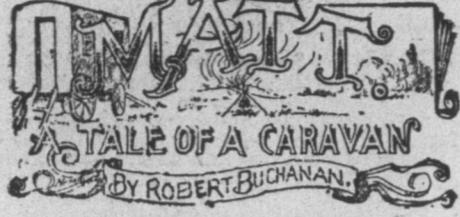


RESPONSIBILITY.

Out of the window my bird doth fly,
Far beyond reach of my vision's strain,
Boldly he saith to the bright, blue sky,
Yet will he come back to me again—
Back to my loving and outstretched hand,
Back to my nurture and my command
Without a sigh
I see him fly,
He will come to me by and by!

Out from the bosom a thought doth fly,
Over the ocean it sails afar,
Where blooming shores in sweet rapture lie,
Through the wide heavens from star to star,
Or, midst the shades of the silent land,
Yet heeds my bidding and my command.
I ask not why
It seeks to fly,
It will come back to me by and by!

Out from the precious and scanty dole
Time measures me, golden moments fly,
Swift they speed to their destined goal,
Bearing each lost opportunity,
Flown are the winged and shining band,
Never to return to my command
Shall I ask why?
We must, for ay,
Meet in eternity by and by!
—Zitella Cooke, in *Youth's Companion*.



CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED.

"At the present moment I am encamped in a spot where, in all probability, I shall remain for days. I came upon it quite by accident about mid-day yesterday, when on my way to the market town of Pencroes; or, rather, when I imagined that I was going thither, while I had, in reality, after hesitating at three cross-roads, taken the road which led exactly in the opposite direction. The way was desolate and dreary beyond measure—stretches of morass and moorland on every side, occasionally rising into heathery knolls or hillocks, or strewed with huge pieces of stone like the moors of Cornwall. Presently the open moorland ended, and we entered a region of sandy hillocks, sparsely ornamented here and there with long, harsh grass. If one could imagine the waves of the ocean, at some moment of wild agitation, suddenly frozen to stillness, and retaining intact these tempestuous forms, it would give some idea of the hillocks I am describing. They rose on every side of the road, completely shutting out the view, and their pale, livid yellowness, scarcely relieved with a glimpse of greenness, was wearisome and lonely in the extreme. As we advanced among them, the road we were pursuing grew worse and worse, till it became so choked and covered with drift and sand as to be scarcely recognizable, and I hardly say that it was hard work for one horse to pull the caravan along; more than once, indeed, the wheels fairly stuck, and Tim and I had to pull with might and main to get them free.

"We had proceeded in this manner for some miles, and I was beginning to realize the fact that we were out of our reckoning, when, suddenly emerging from between two sand hills, I saw a wide stretch of green meadow land,



RATHER EMBARRASSING.

and beyond it a glorified piece of water. The sun was shining brightly, the water sparkled like a mirror, calm as glass, and without a breath. As we appeared a large heron rose from the spot on the waterside where he had been standing—

"Still as a stone, without a sound,
Above his dim blue shade—

and sailed leisurely away. Around the lake, which was about a mile in circumference, the road ran winding till it reached the further side, where more sand hills began; but between these sand hills I caught a sparkling glimpse of more water, and (guided by my conclusion by the red sail of a fishing smack just glimmering on the horizon line) I knew that further water was—the sea.

"The spot had all the attraction of complete desolation, combined with the charm which always, to my mind, pertains to lakes and lagoons. Eager as a boy or a loosened retriever I ran across the meadow and found the grass long and green, and sown with innumerable crowfoot flowers; underneath the green was sand again, but here it glimmered like gold-dust. As I reached the sedges on the lake-side a teal rose, in full summer plumage, wheeled swiftly round the lake, then returning splashed down boldly and swam within a stone's throw of the shore; when, peering through the rushes, I caught a glimpse of his mate, paddling anxiously along with eight little tufts of down behind her. Then, just outside the sedges, I saw the golden shield of water broken by the circles of rising trout. It was too much. I hastened back to the caravan and informed Tim that I had no intention of going any further—that day, at least.

"So here we have been since yesterday and, up to this, have not set eyes upon a single soul. Such peace and quietness is a foretaste of Paradise. As this is the most satisfactory day I have yet spent in my pilgrimage, although it bears, at the same time, a family likeness to the other days of the past fortnight, I purpose setting down, verbatim seriatim, and chrono-

logically, the manner in which I occupied myself from dawn to sunset.

"6 a. m.—Wake and see that Tim has already disappeared and folded up his hammock. Observe the morning sun looking in with a fresh, cheery countenance at the window. Turn over again with a yawn, and go to sleep for another five minutes.

"7:15 a. m.—Wake again, and discover, by looking at my watch, that, instead of five minutes, I have slept an hour and a quarter. Spring up at once and slip on shirt and trousers; then pass out, barefooted, into the open air. No sign of Tim, but a fire is lighted close to the caravan, which shadows it from the rays of the morning sun. Stroll down to the lake and, throwing off what garments I wear, prepare for a bath. Cannot get out for a swim on account of the reeds. The bath over, return and finish my toilet in the caravan.

"8 a. m.—Tim has reappeared. He has been right down to the seashore, a walk of about two miles and a half. He informs me to my disgust that there is some sort of a human settlement there, and a life-boat station. He has brought back in his bagget, as specimens of the local products, a dozen new laid eggs, some milk and a loaf of bread. The last, I observe, is in fossil state. I ask who sold it him. He answers, William Jones.

"8:30 a. m.—We breakfast splendidly. Even the fossil loaf yields sustenance, after it is cut up and dissolved in hot tea. Between whiles Tim informs me that the settlement down yonder is, in his opinion, a poor sort of place. There are several whitewashed cottages and a large, roofless house, for all the world like a church. Devil the cow or pig did he see at all, barrin' a few hens. Any boats, I ask? Yes, one, with the bottom knocked out, belonging to William Jones.

"Tim has got this name so pat that my curiosity begins to be aroused. 'Who the deuce is William Jones?' 'Sure, thin,' says Tim, 'he's the man that lives down beyond, by the sea.' I demand, somewhat irritably, if the place contains only one inhabitant? Devil another did Tim see, he explains—barrin' William Jones.

"9:30 a. m.—Start painting in the open air, under the shade of a large white cotton umbrella. Paint on till 1 p. m.

"1 p. m.—Take a long walk among the sand hills, avoiding the settlement beyond the lake. Don't want to meet any of the aborigines, more particularly William Jones. Walking here is like running up and down Atlantic billows, assuming said billows to be solid; now I am lost in the trough of the sand, now I re-emerge on the crest of the solid wave. Amusing, but fatiguing. Suddenly a hare starts from under my feet and goes leisurely away. I remember an old amusement of mine in the west of Ireland, and I track Puss by her footprints—now clearly and beautifully printed in the soft sand of the hollows, now more faintly marked on the harder sides of the ridges. The sun blazes down, the refraction of the heat from the sand is overpowering, the air is quivering, sparkling and pulsating, as if full of innumerable sand crystals. A horrible croak from overhead startles me, and, looking up, I see an enormous raven, wheeling along in circles and searching the ground for mice or other prey.

"Looking at my watch, I find I have been toiling in the sandy wilderness for quite two hours. Time to get back and dine. Climb the nearest hillock, and look round to discover where I am. Can see nothing but the sandy billows on every side, and am entirely at a loss which way to go. At last, after half an hour's blind wandering, stumble by accident on the road by the lakeside and see the caravan in the distance.

"4 p. m.—Dinner. Boiled potatoes, boiled eggs, fried bacon. Tim's cooking is primitive, but I could devour anything—even William Jones' fossil bread. I asked if any human being has visited the camp. 'Sorry one,' Tim says, looking rather disappointed. He has got to feel himself a public character, and misses the homage of the vulgar.

"Paint again till six p. m.

"A beautiful sunset. The sand hills grow rosy in the light, the lake deepens from crimson to purple, the moon comes out like a silver sickle over the sandy sea. A thought seizes me as the shadows increase. Now is the time to entice the pine trout from their depths in the lake. I get out my fishing rod and line, and, stretching two or three flies which seem suitable, prepare for action. My rod is only a small, single-handed one, and is difficult to cast beyond the sedges, but the fish are rising thickly out in the tranquil pools, and, determined not to be beaten, I wade in to the knees. Half a dozen trout, each about the size of a small herring, reward my enterprise. When I have captured them, the moon is high up above the sand-hills, and it is quite dark.

"Such is the chronicle of the past day. By the light of my lamp inside the caravan I have written it down. It has been all very tranquil and uneventful, but very delightful, and a day to be marked with a white stone, in one respect—that from dawn to sunset I have not set eyes on a human being, except my servant.

"Stop, though! I am wrong. Just as I was returning from my piscatorial excursion to the lake, I saw, passing along the road in the direction of the sea, a certain solitary horseman, who accosted me not too civilly on the roadside the night before last. He scowled at me in passing, and, of course, recognized me by the aid of the caravan. His name is Monk, of Monkshurst, and he seems to be pretty well monarch of all he surveys. I have an impression that Mr. Monk, of Monkshurst, and myself are destined to be better, or worse, acquainted."

CHAPTER III.

MATT MAKES HER FIEST APPEARANCE.

"Eureka! I have had an adventure at last; and yet, after all, what am I talking about? It is no adventure of the past fortnight, I purpose setting down, verbatim seriatim, and chrono-

"I was seated this morning before my easel, out in open air, painting busily, when I thought I heard a movement behind me.

"I should have premised, by the way, that Tim had gone off on another excursion into the Jones territory, or the quest for more eggs and milk.

"I glanced over my shoulder and saw, peering round the corner of my white sun-shade a pair of large, eager eyes—fixed not upon me, but upon the canvas I was painting.

"Not in the least surprised, I thought to myself: 'At last! The caravan has exercised its spell upon the district, and the usual audience is beginning to gather.' So I went tranquilly on with my work and paid no more attention.

"Presently, however, fatigued with my work, I indulged in a great yawn, and rose to stretch myself. I then perceived that my audience was more select than numerous, consisting of only one individual—a young person in a Welsh chimney-pot hat. Closer observation showed me that said hat was set on a head of closely-cropped, curly black hair, beneath which there shone a brown, boyish face freckled with sun and wind, a pair of bright, black eyes and a laughing mouth, with two rows of the whitest of teeth. But the face, though boyish, did not belong to a boy. The young person was dressed in an old cotton gown, had a colored woolen shawl or scarf thrown over the shoulders, and wore

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"I know what you was doing there, she cried, suddenly, pointing to my easel. 'You was painting!'

"I know what this is!" she cried, pointing. "It's water. And that's the sky. And that's trees. And these here—for a moment she seemed in doubt, but added, hastily—"pigs."

"Now, as the subject represented a flock of sheep huddling together close to a pond on a rainy common, this suggestion was not over complimentary to my artistic skill. I was on the point of correcting my astute critic, when she added, after a moment's further inspection:

"No, they're sheep. Look ye now, I know! They're sheep."

"Pray don't touch the paint," I suggested, approaching her in some alarm. "It is wet and comes off."

"She drew back cautiously; and then as a preliminary to further conversation sat down on the grass, giving me further occasion to remark her length and shapeliness of limb. There was a free-and-easiness, not to say boldness, about her manner, tampered though it was with gusts of bashfulness, which began to amuse me.

"Can you paint faces?" she asked, dubiously.

"I replied that I could even aspire to that accomplishment, by which I understood her to mean portrait-painting, if need were. She gave a quiet nod of satisfaction.

"There was a painter chap who came to Aberglyn last summer, and he painted William Jones."

"Indeed?" I said, with an assumption of friendly interest.

"Yes. I wanted him to paint me, but he wouldn't. He painted William Jones' father, though, along o' William Jones."

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