellor with a smile; "and in particular he so much disrelished some expressions of mine that, in a word, he showed me to the door. We were then at a full stand, for whatever shrewd suspicions we might entertain we had no shadow of probation. In the very article comes Captain Hoseason with the story of your drowning; whereupon all fell through, with no consequences but concern to Mr. Campbell, injury to my pocket, and another blot upon your uncle's character, which could very ill afford it. And now, Mr. Balfour," said he, "you understand the whole process of these matters, and can judge for yourself to what extent I may be trusted."

"Sir," said I, "if I tell you my story I must commit a friend's life to your discretion. Pass me your word it shall be sacred, and for what touches myself I will ask no better guarantee than just your face."

He passed me his word very seriously. "But," said he, "these are rather alarming prolocutions, and if there are in your story any little jostles to the law, I would beg you to bear in mind that I am a lawyer, and pass lightly."

Thereupon I told him my story from the first. He listened with his spectacles thrust up and his eyes closed, so that I sometimes feared he was asleep. But no such matter! He heard every word (as I found afterward) with such quickness of hearing and precision of memory as often surprised me. Even strange, outlandish Gaelic names, heard for that time only, he remembered, and would remind me of years after. Yet when I called Alan Brock in full we had an odd scene. The name of Alan had of course rung through Scotland with the news of the Appin murder and the offer of the reward, and it had no sooner escaped me than the lawyer moved in his seat and opened his eyes.

"I would name no unnecessary names, Mr. Balfour," said he; "above all of highlanders, many of whom are obnoxious to the law."

"Well, it might have been better not," said I; "but since I have let it slip, I may as well continue."

"Not at all," said Mr. Rankellor. "I am somewhat dull of hearing, as you may have remarked, and I am far from sure I caught the name exactly. We will call your friend, if you please, Mr. Thomson—that there may be no reflections. And in future I would take some such way with any highlander that you may have to mention—dead or alive."

"Well, well," said the lawyer when I had quite done, "this is a great epic, a great Odyssey of yours. You have shown a singular aptitude for getting into false positions, and yet, upon the whole, for behaving well in them. This Mr. Thomson seems to me a gentleman of some choice qualities, though perhaps a trifle bloody minded. It would please me none the worse if (with all its merits) he were couped in the North sea; for the man, Mr. David, is a sore embarrassment. But you are doubtless quite right to adhere to him; indubitably he adhered to you."

He rose, called over the stair to lay another plate, for Mr. Balfour would stay to dinner, and led me into a bedroom in the upper part of the house. Here he set before me water and soup and his comb, and laid out some clothes that belonged to his son, and here, with another opposite tag, he left me to my toilet.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Brooks Rang the Bell.

Usica Observer.

The following story, with a good joke on the bishop, is told as illustrating the kindness of heart of Bishop Philips Brooks: As the reverend doctor was going up the street one night he saw a little fellow at a house trying to ring the bell, which was almost out of his reach. The tall form of the great divine approached the child with a kindly "Shall I ring it for you, little man?" The boy assented but as soon as the bell resounded he turned to Dr. Brooks with the exclamation: "Now scoot!" and rushing away left the minister to explain the situation.

THE CITY MARKET.

The Prices of Various Articles Sold at That Place.

Below we give prices of various articles on sale daily in the Brownsville City Market. The articles mentioned are all home products raised by the people of the surrounding country. The prices given are in Mexican coin, which at the present time is very low, one dollar in Mexican coin being worth about 65 cents in currency. Prices are authoritative.

VEGETABLES.

Carrots, 4 cents per pound.
Beets, 2 1/2 cents per pound.
Cabbage, 5 to 15 cents per head.
Raddishes, 1 cent per dozen.
Fresh tomatoes, 75 cent per bucket.
Lettuce, 12 cents per dozen heads.
Okra, 62 cents per bucket.
Snap beans, 62 cents per bucket.
Turnips, 1 1/4 cents per pound.
Pumpkins, 1 cent per pound.
Green peppers, 12 cents per dozen.
Parsley, 3 cents per bunch.
Sweet potatoes, (new) 3 cents a pound
Peas, 75 cents a bucket.
Butter beans, 37 cents per bucket.
Squash, 25 cents per dozen.
Egg plant, 25 cents per dozen.

FRUITS.

Banana, 25 cents a dozen.
Lemons (small) 25 cents a dozen.
Sugar cane, \$1.50 per 100 stalks.
Eggs, 25 cents a dozen.
Butter, (country) 50 cents per pound.
" (Western) 55 cents per pound.
Cheese (Mexican) 8 cents per pound.
" (American) 25 cents per pound.

MEATS.

Rough cuts, 4 cents per pound.
Beef roast, 7 cents per pound.
Beef round steak, 6 cents per pound.
Beef surloin steak, 7 cents per pound.
Beef porterhouse, steak 7 cents a pound.
Beef tenderloin, steak 8 cents per pound.
Pork, roast, 10 cents per pound.
Pork, chop, 10 cents per pound.
Mutton, 5 cents per pound.
Hog's head cheese, 12 cents a pound.
Tripe, 12 cents a pound.
Pork sausage, 13 cents a pound.
Fresh leaf lard, 12 cents per pound.
Beef tongue, 18 to 25 cents each.
Calf tongue, 12 cents each.
Liver, 6 cents a pound.
Trout, 5 cents a pound.
Cat fish, 3 cents a pound.
Sheephead 5 cents a pound.
Crabs 12 cents per dozen.
Oysters \$1.00 per hundred.

GAME.

Venison, 5 cents per pound.
Chicken (live) 25 cents each.
Duck wild, 6 to 8 cents each.
Geese (wild) 12 cents each.
Jack snipe 75 cents per dozen.
Small birds, 12 cents per dozen.
Papabots, 75 cents per dozen.

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Hotelkeeper: Yes, sir, you'd be surprised at the number of towels we lose—hundreds every year, sir—hundreds; Traveler: Ah, yes, I see. Guests mistake 'em for handkerchiefs.—New York Weekly.

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District Clerk, Louis Kowalski
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OF DEPARTURES AND ARRIVALS OF MAILS.

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For Alice, Texas, daily at 5 a. m.
" Rio Grande City, Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 a. m.
For Point Isabel, daily at 9 a. m.
" Matamoros, Mexico, Except Sunday, at 9:30 a. m.

ARRIVALS.
From Alice, Texas, daily at 10 p. m.
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" Point Isabel, daily at 6 p. m.
" Matamoros, Mexico, at 9:30 a. m.

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