

pray ask him for me, that he let my father remain in the keep a little longer. He is sore bruised from his fall of yesternight, and if he be removed to Taunton jail, will surely die.'

'I promise thee faithfully, that all that lies in my power I will do for thee,' earnestly replied Clarence Wyllde, as he gazed with profound admiration upon the lovely face of Bessy Thorne.

The cottage girl smiled through her tears, and dropping a low courtesy, turned to go away.

'Stay a moment, maiden,' said young Wyllde, gently. 'In order to plead thy cause better with Sir Roger, 'tis fitting that I know something of this fall, which thou tellest me thy father received.'

Then Bessy Thorne answered firmly, 'Yesternight, young sir, two of my father's fast friends and myself, did go the keep with a strong rope provided for his escape. My father had climbed to the window and grasped the rope, but suddenly the keeper came upon him, and affrighted, he fell heavily to the ground, and this morning the village leech doth count him sorely hurt.'

'Such untiring devotion I never before witnessed; I honor thee for it fair maiden,' and Clarence Wyllde respectfully raised her hand to his lips; but Bessy Thorne quickly withdrew it, and thanking him gravely, yet gently for his promise, hurried across the park. Clarence Wyllde watched her till she passed the hawthorn hedge, and then he went back to the Hall. He thought of the poacher's daughter very often during his walk, she was so noble and fair.

But, Sir Roger, I would have thee remember that this is the first favor I have asked of thee since I came to the Hall, and therefore I shall take it most unkindly if thou refusest me.'

'Have thine own way Clarence,' returned Sir Roger, smiling in the young man's handsome face; 'there is no refusing thee. But I must make one stipulation: take Sir Hugh with thee and visit the poacher, so that thou mayest truly report of him. If he indeed be so grievously hurt, I pledge thee my word that he shall not be removed to Taunton gaol. I would go with thee to the keep, did not these fierce twinges of gout forbid; and Sir Roger glanced deprecatingly at his leg, as it lay upon a cushion.

Gladly thanking Sir Roger for his promise Clarence Wyllde left the room. To Sir Hugh the young man talked earnestly of the poacher's daughter,—of her beauty, her noble devotion and sweet affection for her father,—so that, when he had finished, his uncle, smiling at his warmth, expressed some desire to see Bessy Thorne. 'Of a truth Clarence, were I to judge thy heart by thy tongue, I should say this maiden had won it outright. But what think ye, my boy, of being the poacher's son-in-law?—how wilt that agree with thy pride?'

The crimson blood mantled the cheek of Clarence Wyllde, and glancing reproachfully at his uncle, he made no answer.

'Forgive me, Clarence,' said Sir Hugh, placing his hand affectionately upon his nephew's shoulder; 'I did but jest with thee. And now let us talk of another matter—of my child, my lost Alice.'

As the two wended their way to 'the keep,' they talked of Alice—Sir Hugh despairingly, Clarence Wyllde hopefully. 'The keep' was but a temporary place of confinement for those who were destined for Taunton jail. It stood some distance from the Hall, hard by the keeper's lodge. When Sir Hugh and Clarence Wyllde entered the poacher's cell, they found him stretched upon his pallet, greatly weakened, and sorely bruised by his fall. Richard Thorne had a grateful heart, and touched by their kindness, talked so fairly and pleasantly to his visitors as to make no disagreeable impression on them, and Clarence wondered less at Bessy's fond devotion to her wicked father. With a promise that he should not be removed, but should be properly cared for, Sir Hugh and his nephew had turned to leave the poacher, when his daughter entered the cell. Bessy Thorne would have retreated, but her father calling her by name, bade her come forward, and in a moment she was in full view of the visitors.

'Merciful Heavens!' ejaculated Sir Hugh, his face flushing deeply, and then fading to a deadly pallor; 'Where am I? Who is this maiden?'

'My daughter Bess,' quickly retorted the poacher, raising himself upon his elbow, and keenly regarding Sir Hugh.

'She is no child of thine, Richard Thorne; if the daughter of my beloved wife still lives this maiden is *her*—so like my Alice in face and form.'

'She is mine Sir Hugh, it matters not who she looks like. I will stand to what I have said before the whole world. Come near, Bess; shake back thy curls, and let this gentleman see clearly thy face.'

The poacher spoke mockingly, but his daughter instantly obeyed. Throwing back the long ringlets from her brow, Bessy, with a gaze of distress and bewilderment, approached Sir Hugh.

'Mine! mine! *sealed as such*, not only by the marvellous likeness to my Alice, but by that crimson mark which glows upon no temple but a Wyllde's. Look here, Richard Thorne; and the excited Sir Hugh pushed back the hair from his brow, displaying a mark similar to that of Bessy's; here is its counterpart. Now judge calmly and speak truly.'

But the poacher, frowning darkly, stretched out his arms to the trembling girl, muttering, 'She is mine, mine only!'

'Richard Thorne,' said Sir Hugh, approaching the bed, and speaking gently, 'the

village leech has said thou mayest not recover. I charge thee, then, as a dying man, to speak truly in this matter. Fling away thy obstinate declaration, and go not into eternity wronging this child and myself so foully.'

As the poacher listened to these words his countenance changed. Apparently he had forgotten his perilsous hurts.

'It seems that I will lose Bess as surely by one way as by another,' said he, faintly smiling, 'and so, Sir Hugh, I will deal with thee truly. Yet, hark ye, had my life been certain, thou couldst not have opened my lips so easily.'

'I implore thee Richard Thorne, tell me truly and quickly, where didst thou get this child?'

'From a company of gypsies,' doggedly answered the poacher.

'How long since?' asked Sir Hugh, eagerly.

'Sixteen years ago, Sir Hugh, the gypsies came into this shire of Somerset. Bess had not been with them past a week; but she was a puny, ailing little thing, and they gladly sold her to me for a good meal. Bessy was the name which my wife and I gave to the child, and we loved her as our own. We were a childless pair; but from that day until my wife's death, and ever since, Sir Hugh she has been to me as a daughter, dear as my own flesh and blood.'

Richard Thorne ceased to speak, but he covered his eyes, whilst the heaving of his great chest showed that he was powerfully agitated; then he turned toward Bessie, but she, weeping bitterly, had left the room.

'My good friend,' said Sir Hugh, slowly, and with intense emotion, 'from my inmost soul I bless thee for so frankly dealing with me. And now hark ye to my tale.' Then to Richard Thorne Sir Hugh told all that Clarence Wyllde had listened to with such earnest interest the night preceding. When he spoke of the little Bible, the poacher's eye brightened. 'It is here, Sir Hugh,' he exclaimed, drawing from under his pallet a volume, the rich velvet covers of which were timeworn and much rubbed; 'this Bible the gypsies gave with the child. So foul a crew liked not the good book amongst them, and having broken off the gold clasps—for which, I take it, they stole it—they left the Bible at the cottage door. I am no scholar, Sir Hugh, and Bess can but spell out a chapter: so this writing, with us, went for nought; and the poacher pointed with his dark hand to the flyleaf. Then, with swimming eyes and throbbing heart, Sir Hugh read: '*Alice Wyllde, from her loving husband, Hugh Mortimer Wyllde, Lansmere, May, A. D. —*' and here the year was effaced.

'Through thy precious word, good Father though hast restored to me my child!' fervently ejaculated the old man, raising his hands and eyes to Heaven; and then he read to the poacher the names which he himself had traced, years before.

'Take her, Sir Hugh; she is indeed thine. And now, Bess, come hither,' hurriedly said Richard Thorne. Then, as the girl entered the room, he proceeded: 'Go to that gentleman—he is thy father, thou his child;—Bessy Thorne thou art no longer.'

Timidly, and with tears, the maiden knelt before Sir Hugh, who pressed her wildly to his breast, wept over and blessed her as though she had been an angel. 'This thing hath come upon me suddenly,' she murmured, 'and, my father—if thou indeed art such—pardon my sore bewilderment.'

'I wonder not that it stuns thee, Bess, for thou hast never known but that thou wert my child. I hid the truth from thee lest thou shouldst love me less, yet, after all, I lose thee; and the poacher moaned in bitter grief. Then Bessy released herself from Sir Hugh Wyllde's close embrace, and flung her arms around the neck of Richard Thorne. 'Faithful and true hast thou, whom until now I accounted my father, been unto me; faithful will I be to thee, leaving thee not whilst thou livest.'

A gleam of joy lit up the dark face of Richard Thorne. 'Oh, blossom most sweet and dear, for all thy love I bless thee. But, Bess, thou art a lady now, and must not stay with me. Had not Ralph Wilson lodged me here, Sir Hugh Wyllde would ne'er have known thee as his daughter; so that which he meant to thee as a curse hath turned into a blessing.' As the poacher ceased to speak, a change came over him; his face was distorted with pain, and he writhed in agony.

'Help! help! good sir, bring the leech!' said Bessy, in terror, turning to Clarence Wyllde.

'Bring him not!' gasped Richard Thorne; 'let me die in peace. I was warned that if I overwrought myself I would baste my death-hour; now that it has come, do thou my Bess hold my head upon thy bosom.'

The golden sunlight streamed in the windows of the keep. It fell on a strange scene. On the low pallet lay the poacher, his head resting on the breast of the fair girl, whose slender white fingers lingered lovingly among the masses of his matted black hair. Near by stood Sir Hugh, his face bearing the impress of great emotion, and his majestic figure slightly bent, as he gazed pityingly upon the dying man. The dark blue eyes of Clarence Wyllde were lit up with a mournful expression, as he knelt at the foot of the pallet, and earnestly regarded Richard Thorne and the sad lovely face of her who partially supported him. The girl bent over the dying poacher, and spoke softly to him. Her voice was low, and often choked with sobs, but her words were of Heaven, and mercy, and he to whom she spake groaned out with fervour, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'

'Bessy, I am cold—cold; and 'tis growing dark. Where art thou? I cannot see thee; and, as Richard Thorne stretched out his hand, the weeping girl fondly grasped it.—'Sir Hugh, be kind to her, love her, and—the poacher's voice died to a whisper, and he gasped as though for breath. Once again he spoke. 'Bessy, call me father, ere I die; call me—'

'Father, dear father!' sobbed forth Bessy, kissing the cold brow of him who hath so faithfully loved and cherished her. A faint smile came round the mouth of Richard Thorne, but the death spasm drove it away, and in a few moments he lay, pale and rigid, dead upon the low pallet.

Sir Hugh Wyllde tenderly lifted his daughter from the floor. 'Bessy Thorne no longer but Alice Wyllde—my own precious child whom I have loved and mourned long years as lost—hide thy tears upon thy father's bosom, my darling; I will not chide thy grief.'

Alice Wyllde clung closely to Sir Hugh, whom already she began to love; and he, smiling upon his nephew, said—

'The future is full of mystery, good Clarence. When thou broughtest me to this poor man's bed, how little we thought here to find our Alice! How little I looked to find in her whom men call *the poacher's daughter*, and of whom to me thou spakest so earnestly, my own child, my long lost bird. Thou hast well kept thy promise my noble boy: may God bless thee for it.'

Clarence Wyllde, bowing low, kissed the hand of the fair, weeping Alice, and begged a share in her affections as a newly found, yet loving cousin.

Some years later, Sir Hugh Wyllde presented to the circle of nobility his daughter, the lovely lady Alice. She was admired, and looked upon with no slight interest; for with the same of her beauty went the strange, romantic tale of her early life, and restoration to her family in Somersetshire. The betrothal of the Lady Alice to her noble cousin, Sir Clarence Wyllde, soon also became public. Few were aware, however, that Clarence Wyllde's attachment to the fair Alice commenced in days when she was known only as Bessie Thorne, the poacher's daughter.

And what of Ralph Wilson? In his malignant hatred, he cursed his betrayal of Richard Thorne, as, through it, Sir Hugh Wyllde discovered his daughter, and elevated her at once to her rightful rank. 'Tis a wise ordinance of Providence that the machinations of the wicked often recoil upon themselves, or else serve in a way least expected, to benefit and bless those they wish to injure.

The following, says the Episcopal Recorder, strikes us as being one of the most beautiful passages in the whole compass of English literature:

#### THE KNELL OF TIME.

Heard you that knell? It was the knell of Time! And is Time dead? I thought Time never died.

I knew him old, 'tis true, and full of years; And he was bald, except in front—but he Was strong as Hercules. I saw him grasp The oak; it fell—the tower; it crumbled—the stone,

The sculptured monuments that mark the grave

Of fallen greatness, ceased their pompous strain

As Time came by. Yes, Time was very strong;

And I had thought too strong for death to grapple.

But I remember now his step was light, And though he moved at rapid rate, or trod On adamant, his tread was never heard.

And there was something ghostly in the thought,

That in the silence of the midnight hour He trod my chamber, and I heard him not.

And I have held my breath, and listened close

To catch one footfall, as he glided by.

But nought awoke the echo slumbering there. And the thought struck me then that one whose step

Was so much like a spirit's tread: whose acts Were all so noiseless, like the world unseen,

Would soon be fit for other worlds than this, Fit for high converse with immortal minds,

Unfettered by the flesh, unchained to earth.

#### New Works.

From Bentley's Miscellany.  
LEOPARDS.

The following practical joke is related in the late Rev. T. Acland's amusing volume on India:—A party of officers went out from Cuttack to shoot; their men were beating the jungle, when suddenly all the wild cry ceased, and a man came gliding to where all the Sahibs were standing to tell them that there was a tiger lying asleep in his den close at hand. A consultation was instantly held; most of the party were anxious to return to Cuttack, but Captain B— insisted on having a shot at the animal; accordingly he advanced very quickly, until he came to the place, when he saw, not a tiger, but a large leopard, lying quite still, with his head resting on his fore-paws. He went up close and fired, but the animal did not move. This astonished him and on examination he found that the brute was already dead. One of his companions had bribed some Indians to place a dead leopard there, and to say that there was a tiger asleep. It may be imagined what a laugh there was!

Nature, ever provident, has scattered with a bounteous hand her gifts in the country of

the Orinoco, where the jaguar especially abounds. The savannahs, which are covered with grasses and slender plants, present a surprising luxuriance and diversity of vegetation; piles of granite blocks rise here and there, and, at the margins of the plains occur deep valleys and ravines, the humid soil of which is covered with arums, heliconas, and liannas. The shelves of primitive rocks scarcely elevated above the plain, are partially coated with lichens and mosses, together with succulent plants and tufts of evergreen shrubs with shining leaves. The horizon is bounded with mountains overgrown with forests of laurels, among which clusters of palms rise to the height of more than a hundred feet, their slender stems supporting tufts of feathery foliage. To the east of Atures other mountains appear, the ridges of which is composed of pointed cliffs, rising like huge pillars above the trees. When those columnar masses are situated near the Orinoco, flamingoes, herons, and other wading birds perch on their summits, and look like sentinels. In the vicinity of the cataracts, the moisture which is diffused in the air produces a perpetual verdure, and wherever soil has accumulated on the plains, it is adorned by the beautiful shrubs of the mountains.

Such is one view of the picture, but it has its darker side also; those flowing waters which fertilize the soil, abound with crocodiles; those charming shrubs and flourishing plants are the hiding place of deadly serpents; those laurel forests, the favorite lurking spots of the fierce Jaguar; whilst the atmosphere, so clear and lovely, abounds with mosquitoes and zancudoos, to such a degree that in the missions of Orinoco, the first questions in the morning when two people meet, are 'How did you find the zancudoos during the night? How are we to day for the mosquitoes?'

It is the solitude of this wilderness that the jaguar, stretched out motionless and silent, upon one of the lower branches of the ancient trees, watches for its passing prey; a deer, urged by thirst, is making its way to the river, and approaches the tree where his enemy lies in wait. The jaguar's eyes dilate, the ears are thrown down, and the whole frame becomes flattened against the branch. The deer, all unconscious of danger, draws near; every limb of the jaguar quivers with excitement; every fiber is stiffened for the spring; then, with the force of a bow un bent, he darts with a terrific yell upon his prey, seizes it by the back of the neck, a blow is given with his powerful paw, and with broken spine the deer falls lifeless to the earth. The blood is then sucked, and the prey dragged to some favorite haunt, where it is devoured at leisure.

Humboldt surprised a jaguar in his retreat. It was near the Jovial, below the mouth of the Cano de la Tigrera, that in the midst of wild and awful scenery, he saw an enormous jaguar stretched beneath the shade of a large mimosa. He had just killed a chiguire, an animal about the size of a pig, which he held with one of his paws, while the vultures were assembled in flocks around. It was curious to observe the mixture of boldness and timidity which these birds exhibited; for although they advanced within two feet of the jaguar, they instantly shrank back at the least motion he made. In order to observe more nearly their proceedings, the travellers went into their little boat, when the tyrant of the forest withdrew behind the bushes, leaving his victim, upon which the vultures attempted to devour it, but were soon put to flight, by the jaguar rushing into the midst of them. The following night, Humboldt and his party were entertained by a jaguar hunter, half naked, and as black as a Zambó, who prided himself on being of the European race, and called his wife and daughter, who were as slightly clothed as himself, Donna Isabella and Donna Manvela. As this aspiring personage had neither house nor hut, he invited the strangers to swing their hammocks near his own between two trees, but as ill-luck would have it a thunder-storm came on, which wetted them to the skin; but their troubles did not end here, for Donna Isabella's cat had perched on one of the trees, and frightened by the thunder-storm, jumped down upon one of the travellers in his cot: he naturally supposed that he was attacked by a wild beast, and as smart a battle took place between the two, as that celebrated feline engagement of Don Quixote; the cat, who had perhaps more reason to consider himself an ill-used personage, at length bolted but the fears of the gentleman had been excited to such a degree, that he could hardly be quieted. The following night was not more propitious to slumber. The party finding no tree convenient, had stuck their oars in the sand, and suspended their hammocks upon them. About eleven there arose in the immediately adjoining wood, so terrific a noise that it was impossible to sleep. The Indians distinguished the cries of alouates, jaguars, cougars, sloths, parayuas, and other birds, so that there must have been as full a forest chorus as Mr Hullah himself could desire.

When the jaguars approached the edge of the forest, which they frequently did, a dog belonging to the party began to howl, and seek refuge under their cots. Sometimes, after a long silence, the cry of the jaguars came from the tops of the trees, when it was followed by an outcry among the monkeys.—Humboldt supposes the noise thus made by the inhabitants of the forest during the night, to be the effect of some contest that had arisen among them.

(To be continued.)