

# A MEMORABLE SWIM.

BY W. CLARK RUSSEL.

The little sitting-room, at whose open window I was seated, was very hot. From the lodging on either hand of me there broke into the quietude of the night a horrid, distracting noise of jingling pianos, accompanied by a squealing of female voices. The hour was about eleven. I filled my pipe afresh, left the house, and walked in the direction of the beach.

The moon rode high. I had never before seen the orb so small, and so brilliantly piercing too. She diffused a wide haze of greenish silver round about her in the heavens, in the skirts of which a few stars of magnitude shone sparsely, though clear of the sphere of this steam-like radiance the sky trembled with brilliancy, and went hovering to the sea-line, rich with prisms and crystals. In the heart of the silent ocean lay the fan-shaped wake of the moon, and the splendor of its hither extremity, so wide-reaching was it, seemed to melt out in the lines of summer surf which formed and dissolved upon the wet darkened sand. The sands were a broad firm platform, and stretched before and behind me, whitened into the complexion of ivory by the moonbeams. The cliffs rose tall and dark on my left, a silent range of iron terraces, with the black sky-line of them showing out against the stars, and with nothing to break their continuity save here and there a gap, as of some ravine. The summer-night hush was exquisitely soothing. From afar came the thin faint notes of a band of music playing in the town, past the huge shoulder of cliff, but the distance was too great to suffer the strains to vex the ear. Indeed, the silence was accentuated rather than disturbed by that far off music. The creeping of the surf was like the voice of innumerable fountains. There was not a breath of air; the moon's reflections lay tremulous; and in the liquid dusk on the western edge of that motionless path of light, floated the phantom shape of a ship, her hull as black as ink, and her sails stirringly poised over her in spaces, like ice in shadow.

I walked dreamily onward, smoking my pipe and listening to the innumerable babble of the waters upon the beach. I went perhaps a mile. There was plenty of time; no hurry to go to bed on such a night; and there would be abundance of room for the walk home long after the tide should have turned.

I came abreast of a mass of black rock, table-shaped, and nearly awash; that is to say, the water stood almost at the level of it, so that at flood it would be submerged and out of sight. I spied what I thought to be a gleam of light resting upon it; but on looking again I was sure that that strange shining could not be moonlight, for the lustre was local, and it was not light either, but white and its size was about that of a man's body; and, indeed, it looked so much like a naked man that I drew close to examine it. There was dry sand to the rock; but the water brimmed very nearly around it, and there was water under where the white object lay. On drawing near, I observed that what I thought to be a gleam of light was the body of a drowned man. I stood staring long enough to satisfy me that he was dead. It was a dismal and dreadful object to light upon. The very silence of the night, the beauty of the stars, the high, peaceful, piercing moon somehow increased the horror of the thing. On a dark, stormy night I do not know that such a spectacle would have so shocked and unnerved me as this now did.

I peered to right and left, but not the shadow of mortal being stirred upon the wide white sweep of the sands. Then, casting my eyes up at the cliff, I recollected that a little distance further on there was a gully, at the head of which stood a coast-guard's hut, and knowing that there would be a man stationed on the lookout up there, I forthwith bent my steps in the direction of the gully, and ascended it until I arrived at the hut. Here I found a coast-guard. He eyed me fixedly as I approached him.

"Good-night, coast-guard," I said.  
"Good-night," he answered, attentively surveying me by the light of the moon.  
"I am somewhat breathless," said I.  
"I have walked fast and that gully is hard to climb. There is a dead body on the beach."  
"Whereabouts, sir?" he exclaimed, with the instant promptitude of the seaman, and he advanced to the edge of the cliff.

"It lies on the rock there," said I, pointing.  
"I see it, sir," said he. "D'ye mind coming along with me? My mate won't be here for a bit."  
Together we proceeded to the sands. The coast-guard got upon the rock, and stood viewing the body. Then catching hold of it by the arms, he dragged it gently on to the sand.

"Ay," said he, "I thought as much. This'll be the gent as was drowned whilst bathing out of a boat yesterday. Poor fellow! he's left a wife and two children. There's a reward of twenty pounds offered for his body. That'll be yours, sir."  
"It will be yours," said I. "I do not stand in need of money earned in this fashion."  
The body was that of a man of about thirty. He had fair hair and a large moustache, and in life had doubtless been a handsome young fellow.

"Taint often as they comes ashore so perfect," said the coast-guard. They're mostly all ate up so as to be unrecognizable.  
I recoiled, and said, "Why am I afraid of this body? It cannot hurt me. It is but a dead man, and comely too. Why, as he lies there, coast-guard, he might be formed of ivory, moulded by the fingers of the sea out of its own foam, and cast up thus. And yet," said I, looking round, with a silly, chilly shiver running through me, "I believe it would go near to unsettling my wits were I forced to stand watch by this body all through the night here."  
"I see he's got his rings on," said the matter-of-fact coast-guard, stooping to bring his eyes close to the fingers of the body.

"What is now to be done?" said I.  
"Which way might you be going sir?"  
"Home—back to the town," I replied.  
"I have walked enough by the seashore to-night."  
"Then," said the coast-guard, "I'll ask you to report this here discovery to the first bobby ye meets with. Tell him that the body lies almost abreast of Downton Gap; and if you don't mind giving me a hand sir,

to carry the corpse to the foot of the cliff, in case the bobby—the tide, ye see—"  
"No," said I; "you dragged it single-handed from the rock. You are able to drag it single handed to the foot of the cliff. If I touched the poor thing—Well, good-night, coast-guard," and I walked off, leaving him to handle the body single-handed, for which I have no better excuse to make than that I was possessed at the time by strong feelings of horror, and perhaps fear, which the presence of the coast-guard in no degree mitigated, and which were induced, as I can now believe, by the suddenness and violence of the obtrusion of an object of terror upon my mind at a moment when it had been rendered in a peculiar sense unprepared for any such experience by the enervating charm, the sweet relaxing magic of the soft and glorious night of moonshine and silence, and waters seething with the stealthy hiss of champagne.

I stepped out briskly, and as I walked I seemed to behold many white bodies of drowned men floating shoreward on the summer feathering of the little breakers. When I arrived at the town I met a policeman, to whom I communicated the news, and I then returned to my lodgings and sat in the open window smoking a pipe, and as I lighted my pipe the clocks in the town struck the hour of midnight.

As I sat smoking thus I surrendered my mind so wholly to contemplation of the dead white body I had so suddenly fallen in with, that I might well have supposed the impression which the encounter would leave must be lifelong. But next day I returned to London, and within a week the memory of the little incident had as good as perished from my mind. For a month I was very busy. My employment was exceedingly arduous, and often obliged me to work late into the night. Then at the expiration of the month, feeling uncommonly fatigued, I resolved to spend a week at the same seaside town where I had discovered the body on the rock.

The name of this town I will not give. I do not wish to excite the anger of its boatmen. "Ho!" they will say should I name their town. "Ho!" they will cry when they have arrived at the end of my story, "what a joy! This here piece is put into the newspapers all along o' spite. The gent don't wish us well, and he's invented this

blooming yarn to scare folks from employing of us. He's a-going to start a pleasure yacht for taking o' people out at a shilling a head, and don't mean that its pore watermen shall get a living." Thus would you declaim, O ye sons of the beach; and that you may in no wise suffer from any statements of mine, I withhold the name of your town, so that the reader may take his choice of any port or harbor on the coast of the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, what I am about to relate is no "loy," but the truth itself—absolute, remarkable, living.

I was again at the sea-side. It was now the month of August, and the hottest August that I can remember. After the intolerable heat of London, and the fatigue of my work there, nothing, of course, could prove so beneficial, so bracing, in all senses so restoring, as sea-bathing. But for the bathing-machine sea-bath I had the strongest aversion. First, there was no depth for swimming. The necessary depth for true enjoyment was to be gained only when the limbs were well-nigh exhausted by the labor of striking out for it. Then I disliked to bathe in company. Again I objected to the crowds who stood watching the bathers from the piers and sands. In fact, for an expert swimmer such as I, there is but one method of bathing in the sea; he must take a boat, row out a mile or two where the brine sparkles foamless, where it is clear of the contamination of the set of the inshore tide, where the blue or green of it is darkly pure with depth.

On the morning following the day of my arrival, somewhere about the hour of seven o'clock, I threw some towels over my arm and walked down to a part of the harbor where I knew I should find a boatman. Even at this early hour the bite of the sun was as fierce as though he stood at his meridian. The atmosphere was of a brilliant blue. There was a little air of wind that delicately rippled the sea. I beheld not a cloud in the sky—no, not so much as a shred of vapor of the size of a man's hand. In the harbor the red canvas of smacks preparing to go to sea painted the water under them. The soft wind brought many wholesome odors of tar, of sea-weed, of sawn timber to the nostrils. As I approached that part of the pier off which most of the wherries belonging to the town were congregated, a man who was leaning with his back to me over a stone post, gazing in the direction of the sands, turned his head, and guessing at my intention by observing the towels I carried, stooped erect with alacrity, and called out: "Boat, sir? The werry morning for a swim, sir. A sheet calm, and the flood's only now a-going to make."

Though I had from time to time visited

the town, I had never spent more than three days at a time in it; and the boatmen, therefore, were strangers to me. I said to this man:

"Yes, it is the very morning for a swim. What sort of a boat is yours?"  
"The best boat in the harbor, sir," he answered. "There she lies, sir—a real beauty," and he pointed eagerly at a wherry painted blue, with raised thole-pins, after the fashion of the boats of the Thames watermen.

I looked at her and said: "Yes, she will do very well to take a header from. Bring her alongside."  
It was not until I was seated in the stern-sheets of the boat that I particularly noticed this waterman, who, having flung his oars over, was propelling his little craft through the water with a velocity that was warrant of an extraordinary powerful arm. My eyes then resting upon his face, I found myself struck by his uncommon appearance. His skin was very dark, his hair jet-black, and his eyes were of a glassy brilliance, with pupils of jet. Coarse as his hair was, it curled in ringlets. He wore a pair of immensely thick whiskers, every fibre of which might have been plucked from a horse's tail. His nose was heavy and large, and the curve of the nostril very deeply graven. In each ear was a thick gold hoop, and the covering of his head consisted of a cap fashioned out of a skin. Otherwise he was habited in the familiar garb of the British boatman—in a blue jersey, large loose trousers, formed of a yellow stuff called "feanought"; top-boots under the trousers, which were turned up to reveal a portion of the leather. I observed that his gaze had an odd character of staring; it was fixed, stern, yet with a suggestion of restlessness in it, as of temper.

"Are you a Jew?" said I.  
"No fear," he answered.  
"Do not suppose that I ask the question out of any disrespect to you. The Jews are a very intelligent, interesting people. It would cause me to wonder, however, to find a Jew a boatman."  
"I ain't no Jew, sir," said he.  
"Perhaps you are what is called a Romany Chal?"

"What's that?" he cried, gazing at me with his staring eyes.  
"A gypsy, isn't it?"  
He grinned, and answered, "Well, I believe I has some pikey blood in me."  
"What do you mean by pikey?"  
"Gypsy," said he.  
"That must be a local term," said I, "probably derived from the words turnpike as connecting the gypsies with the road."  
He strained at his oars in silence; but

guard's hut there, and gave notice. Who was the drowned man, do you know?"  
"It came out in the cronner's 'quest, but I forget the name."  
"How was he drowned?"  
"Why, by a-wading out of his depth, I allow."  
"The coast-guard told me he was drowned by bathing from a boat."  
"He didn't know nothen about it," answered the boatman. "There never yet was a man drowned by bathing out of a boat in these parts. Didn't ye see the account of the 'quest in the newspapers?"  
"No."  
"Well," said the man, "it was supposed he was took with cramp. There's too many drowning jobs of that sort going on along the coast. It don't do us waterman any good. It creates a prejudice agin the places where the accidents happen. What does a man want to go out of his depth for if he ain't no swimmer?"

We fell silent, and he continued to row with great energy, whilst I lay back in the stern-sheets enjoying the sweet cool freshness of the salt air breathing upon the face of the waters, and greatly enjoying the noble and brilliant spectacle of the sea shining under the sun, and of the coast, whose many colors, and whose many features of structure, of elbow, of cliff, of green slope, of down on top, every stroke of the oar was now making more tender, more delicate, more toy-like.

After rowing for about twenty minutes, the gypsy faced boatman rested upon his oars, and taking a look around, and then gazing over the side into the water, he exclaimed, "This here'll be the spot, sir."  
I at once undressed, stood up in the stern-sheets, put my hands together, and went overboard into the cool green, glass-clear profound. I came to the surface, and with a shake of the head cleared my eyes, and perceived the boatman very leisurely pulling his werry still further out to sea. This was, perhaps, as it should be. He might, indeed, have headed his boat in for the land; but, in any case, he was right to keep her in motion as an invitation to me to swim after her. I swam with great enjoyment the embrace of the water penetrated to my inmost being, and every pulse in me beat with a new vitality. I swam directly in the wake of the boat, past the rim of whose stern I could see the head of the boatman. He held me in view, and he watched me intently, though from time to time he would direct his gaze to that part of the land where the town was situated, and sometimes he would turn his head and look behind him, that is to say, over the bows of his boat, in the manner of one who cannot

satisfy himself that something is not approaching.

Presently I thought I would catch hold of the boat by the gunwale, to rest myself, and I called to him to stop rowing, that I might come up with him but he did not stop rowing. When I called he turned his face from me, and continued to ply his oars. I called to him again, but he paid no attention to me. There was the sullen air of murder in his averted face, and in his whole manner of determination not to hear me. My heart beat furiously, and I felt faint, for now, with the velocity of thought, I was linking the fate of the man whose dead body I had lighted upon with the gypsy ruffian ahead of me in the boat; and I said to myself, he might have been drowned, and perhaps by that very demon there, as I am to be drowned; left as I am to be left, to swim until he sank from exhaustion, as I am to sink, that the boatman might possess himself of his watch and chain and money, as my watch and chain and money are the objects for which I am to be obliged to struggle here until I perish!

A bazaar in Moscow, presided over by Grand Duchess Elizabeth, wife of the Governor of Moscow, realized £10,000 for the famine fund.

Kincaid St., Brockville, Ont., Jan. 11, 1889: I was confined to my bed by a severe attack of lumbago. A lady friend of mine sent me a part of a bottle of St. Jacobs Oil, which I applied. The effect was simply magical. In a day I was able to go about my household duties. I have used it with splendid success for neuralgic toothache. I would not be without it. Mrs. J. RINGLAND.

TO BE CONTINUED.



## Catarrh

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Found a Manacle Skeleton in a Tree.

Near Tishomingo, Tex., recently a strange discovery was made by some woodchoppers who were working in the hills west of that place. They brought to town a skeleton and the section of a tree to bear evidence of the truthfulness of their story.

They cut down a large oak tree which was partly hollow, but the entrance to the hollowed portion had almost entirely grown over, leaving only a narrow slit in the outside of the tree. When the tree fell to the ground it was split open by the shock, and there lying in the centre of the broken wood, was the skeleton of a man. On one ankle of the skeleton was a band of iron attached to a piece of chain, evidently from the manacles worn when he sought refuge in the hollow tree. From all indications the skeleton has grown sufficiently to almost cover the opening through which he crawled to hide. Two of the ribs were broken in such manner as to lead to the belief that it was done by a bullet.

### A Winning Throw.

Rastus—"Wuz'yo' down ter de tukkey raffle las' ebenin'?"  
Clem—"Dat's de vo'y place er wuz at, Br'er Rastus."

Rastus—"Did yo' make de winnin' frow?"

Clem—"Deed I did, honey. Whilst de breddern wuz quar'lin' obor the dice I snoke up an' trew de turkeys out de winder an' waltz' eroun' on de outsid an' gaddered in de game."

## "German Syrup"

Martinsville, N.J., Methodist Parsonage. "My acquaintance with your remedy, Boschee's German Syrup, was made about fourteen years ago, when I contracted a Cold which resulted in a Hoarseness and a Cough which disabled me from filling my pulpit for a number of Sabbaths. After trying a Physician, without obtaining relief—I cannot say now what remedy he prescribed—I saw the advertisement of your remedy and obtained a bottle. I received such quick and permanent help from it that whenever we have had Throat or Bronchial troubles since in our family, Boschee's German Syrup has been our favorite remedy and always with favorable results. I have never hesitated to report my experience of its use to others when I have found them troubled in like manner." REV. W. H. HAGGARTY, of the Newark, New Jersey, M. E. Conference, April 25, '90. A Safe Remedy.

G. G. GREEN, Sole Man'fr, Woodbury, N.J.

Cable reports of the storms and the cold weather that are prevailing in western Europe might also make one believe that there had been an exchange made in climatic conditions between America and Europe. We, in southern Canada, have been having thus far what would be a customary English winter, barring the presence of frequent fogs, while in England the temperature seems to have been considerably below the average. Possibly later on the conditions will change, and the average for the season will be maintained, but it often seems as though a decided climatic change was taking place through this country, tending to make our winter less severe than they were in former years. In time, perhaps, the science of meteorology will be sufficiently advanced to account, and possibly foreshadow, these special conditions. As at present advised no definite reason can be framed, though in spite of the hard proverbs about a green Christmas we in Toronto can easily reconcile ourselves to the enjoyment of a temperature which is sufficiently moderate to make the task of maintaining vital heat a comparatively easy one.

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