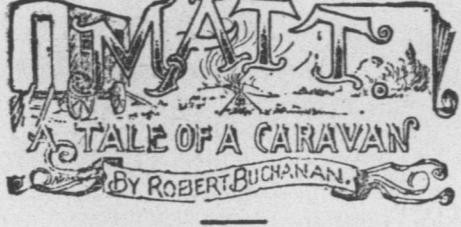


## A TRANSFORMATION.

"Twas a narrow, city way  
Filled by a busy throng,  
Before I heard that sun-bright day  
A blackbird's joyous song;  
Transformed was that squallid street  
The while his loud notes rang—  
The early dows were round my feet,  
The cowpards round me sprang.  
  
No common sounds were in my ear:  
I heard the ringdove's cry,  
The thrushes singing sweet and clear,  
The skylark's chanson high;  
The wind that fanned my brow had come  
O'er daisied hills and leas,  
O'er hollows pale with hawthorn foam  
And wild anemones.  
  
His amber rain the sun-god shed:  
I saw the greening haze  
Of opening buds of boughs o'erhead;  
I saw the gorse-gold's blaze;  
I saw the crimson fir-comes sway  
On odorous larch and pine;  
A blackbird's song on that spring day  
Made vernal glories mine.  
—M. Rock, in Chambers' Journal



## CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

The old man, who, Brinkley performed, certainly bore some resemblance to the Rembrandtish head which Matt had recognized, sat dozing fitfully by the hearth, while his son was busily employed in mending an old lantern.

Upon the entrance of Brinkley the lantern was quickly thrown aside, and William Jones, assuming a most obsequious manner, hastened to give a welcome to the stranger. Brinkley was amused. He accepted William Jones' offer of a seat, then he lit up his briar-root pipe, and, while smoking lazily, he put a few questions to his host. But if he expected to gain information of any kind he was soon deceived. William Jones was no fool. Combined with excessive avarice, he possessed all the cunning of the fox, and the moment he saw that the stranger was pumping him he was on his guard.

Presently, however, his curiosity gained the day. Categorically, in his turn, he began to question Brinkley about his doings.

"I suppose now, master," said he, "you travel about a deal in that cart o' yours?"

Brinkley explained that the "cart" in question had been in his possession only a few months.

"But I traveled a good deal before I got it," he explained. "This time last year I was in Ireland."

"In Ireland, master?"

"Yes, on the west coast; do you know it?"

William Jones shook his head.

"There be plenty wreck there, ain't there?" said he, suddenly.

"Wreck?" repeated Brinkley.

"Yes; I've heard tell o' wonderful storms and big ships breaking up. Look ye now, and they do tell wonder-



"SHUT UP, OLD MAN," SAID WILLIAM, GIVING HIS FATHER A NUDGE.

ful tales; and I wonder sometimes if all they says be true."

Brinkley looked at his host for a minute or so in silent wonder, for the little man was transformed. Instead of gazing upon him with the stupid expression which till now his face had worn, his face expressed all the keenness of a fox-hound well on the scent. There was also another curious thing which the young man noticed: the word "wreck" seemed to act like magic on the other members of the Jones household. At the first mention of it the old man started from his sleep; and he now sat staring wildly before him, evidently imagining he was standing on a headland gazing out to sea.

"Wreck!" he murmured. "Ay, there it be, driftin' in wi' the wind and the tide, William—driftin' in wi' the tide."

"Shut up, old man," said William, giving his father a nudge; then, turning again to Brinkley, he said: "Be them tales true, master?"

"Eh? Oh, yes; perfectly ture," said Brinkley, being in a lively humor, and determined to give his host a treat.

The expression in the eyes of William Jones became even more greedy. "P'raps," he said, "you've seen some of them wrecks?"

"Dear me, yes," answered Brinkley, determined to give the reins to his imagination. "I've seen any number of them. Huge ships broken up like match boxes and every soul on board them drowned; then afterwards—"

"Ah, yes, master," said William Jones, eagerly, as the other paused; "arter—"

"Well, afterward, my friend, I've seen treasures come ashore that would have made you and me, and a dozen others such, rich for life."

"Dear, dear! and what became of it, mister—tell me that?"

"What became of it?" repeated Brinkley, whose imagination was beginning to give way; "why, it was appropriated, of course, by the population."

"And didn't you take your share, mister?"

"I?" repeated Brinkley, who was

getting muddled. "Well, no—firstly, because I didn't wish to—I have a superstitious horror of wearing dead men's things; and, secondly, because I could not have done so had I wished. The people are clannish; they wanted it all for themselves, and would have killed any interfering stranger."

"I suppose, mister, there be coast-guard chaps there?" said William Jones.

"Oh, dear, no! No coast guards."

"Ah!" sighed the old man, coming out of his trance. "It warn't so long ago when there warn't no coast-guard chaps here neither. Then times was better for honest men. On a dark night 'twas easy to put a light on the headland, and sometimes we got a prize or two that way, didn't we, William, dear? but now—"

"You shut up!" roared William, giving his parent a very forcible dig in the ribs. "You don't know what you're talkin' about, you don't. The old 'un is a bit queer in the head, master," he explained; "and he's allus a-dreamin', he is. There ain't no prizes here, the Lord knows; it's a most as much as we can do to git a bit o' bread. Matt knows that; don't ee, Matt?"

But whatever Matt knew she evidently meant to keep to herself, for she gave no reply. Presently, after a little more general conversation, Brinkley rose to go. He offered a two shilling piece to William Jones; and, somewhat to his amazement, that worthy accepted it gratefully.

"Good-by, Matt," said Brinkley. But in a trice Matt was beside him.

"I'm going to show you the way," she explained as she went out with him into the air.

"Whew!" said Brinkley when they were fairly clear of the cabin; "the open air is better than that den; but then William Jones is very poor, isn't he, Matt?"

"He says he is."

"But, don't you believe it?"

"'P'raps I do, and p'raps I don't; it don't matter to you, does it?"

"Not the least in the world."

They went on for awhile in silence; then Matt, who had been furtively watching his face all the while, spoke again:

"You ain't angry, are you, master?"

"I angry—what for?"

"'Cause I said that just now."

"Dear me, no; whatever you might say, Matt, wouldn't offend me."

If he expected to please her by this he was mistaken.

"That's 'cause you don't care. Well, I don't care neither, if you don't."

She ran a little ahead of him, and continued to precede him until she gained the last sand hill, and caught a glimpse of the caravan. Then she paused.

"You don't want me to go any further, do you?"

"No."

"All right—good-by."

She gave a bound, like a young deer, and prepared for a swift run back, but the young man called her.

"Matt, come here!"

She came up to him. He put his arm about her shoulders, bent over her upturned face and kissed her. In her impulsive way Matt returned the kiss ardently; then, to her amazement, she gave one strange look into his eyes-blushed violently and hung her head.

"Come, give me another, Matt," he said.

But Matt would not comply. With one jerk she freed herself from him; then, swift as lightning, she ran back across the hills toward the sea.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MATT GROWS MATRIMONIAL.

That night the young man of the caravan had curious dreams, and throughout them all moved like a presiding fairy Matt of Aberglyn. Sometimes he was wandering on stormy shores, watching the wrecks of mighty argosies; again he was in mysterious caverns underneath the ground, searching for and finding buried treasure; still again he was standing on the decks of storm-tossed vessels, while the breakers thundered close at hand and the bale-fires burned on lonely headlands. But at all times and in all places Matt was his companion.

And, curiously enough, Matt in his dream was very different to the Matt of waking reality: taller and brighter in fact, as beautiful as a vision can be; so that his spirit was full of a strange sensation of love and pity, and the touch of the warm little hand disturbed his spirit with mysterious joy. So vivid did this foolish dream become at last that he found himself seated on a sunny rock by the sea by Matt's side; and he was talking to her like a lover, with his arm around her waist, and she turned to him, with her great eyes fixed on his, and kissed him over and over again so passionately that he awoke!

It was blowing hard, and the rain was pelting furiously on the roof of the caravan. He tried to go to sleep again, but the face of Matt (as he had seen it in his dream) kept him for a long time awake.

"Come, Matt," he said, kindly, "you mustn't take this so seriously. Tell me all about it—there's a good girl."

"I will—if you won't laugh."

"I won't, then, there."

"Well, when I was lying in my bed this morning I heard William Jones a-talking to some one. He thought I was asleep, but I got up and listened and I heard Mr. Monk's voice; and he said, he says: 'She's over sixteen years old, and I'll marry her,' and William Jones said: 'Lord, Mr. Monk: what can you be a-thinking about? Matt ain't old enough, and what's more she ain't fit to be the wife of a fine gentleman.' Then Mr. Monk he stamped his foot like he does when he's in a passion, and he said, he says: 'My mind's made up, William Jones, and I'm going to marry her before the year's out; and I don't care how soon.' Then I heard them moving about, and I crept back to bed and pretended to be fast asleep."

The young man's astonishment increased. There could be no doubt of the veracity and sincerity of the speaker; and the story she told was certainly puzzling. Brinkley made up his mind without much reflection that

more than sixteen. For a damsel of that age her kiss was decidedly precocious.

At last he tumbled off again and dreamed that Matt was a young lady of beautiful attire and captivating manners, to whom he was "engaged," and her speech, strange to say, was quite poetical and refined; and they walked together, hand in hand, to a country church on a green hillside, and were just going to enter when who should appear upon the threshold but Mr. Monk, of Monkshurst? But they passed him by and stood before the altar, where the parson stood in his white robes, and when the parson asked aloud whether anyone saw any just reason or impediment that the pair should not be joined in holy matrimony the same Monk stepped forward, with a Mephistophelian smile, and cried: "Yes, I do!" On which the young man awoke again in agitation, to find that it was broad daylight and a fine, fresh summer morning.

Whom should he find waiting for him when he had dressed himself and stepped from the house on wheels but Matt herself? Yes, there she was, as wild and quaintly attired as ever, quite

"'Humph!—is he well to do?—rich?'" Matt nodded emphatically.

"All Aberglyn belongs to him," she said, "and the woods up there, and the farms, and the horses up at the big house, and—everything."

"Ever since I came ashore," was the reply.

"'Humph!—is he well to do?—rich?'" Matt nodded emphatically.

"All Aberglyn belongs to him," she said, "and the woods up there, and the farms, and the horses up at the big house, and—everything."

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