

quarry. On reaching a spot within a few hundred yards of the brow of the hill, I stood still to survey the fertile spot which lay at my feet, expecting that one or more of the dogs would shortly return to pronounce "a death," or "a double." * I had waited a considerable time, and could neither see nor hear anything of them; so I resolved to whistle them back, if possible. The shrill note penetrated the woods, echoing in loud reverberation from hill to hill; but the dogs returned not, even after many repetitions of the well known sound. I became persuaded that they were either beyond hearing of the signal, or else were feasting off the carcase. Descending the hill a little farther, however, I soon discovered both conjectures were erroneous, for to my surprise, I espied them at a considerable distance in company with other dogs of a similar breed, attached to three men, dressed and accoutred after the fashion of the constables who had been at the mill that morning. Assuming these men to be the associates of those that had procured the rations, I immediately determined to make up to them, but had not proceeded many paces, before I as suddenly changed my mind—an idea seizing me, that in all probability these very men, might just as well be the three bushrangers the constables were in pursuit of, as the policemen themselves; and I was more inclined to think so, from my knowledge of the fact, that bushrangers in those days occasionally attired themselves in the garb of constables, thereby often procuring a night's lodging and "good entertainment for man and beast," at distant settlers' stations. With this belief, then, strongly impressed upon my mind, I resolved quietly to retrace my steps up the hill, or rather mountain. I had not ascended many yards, when, on looking back, I perceived I was observed, as all three, previously intently employed in skinning a kangaroo, had suspended their operations, and were looking in the direction where I was standing, apparently holding a council, whether they should communicate with me or not. I was not deceived in my conjecture, for on making a further side-way ascent of the rugged steep, keeping my eye upon their movements, I observed that two of the party had left the other in charge of the kangaroo and their "traps," and were in speedy advance in the direction I was aiming at. On approaching somewhat nearer, they called on me to stop. I did not deem it prudent to disobey their authoritative command, whether constables or bushrangers; I therefore waited till they came up, when the compliments of the morning were exchanged, in true English fashion, as if we had been acquainted for many years. Their first interrogatories were, who I was, whence I came, for what purpose, and whither I was going. These questions were answered frankly, further telling them of the morning visit of the four constables to the mill, and of their having, after procuring rations of flour, hastened to join three others of their party, in search of Briton, Brown, and Jeffkins, who, it was reported, had made a rapid journey to those parts, having only little more than thirty hours before, paid a very unpleasant nocturnal visit to a settler, resident full forty miles off, on the opposite side of the river.

"Indeed!" said one of the two supposed policemen, who appeared to be the spokesman or leader.

"Yes," I replied; "but I do n't think you'll succeed in your mission, for Britton and his comrades are so habituated to the bush, that their sense of perceiving objects at a great distance, almost precludes the possibility of such feather-bed soldiers as you are to come within gun-shot of his trine band."

Whether they suspected that I knew more of them than I wished to appear to do, I could not imagine; but they backed a few steps, keeping a steady eye on me, as I sat myself down upon the trunk of a gum-tree. After a few minutes' conversation, during which I began to think, from the restlessness of their eyes, that they were not "good men and true," they hailed their companion in the

* The singular fact may not be generally known, that when a well-trained dog captures and kills his game, he usually returns (unless very hungry) to his master, to point out the spot where the kangaroo has breathed its last. The dog's jaws, too, are invariably examined, to ascertain whether they have come in contact with the hair or blood of the vanquished beast. If so, "a death" is generally sure, the kangaroo having been too swiftly pursued to effect "a double" and escape.

distance to make up to them. On his approach, they held a consultation in a low tone, during which my fears increased that I was in danger. At last they joined me, and I rose as if to welcome them—but my tongue began to parch, my breath to shorten, my heart to palpitate at a high fever rate; but yet I affected to be unmoved. The one I supposed to be the leader of the doubtful three relieved me considerably, by politely requesting me to resume my seat on the log. He took his place beside me, while one of the others followed his example, the third walking away a yard or two in front, but still near enough to join in the *tête à tête* which followed.

"Well, young fellow," said the leader, "as we shall be in company some time, what say you to a smoke?"

"Not the least objection," I replied; although just at that moment I would have given gold for water, for I began to grow faint with fatigue and thirst, having started out without breakfast, intending only to be out about two hours, whether successful or not in my pursuit of game. I happened to have a small box of cut negrohead with me, and my then constant companion—a very handsomely polished and aged dhudheen, which even my strange companions admired and perhaps coveted. I, of course, offered them the fill of their pipes from the box, which they readily accepted, inasmuch as it saved them the time and trouble of cutting from the remnant of a fig, which they had extracted from a well-seasoned pouch made with the hide of a kangaroo or an opossum. We were soon actively employed, and as the repeated puffs ascended with fantastic curves, and sported with each other, until they appeared to have become one harmonious volume, we talked and smoked, and smoked and talked.

"Now," said the spokesman, who was a thin, parchment skinned, hyena-eyed man, about five feet seven inches high, "as the four constables left the mill shortly before you did, they probably cannot be far off, and if they make haste, the sooner may Briton and his companions be captured, for to tell you the truth, we *all* saw him within half an hour ago."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed. "Well then I would not care if the other constables were here immediately, so that I could join you in pursuit, for I have a great desire to see that surprising man Briton. I would not begrudge five pounds to observe him in his wild condition."

"Then, if we understand you," observed the leader, looking painfully full in my face, "you only want to *see* him—you do not want to have him captured, or shot, or hung?"

"Not I!—A sight of him, and a few minutes conversation relative to his singular life, would satisfy me; although it might not you, or the laws of his country."

"Are you aware that rewards have been offered for the capture of him and his companions, and if you were to assist thereat, would you not of course get your share of the Government swag?"

"It might be possible, *if* I were to assist in their capture, which I might be compelled to do by you in the King's name,† that a portion of the reward would be tendered me; but I trust that will not be the case. So, gentlemen, as I feel rather hungry, I will bid you good morning, and return home."

"Oh, if you are hungry, we will soon prepare a 'sticker-up' for you, from the hind quarters of yonder kangaroo, which in truth is yours, for it was one of your dogs pinned him close by the spot where we were preparing him for our dinner. I say *pal*," said the leader to the most diminutive of his followers, "just go and stir up the embers, and make the pot boil, for no doubt the young gentleman would relish a pannikin of tea with the 'sticker-up.'"

Whoever might be my host, I began to think him a Christian fellow; and his *pal*, as he called the one previously addressed, instantly proceeded to do his bidding with apparent cheerfulness, and astonishing alacrity. I could not fully persuade myself that these men were bushrangers, although, in many respects, they looked

† This occurrence took place before the death of King William.

somewhat strange, and were every now and then very restless, never for one instant laying aside their arms. Besides, from the moment they first hailed me, up to this period of our acquaintance, their demeanour was rather deferential than otherwise, although I by no means looked their superior; nor was I dressed in the pink of fashion—my outer garments being simply a nankeen jacket and inexpressibles of celestial cut, both considerably tarnished by their contact with burnt scrub and long grass covered with black-dyed morning dew, and my cap was made of kangaroo skin. To these roamers of Tasmania's wilds I must have been esteemed, or dreaded, no more than a Cockney would be by a *leash* of pheasants or partridges, in the Duke of Buckingham's preserves, on the other side the Equator. Indeed, their civility was much more than *constables* were in the habit of showing in those days of police insolence—when ignorant men, "armed with a little brief authority," were so intoxicated with the power which had been delegated to them, that they scarcely could recognise a superior, not of their corps. My fears, too, as to the supposed character of these men, were temporarily set at rest, when, having pointedly asked the leader if he and his companions were really the remnant of the special party in search of the bushrangers, I was answered without hesitation in the affirmative.

In less than half an hour from the time of giving the order to prepare the "sticker-up" and the pannikin of tea, we were employed in doing ample justice to the bush meal. To speak of the quality of either article which composed it, would by no means make my readers long for such a feast; however, although I have eaten and drank much greater dainties, both before and since that eventful day, never was I better satisfied with what was by these gents. styled "a tucker"—the tea was really good, although not mixed with gunpowder, nor served up in a China cup, with that rare addition, farm-house cream, or the more common liquid, London "sky-blue." Having finished our meal, the diminutive gentleman-at-arms packed up the remnants, distributing to the dogs a few slices of flesh from the fore-quarter of the kangaroo. We again, as a matter-of-course business, addressed ourselves to the "soothing influences" of the pipe: and after a few whiffs, I rose to return home, thanking my friends for their kind entertainment. I had risen for that purpose, when the leader wished me to prolong my stay, and said—

"What hurry, since you've had a tolerably hearty meal, such as we do n't get every morning; why not stay, and perhaps we may turn up another kangaroo?"

"I should have no objection," I replied, "but really my long absence will alarm the old gentleman at the house."

"Well, Sir, if you are so bent upon leaving our company," observed the leader, "I must tell you that we cannot allow you to leave us so early; wait till sundown, and if the other *constables* do not find us out before that time, it is not very likely they will do so, at least before morning; therefore, at sun-set, we will all escort you to the mill."

"I am much obliged to you, gentlemen, for the offer, but I really must be off. So good morning to you."

"If you will go, then," said their diminutive companion, "you'll lend us the loan of this dog, for he appears to be no new 'chum' at hooking 'a hopper.'"

"If you can persuade him to remain with you, which is not very probable, you may do so, provided you return him in the evening."

"Oh, we'll soon persuade him to remain," said they all.

With this remark they endeavoured to catch the dog, in order to put a cord round his neck. To this I objected, as also did the dog, who had no idea of being so closely allied to strangers—so he bolted off a considerable distance. It would almost seem, too, that he doubted the honesty of the strangers, as neither my whistling nor commands to return were of any avail; in fact, the more I called the further the faithful and sagacious animal retreated in the direction of home. It may be as well to remark, that this dog was once attached to the party who brought in the remnant of the aborigines of Van Diemen's Land, who were subsequently forwarded to Flinder's Island. He was rather singular in his loves at times; in

fact, he might be termed a *genuine* Odd Fellow, for he appeared to have no notion of *duplicity*—his *tail* never wagged without his *heart* beat time; and to those he could not admire, either from their outward appearance, or rough deportment, he showed the few teeth that remained in his jaws, and hung his tail like an icicle.

Still bent upon making my departure, I moved off a few paces to show them I was in earnest, when the leader muttered a few words to his companions, and then quickly overtook me.

“Come, come, my fine fellow, you *must* remain with us till sun-down, so make yourself content.”

“*Must*, indeed, is rather a strong word. I am much obliged to you, as I have before said, for your entertainment—but to be brief, I will use as strong a word as you have, and now I say I *will* go.”

“No, you wo’n’t,” all three exclaimed at the same time, (for the other two had joined their companion). “We promised that you should see Briton and his pals,” further observed the leader, “and see him you shall, sooner than you may calculate upon.”

“Where?” I exclaimed.

“Here—on this very spot!” exclaimed the leader, in a melo-dramatical tone, suiting the action to the word. “Behold in me, and these two, my companions, the three men with whom you so lately desired to communicate. Now, is your *curiosity* satisfied?”

“Is a man dead, when he’s shot through the head?” I might have responded; but I was speechless—I was petrified—every limb trembled, and I sickened at the thought that I was in the hands of at least one man, branded with the commission of many murders—it was Briton, the bushranger of seven years’ notoriety.

Perceiving the state into which this announcement had plunged me, Briton observed, in a kind, encouraging tone—“You have nothing to dread from us, if you reply to our questions undeceivingly.”

The recollection flashed across my brain, that Briton had deliberately shot two superintendents at the mill so nigh at hand; and the idea of being in company with such merciless desperadoes, and in their power, too, without hope of escape, made me recoil a few paces; but I felt that I was in their power—that it would require all the tact and generalship of a more experienced hand than I was, to tear myself from the custody of such unwelcome, and unceremonious acquaintances. I therefore resolved to adhere as strictly to truth, as I had, fortunately perhaps, done in my previous answers to their interrogatories, to any question they might put to me. And well I might so resolve, considering that by the least deviation therefrom, and unqualified by sundry provisoes, not only might “my life dwindle to the shortest span,” but those at the mill, ere the sun sank in the west, might number with those who slumber in the silent tomb!

My terror—for indeed I never felt the like before—could not be less intense than that produced on the mind of the victim, doomed in the olden times to walk the pirate’s plank into the ocean’s fathomless depths, whose howling billows drowned alike the cries of the young and the beautiful, the veteran navigator and the virtuous father, or the smiling infant, unconscious of its fate, in the convulsive embrace of its tender parent.

(To be continued.)

NOVEL IMPORTATION.—The American line-of-packet ship *Northumberland*, which arrived in the St. Katherine’s Docks in February last, from New York, has brought four patent guns, the manufacture of the United States, of a peculiar construction, for the British Government, the same having been purchased in America by the British Consul, and forwarded to England in pursuance of instructions from the Lords of the Admiralty to that effect.

THE ROUGH DOG.

[BY ZETA.]

(From the English Odd Fellows' Quarterly Magazine.)

HAVING one day to call upon Mr. A——, an old acquaintance of mine, I found, not much to my satisfaction, that the door was well guarded by his dog, Chance; which, from its wolf-like appearance and growling propensities, was no great favorite of mine. Well, I whistled, spake softly to him, and tried every means I could think of to coax him from his post, but yet Chance would not budge an inch; and as I knew that if I presumed to drive him off by force, he would most likely fly at me like a tiger, I prudently waited until Mr. A——, who had observed my manœuvres from within, came to open the door.

"Well, Mr. A——," said I, as soon as I was comfortably seated, "I would not keep such a rough-looking brute as that dog of your's; if I did keep a dog at all, I would, at least, have a decent-looking animal, and one that showed a little more civility to my friends."

"Indeed!" replied he; "to tell you the truth, you are certainly not the first person who has given me that hint; but you know 'all is not gold that glitters;' some very pretty dogs are of very little use, while a dog with a rough skin ought not always to be despised. That uncouth dog of mine, although it has the appearance of a wild animal from the desert, is such a faithful creature, that I scarcely think money could induce me to part with it."

"I must acknowledge," said I, "that he appears faithful enough to his post, for he does not seem inclined to let any one enter your door, except yourself. Nevertheless, I assure you that I know of no one else who is particularly partial to him, and therefore you need not be much afraid of being tempted by the offer of gold to part with him."

"Well, well," replied he, "I know that he is not a general favorite, and as he is certainly rather ill-natured, I generally keep him confined to the yard. But you will wonder less at my partiality, when I inform you that I have reason to believe that dog once saved me from losing a considerable sum of money, and probably my life also."

"In that case," said I, "I no longer wonder that he should be such a favorite: but as you have raised my curiosity, I feel anxious to know in what manner the dog proved of such singular service to you?"

"The circumstance," replied he, "which I allude to, happened in the latter part of the year 183—, when, having occasion to leave home for a week or more, I took care, when my horse and gig came to the door, to secure the dog in the stable, to prevent his going with me. I then got into the gig, and drove off; but before I had travelled many miles, I was surprised to see Chance trotting along by the side of the gig as usual. It afterwards appeared that the dog, which was allowed to accompany me in shorter journeys, had after my departure become so restive, had scratched, barked, howled, and kicked up such a terrible uproar in the stable, that the servant, after trying every means to silence him, had at last been induced to let him out; and thus, before I had got far from home, the dog was wagging his tail, and running along beside the horse in his usual manner. However, as I knew when he had once overtaken me, it would be a difficult matter to drive him back again, I at once submitted to (what I then considered) the inconvenience of having him as a companion during my journey. Six days we travelled together very comfortably, the dog running beside my horse during the day, and sleeping beneath the manger during the night. On the evening of the seventh day, I arrived at a small village, about twelve miles from home, and as I had travelled a considerable distance, I stopped awhile to get some refreshment for myself and horse. As I passed through the kitchen, I noticed three men sitting drinking around a cheerful fire; but as they were strangers, I paid little attention to them. I staid at the inn about an hour, and on departing, I observed that the three men were gone, but at the time I thought nothing of it. The night