

Thor, the Norwegian

By Frederic Van Rensselaer Dey.

(Copyrighted, 1900, by F. V. R. Dey.)

There is no place in all the world so desolate, particularly when a north-west gale has been on the rampage for three successive days, lashing the sea into a fury of foam and turmoil, as that part of the North sea where it washes against the western coast of the peninsula of Denmark. At such times the air is frost-laden and blustering, even in mid-summer. The water itself is of an ominous, leaden tint, like a battleship with her paint on, even the foam which caps the waves is not white and flakey as it is in the southern zones, but seems to be adulterated with some refuse tint suggestive of the dirty suds of a wash day. The wind is as frigid as the waves which chop like a fury, it howls and shrieks and roars with deadly energy for a time, and then moans sullenly while it generates new force for a more furious onslaught. Deep-sea sailors dread this region, and avoid it when they can, but the amphibious Norwegian and the storm-torn Dane love it as a savage loves the wilderness.

If you should study one of the older charts of this bad-tempered sea you would discover that fifty-two miles off the coast of Denmark, by the compass north-north-west from Tyboron, there looms a rock with an unpronounceable Danish name, which, being translated into English, means the Devil's Nose. At the present time it has disappeared, for upon it had stranded so many vessels and it was due the loss of so many lives and so much property that the Danish and the German governments united to destroy it. It is not located on the charts in use today, and the deepest draught war vessel may now pass over the spot in safety. Originally it loomed sixty-four feet into the air, and from the westernward appearance of the nose, the more so when the tide was low, for then at the water's edge could be seen indentations that had been ground out by centuries of pounding waves, and these cavities were the nostrils of the mammoth proboscis. To the eastward it extended from the summit to the water at an angle of 23 degrees. This part of the rock was concave in form, and it broadened as it descended until it finally disappeared beneath the water like the tines of a pitchfork, leaving a sheltered bay about fifty feet in length by thirty in breadth, and as deep as the sea itself. Many a belated craft returning from a fishing voyage and overtaken by a furious north-west gale, sheltered here before the rock was destroyed, and in the little bay rode out the gale in safety; and it was just such an occasion as this which one afternoon in August compelled two men, the sole occupants of a sloop-laden craft, to seek the little haven of refuge.

The gale had come upon them almost without warning. They had reefed and doubled reefed their sails, but the wind, as if it enjoyed their discomfort, increased its strength in proportion as they reduced the resistance to it, so that at last they were obliged to seek before it with only sail enough left standing to give them steering way.

One of these men, almost a giant in stature, held the tiller and was looking up, unseeing eyes the play of the savage water around them. He knew the water as the half-grown child knows the dooryard of his birthplace, and he loved the sea, the leaping waves and the rousing wind with a passion that was hereditary. He loved it, and he delighted in the furious play of the water when it held the sheet rope, which, notwithstanding the fact that he had taken two turns around the cleat, was with each fresh gust of wind, almost snatched from his grasp.

"We'll make the Devil's Nose, Craddock," said the big man at the helm, "and we'll be there in ten minutes' time. Pass the sheet to me. I can hold it with my left hand. Now take the heaving line and go forward. Make one end fast to the capstan block the other end around your waist, and when I round into the little bay jump and swim for your life. She'll have headway enough to carry her into the neck of the cove, but not a bit more. There is an iron ring set in the rock near the point on the north shore and anchor at that point the cove. If you can make one of them, and get a hitch through it before the line pulls taut, we will be as safe as a church. Put your cleat knife in your teeth, Crad, and if you cannot make one of the rings in time, cut yourself adrift and swim ashore and wait. I'll ride out the gale alone, and then I'll come back for you. Go forward, now! Not a word! I'm captain of this craft."

When the sloop was again upon the summit of a wave Craddock, from his position at the bow, could see the huge rock to which his companion had referred. He had heard him describe it many times, but he had never seen it before.

There is nothing so deadly uncertain in the life of a sailor as running straight before a gale of wind. Billows, like mountains, tower in front and rear up out of the ocean's depth astern, making destruction appear inevitable. And there is an angry swish and a resentful seething in the rushing water as it lifts the stern on high and hurls the craft like an arrow from a bow before it. But neither of these men seemed to realize the danger they were in, or if they realized it, they were careless concerning it. And while he at the stern stood with feet apart, his right hand grasping the tiller and his left firmly holding the strain sheet, Craddock pressed himself to the leap he was to make, upon the success of which their safety depended.

From a small thing in the distance the Devil's Nose loomed greater and mightier as they advanced. The water was rushing toward them at fearful speed, growing taller and mightier and more ominous as it approached. The waves beat against it with savage fury and clouds of spray and chunks of water were hurled almost to the summit. It seemed to Craddock as they drew toward it that his friend was steering straight for the forbidden rock; but he never looked astern. He knew that the hand that held the tiller was strong, tried and sure.

Then came the mighty boom of the mad-dened waters against the barrier of the reefed sails, and the yacht was enveloped in a shower of foam and mist through which, half obscured, the black mountain towered. The helmsman released his hold upon the sheet, the boom flew forward with a sudden crash against the barrier, the ship heeled over to starboard until her deck was half submerged in water and she came about like the snapping of a whip. It was at that instant that Craddock made his leap.

Some sailors who found it possible to navigate a craft which ordinarily should have carried a crew of four or five. When morning came the storm had increased in violence, and so mightily were the waves which swept before it that not infrequently clouds of spray and masses of water leaped over the summit of the rock, to again fall into the sea many fathoms to leeward. The rushing of the wind, split in twain by the barrier which sheltered them, came together again beyond the Devil's Nose with a noise like distant thunder.

After they had disposed of their coffee he who had held the helm through the storm of the preceding night, and brought the sloop safely into this strange retreat, said to his companion, while they stood together at the bow: "Craddock, this pile of nature's masonry contains the unwritten epitaphs of thousands who have perished here. It has other secrets, too, and one of them I have discovered and will show you. Do you think if we climb to the summit yonder that you can keep your hold upon the slippery rock against the gale?"

Craddock shrugged his shoulders, and in reply, turned toward the angry which had already been launched and was moored on the port side of the sloop. They sculled it quickly to the head of the bay, and soon began the precarious ascent of the Devil's Nose. Two-thirds of the distance to the summit they came upon a level space no bigger than a dining table, which in the center was cleft apart, leaving a space no more than two feet wide, and as dark as midnight within; and into this forbidding place the big man, without explanation or hesitation, Craddock followed, and at a moment later they stood in a natural cavern that was created when the rock was formed.

"I doubt," said the leader, "if there lives another man today who knows of the existence of this cavern. Hark! Do you hear that whistling moan? It is like the vibration of a hundred aeolian harp. I have a tern here; wait till I strike a light and I will show you something grander than you ever saw before." Then, presently, he led the way up the slippery rock, and as they advanced the weird moaning and whistling became louder and shriller until it seemed as if there were living things hovering around them and shrieking in their ears.

The bow, being upon the gale as it rushed through an opening in the rock high over their heads; and after they had mounted to it Craddock saw his friend put the lantern down; then his arm was seized in a firm grasp, and he was led around a jutting boulder into the light of day.

The wind struck them like a blow, and for a moment forced them back again, but they held their ground and presently stood upon a ledge formed by an indentation which Nature had left in the mighty mass, with the summit of the Devil's Nose a scarce three fathoms above their heads.

The view was grand and awful. Black clouds with the speed of a locomotive was a "schoner yacht" under bare poles, rolling and pitching beneath torrents of water that fell upon her from the pursuing waves and again appearing like a helpless chip upon the summit of an angry sea.

She seemed to be making straight for the Devil's Nose. Upon her deck a dozen forms were visible, lashed to their places to prevent being swept away by wind and water.

As she drove onward nearer and nearer, Craddock's companion again shouted in his ear: "I know her, Crad. It is the favorite yacht of the Princess Charlotte of Denmark. God grant that she may not be aboard it. She loves the sea as we love it, Crad, and—look for God's sake! look!" He pointed with his disengaged hand, and Craddock saw the figure of a woman wrapped in a cork jacket, lashed to the binnacle of the beleaguered yacht, which was now not more than thirty fathoms from the rock.

At the very instant that the two men discovered her a mighty wave rolled up over the stern and broke in mid air, overwhelming the yacht with a flood of water that crashed and made a wreck of her before their eyes.

For two seconds they gazed spellbound upon the scene, and then without a word of warning or intention Craddock's companion leaped upward and outward and plunged headlong downward to the water, fifty feet below.

Craddock did not move. He stood as if petrified, clinging with both hands to the rock from which the wind seemed determined to hurl him; and he gazed with awful faculty concentrated in his eyes upon the every feature of wreckage and destruction. The yacht careened over, half filled with water, and surely foundering, was thrown by the violence of the wave that struck her out of line with the Devil's Nose, and almost before there was time to realize the awful thing that had happened she had passed beyond his view to leeward. He was dimly conscious that the binnacle and wheel and all the after-fittings of the yacht had been torn loose and swept away in the vortex, and with them had disappeared the figures of the woman and of the two men who were lashed to the wheel.

Then the storm that had promised to invest that part of the world for three or four days began to lull at the day advanced, so that when the sun was at meridian the fury of it was spent, and only the unquiet waves told what it had been through the preceding night.

still burning there, made his way rapidly down and out through the cleft; into the open air, thence hurriedly to the water's edge, and in a moment more he was in the dingy, sculling rapidly past the sloop toward the open sea.

When he had reached a certain point beyond which it would have been folly to have ventured, he artfully working his oar, he held the little craft almost stationary, while he, standing upright, shading his eyes with his disengaged hand, gazed eagerly to windward. He seemed also to listen. Presently high above the roar of the wind and waters the strange, weird bar of a yodel song in minor key came to him. A moment later he saw the form of his friend swimming toward him, with powerful strokes, and clinging to his back with her arms around his neck, was the cork-jacketed woman of the wreck.

White and wan and drenched, yet conscious, with something infinitely pathetic in her wonder and amazement, they assisted her along the sloop's deck to the little cabin. It was Craddock who entered with her, and from a locker he selected clothing of his own, which he laid out upon the berth; until then they had been naked.

"Madam," he said, pausing beneath the hatch, "do you understand English?"

She replied with an inclination of her head, and he added: "This is the only dry thing I can offer you. There is brandy on the table. It is more than I can do, you have but to call through the hatch." He turned then to leave her, but she detained him by a gesture.

"Tell me," she demanded, with nervous intensity, "who is the man who took me from the sea?"

"He is a Norwegian, madam; by name, Thorgensen."

"Well named," she murmured. "A Norwegian Thor. Tell him that he has saved the life of a daughter of the king of Denmark."

When Craddock returned to the deck he found his friend stretched at full length at the bow, lying upon his back, with his eyes fixed upon the coursing clouds, and there was an indescribable smile upon his face. He seemed to have forgotten that he was bedraggled and wet and that his rawny hair and beard were matted and unkempt, and which Nature had left in the mighty mass, with the summit of the Devil's Nose a scarce three fathoms above their heads.

"Who is she, Craddock?" "She told me," said Craddock, calmly, in reply, "to tell you that you had saved the life of a daughter of the king of Denmark. The Norwegian did not immediately respond. There was a dreamy, faraway look in his eyes and presently he murmured: "The daughter of a king. I am glad of that. The daughter of a king. Yes, I am glad of that."

He ceased speaking, rose slowly to his feet, and, standing before his friend, said in that same half-dreamy tone: "Shall I tell you how it happened, Crad? It seemed when I stood up there on the rock and saw that wretched creature, ready to fall and crush, as though I heard her cry aloud to me to save her, and I leaped. How I found her I do not know, but when I came to the surface she was near to me and I seemed to leap through the water, impelled by greater strength than I ever possessed before. Then—why, then it seemed as if there was no danger and I remember that I laughed aloud and told her to put her arms around my neck, and somehow, Crad, it seemed as if she felt the same as I, that the wind and the waves and the fury of the storm could not, dared not, harm us; that the water could not drown us, and I swam around the rock, knowing that you would be waiting for us. And all that time she did not speak. I have not heard the sound of her voice. A daughter of a king, you say, but only a woman after all. A woman with a heart—aye, two hearts—for now, by heaven, she possesses mine. The daughter of a king, but only a woman, Crad, only a woman."

An hour later she called to them from the hatchway, and it was Thor who answered her. She had made no change in her apparel and seemed to be as unconscious of the wet as her Norwegian savior. It seemed, too, as if they had never known each other, he towering over her like a god, and she gazing up into his eyes in silent amazement.

"Princess," he said, "it has pleased God to let me take you home, and I thank him for it. Did you call aloud from the deck of the schooner before the mountain of water fell upon you, and did you call my name?" "No," she said. "I could not call your name. I did not know any one was near. Who are you, sir?" "I do not meet you by your name. Your friend has told me that. Who are you?" "Yesterday if you had asked me," replied Thor, "I could have answered. Now, I do not know. There was a man upon the rock when your yacht foundered in the storm. That man leaped into the sea, but the man who swam out of the sea with you upon his back is not the same. You, madam, are a princess of royal blood. I am a man who knows his father and his name, and I belong to both a divinity of love. It is stronger than I or you, and he bent forward and kissed her on the forehead. She made no reply, and she did not resent the salutation.

"Thor," she said, dreamily. "Yes, it is true." And she reached out and took his hand, raised it to her lips and kissed it; then she turned back into the cabin and disappeared.

then silently withdrew. As many times he strode to the hatchway and seemed to meditate upon entering the cabin, only to turn away and stand gazing across the water toward the coast of Denmark. His strong and noble face wore an expression of introspection which could not be confounded with anxiety, and frequently he ran his fingers through the wavy, tawny masses of his hair, as if by doing so some obstacle to collected reflection might be dispelled. Craddock also seemed distraught. He kept his place at the bow and gazed, not at the sea, but upward, toward the summit of the Devil's Nose, and there was anger to his eyes and menace in the expression of his face.

At last Thor drew near to him again. "I cannot help it, Craddock," he said, as if in continuation of a discussion between them. "I cannot help it, my friend. I love her. Yes, she loves me. It was her soul that cried aloud to me from the sea when I stood upon the rock and heard and answered and obeyed. What matter if she is the daughter of a king? Do you know, Craddock, that since she came to me I believe that I, too, am of royal blood? You are angry because you know I love this princess?"

"No, Ralph," and Craddock turned and faced his friend. "I am not angry; that is not the word; but I have grave misgivings. I wish that you had not taken me to the summit of the rock. The broad shoulders of the Norwegian gave expression to a shrug. He raised his head proudly, and smiled at the clouds, the sky, and the world around him.

"I did not take you there, old chap," he said, "but I am glad that you are here now. The daughter of a king, Craddock, but only a woman after all. I love her, and she loves me; and she is the daughter of a hundred kings, she is no less mine. The daughter of a king, Craddock, but also the sweetheart of Thor, the Norwegian."

SALED WHISKY.

How a Liquor House was Worked by a Clever Swindler. "There are tricks in the whiskey business as well as in others," said the drummer for a large compounding house to the Washington Post reporter. "And I remember how the firm I was with got stuck. One day a man drove up in a one-horse wagon carrying one barrel of whiskey, which he wanted to sell. He told us some kind of story about an old uncle dying and leaving it to him, but as he couldn't afford to use as good liquor as it was, he had concluded to sell it. We took the barrel into the house and, prying out the bung, we slipped in the siphon and drew off a glass of it to sample. And it was fine. The barrel showed age and the liquor tasted it. It was worth \$10 a gallon if it was worth a cent, but we didn't give the man any such pointers. We knew by the weight that there were at least forty gallons of it and we made him an offer of \$150 for the barrel. He haggled awhile, but took the money at last and drove away.

"In the course of a couple of weeks, we concluded to put that whiskey in bottles and sell it as case goods, so we set the siphon to work at the bung and began to draw it off. After the fourth bottle had been drawn the siphon refused to work and we examined it to find what was wrong. We could not get it at that way and, as the contents seemed to be all right, we set the barrel on end and bored another hole in it. Then the siphon worked, but the liquor was much paler, and one of the men tasted it. By George, it wasn't whiskey at all. It was only water, colored somewhat from the charred inside of the barrel. That scared us and we smashed the head in to see what was inside and we saw in a minute. The wily cuss had fitted a can filled with fine old whiskey to the bung where we made the examination before purchasing, and when that had been emptied the whole story had been told. He had

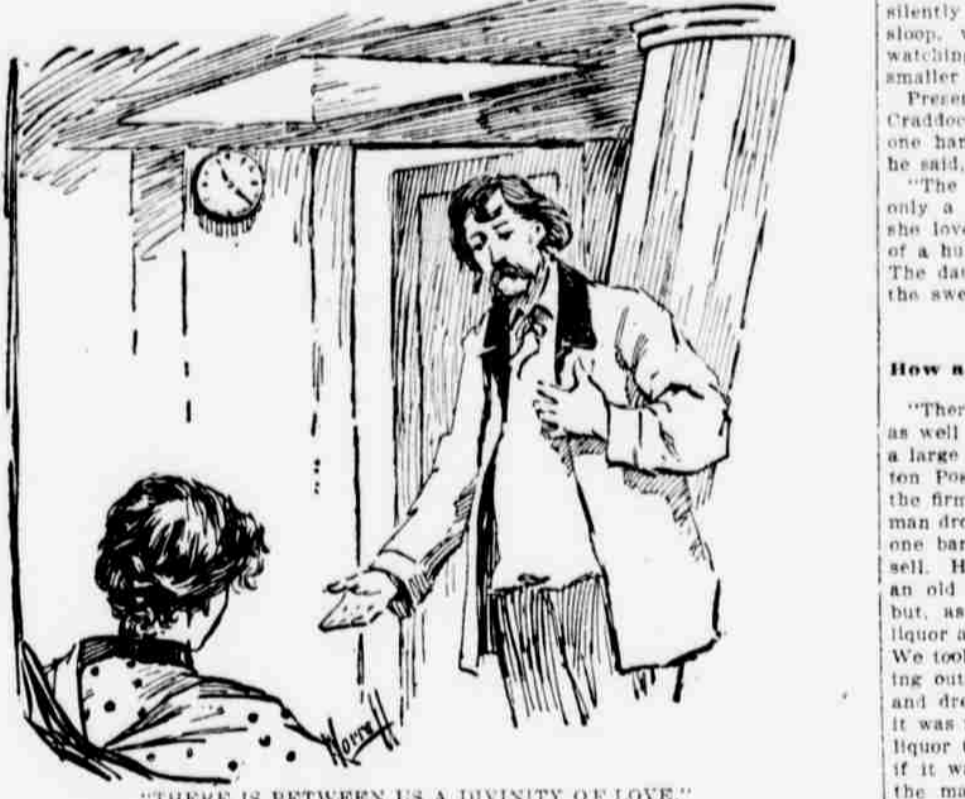
probably paid \$5 for the gallon to fill the can, and we sold it for \$150 a bottle, but we didn't get a blamed cent for the thirty-nine gallons, more or less, of water that filled the rest of the barrel. It wasn't a total loss of \$150 to us, but it came so blasted near it that we would have kicked the fellow if he had ever turned up again, which he did not."

An Early Morning Episode. The gray light of the morn'g was starting through the windows of the Brown home, reports the Indianapolis Press. Suddenly the doorbell chimed, and a young girl, a sleeky hour of a girl, suddenly the doorbell chimed with a wild, fierce shriek. Again and again it repeated to the wildly reverberating tremulousness. Then hurried footsteps took their noisy way over the sidewalk to the back porch and a series of loud and irrelevant knocks disturbed the solitude.

"Fire at the store," thought Brown, turning pale. "A telegram saying that mother is ill," thought Mrs. Brown, with a strange fear clutching at her heart. "A telegram saying that mother is ill," thought Mrs. Brown, with a strange fear clutching at her heart. "A telegram saying that mother is ill," thought Mrs. Brown, with a strange fear clutching at her heart.

Refreshment Sleep. Horsford's Acid Phosphate. Quiets the nerves, relieves the tired and fatigued condition of the brain, and induces refreshing sleep.

CURE YOURSELF! Use Big G for rheumatism, neuralgia, inflammation, etc.



SHAKE INTO YOUR SHOES. Allen's Foot-Paste, a powder, it cures painful, smarting, swollen feet and restores the hair, and instantly takes the sting out of corns and bunions.

SUMMER EXCURSIONS. VIA UNION PACIFIC OVERLAND WORLD'S PICTORIAL LINE. The Union Pacific will place in effect on June 21, July 7 to 10 inclusive, July 18 and August 2nd, Summer Excursion rates of ONE FARE FOR ROUND TRIP plus \$2.00 from Missouri River to DENVER, COLORADO SPRINGS, PUEBLO, OGDEN AND SALT LAKE.

REFRESHING SLEEP. Horsford's Acid Phosphate. Quiets the nerves, relieves the tired and fatigued condition of the brain, and induces refreshing sleep.

CURE YOURSELF! Use Big G for rheumatism, neuralgia, inflammation, etc.

THE BURLINGTON STATION. Burlington Route EXCURSIONS. Detroit and return... Denver, Pueblo, Colorado Springs and return... Philadelphia and return...

SPEAKING GOOD ENGLISH is a Business Necessity— A Social Requirement— A Gauge of Intelligence— As one acquires the slime of the street on a muddy day, so one gathers the slang of the street by contact with careless people. A Good Dictionary is an Armor Against Ignorance. The public is possibly prejudiced in favor of old style, old time, antiquated and worn out dictionaries. THE STANDARD DICTIONARY BY FUNK & WAGNALLS. is accepted everywhere by scholars because it satisfies them. One important feature not to be overlooked is The Price \$8.00. The publishers, Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls of New York, spent nearly one million dollars in preparing this work, but the public appreciates it most heartily.