THE OLD BARGE.

By Thomas St. E. Hake

CHAPTER II.—WITH THE EBB.

Meanwhile, Rotherford had stood on the ferry steps, watching Bertha's retreating figure until the twilight had hid her from view. He had then gone to his boat and cautiously rowed down stream, with the wind and rain driving up against the tide and growing rougher as the night fell. He kept close under the bank, out of the rapid current. His intention was to pull alongside Landrick's barge while there was still a gleam of light, make fast there, and remain on the alert till daybreak. And although the prospect was anything but promising, even to an ardent lover, David Rotherford would have gone through a severer ordeal for Bertha's sake. For was not this solitary night-watch on the Thames under her very window? And within doors—as he judged by the light—she was keeping night-watch too. He came up alongside the barge as noiselessly as possible in order not to disturb Landrick, and attached his boat to the stern, where his presence would not be suspected.

The tide had begun to ebb. Rotherford listened intently for the slightest noise. All that Bertha had told him about the weird midnight voices on the river recurred to him now. The wind blew boisterously, and in the sound he imagined that he heard whisperings on all sides; and he frequently peered round with a strong conviction that there was a noiseless figure moving about on the barge—a black, crawling thing, like a huge spider, and blacker than the night. So strong did this conviction become that at last he resolved to go stealthily on board and satisfy himself concerning the dark shadow. If it existed only in his brain so much the better; if not—

Suddenly the barge began to move—move slowly out of the creek towards mid-stream; and Rotherford's boat, swinging round, glided after it—glided away with the ebbing tide! Rotherford could hardly believe his senses. It was like a dream—a strange nightmare. His first thought was to raise an alarm; but as he opened his lips the thought flashed across him that the figure—a dim moving figure now—was on the deck and creeping towards the cabin; and were he to cry out, his boat would be cut adrift. It was still in his power to leap on board the barge and go to Landrick's aid.

As the figure went into the cabin, leaving the barge to take its course with the tide, Rotherford drew alongside and crept up into the stern, advancing on hands and feet across the deck towards the little skylight. His heart throbbed loudly as he looked down. The cabin lamp, still hanging in its place, was burning brightly, and its light fell upon the dark eager visage of John Morison. His figure was bent forward, and his hands—no longer employed in mending nets—were busily occupied in opening a cupboard over Landrick's head. The old bargeman was lying asleep in his bunk; he was enveloped in a rough coat; and over this coat was a quantity of netting. Should he awake suddenly and attempt to rise, he must become entangled in this web. This was obviously the "spider's" handiwork, thought Rotherford. The intention was doubtless to throw Landrick into confusion while he completed his purpose and made his escape.

In another moment Rotherford was standing at the cabin door. Morison's arm was already plunged into the cupboard. As Rotherford's shadow fell upon him he looked round: a gasping cry escaped him, and the box dropped ringing and clinking upon the floor. The man sprang towards Rotherford, more with the intention of making his escape than of showing fight; but Davy caught him by the throat, flung him down as he would have done a dog, and stood over him ready to repeat the action should he move. But Morison made no attempt to rise; he lay cringing at the other's feet, and trembling from head to foot.

The ringing sound of the iron box, or more possibly the money inside it, had roused Landrick. He started up on his elbow and stared at these two men as though he doubted whether he were awake. The one man, standing silently over the other under the dim light of the barge-lamp, was as startling and unexpected as any dream could be.

Davy was the first to break the silence. "Mr Landrick," said he, in a rapid manner, "the barge is adrift! Throw that netting off you, if you can, and get to the tiller. The tide's ebbing fast. We shall be down on Battersea Bridge and broken to pieces against the timber, if you're not quick. I'll look to this fellow: it's all his work."

"Let him go, Davy!" cried the old bargeman—"let him go overboard, or I shall pitch him there. Let him take his choice."

Rotherford obeyed. He stepped back a pace to allow Morison to rise. "You hear?" said he.

Morison had heard. He instantly sprang to his feet and glanced round with an air of desperation. There was a slight gleam of light in the sky. The day was breaking. It was just light enough to indicate objects over the river and on either bank, in dark uncertain outline. The nearest object—and it was the one that instantly caught Morison's quick eye—was Rotherford's boat at the stern. He ran aft and flung himself into it. A minute afterwards he was rowing away in the semi-darkness; and the very fluttering of the sculls upon the water expressed the creature's abject fright.

Old Landrick now seized the tiller and pointed down-stream. "Davy," said he, "that's Battersea Bridge yonder. Stand steady. We shall be upon her, I'm afeared, afore we can get the barge righted for shootin' between the piles. Stand steady, lad, and a sharp lookout!" he added; "ay, there's rocks ahead."

Rotherford made no reply. He bent down and kept his eyes fixed upon such dim outlines of the bridge as were indicated in the uncertain morning light.

It was a dark mass, with some dozen oil-lamps at equal distances, spanning the Thames. This wooden structure, which connected the antique parish of Battersea with Old Chelsea, was an object of dread to all who navigated "above bridge." Its history stretches back a century or more. During the severe winter of '95 the bridge had been considerably damaged by huge blocks of accumulated ice, that had become attached to the piles, drawing them rudely at the rise of the tide. It was not until the end of the last century, about the period of this tale, that the bridge was even lighted with lamps; it was indeed the only wooden one that possessed this poor accommodation. In those days the bridge had nineteen openings, varying from thirty-one feet in the centre to sixteen at the ends; the piers were formed of groups of timber piles with a clear headway of fifteen feet under the centre span at high-water. It was towards this centre that Landrick now exercised all his ingenuity to direct the barge. No harder task could have been set a bargee in broad daylight; but it was still practically night; only a glimmer of dawn, in dusky gray, stretched across the sky beyond the openings under the bridge. And the tide wasebbing nfaster now, was carrying this old and sle ,der craft straight down upon the massive pi'es; and only a miracle could prevent a collision.

No words passed between Landrick and his young companion. Each was at his post. Rotherford stood in the forepart of the barge-boat, hook in hand, and with a "fender" ready if needed to deaden the blow. The old bargeman, with a firm grasp upon the tiller, looked keenly ahead. He knew that his cabin home—his iron box that contained all his savings—his life and Davy's too—depended upon such skill as he possessed, such as time and tide were doing their utmost to defeat. A minute more—one more gleam of daylight and a slower tide—and the barge might be saved! But that could not be: to shoot between the piles at so narrow an opening was now impossible. The barge swung round. Rotherford shouted loudly and ran aft—shouted to Landrick to let go the tiller and cling to the rope astern for his life. A moment afterwards there was a crash; the barge creaked and shivered, and began to settle down among the piles, with the water rushing in through a leak in her side.

CHAPTER III.

When Bertha discovered that the barge was gone from its moorings, she did not lose her presence of mind; she kept a cool head and acted promptly. Passing with her lantern farther within the creek, and walking at the water's edge, she came upon a little tub of a boat. It belonged to her grandfather; and it was one which she had used for crossing the river since she was a child. The boat was propelled by dropping a short oar over the stern, and screwing in fish-tail fashion to and fro. The girl stepped into this boat, fixed the oar, and began to work her course into the river. The barge could have taken but one direction—down-stream with the tide. And in that direction she now began to urge the boat, making but slight noise with the oar. She listened and looked about her, wondering where Rotherford could be. Had he not promised her that he would watch the night through?

The deep silence on all sides troubled her. And even the gleam of light that came into the sky only roused a momentary sense of reassurance. For the sight of the dark bridge brought a dreadful thought to her brain and awoke sudden terror and despair. She felt the danger; and now the gleam of daybreak came to show her, like a beacon where that danger lay. She could not hide from herself that the barge, with her grandfather on board, had probably sunk to the bottom of the river. And in the dead of the night! It was horrible to think of. But where was Davy? The mere thought of him gave her courage. Had he gone for aid? He must know what had happened: he had feared to alarm her. She paused in her rowing and called to Rotherford by name: "Davy!"

But no answer came back to her across the river—not a sound. The sense of loneliness and dread grew upon her now; and yet she persevered, screwing vigorously at the oar—hurrying on towards Battersea Bridge with the tide racing after her and dancing in the dark eddies round her boat. As she neared the bridge, always listening with intentness, she fancied that she heard voices—voices among the shadowy piles. Her heart beat loudly. She went down on her knees and began working like a madwoman at the oar. In her anguish she again cried out: "Davy—Davy!"

At last! It was his voice: it came to her from under the bridge and urged her to fresh exertion: "Bertha! we are here—your grandfather and I, and the barge is sinking fast. Can't you see us?—There! Now ship your oar. I can hold the boat.—Can't you see us now?"

Bertha could see nothing—hear nothing. A darkness deeper than the night came across her eyes; her senses were forsaking her; and as Rotherford reached out his hand and brought the boat alongside the sinking barge, the girl dropped down unconscious in the stern.

In a moment old Landrick had stepped into the boat and Davy too, but not a moment too soon. Rotherford had scarcely taken the oar and pushed the boat clear of the woodwork under the bridge, when the barge rolled upon its broken side and went down stern foremost. The tide swept over it, eddying and gurgling among the piles.

"Gone!" cried Landrick with a groan. "Home and savings too, Davy, all swallowed up. I'm a ruined man."

Rotherford answered angrily: "Come, come, Mr Landrick! What are you thinking about? If it hadn't been for Bertha, we should have been swallowed up too. Look to your grand-daughter, sir. Don't you see she has fainted?"

"Ay, ay. Poor thing!" and he bent down over her.

Rotherford, setting the boat's head against the tide and getting free on the bridge, steered towards the ferry steps where he and Bertha had met in the twilight on the previous evening.

Nothing more was seen of John Morison But Rotherford afterwards learned that the notorious Red House tavern in Battersea Fields—in those days a den of gamblers and thieves—had been his favourite resort. It then became evident, even to the old bargeman, that the net-mending was a mere pretext for discovering the best means of gaining possession of the iron box which Landrick had guarded day and night in the barge cabin ever since he had taken up his moorings beside the thatched house.

At low tide when Rotherford rowed back with Landrick under Battersea Bridge to examine the spot where the barge had sunk, they were not a little surprised to discover the old craft lying half out of water. Upon closer inspection, it was found that she had got caught among the piles, and had become wedged in between them so firmly that there was no likelihood of her sinking deeper if she could be recovered before the tide broke her to pieces.

The difficulty proved comparatively slight. On the following day, at low tide, the barge was bouyed up and towed back to its moorings. But it was no longer habitable; there was a great hole in the stern as well as in one side. Landrick was compelled to take up his quarters in the thatched house, and here he soon settled down, mending nets all day long, and in the evening sitting down opposite Mrs. Landrick in the chimney corner.

The iron box was found upon the cabin floor, where it had fallen. And when David Rotherford had won Bertha's hand, and had become a partner in his father's firm, he induced Landrick to invest his savings in the lighterman's business, where they proved far more profitable than when lying "cabined and confined" on board the old barge.

[THE END.]

ABOUT THE CHOLERA.

A CHOLERA PREVENTIVE.

The chief preventive of cholera and similar diseases is absolute cleanliness, which insures the absence of disease germs. To secure this condition various antiseptic preparations are used. A new antiseptic has recently been discovered which many eminent physicians regard as superior to the old preparations.

Lysol, the new preparation, in one per cent. solution, possesses high antiseptic powers and is sure death to cholera and other disease germs. Unlike carbol and other familar preparations, it is convenient for ordinary use and leaves the skin smooth and soft.

Its use has been strongly recommended as a disinfectant and preventive by the Chief Sanitary Board of Austria. It is also used as a surgical antiseptic with marked success.

ASIATIC CHOLERA.

It is only since 1817, however, that its history has been fully and carefully recorded. In that year it appeared in the army of Lord Hastings while encamped on the banks of the Sind.

It was then taken for a new disease and created great consternation, carrying off 5,000 soldiers in five days.

From this time and place it radiated in many directions far beyond the confines of India, everywhere creating terror and devastation, being considered by the inhabitants as a new and fearful plague.

It soon made its appearance in Burmah and Malacca and in Siam and Ceylon. In 1820 it reached China, in 1822-23 Persia.

It traveled west through Russia, Germany and reached England in 1831 and Quebec and New York in 1832.

From Quebec it followed the line of travel by the Great Lakes to the military posts on the Upper Mississippi.

In June, 1835, it again appeared in New York, and in 1848 it was again introduced into the country through New Orleans, whence it traveled up the Mississippi and across the plains to California, a severe epidemic having prevailed in Sacramento.

We have had several epidemics in this country since then, notably in 1868 and 1872.

Cholera prevailed in France and Italy in 1883 and 1884. The last severe epidemic in Germany was in 1866, during the German-Austrian war.

THE CHOLERA IN 1832.

It is an encouraging sign that popular dread of the cholera can not now be compared to that of 1832, for the disease is undoubtedly promoted by mental emotions and fears. In 1832 people throughout the country were absolutely panic-stricken. The announcement of the approaching appearance of Halley's great comet was coupled by the superstitious, and that class included well-nigh the whole population, with pestilence and impending evil. Men looked upon its baleful light with dread.

The most terrifying feature of the disease was the suddenness with which it came and with which it frequently terminated in death. The physicians of the country did noble work. Their efforts were directed to allaying the panic by assuring the people that with proper precautions there was little to fear. They issued public notices warning against eating fruit, against dosing themselves with medicines and nostrums, above all things insisting upon having the surroundings of dwellings clean and pure. Before the disease broke out in Maryland many physicians went to New York to study it. The popular treatment during a portion of the time of the epidemic was external hot applications and mustard plasters, with doses of calomel and opium. Whatever complaints we may make of the uncleanliness and bad drainage of cities and towns now, the condition is unspeakably superior to that of sixty years ago, and when we consider our improved surroundings, the increase of medical skill and the improved intelligence of the people there is no occasion for us to disquiet ourselves in vain over expected epidemics. Let everybody keep his premises clean, and let the city authorities do their duty and there is little to fear.

BOLD KIDNAPPING.

Napoleon Wells Snatches His Child from the Side of His Grandmother.

A Detroit despatch says:—Napoleon Wells kidnapped his little son and made good his escape in a coupe behind a galloping horse. The high-handed affair occurred at the corner of Howard and First streets last evening, when the streets were full of people going home from work. The story is that Wells, who travels for a San Francisco tobacco house, married in England a daughter of Mrs. Booth, who now lives at 50 Howard street. The marriage proved to be an unhappy one, and Mrs. Wells secured a divorce and the custody of the son. They lived at Cincinnati, but last May Mrs. Wells and her mother came to Detroit. In a short time she married Mr. Sterling, of Toronto, and yesterday when the kidnapping occurred they were in Toronto arranging to move there. The coupe which contained Wells met Mrs. Booth and the little son on First street. Wells shouted to the driver to stop, and in an instant he had seized the child. The old lady also held to him, and Wells thereupon pushed her to the ground. In another instant he was in the coupe and out of sight. The officers cannot locate him.

In Saxony about seventy per cent. of the workingmen earn less than $150 per year.

WITH THE ELECTRICIANS.

The invention of a self-lubricating gear for trolleys by a Canadian is said to meet a want in electric railroading.

It is said that the English electrical manufacturing concerns do not respond to the proposition for a representative exhibit at the World's fair.

The stability of electric locomotives at high speeds is said to be much greater than that of steam locomotives, and there is less danger of derailment.

Telephotography is now interesting Parisians, and causes the Figaro to predict that "soon may be seen in Paris the image of a man smoking in St. Petersburg."

Japan is fairly well supplied with telephones and electric lights, and now it is proposed to build two electric railways of 12 and 17 miles, respectively, in length.

Work on the New York & Chicago long-distance telephone line is being rapidly pushed by a large construction force working in three sections. It is predicted that in the early fall not only New Yorkers, but Bostonians, can easily talk to their friends in Chicago.

In the new electric station in Springfield, Ill., the lightning arresters are so placed that, in case of the formation of an arc by lightning, they can be enveloped in live steam. Experiments have shown this to be a most effective means of extinguishing electric arcs.

A device has just been patented intended to be used in signalling along a length of fire hose. Wires are carried in the hose and insulated therefrom so that by making battery connections, a fireman from one end of a line can send signals to the other without leaving his post.

A dispatch from Paris says that the French Transatlantic Company has taken up again the project relative to ocean lights, which was abandoned a few years ago. The proposal is that lightships, connected by telegraph cables, be stationed at intervals of 300 miles across the Atlantic.

It is said that Dr. Sargent, the physical director of Harvard University, has devised an electrical machine with which to measure the speed of the prize-fighter's fist in delivering a blow. Of Sullivan's blow, it was found that if his fist left the arm and kept on travelling, it would make a mile in about three minutes.

What is said to be the largest contract for stationary engines ever awarded in the world has just been secured by a Milwaukee firm. The contract calls for 14 engines with an aggregate of 20,000 horse power, to be used by a Brooklyn street railway company in its new electrical power station. The engines will cost over $440,000.

In a recent address before the Electric Club of Chicago it was stated that within a year there will be in operation five electric locomotives of from 700 to 1200 horse power, and weighing from 45 to 80 tons. Such machines would haul trains of 450 tons at 30 miles per hour up a grade of 26 feet to the mile, and when operated at a voltage about double that now used on trolley roads, will develop high speed service.

A street announcer for electric street railway cars has been patented recently. It is described as a device contained in a box about one foot square, to be placed inside the car over the door opposite the passenger indicator. On the span wire which supports the trolley wire, and very near the latter, is placed a knob, which a small arm projecting from the trolley wheel standard strikes in passing. The contact allows a momentary electric current, which rings a bell, calling attention to the name of the street next ahead, with its adjacent number, or public building, just appearing in the box; as this street or building is passed the name displayed drops automatically, and the name of the succeeding street appears in its place.

COLOR BLINDNESS.

The Plan of Examination in England—Causes and Dangers.

The Parliamentary Committee appointed in Great Britain to examine the subject of color blindness, particularly in its relation to marine and railway signaling, have made an exceedingly interesting report. They find that in the male population nearly four per cent. are either partially or wholly deficient in the ability to distinguish rightly the primary colors of the spectrum. The tests were made with great care, under the guidance of specialists whose scientific knowledge afforded a guarantee of accurate and trustworthy investigation. Because Berlin wool presents to the eye a rough and non-reflecting surface, the colors of which are not heightened nor dulled by the light in which it is displayed, that substance was selected for testing the eyes. From a miscellaneous heap of skeins of various colors the person submitting to a test was required to select approximate matches for certain test colors.

It was found that blindness to red was the most common form of deficiency; blindness to green was next in frequency. Since experiment has proven that red and green are the two colors found to be most trustworthy for signaling purposes, on account of their superior luminosity and their visibility at considerable distances, the fact that these are the two colors which color-blind persons are most apt to mistake is a matter of the first importance.

The committee found that persons in responsible positions in the marine and railway service, where accuracy in determining color is essential to safety and efficiency, could not be trusted to read the signals correctly. This condition of things possibly furnishes the explanation of many disasters on sea and land which have hitherto been deemed mysterious; and it certainly indicates the necessity for a thorough test of the eyes of engineers, pilots, signalmen, and others who are intrusted with the movement of trains and water craft.

As to the cause of color blindness the committee report that in the greater number of instances it proceeds from congenital defects that can not be remedied; but it is frequently the result of excessive use of tobacco. This is a hint worth remembering on the part of those who may become aware of their inability to distinguish colors.

As every day in the year thousands of lives and millions of dollars' worth of property are dependent for safe keeping upon the accurate reading of colors by persons employed upon steamers, ships and locomotives, the knowledge of the risk involved should lead to thorough examination and the weeding out of those found in this particular to have defective eyesight.

FAMOUS VENTRILOQUISTS.

Stories of Some of Their Curious Feats—Lee Sugg and the Baby.

Although the earliest ventriloquist of whom we have any definite knowledge is Louis Barbent, valet to Francis I. of France, ventriloquism is a very ancient art, as it is thought that many of the responses of the Greek and Roman oracles were due to ventriloquial trickery. The Greeks generally ascribed ventriloquism to the operation demons. The uses to which it has been put in modern times, however, have been entirely innocent, and for the most part amusing. As a means of entertainment it has been very popular in the past, especially among the French, who have attained the highest perfection in the art. Many stories have been told of the curious feats of ventriloquists, and the astonishment they have caused their puzzled audiences.

One of the most wonderful ventriloquists that every lived was Alexandre, a Frenchman, who met with great success in London in 1823. His most clever trick was to play the part of the roguish valet; he would imitate his master coughing, and raging at his servant for the latter's tardiness in preparing him an omelet. Alexandre imitated, by means of his ventriloquial powers, the sounds of the breaking and mixing of eggs, and

THE SAWING OF WOOD

preparatory to making a fire. A chimney-sweep is distinctly heard by the audience singing a pretty French song away up at the top of the chimney, just before coming down. After the fire is lighted, the eggs begin to fry, and then are heard the stifled cries of the poor little sweep, as he is met by the smoke and heat in descending the chimney. Then, in an instant, the whole house is in an uproar—dogs bark, babies squall, the old gentleman storms about the room calling for the omelet that his valet is seen quietly tasting in the corner of the room before taking it to his master.

Monsieur Alexandre was not only a remarkable ventriloquist but also a good actor. He possessed such great mimetic powers that he could in a moment so alter his face and figure as to deceive the most critical judges. On one occasion, while the guest of Sir Walter Scott, at Abbotsford, with the aid of only a wig, he actually sat to a sculptor for an absent friend, much to the delight of the "Wizard of the North." It was only when he threw off the wig and resumed his own expression of face that the sculptor

DISCOVERED THE DECEPTION.

Ventriloquists have been known in the last century to play tricks on the public in such a way as to draw the attention of the police authorities, and then having explained the matter to them satisfactorily, use the incident to advertise their entertainments. An English ventriloquist named Lee Sugg, at Kew, once successfully accomplished this by rushing into a baker's shop, holding what appeared to be a crying baby in his arms. Apparently very angry at the child's cries, he savagely threw it in the hot oven. He then tried to escape but was caught, and immediately presented before the town magistrate. The charred remains of a rag doll were produced as that of the burned baby, and both it and the situation looked black indeed for poor Sugg, until he astonished the judge and set the spectators in a roar by making the child cry in the baker's own pocket, and perform other unnatural antics. Of course the sagacious ventriloquist could not find after this, a hall big enough to hold the people that crowded nightly to his entertainments.

A Cattle Pest.

The Texas or horn fly, as already stated, has made its apppearance in considerable numbers in Ontario, and farmers report it has done much injury to their cattle by worrying and annoying them, and thus preventing them from receiving proper rest and food. Most alarming and exaggerated accounts have been published of the ravages committed in different parts of the American Union. One report says that the flies bored into the horns of the cattle and deposited eggs which hatched out maggots that consumed the substance of the horns, so that they would early break off. This is very improbable, as Mr. Jno. M. Denton, of London, the well-known entomologist, who has made a careful examination of the horn fly, reports that the eggs are deposited upon manure and hatched into footless maggots. This altogether contradicts the report that the flies bore into the horn and deposit eggs. The technical name of this Texas horse-fly is *Hematobia Serrata*, and is an imported insect well-known in southern France since 1830. It is a little more than one-sixth of an inch in length, of a dark ash-gray color, with a faint yellowish tinge, though to the ordinary observer they appear black. They bite thin-shinned cattle by piercing them with their proboscis, which somewhat resembles that of a mosquito, and through which the blood of the animal is sucked up and transferred to the stomach. When the flies are numerous they are extremely annoying, and cause a shrinkage of milk and flesh. The eggs are deposited upon manure heaps and fresh cow manure, and hatch into little footless maggots about three-eighths of an inch long when mature, and of a dirty yellowish white color. The eggs hatch within two or three days, and the insects make the full round of life from egg to mature fly in two weeks. Prof. John B. Smith, of the New Jersey Experiment Station found tobacco powder sifted into the hair between the horns, along the back and at the root of the tail, would kill the flies as they enter the hair to bite. Also that fish oil with a little carbolic acid mixed with it is excellent as a preventive, the oil to be rubbed lightly over the animal with a sponge so as to moisten the ends of the hair. But the best preventive is to destroy the eggs by spreading the fresh droppings of the cattle so they will dry. This should be done as often as every second day. The eggs cannot hatch or the young maggots live except in moist substances. Manure in stables should be sprinkled freely with land plaster, which will destroy the maggots, and add to the value of the manure. Like many other pests it can only be exterminated by the united action of all stable owners in a country where it exists.

E. F. Scott, one of the wealthiest negroes in Virginia, went to Clifton Forde several years ago without a dollar. He now owns eighteen houses and lots, a hotel and a large amusement hall and is putting up a large building on Main street. He also runs a wood and coal yard.