

# DICK RODNEY;

Or, The Adventures of  
An Eton Boy...

BY JAMES GRANT.

## CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

"I remember well when, from a wild forest, I saw before me a long blue ridge. It was the Sierra Leona—or the Mountain of the Lioness, as the niggers thereabout call it, the highest in North or South Guinea. Glad was I, Master Rodney, to see the flag of old England waving on the fort and in the bay. There was a sloop of war at anchor there, the Active; and when she fired the evening gun you would have thought a whole fleet was saluting, there are so many echoing caves and dents in the mountains and along the shore.

"I soon made my way home to England, but was more laughed at than pitied for my queer figure-head, which frightened some folks, my old mother especially, for she banged the door right in my face, and called for the police when I went to her old bunk at Deptford.

"However, I got used to all that sort of thing; but as folks are so ill-bred and uncharitable ashore, I have left Deptford forever, and keep always afloat, to be out of harm's way. So that's the yarn of how I became tattooed, Master Rodney."

"Finish the brandy-and-water, Tom," said I, "and now we'll make a start for the brig—noon is past, and the atmosphere cooler than it was."

"Your very good health. Next time we splice the main-brace ashore, I hope it will be in Cuba," said Tom, finishing the contents of my flask and then becoming so jovial that he broke at once into an old sea-song, the last two verses of which were somewhat to this purpose:

"I learned to splice, to reef and clew, To drink my grog with the best of the crew,

And tell a merry story; And though I wasn't very big, Aloft I'd climb, nor care a fig To stand by my gun, or dance a jig,

And all for Britain's glory! "When home I steered again I found My poor old mother run aground,

And doleful was her story; She had been cheated by a lawyer elf, Who married her for her old dad's pelf, But spent it all, then hanged himself.

Hoora for England's glory!"

Just as Tom concluded this remarkable ditty with tones that made the volcanic grotto to echo to "glory," a voice that made us start exclaimed, close by us:

"Bueno! Ha! Ha! Los Angeles burrachitos!"

On hearing this impertinent reflection on our sobriety we both looked up and saw—what the next chapter will tell you.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Dangerous Company.

Behind us stood eight fellows, five of whom had muskets, and three heavy bludgeons. They were apparently Spanish seafaring men; but whether contrabandistas of the lowest class, a portion of a slaver's crew, or merely drunken brawlers, we could not at first determine. However, they soon made us aware that robbery was their object, and that they were in no way averse to a little homicide if we interfered with their plans in the least.

Some had their coarse, but glossy and intensely black hair confined by nets or cauls; others had only Barcelona handkerchiefs round their heads. The spots of blood upon these, together with several patches and discolored eyes, showed us that these modern Iberians had been fighting among themselves. Their attire, which consisted only of red or blue shirts and dirty canvas trousers, was rather dilapidated; but something of the picturesque was imparted to it by the sashes of glaring red and yellow worsted which girt their waists, and in which they had long knives stuck conspicuously.

By their bearing, their dark glaring eyes, their muscular figures, their bare arms, chest and feet, their bronzed, sallow and ugly visages—and more than all by their rags, which were redolent of garlic and coarse tobacco, it was evident that we had fallen into unpleasant society. Several had silver rings in their ears, and on the bare chest of one I saw a crucifix marked either with ink or gunpowder.

These fellows had come from the inner or back part of the cavern, where they had evidently been observing us for some time before they so suddenly appeared.

"Acquardiente," said one, approvingly, as he applied his fierce, hooked nose to my empty flask, and then placed it in his pocket. A second snatched away my courier-bag, and a third appropriated my telescope, which he stuck in his sash.

Taking up a stone which lay at hand, I was about to hurl it at the head of the latter when the muzzle of a cocked musket pointed to my breast, and the butt of another applied roughly to my back, admonished me that discretion was the better part of valor.

"El page de escoba—ha, ha!" (the cabin boy), said one contemptuously, as he examined my attire—a smart blue jacket, with gilt anchor buttons, which Hislop had given me. My portemonnaie, which contained only a few shillings, and my gold watch, a present given to me by my mother when I went to Eton, were soon taken from

me. As for poor Tom, he possessed only a brass tobacco-box, a short, black pipe, and one shilling and sixpence; yet he was speedily deprived of them by one who seemed to be the leader of the gang.

"You rascally Jack Spaniard!" said Tom, shaking his clenched fist in the robber's face, "if ever I haul alongside of you elsewhere, look out for squalls!"

At this they all laughed, and seized us by the arms, dragged us into the back part of the cavern or fissure in the rocks, leaving one of their number, armed with a musket, as sentinel, at the entrance, where he lit a paper cigar, and stretching himself on the grassy bank, placed his hands under his head, and proceeded to leisurely smoke in the sunshine.

These proceedings filled us with great alarm; now that they had robbed us of everything save our own clothes, what could their object be?

One of them produced two pieces of rope, with which our hands were tied. Dragged by some, and receiving severe blows and bruises from the clenched hands and musket-butts of others—accompanied by the imprecations and coarse laughter of all—we were conveyed through a low-roofed grotto, or natural gallery in the rocks, the echoes of which repeated their voices with a thousand reverberations.

The only light here was by the reflection of the sunshine at the entrance, where the basalt was coated by a white substance, the debris of some old volcanic eruption; for the slope upon which we had been ascending all the morning formed a portion of the great Peak. And now we became sensible of a strange sound and a strange odor pervading all the place.

Through a rent in the rocky roof of the grotto there fell a clear, bright stream of sunlight, that revealed the terrors of the place toward which our captors dragged us.

On one side there yawned a vast black fissure or chasm, in the somber masses of obsidian and red blocks of lava which composed the floor of that horrid cavern; and from this fissure there ascended, and doubtless still ascends at times, a hot, sulphurous steam, which rendered breathing difficult and induced an inclination to sneeze.

From the depth of that hideous chasm, the profundity of which no mortal eye could measure, and no human being could contemplate without awe and terror, we heard a strange, buzzing sound, as if from the bowels of the inner earth, far—how alone knows how far—down below.

In fact, we were upon the verge of one of those natural spiracles which the natives term "the nostrils," or avenues through which the hot vapors of that tremendous Piton ascend; and the buzzing sound that made our hearts shrink, we scarcely knew why, was caused by some volcanic throe at the bottom of the mountain, whose base is many a mile below the waters of the sea.

The fissure was also twelve feet broad, and across it there lay a plank, forming a species of bridge.

Two of our captors crossed, and then ordered us to follow them. I followed like one in a dream; but my heart was chilled by a terror so deadly that I had no power or thought of resistance. My first fear was that the plank might be trundled from under our feet, and that we would be launched into the black abyss below; but such was not the object of these Spaniards, as Tom and I were permitted to pass in safety.

The remainder of the thieves followed, and we found ourselves in another grotto, the roof of which was covered by stalactites, that glittered like gothic pendants of alabaster in the light that fell from the upper fissure, which formed a natural window, and through it we could see the thin, white steam ascending and curling in the sunshine.

Now, supposing that they had us in perfect security, our captors proceeded to hold a consultation as to what they should do with us; and imagining that we were both ignorant of their language, or, what is more probable, caring little whether we knew it or not, they canvassed the most terrible resolutions with perfect coolness and freedom of speech.

## CHAPTER X.

### The Ventana.

Tom Lambourne's face wore somewhat of a blanched hue, through which the stripes of his tattooing seemed blacker than ever. A severe cut on his forehead, from which the blood was oozing, did not add to his personal appearance. He scarcely knew a word of Spanish, but seemed instinctively aware that we had fallen into hands nearly as dangerous as his former acquaintances, the Mussologos, for he said:

"Master Rodney, I fear we have run our last knot off the log-line, and our sangliss won't run again, unless heaven gives the order to turn. Yet, if I could but get one of these muskets, to have a shot at the rascally cargo-pudders before it's all over with us, I would be content. As it is, I am all over blood, from clew to earring, and they have well-nigh choked me by shaking a quid down my throat."

"Hush, Tom," said I, for I was listening to a discussion which took place among the Spaniards.

"Do you understand their lingo?" "A little."

"What are they saying?" he asked, with growing interest.

"I will tell you immediately." But as they all spoke at once in the sonorous Spanish of the Catalonian coast, mingled with obscure slang and nautical phrases, some time elapsed before I could understand them. Meanwhile, how terrible were the thoughts that filled my mind.

"If these fellows murdered and cast us into that awful chasm, the deed would never be known; until the day of doom our fate and our remains could no more be traced than the smoke that melts into the sky. Even if we escaped unhurt, but were detained so long that the brig sailed without us, what could be our condition, penitence, forlorn and unknown, in that foreign island? But this was a minor evil.

Then I burned to avenge the lawless treatment to which we were subjected, and the blows and bruises their cowardly hands had dealt so freely.

"Companeros," I heard one say, "one of these fellows is tattooed and would sell very well to the South American planters with the rest that will soon be under hatches. He is worth keeping, if he cannot ransom himself; as for the other—"

"El muchaco!" (the boy) said they, glancing at me.

"Si—el page de escoba—if he is allowed to return, a complaint may find its way to the senior alcalde, whose alguazils may come and borrow our topsails and anchor for a time; whereas, if we have him where the others went yesterday—"

"Where?"

"Into the ventana, hombre!" was the fierce response; "and then no more will be heard of the affair."

My blood grew cold at these words, and I scarcely knew what followed, till the first man who spoke came forward and addressed us.

"Inglesos," said he, "we have decided that one of you, after swearing not to reveal our hiding place, shall return within four hours, bearing a fitting ransom for both, else, so surely as the clock strikes, he who is left behind goes into the ventana of the mountain, where never did the longest sea line find a bottom—not that I suppose any man was ever as enough to try. Santos! do you hear?" he added, striking his musket-butt sharply on the rocks, when perceiving that Tom was ignorant of all he said, and that I was stupefied by it.

"Si, señor," said I, and translated it to Tom Lambourne, who twirled his tarry hair in his forehead, stuck his quid in his cheek, slapped his thigh vigorously, and gave other nautical manifestations of extreme surprise and discomposure.

"Ransom, Master Rodney?" he reiterated, "in the name of old Davy, who would ransom a poor Jack like me?"

"The whole crew would table their month's wages on the capstan head—aye, in a moment, Tom," I replied, with confidence.

"I'm sure they would, and the captain and Master Hislop, too, for the matter of that, rather than poor shipmates should come to harm; but—"

"As for me," said I, with growing confidence, "I am, as you said, senores, only the page de escoba."

(To be continued.)

## BEFORE TIME OF BELLS.

The Sonnets Which Called to Church in Olden Times.

Before the time of bells various instruments were used to summon congregations to worship. In Egypt they are said to have followed a Jewish custom in using a trumpet. In some Oriental churches a kind of rattle gave the signal. In monasteries monks took it in turns to go round the cells calling the inmates to their devotions by knocking with a hammer, which was called the "awakening instrument." Bells of one kind or another are, however, of very great antiquity, having been used in religious ceremonies by many of the ancient nations as a means of honoring their gods and summoning them to the feasts. For example, the feast of Osiris and Isis was always announced by bells. Pliny says that bells were in use long before his time, being called "tin tin nabula." The use of small bells (nolae) in England, says William of Malmesbury, may be traced back as far as the fifth century, and it is clear from Bede that even those of the largest kind (campanae), such as sounded in the air and called a numerous congregation to divine service, were employed in England as early as the year 680, being that in which the Abbot Hilda died.

Cutting Teeth When 63 Years Old. Physicians of Knoxville, Tenn., have been consulted regarding a discovery made by a tourist in the mountains of Claiborne county, Tenn. The case is that of Mrs. Julia Spence, 63 years old, who has four new front teeth, all of which have recently become fully developed. Previously she had been without teeth for six years. It is considered remarkable that new incisors should appear at this late period in life. Mrs. Spence is in perfect health.

Overlooked. Mrs. Beeswick—I can't see why those people next door don't take a hint. They're always sending over to borrow something. If we did the same, they might have an excuse, but we've never got anything from them yet. Mr. Beeswick—My dear, you are mistaken. Didn't we get the measles from them?

## HIS OLD YELLOW ALMANAC.

I left the farm when mother died, and changed my place of dwelling. To daughter Susan a stylish house, right in the city streets. And there was them, before I came, that sort of scared the town. How I would find the town-folks' ways so difficult to meet. They said I'd have no comfort in the rustic, knee-up throng, And I'd have to wear stiff collars every week-day right along.

I find I take to city ways just like a duck to water. I like the racket and the noise, and never tire of shows; And there's no end of comfort in the mansion of my daughter, And everything is right at hand, and money freely flows; And hired help is all about, just listenin' for my call, But I miss the yellow almanac from off my kitchen wall.

The house is full of calendars from attic to the cellar; They're painted in all colors, and are fancy-like to see. But just in this particular I'm not a modern feller, And the yellow-covered almanac is good enough for me. I'm used to it, I've seen it round from boyhood to old age, And I rather like the jokin' at the bottom of each page.

I like the way the "G" stood out to show the week's beginnin' (In these new-fangled calendars the days seemed sort of mixed), And though upon the cover, though he was n't exactly winnin' With lungs and liver all exposed, still showing how we are fixed; And the letters' credentials that was writ to Mr. Ayer, I've often, on a rainy day, found readin' very fair.

I tried to find one recently; there wa'n't one in the city. They toted out great calendars in every sort of style; I looked at 'em in cold disdain, and answered 'em in pity: "I'd rather have my almanac than all that costly pile." And though I take to city life, I'm lonesome, after all, For that old yellow almanac upon my kitchen wall.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in the Century.

## First Uses of Rubber.

It is worthy to note that one of the earliest industrial applications of the gum made in Great Britain followed the example of the Mexicans, who were known in the seventeenth century to smear the milk of a tree upon their cloaks to render them waterproof. Mackintoshes, as they are still called abroad, began to be made at the close of the last century, but after the fabric was coated with a turpentine solution of caoutchouc it was necessary to cover it with some flocculent fiber to overcome the stickiness of the vendid product. Indeed, it was this stickiness that hindered goods manufactured of rubber from general use, until, seventy years ago, Goodyear showed how this adhesiveness could be obviated by the use of nitric acid.—Self-Culture Magazine.

Mr. Editor:—For the good of suffering humanity, and particularly those suffering from that most dreadful disease, rheumatism, we desire to inform your readers that the only specific in the world today for this disease is our "Five Drops" remedy. "Five Drops" is the name, and "Five Drops" is the dose. It is not only acknowledged a specific by the many thousands who have been cured by its use, but it is now acknowledged to be such by the medical profession, many of whom use this remedy in their daily practice, and they state to us that it is the only thing with which they can cure the rheumatism. This remedy not only positively cures this disease, but it never has failed and it never can fail to cure any and all of the following diseases: Sciatica, Lumbago, Neuralgia, Catarrh, Creeping Numbness, Nervousness, Asthma, Heart Weakness, Toothache, Earache, La Grippe, and diseases of the liver and kidneys. "Five Drops" is not a patent medicine, but was perfected only after vast research in scientific fields, and at great expense. It never can be fully appreciated until it is used. Many of its cures border on the miraculous. Words are almost inadequate to express the great benefit which suffering humanity is daily deriving from the use of this most wonderful remedy. Its merits and medicinal properties are as far above the other remedies offered for sale as the mountain is above the valley. It is worth its weight in gold to anyone suffering from any of the diseases for which it is recommended. The price is low and within the reach of all, \$1 per bottle for full size (300 doses), prepaid by mail or express, or six bottles for \$5. Anyone desiring to test its efficacy without ordering a full size bottle, can have a 25 cent sample bottle sent by mail until May 10, by sending 10 cents to the Swanson Rheumatic Cure Company, 167 Dearborn street, Chicago, Ill.

Husband: "What! Another hundred-dollar gown? Didn't I tell you that you must keep within your allowance?" Wife (triumphantly): "You said unless in case of absolute necessity!"—Puck.

B. & O. New Steel Rails. The recent purchase of 28,000 tons of 85-pound steel rails by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad brings the total amount of rail bought since March 1, 1896, up to 115,300 tons, enough to relay 870 miles of track. Of the new rail ordered eight thousand tons is to be laid on the lines west of the Ohio river, and twenty thousand tons is to be used as follows: Forty-four miles on the Philadelphia division, 11 miles on the Second division, 13 miles on the Third division, 30 miles on the Fourth division, 21 miles on the Fifth division, 10 miles on the Connellysville division, and 21 miles on the Pittsburgh division. Much of the rail that will be taken up is still good enough to be relied on branches where traffic is not heavy. The Southwestern division, between Parkersburg and St. Louis, will have forty thousand tons of rail to lay this spring.

Jimmy: "Dey tell me dat you said you wuz goin' to break my face if I didn't watch out." Tommy: "Well, yoder watchin' out, ain't yer? You've been watchin' fer me ever since I said dat."—New York Journal.

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"What is a patent lawyer?" "He's a lawyer who gets people put in jail for inventing things."

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MRS. M. STODDARD, Box 268, Springfield, Minn., writes:

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