"THE ISLE OF THE WINDS."

BY S. R. CROCKETT.

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SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS.

Sir James Stansfield of New Milns, in company with his grandson, young Philip, meets in an inn house his son Philip and his son's paramour, Janet Mark. They quarrel. Sir James goes home taking along his grandson. That night he is murdered by his absolute son and Janet Mark. They take his body outside and lay it upon an ice floe in the effort to fasten the crime upon other shoulders. But the boy Philip has witnessed the crime; he tells his grandfather's chief tenant, Umphray Spurway, and Spurway succeeds in having the real murderer brought to justice. He is sentenced to be hanged, his woman accomplice to be transported. Mysteriously Philip Stansfield escapes the gallows, seeks out his wife, finds her in the company of Spurway and tries to murder her, but does not quite succeed. She is taken away to Abercairn for cure, leaving her son young Philip in charge of Sir Irwan and in the company of little Anna Mark, from whom he learns that in some ways girls are worth quite as much as boys. For example in the time of the cattle drowing when Master Spurway bought his winter beast in the Mart, Anna beat Philip in helping to cut them out. Still they are excellent friends and when she beats him at her studies in the school to which they go together, John Stansfield, Philip's lawyer uncle, brings in a new teacher, Dominie Ringrose, a small man with wonderful eyes, shortly after he comes the country side is shocked and thrilled with a number of bloody and mysterious murders, evidently for the sake of robbery. Business calls Umphray Spurway from home. In his absence a big packing case, purporting to be full of fine Spanish wool, is delivered to Will Bowman, Umphray's clerk. He puts it in the weaving shed. That night, while playing about it, sees shining through the gauze of the packing case a pair of eyes. He calls Will Bowman, who counts three, then stabs the packing case with a small sword. Blood flows, they open the case and find Dominie Ringrose inside, apparently dead. Shortly after the house is attacked by robbers, whom Ringrose had meant to let in. They are beaten off, but afterward Philip's mother refuses to let him spend the holidays at New Milns. Returning from a day's visit to New Milns, Philip falls in with Saul Mark, Anna's gypsy father, who, under pretence of showing him Sir Harry Morgan's treasure, makes him prisoner. Anna finds out his plight and leads Umphray Spurway on his track.

CHAPTER XXI

PROVOST GREGORY PARTAN.

But by this time it was too late. All trace of Saul Mark and his companion was gone completely. There only remained to visit the King's Arms to see if any one had noticed in what direction I had departed. But though Will's horse was duly in stall, neither landlord nor hostler could be seen. And the King's Arms close was bare as the palm of a man's hand.

And now what to do. Anna was crying by this time, the tears rolling unchecked down her face, even as they passed the flaring resin torches of the booths, which, like swallows' nests, monstrous and foul, were plastered about the walls of the great kirk.

They would go to the little house on the Vennel. It was just possible I might have gone directly home. But even in that moment Anna rebelled against meeting my mother. So that the two women most concerned about me—my mother and my comrade—would have nothing to say to each other. So Anna Mark abode without, while Will Bowman bent his head to the lighted window, but could see nothing.

"Do you hear Philip's voice, Will?" whispered Anna from the dusk of a close across the narrow causeway.

"Nay," said Will, bending yet closer, "but I hear a man speak within."

Little Anna Mark could guess who, and a scornful smile, which none could see, passed over her face.

"Umphray Spurway has come back" whispered Will Bowman. "I can hear his Yorkshire burr."

A knock on the door. Will and let us tell him all.

He will break my head for leaving the horse, and Philip's, when he catches him, for bringing you, Anna.

"Nay," the answer came clear across the Vennel, "what are broken heads at worst? And, bonnie Philip, I care nothing for me or he would have gone straight home to his mother, as I bade him."

Will Bowman stalked heavily to the little door in the corner in which glowed a bright ruddy brought, a little later, a long saucer there ensued the soft grating of iron on iron. Then came two rattles and an of a door which has been opened upon the crying. Which was my mother's ordinary or third tone since the face of her husband had leaped in upon her through the open window of the West cottage in the wood of New Milns.

"I am William Bowman, servant to Master Spurway, of New Milns, madam." Anna could hear Will saying in reply to a question from behind the opened door. "I am anxious about your son, Philip. He rode to the town a dasse upon a horse and hath not been seen since. I came to know if he had returned home."

Then came to Anna the sound of heavy steps upon a flagged floor, the pass and rattle of a stooped door lintel, and the lighted curtain seemed to hang a more threatened crack became a broad chink, till the whole space was again filled in by the giant figure of Umphray Spurway.

So sudden was the apparition that though he had expected his master's presence, Will gave back a step. Umphray Spurway had a way, when disturbed in taking the ease of a servant who had announced him and thus occasioned no disturbance, a hard watch enabled him to preserve complete discipline, but when sometimes led to momentary impatience. Yet Umphray Spurway's hand was no feather bolster.

"What do you here, Will?" his voice rumbled across the narrow street. Anna's heart beat and she would have ran to him, but for the knowledge that that "that woman" was peeping timidly past his shoulder.

Then Will went over the tidings of the day as it was known to him. Umphray standing gloaming to the doorway with the warm and lighted kitchen behind him and my mother's knitting dropped on the clean sweep hearth.

As every mention of my being lost my mother uttered a little moan, or a gasp, or sob. For since the Spurways had come to live beside the contiguous to her line. At the third repetition Umphray Spurway turned him about saitily.

"Mary," he said, "do not fear. I will bring the lad back to you if he be in this town."

And he strode into the house again to get his broad unplumed hat.

"Shut the door, Mary, behind us," he said, "open it to none. And keep your heart up. This is but some boyish piece of Philip's, for which I will take his unconditional pide."

"Nay, nay, not if you love me," said my mother through the door. "promise you will not for my sake." It is all Philip's high spirit."

"Hech devil's tricks," Umphray groaned. "Such high spirits are lest moderated with a rope's end! Bide within, Mary, and do as I bid you."

All marks, but for his ordinary way with all men to serve him best with my mother also. For she loved masterly men, as indeed most women do, and naturally obeyed them.

So out into the moll star soon clarity of the night Umphray Spurway came. And as soon as Anna heard the main fa'ts back to its place behind the door of the little corner house in the Vennel she ran lightly to Umphray and clasped him by the arm.

"Anna!" he cried in great astonishment stopping at the edge of the quay. "What in heaven's name do you in this place at such an hour?" And he turned to get about with her face in a lighted window, that he might see what was in her mind.

Then in hasty, broken sentences, the girl told him all the tale that he knew not already, of my mode John of Saul Mark, of the bout a single stroke and of the tracking of her father from the hill. Finding Will for meeting with Will, as to or their wooden had lost their quarry at the upper part of the town.

Umphray Spurway went on stroking his beard as he listened. The masts of the ships stood up there into the sky, a star greater or smaller shining upon the top of each. The surface of the harbor was dappled with white.

The two men were walking arm in arm, and presently, stumbling over a cask, the Provost swerved a little to the left to avoid the piled confusion of the quay, and, as he did so, he noted Umphray Spurway standing by the corner of the street with his companions a little behind him in the dusk of the wall.

"A braw and balmy nicht," he said, making his magisterial salutation, which was always considered to be of superexcellent dignity. "Ah! good Master Spurway, what gives us poor folk of Abercairn the pleasure (and I may add honor) of your company? But I forgot—yes, yes, I have heard there is an attraction at the foot of the Vennel that robes us in a worthiness not our own. A dainty bit widow, Master Spurway, or, rather, when I think of it, scarcely a widow, but if one may say so without offence, so much the more taking on that account!"

"Not even you, Provost Partan, can say such things without offence," returned Umphray, very gravely, while Anna shrank deeper into the dusk of a doorway, and Will Bowman spread his master's coat-tails abroad to shield the girl from her father's eyes.

"No offence, man; no offence at all!" replied the provost amicably, "surely we have kenned one another weel enauch this score o' years that I may take the freedom o' a jest wi' you, Umphray, my friend!"

"I have been seeking a lad of the name of Philip Stansfield," said Mr. Spurway, without continuing the subject; "he was last seen in the company of your companion, Mr. Saul Mark. Perhaps he can give us some information as to the boy's present whereabouts?"

"My companion!" cried the provost, scandalized; "nae, nae companion o' mine. Saul Mark is just the supercargo o' a bit boatie that rins to Bordeaux wi' ony Abercairn staples—thread, baith black, white and whitey-brown, birk pirns to wind it on, and your ain manufacture o' braidcloth—whilk, gin I may say sae, has made us famous through a' the land o' France."

"Of what ship is Saul Mark the supercargo?" asked Umphray.

The provost lifted his broad hat a little to the side as he slowly and meditatively scratched his head.

"The name of the boat?" he answered. "Dod, I canna juist bring it to mind at this present moment." (Here he glanced cautiously over his shoulder.) "Ye see, there's the trip back frae Bordeaux, and though, of coorse, she comes in ballast, pavin' stanes an' gun flints, there's whiles odd things get stowed awa—sic as ankers o' brandy, wee barrels o' the fine dairy wine, tobacco that will make the noblest sheeshan in the worl' (will ye try ma baccie, I'se o' the best? Na, weel than!), and maybes a warp or twa o' Valenceens lace. A' hairmless enauch, but not to be spoken aboot as loud as Master Ebenezer preaches in the muckle kirk. Ye tak' me? I, Gregory Partan, am the chief magistrate o' this ceety, and as such a law abidin' man. But thae ill set customs duties are neither house dues nor town dues, nor yet for the common guid. They are neicht but a sendin' awa' o' guid siller oot o' the municipality. And I dinna hand wi' them ava!"

In this fashion, and at considerable length, the provost expounded his theory of the several incidents of imperial and local taxation, to which Umphray Spurway listened impatiently enough.

"But, Provost," he broke in as soon as opportunity allowed, "this lad was seen to enter the town with Saul Mark, and we mean to find where he is concealed. In which we ask for your magisterial assistance. If he be on shipboard we must go there and recover him. Philip Stansfield is the heir to a large and important property, and is, indeed, a ward of the Master of Stair, the King's own advocate himself."

"Forbye," said the Provost coming over and pinching Mr. Spurway's arm joocosely, "the only son o' his mither" and her a weedow—or the next thing to it!"

"The name of the man's ship, if you please, Provost," said Umphray in a voice below the last getting angry, and began to suspect that the provost was merely putting him off.

The Provost shook his great head, removed his hat, and coolly wiped the brim medi tatively with his cuff.

"Na, Maister Spurway, try as I wall, I canna call it to mind. My memory is no what it was. But I ken a better way o't. The man shall tell ye himself. Saul!" he put his hands to his mouth and made a trumpet of them, "Saul Mark! come hither, man. Umphray Spurway has lost aneu' his barrns and wants to ken gin ye hae him in your tail pesch!"

But by this time Saul Mark had disappeared among the tumbled casks and cordage piled upon the quay. They could see nothing but the masts standing thick against the sky, and even the light of the stars was dimmed by clouds which began to bear upon the land wind.

"Saul! Saul Mark!" come hither and speak with Master Spurway."

The bass bull's thunder of the Provost's summons seemed to wake most of the sea front. Doors opened and shut. There ensued a noise of men moving cautiously in dark places. And then ensued a moment and it were gone. The sound of oars came up from the water, together with a muttered curse as somebody at the bottom of the rude stone steps fell inward into a boat with a clatter and a barbed shin. The surface of the bay was stirred into phosphorescence by the regular dip of oar blades and then dulled again as little ripples and small waves began to ripple the dark water into a thousand wavering diamond points. Then, passing through the masts with a sharp flick flick of cordage they sped away over the town of Abercairn toward the unseen hills where the sheep lay out among the heather.

"Na," said the Provost, "I'm deotfu' Saul's gangin. He maunna mo precious wonderstan' A supercargo in a Bordeaux ship has nae sinecure. A rival hooked lad Saul—will tender ye a reckoning to the value o' a hawbee. Meddles a wee over muckle wi' the varns and the dye, says you. But that's neither here nor there when every penny o' the profit o' your venture is chinkit doon on the nail."

"I must pursue my search alone then, Provost, if you cannot or will not," broke in Umphray Spurway, for the moment that he was being moved with his cap off and his head bare. "Will Bowman, I go with you. Now, right about face! Put your hands behind you. Take three steps backward. Halt! Bow to the gentleman un!"

"Bassant, i. e., dappled with white.

"By 12 o'the clock at latest," said Saul succinctly, "we sail with the morning tide, full to the hatches with the bonny young two-legged cattle."

"And a fine riddance it will be to the toon o' Abercairn, forbye some siller in my pooch, gin the Lord gie ye success and a guid market on the ither side the water. But, mind ye, keep within the law. And be prepared to render a strict account o' every head among them, either in yellow guineas or the best Virginian tobacco. Are ye to tak' the boy on board wi' ye the nicht?"

"Aye, an' the lassie too, if we have luck."

"What lassie?" The provost turned quickly. "I thought that it was a strict rule that there should be naething o' that kind?"

Saul Mark laughed an ugly little laugh.

"Surely you have forgotten the heart of a parent, and you a man with a family! Provost, I mean my own daughter Anna."

"God!" gasped the provost, "ye are never sicean deevil incarnate as to sell your ain flesh and blood?"

"And what for no?" returned the supercargo. "Is it not done every day? Did not you yourself give your daughter Elspeth to the drunken lawyer Kirkup for gettin' ye the toon parks in lease perpetual?"

The provost did not answer the taunt. He kept on muttering to himself and shaking his head.

"I canna allow that. I wanna hae that on a ship o' mine. A risk in the way o' business or the blinkin' o' an e'e for a certain profit. I will tak' wi' ony man. I will gang as far as it is in mortal man to gang, according to my conscience, that is. But to sell ane's flesh and blood—"

"Apprentice" is the word, provost," said Saul Mark, smiling, "but you hinder us. Rest assured the girl is safe with me. We will find her very useful after she is snugly settled. I will put her into good training on the other side. Besides, you know, she will be near her mother. And in the meantime she will serve to civilize us aboard the Corramantee. God knows we need it."

"And what will he say to a woman on board?" Saul Mark chuckled as he replied.

"He," as you call him, is a fury and all of a fine captain. But—well, Saul Mark is supercargo of the Corramantee, and the entire cargo is his business. Bear that in mind, provost. Now, lads, bend your stiff shellbacks. On hands and knees till we are clear of these accursed lights! Good night to you, provost."

And, like the links of a great serpent, one pair of bowed shoulders after another passed Gregory Partan as he stood there leaning on the grayed stone pillar, till full twenty men had gone by, and say for the scraping of cutlass sheaths against the piled barrels and the gleam of a distant light dimly reflected on a pistol butt, there was nothing to tell that a score of the most desperate ruffians in the world were abroad in Abercairn.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SUPERCARGO OF THE CORRAMANTEE.

In the narrowest part of the alley which wound its way past the gable of Gregory Partan's property, Umphray Spurway was greeting with his lantern in his hand. A noisome place it was in the day time, gloomy even in mid June, with its slanted bars of light and its deep shadows, where low and villainously browed doorways opened off into the unknown. At night it became a nest of darkness, peopled by man and dreamed of as a standing horror by women and children, for it was reputed haunted by crouching, malignant heads and nameless terrors among all the superstitious of Abercairn. Strange sounds came up out of its deep throat. Lights had been seen by scoutling night wanderers flickering far down it like will o' the wisps in the marshes.

But Umphray Spurway was not the man to be intimidated by idle bogeyly dreads or old wives' tales. In the course of his search for me he had obtained a lantern at the King's Arms by the simple process of going into the stable and lighting it with his tinder box, and now, with a spare candle in his pocket he was systematically searching every corner of the town of Abercairn to which by any chance I might have wandered.

As he passed up the filthy street he kept close to the houses on one side, flashing his lantern this way and that, as if he were sweeping the ground even causeway with a broom of light. On many unholy and unwaiting things did that feeble illumination fall. But it was Anna Mark who obtained the first clue for, like a young fire lance, the girl went peering and trying back from side to side of the narrow street, doubling and twisting down some alley or close in the midwhile.

At the very entering in of Partan's close she lifted a long switch of willow, or, as it is called in these parts, "saugh wand."

"See!" she cried, "he has been here. This proves it. I cut this with my own gully knife on the land side of the Lion of Kirkconnel this very day at the thorlack. See there is where the gully slipped and I had to strengthen my fingers with the wand."

She handed the switch to Umphray Spurway, who examined it with much interest. Will Bowman also bent over it.

"It certainly looks as if you might be right," said Umphray, "but, after all, one cannot be certain. There are a thousand 'saugh' bushes between Ayrton and the land of Kirkconnel. And besides, you yourself are slipshod."

"That is the way I grip with Philip's fingers as he rode away, sending him that he had spent over much time already, and warning him to ride like mutineers before a following wind."

Anna Mark spoke positively. She was not a girl to have doubts when she made up her mind.

"Aye," said Umphray Spurway, "beggars must not be choosers. We must offer the help the only one we can find. Here goes! Lead on, the Vennel. Good! Ugh!" he sniffed, "the filthy pigs. The sooner we clean anything till they have laired themselves in the sties is much."

He took his way down the alley, the rising breeze sometimes flinging it out, and feeling the clammy sides with his uncovered hand till he came to a low door.

"Here, where you are, Anna," he called back, "and you Will, bear to her. It is fair wading here. What's that?"

"Help! help!" was Will Bowman's voice.

"Father, I'm in!" This time it was Anna's, but muffled and muffled.

"I make no Spurway, help! They are choking me."

The great Englishman turned and drew his sword. He ran here along the narrow three-foot passage, holding his lantern before him and, almost before he was aware, touched the black muzzles of half a dozen muskets which with one accord were pointed at his breast. But nothing daunted, he lifted his sword and would have drawn on for instantly into the midst.

"Stand! Who goes there? Friends or foes?"

It was Saul Mark, who spoke. He stood behind three of his men whose guns held Umphray Spurway prisoner in the narrow pen of the Provost's Close.

"Surrender, Umphray Spurway, or you are a dead man," continued Saul Mark, "and deliver up the boy. You carry in the pocket of your breast a book. Let us have it, and I will give you a safe conduct out of the town."

"I will surrender to no man!" cried Umphray. "Will ye try the alarm, Kirk upon this Provost's door?"

"Your Will is provided for. He will give us no more trouble," returned Saul Mark, dryly. "Nor will you, Master Spurway, if you delay an the minute."

"Then I will try the alarm myself!" He lifted up a long horn to his lips and blew a blast which made the sleeping town of Abercairn tremble in its bed.

"Help! help! Murder! murder!"

"Fire! crash, and ready to fire. Scipio, cut the prisoner's throat if he shout again. Now, Umphray Spurway, will you surrender, or will you die?"

The great Englishman was not yet conquered.

"For me," he said, "I would rather die than to yield to any tallow faced son wash alive. I will give up any man of you with any weapon you like to name."

"Fighting for honor is not our business. Our business is to have your money, and get aboard. Now, I give you thirty seconds, and if you will not deliver it, by the Lord, I will kill the lad and the devil before your eyes."

"Mercy of God, man, she is your own daughter!"

"The more reason then that I should do what I like with my own. Now, you are wasting time. Will you give up the money and submit? Half a minute from now, Scipio, I count the seconds."

A rich, oleaginous voice in the background, with a swaying in it like the overword of a chantey, began to count. "One, one, one, one, one. Two, two, two, two, two. Three, three, three, three, three." and so on through the numerals, each one of seventeen ticking off a second as surely as a clock.

Umphray Spurway hung a moment in the wind, doubtful whether to make a rush for it. Instead, he elevated his lantern and its light fell on Anna Mark, helpless in the arms of a gigantic black, whose great palm was pressed against the girl's mouth. It was this man who was counting the seconds in a monotonous singsong, and swaying from side to side as he did so. Behind him Umphray caught a glimpse of a couple of dark, stunted ruffians, stuffing a gag into Will Bowman's open mouth, while other two held him pinioned by either arm.

Umphray was a brave man, but he knew when to give in.

"Enough," he said. "I surrender."

"Pass over the money, then," ordered Saul Mark, shortly.

The Englishman took a shagreen pocketbook out of his coat, and slipped the leather strap over the levelled mouth of the nearest musket. The cannon touched it back as a bayonet hits bay on a fork. Saul Mark opened it briefly.

"Here is a note, the dark lantern. Let the grim fight go this," he said, and, with quick and methodical accuracy, he checked the amount, nodding his head as he did so with a satisfied air.

"It is as well for you, Umphray Spurway," he said, as he buckled it up, "that you have not tried to play with us. Now, right about face! Put your hands behind you. Take three steps backward. Halt! Bow to the gentleman un!"

CHAPTER XXIII

JACOB AND ESAU.

"Will you let the boy and girl go?" said Umphray when he had obeyed, which he did without murmuring, knowing that with such desperate ruffians there was nothing else to be done.

"The girl is my daughter," said Saul Mark, "you have too long separated parent and child. I am sure your warm and generous heart will take pleasure in having brought about so happy a reunion. I am infinitely obliged to you for your care of Anna. But now I will relieve you of your guardianship. Indeed, the girl wishes it herself, do you not, my daughter?"

Anna struggled vehemently in the clutches of the black Colossus who held her, but only one muffled, inaudible sound escaped from under the great palm.

"You hear," said Saul Mark, smiling, "she cannot even express her joy."

"You are a devil," cried Umphray, indignantly. "Listen—take my life and let the girl go."

Saul Mark laughed aloud.

"That would be neither profitable nor yet a Christian act. It is true, you cannot go back to your mill till after you have remained a little while in a secluded spot. But we are not murderers. Besides, we want you to go and weave us more money than this paltry sum you have paid us on account. Do not imagine that this pays back the blood money you owe for Dominie Ringrose's life. His death we will require at your hands and at those of this brave young man here, whose fame is so great in all the countryside."

He turned about to Will as he spoke.

"Ah, sirrah," he said with a deep sneer, "you are but an apprentice, but for all that you will pay. Oh, yes, you also will help to settle the blood debt. Blood for blood shall you pay. Drop for drop. Agony for agony, till every jot and title be redeemed."

To all which, wisely enough, Will Bowman answered nothing. For the fellows who held him on either side threatened him with knives, if he tried to speak. By this time they had tied up Umphray Spurway as he stood, with his back to Saul Mark and his men, in the open of the Provost's Close.

"Now," said Saul, "it remains that so bold a seeker should be taught how to find."

He passed Umphray by, and, taking the lantern which had fallen to the ground, he followed the darksome passage to its end. Here he unlocked a door under an archway, the same by which some hours before I had descended to view the treasure of Sir Harry Morgan.

"Bring him along, three of you," Saul cried back, "the rest be snug. Now, Umphray Spurway, bend your head if you wish your brains to remain in their place. Follow me along the passage, and at the end you shall find safe and sound that for which you have searched in vain all this night."

It was at the same moment of time that I started up from the dusty floor of the deserted lime-kiln, a wild hope that I was to be delivered singing in my heart. I heard voices, footsteps, the tramp of men approaching. Fear and hope laid alternate hand on me. The low door, which I had not been able to find in the dark, showed itself jeamsy enough now, light darting from the keyhole and flashing all around the ill-fitting edges.

The door opened. A tall, broad shouldered figure filled all the doorway. I was found—I was delivered.

"Umphray Spurway!" I cried and sprang toward him.

"My poor boy," he said, "I can do nothing for you. I also am a captive in cruel hands."

"What! I cried, "you a prisoner!" For I had deemed such a thing impossible.

"Then appeared Saul Mark carrying the lantern and three other men behind him, whom I had never seen, all with weapons in their hands. I could now see the Englishman's wrists tied behind him.

"Now, Master Philip," began Saul Mark, "I promised you that you should see Sir Harry Morgan's treasure. It was necessary to try your courage first. Now, since that is proven, I shall keep my word. Harry Morgan's treasure you shall see, and that in the best of company. Moreover, you shall have a chance to gain some of it on the same way he did—or thereabouts. You are rising seventeen, Philip, my lad, and I fear me your bit is something of the shortest. But this your benefactor will supply. Put your hand into his pocket and see what you find."

"I will never rob Mr. Spurway," I said, thinking as quickly as I could of the man with the silver rose in his ears. He was still sending the little consequitous smile which I hated so.

"What do you say to that, Master Spurway?" As he spoke he turned to the Englishman.

"Philip," said Umphray, kindly, not answering directly, but speaking to me, "do as you are bid. Put your hand into my pocket and take what you find there. It is all yours."

"I thought so," cried Saul with simulated generosity. "I knew it—spoken like a generous Yorkshireman! You are going to a far country, lad. You will need all you can get to make a figure there. So do not fail to take advantage of this, your benefactor's kindness."

I saw seeing that it was useless to do otherwise, and sickened by himself bade me. I put my hand resolutely enough into Mr. Spurway's pockets, and by his order, I put out the contents. From his coat tails a snuffboy of gold set with pearls, and a silk kerchief of fine material. Out of the other came a little red bound prayer book, which struck me as strange, for Umphray was never known to be pious, or even so much as to cross a kirk door.

"I will relieve you of that souvenir, Philip," said Saul Mark, "it is a habit most foul, and one that growing boys will do well not to acquire." And he held out his hand for the box.

For a moment I hesitated, and the next Saul's voice changed from suavity into a perfect gust of ferocity.

"Shilly manners," he cried. "Learn to obey! Not at once, but a long mile ahead of that. After you have been a month on the Corramantee, with the captain on board, you will learn to obey before and after you are spoken to."

Saul's almoner out of my judgment I handed him the box.

"Now, proceed with your inventory, and make haste! I cannot keep my lads here all night waiting on your fumbling."

Then I took from my friend's breeches pocket his tobacco pipe and its silver case. The stem was round into six curves, and the bowl was larger than common. After that came his tobacco box and tinder. These also Saul Mark took, frowning on the same the most a id handed to the seamen behind him. I never saw them again. Mr. Spurway says he permitted me to put back into his pocket, saying that as he was to return to the Mills house and weave more money for him he had better have no more difficulties than were necessary to his risk was. Next came his purse, which the poor angry lad, me put into my own pocket for safe keeping. Then I was commanded to search in the pockets in his waistcoat, to take the watch and chain out of his fob, and to put my hand into the breast from which, though I knew it not, he had already taken out the pocketbook. And did this last I felt something small and oval hidden deep within a fold each time my hand passed across it. I could feel him aimpe. So I judged that Umphray feared above all the rest, to retain this article, whatever it might be. So, of course, I passed it in.

So busy was I as this work that I did not hear the sound of feet along the passage, nor a sy one as sounding the steps which led into my dungeon.

"What is this?" said a voice that sounded in my ear like the trump of doom. "Congratulations, young lad, on the robbing his benefactor, his foster parent. We must teach him better manners on the 'Corramantee.'"

I turned me about, and there, taller than any by a head except Umphray Spurway alone, I beheld my father. Philip Stansfield, the condemned parricide. The damned assassin of my mother!

He was dressed in a handsome gold laced coat, with epaulets upon his shoulders, and a cocked hat on his head. Like that worn by high officers of the Marine Navy. As ever, he was a man of majestic figure, and carried himself proudly and mercifully.

"I cannot tell Saul Mark what bad lad I could see the fisherman shake with fear. Philip Stansfield, lad, you are where I cared speechless beside Umphray Spurway.

"I knew it, my father, lad. And when Saul Mark's lodgers brought to be put his hand under me, I was more greatly than I had expected, and I felt the sting of my father as though it had been a painted fan.

"Umphray," he said shortly after a pause, and then turned away.

"And now, brave Master Spurway," he went on in another tone. "I hear you have set yourself up as a prophet as a power in the land. What hinders you, I should not kick a knife into you and have you in Blue river for pay? You hunted me as a dog, and I will yet. You know, that you deserve to condemn me to the gallows, did you? Have you gone through fire, man? What my gallant son has already lifted the feet. Well, I am not proud. I will see if there are any leavings."

And with that he strode to where Umphray stood, very grave and quiet, his arms strained behind his back, and began to pass his fingers across his waistcoat seeking for anything that he might have concealed. I could see the Englishman's face wince every time Philip Stansfield's hand went near his breast, where I had felt the little hard oval thing.

The cutpurse noted the involuntary movement and turned his hand into the inner pocket of his waistcoat, from which he brought out a little oval ring set in it, hitherto unknown to me, with diamonds. It was a little thing, but I knew and as Philip Stansfield held it underneath the lantern I could see it quite plainly within a yard of my eyes.

It was a portrait of my mother.

At this unexpected climax my father laughed a ruthless laugh. I never heard but one thing like it in all the world of sound. That was the low growling rumble of boulders grinding against each other in the bottom of a flooded river. It was not a good noise, but there was certainly something appalling about it.

"So," said my father, turning to Umphras Spurway, "it is as I thought, Master Jacob the Supplanter. You have been amusing yourself with Esau's wife, have you? And that when the poor man was abroad in the desert. Well, Esau has come home again. What have you to say to him?"

"I have nothing to say to you, Philip Stansfield," said Umphray very calmly, "save that I cherish for the unfortunate lady who once was your wife a feeling such as your nature could never understand. Her treasure you hold. I had made privately. She knows nothing of it."

"That will do," said my father shortly. "I need neither instruction nor information from you. What is between us I can settle for myself. Here, supercargo, take my son and the other prisoners aboard the Corramantee immediately." Returning upon Umphray Spurway. "And now, sir," he said, "in good enough to observe the manifold consequences of this kiln as an eligible permanent residence. Here" (he pulled away a loose board in a ring) "is a quiet resting place, deep, you see, and quite unescaped. There (pointing to a whitish gray heap in the corner) "is a bounce of quicklime, waiting only a can of water to do its duty. I have a knife here, sharp enough to settle all scores with Master Jacob. In the meantime I am a feeling hearted man. Take your charming nimiatures to the place you are going to. I do not desire to possess such a constant reminder of past felicity."

He thrust the miniature back into the pocket where he had found it. Umphray stood silent, evening his enemy, as calmly as though he had been striking a bargain with him in the market place.

"Bring the boy this way" said Saul Mark. One of the sailors seized me by the collar and gave me into the grasp of the supercargo.

"Now, listen," he said, "if, as you pass through the streets, you speak above a whisper my orders are to throttle you." And, as a warning, he tightened his fingers on my throat till I gasped for breath. The last I saw of the lime kiln behind Provost Gregory Partan's house was my father setting down the lantern on the edge of the yawning grave, in which he designed to place the body of my benefactor, Umphray Spurway.

To be Continued.

TALES OF YANKEE ENCHANTMENT

THE PERMANENT SNOW COMPOUND.

Bernard and Brainerd Catlin Bought Five Dollars' Worth Unknown to Their Father and Realized Barrels of Fun Out of It.

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"I'd as soon sell you my farm for two cents as to buy your compound," said farmer Catlin to the black haired and uncanny looking stranger. He had arrived just at nightfall at the close of a long winter's storm. The fields and trees and fences and roofs were white with snow and the two Catlin boys were delighted, but their father, with his knowledge of the work that it entailed would have been glad to see the snow take the same wings that had brought it and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. And here was this fellow having the impudence to offer him a compound that would make snow permanent.

Mr. Catlin had let the man into the little hall with its winding stairway that led to the bedrooms above and now they stood talking while Bernard and Brainerd, his two sons eagerly listened to the stranger's enchanting conversation.

"Why, I've sold quantities of it to fellers down in New York who are going to use it to make toboggan slides that'll last all summer."

"Well, people in the city may have time for such foolishness, but what in tarnation do you suppose I want my farm burried under three feet of snow the year round for? Summer season's short enough as 'tis.

"Only $5 a quart and a quart will sprinkle an acre besides which I donate a beautiful nickel plated machine for distributing it."

"Say, young man," said Mr. Catlin, suddenly, "I think you're dealing in unlawful goods an' if they ain't they ought to be. S'pose you was to strike some mischievous feller that had a grudge agin his neighbor? He'd sprinkle his field with it while he slept an' 'twould be winter all the year 'raound on that farm. I don't question your bein' able to do it. Since I see how cars go along I'm prepared for anything, but you don't sell me nothin' of the kind. Good night."

With a little sigh the man slung his bag over his back and left the house.

Mr. Catlin went out to the barn to bed down the cattle and the boys followed the stranger.

"Say, do you sell that in small quantities?" asked Bernard.

"Don't like to open a can. You see a quart will last a lifetime, so you only have the first expense. Your father's got the wrong idea. I don't want to cover up his potato fields with snow the year round, but if he has a hill that ain't worth cultivating and sprinkles it with this powder you boys can coast all summer long and he can keep his milk and butter cool and comfortable without any need of ice."

"Wish we could see the thing work," said Bernard with caution. "Course such weather as this snow is going to stay anyway, but how do we know it would stay when a thaw came?"

"That's so," echoed Brainerd.

"Easy proved," said the stranger with a smile. "I'll build a little fire here out of some pine cones if you boys'll get 'em and I'll sprinkle a little of the powder on some snow and you can make snow balls that'll be good to play croquet with next August."

"Won't they melt?" asked Brainard.

"If you can melt 'em I'll give you my whole outfit."

A bonfire in the snow always appeals to a boy and they soon collected about a hundred cones from a tree near at hand. Then the stranger built a little pyramid of them, poured some kerosene oil on them from a tiny can that he carried in the pocket of his ulster and touching a match to it had a blaze in a few seconds.

The brick red blaze lighted up the snow and made it sparkle with a million diamonds, but the boys were too interested in watching the further processes of the strange ger to notice the beauty of the scene. He took a little water sprinkler out of his other pocket and filled it with some of the powder. Then he dusted the snow with it for the space of a yard square.

"Now make snowballs, boys and put them into the fire."

The boys got to work and fashioned big round snowballs, patting them into shape and hardening them by a pressure of the knees. When a dozen had been made the stranger said "Now dump them in the fire."

The boys did so and were not at all surprised to see them resist the heat, for they had perfect confidence in the stranger. After they had been in the bed of coals for five minutes the stranger kicked them out of the fire, and although they were somewhat smoked they were otherwise just as good as when put in.

"Now, you see that my compound does just what I claim for it. You'd better buy a quart. Haven't you any money laid by for a rainy day?"

"Yes," said both boys.

"Well, put it into perpetual snow instead. Much more fun. You can make a coasting place on some hill that no one ever cultivates."

"Blakely Hill," said both boys together.

So Bernard sent Brainerd back to the house to get five dollars out of their tin banks—he made his younger brother run errands for him—and while he was gone the fascinating stranger gave him a quart can of the compound with a little nickled sprinkler and then when Brainerd came back he counted ten half dollars into the stranger's hands.

"I think you boys are too good for this earth," said the stranger as he proceeded to go on his way.

"Why so?" asked Brainerd.

"Why, you seem so particular about only using it in places that aint growing to be cultivated. When I was a boy I would have sprinkled little patches here and there just for the fun of seeing heaps of snow in midsummer."

"Oh, that'd be bully," said Brainerd, laughing at the idea, and Bernard seemed to think there were possibilities in it, so after the stranger had gone off into the darkness they opened the can and poured some of the white powder into the little feeder and then they walked all around the house sprinkling it in a thin line. They then sprinkled the gate posts and I am sorry to say the front path. The snow once hardened into place could not be shoveled off.

Then they got a lantern and set out for Blakely Hill, which was not far from the house, but which was three quarters of a mile long, very steep, and never used for anything. On the way there they passed the church, and whether by accident or design they dropped a lot in front of the church on a big drift, and if you go up to Ardmore next summer you can see that drift gleaming in the hot summer sun. Every one has to drive around it, but it has brought lots of summer people to the place, so no one has ever complained.

Arrived at Blakely Hill they sprinkled a patch ten feet wide for the whole length and that need up all their powder but a little bit which they saved for future use.

Then they went home and went to bed so early that Mr. Catlin said to his wife "I declare I'm those boys get better'n better. I was always full of the old Harry when I was their age. Now I wouldn't have be'n contented to let that man go off with his mis'able compound to night if I'd be'n them. I'd a covered the farm with it."

"They're the best boys in the world, father," said Mrs. Catlin, and went up to their room to kiss them good-night and tuck them in.

Boys are generally anxious to have snow remain, but in view of the queer things that were going to happen the Catlin boys wished hard for a thaw. But the weather held cold for two weeks and no one suspected that any [illegible] chemically hardened. The boys built several bonfires on Blakely Hill to test it and it didn't melt a bit.

They hinted to their schoolfellows that when a thaw came there'd be more fun than a goat up at their house and at Blakely Hill, but beyond that they would say nothing.

At last, toward the end of January, there came a warm rain, and snow in the vicinity of South Ardmore vanished like maple syrup and buckwheat cakes.

The boys heard the patter of the rain on the tin roof and hugged themselves and chuckled. In the morning they were up as soon as it was light. The rain had stopped, but it was very warm. The mercury registered 52 on the front porch. They dressed and went out of doors in the morning twilight. Bare ground everywhere. Bare ground as far as they could see, except that on the front path there was three feet of snow packed hard, and all around the house a drift and two picturesque heaps on the gate posts, and under one of the pine trees a pile of ashes and half burned cones and twelve snowballs.

Mr. Catlin was disposed to be angry when he saw what had happened, but good Mrs. Catlin reminded him that boys would be boys, and that they might have covered up his winter wheat.

"Well, it does beat all!" he said at last, and when he heard about the coasting at Blakely Hill he grinned like a boy and said: "Mother, what say we all go over there and remo snow?"

Mrs. Catlin would never grow old. She was always ready for anything, so a merry family party, including the hired girl and the hired man, set out for the hill, drawing in their wake the boys' big bobsled.

Of course, lots of people saw them going up the road pulling the sled over the bare ground and many thought them crazy, but when a few minutes later they heard shrill cries of glee from Mrs. Catlin and the girl and the deep bass laughter of the men and the shouts and shortles of the boys, they ran out to see what was the matter.

And when they saw motherly Mrs. Catlin, her hair streaming in the wind, steering the bobsled down Blakely Hill on an eminence of hard snow, while all around the grass was fresh and green, owing to its winter blanket just removed they came out, too, young and old, bringing sleds and trays and anything on which they could coast.

And from that time until people got tired of the sport, which wasn't until late in September, that hill was alive with coasting parties when the mercury was up in the hundreds and stored ice melted like heated butter.

But the pathway of three feet snow in the Catlin's front yard was a good deal of an eyesore to the old people, and at last they covered it with dirt and planted grass seed on it and named their place "The Embankment," and took summer boarders on the strength of it, and now Mr. Catl