

# A Brave Coward.

By Robert Louis Stevenson.

## CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

My wife and I, a man and a woman, have often agreed to wonder how a person could be at the same time so handsome and so repulsive as Northmour. He had the appearance of a finished gentleman; his face bore every mark of intelligence and courage, but you only had to look at him, even in his most amiable moment, to see that he had the temper of a slave captain.

I never knew a character that was both explosive and revengeful to the same degree; he combined the vivacity of the South with the sustained and deadly hatreds of the North; and both traits were plainly written on his face, which was a sort of danger signal. In person he was tall, strong and active; his hair and complexion very dark; his features handsomely designed, but spoiled by a menacing expression.

At that moment he was somewhat paler than by nature; he wore a heavy frown; and his lips worked, and he looked sharply round as he walked, like a man besieged with apprehensions. And yet I thought he had a look of triumph underlying all, as though he had already done much, and was near the end of an achievement.

Partly from a scruple of delicacy—which I dare say came too late—partly from the pleasure of starting an acquaintance, I desired to make my presence known to him without delay.

I got suddenly to my feet, and stepped forward.

"Northmour!" said I.

I have never had so shocking a surprise in all my days. He leaped on me without a word; something shone in his hand; and he struck for my heart with a dagger. At the same moment I knocked him head over heels. Whether it was my quickness, or his own uncertainty, I know not; but the blade only grazed my shoulder, while the hilt and his fist struck me violently on the mouth.

I fled, but not far. I had often and often observed the capabilities of the sand hills for protracted ambush on stealthy advances and retreats; and, not ten yards from the scene of the scuffle, plumped down again upon the grass. The lantern had fallen and gone out. But what was my astonishment to see Northmour slip at a bound into the pavilion, and hear him bar the door behind him with a clang of iron!

He had not pursued me. He had run away. Northmour, whom I knew for the most implacable and daring of men, had run away!

As I thus stood transfixed with wonder, I began to grow painfully conscious of the injuries I had received in the scuffle; I skulked around among the sand hills; and, by a devious path, regained the shelter of the wood. On the way, the old nurse passed again within several yards of me, still carrying her lantern, on the return journey to the mansion house of Graden. This made a seventh suspicious feature in the case, Northmour and his guests, it appeared, were to cook and do the cleaning for themselves, while the old woman continued to inhabit the big empty barrack among the policies. There must surely be great cause for secrecy, when so many inconveniences were confronted to preserve it.

So thinking, I made my way to the den. For greater security, I trod out the embers of the fire, and lit my lantern to examine the wound upon my shoulder. It was a trifling hurt, though it bled freely, and I dressed it as well as I could (for its position made it difficult to reach) with some rag and cold water from the spring. While I was thus busied, I mentally declared war against Northmour and his mystery.

## CHAPTER III.

For two days I skulked round the pavilion, profiting by the uneven surface of the links. I became an adept in the necessary tactics. These low hillocks and shallow dells, running one into another, became a kind of cloak of darkness for my enthralled, but perhaps dishonorable, pursuit. Yet, in spite of this advantage, I could learn but little of Northmour or his guests.

Sometimes I thought the tall man must be confined to bed, for I remembered the feebleness of his gait; and sometimes I thought he must have gone clear away, and that Northmour and the young lady remained alone together in the pavilion. The idea, even then, displeased me.

Whether or not this pair were man and wife I had seen abundant reason to doubt the friendliness of their relation. Although I could hear nothing of what they said, and rarely so much as glean a decided expression on the face of either, there was a distance, almost a stiffness, in their bearing which showed them to be either unfamiliar or at enmity.

On the morning of the third day she walked alone for some time, and I perceived, to my great concern, that she was more than once in tears. You will see that my heart was already interested more than I supposed. She had a firm yet airy motion of the body, and carried her head with unimaginable grace; every step was a thing to look at, and she seemed in my eyes to breathe sweetness and distinction.

The day was so agreeable, being calm and sunny, with a tranquil sea, and yet with a healthful piquancy vigor in the air, that, contrary to custom, she was tempted forth a second time to walk. On this occasion she was accompanied by Northmour, and they had been but a short while on the

beach when I saw him take forcible possession of her hand. She struggled, and uttered a cry that was almost a scream. I sprang to my feet, unmindful of my strange position; but, ere I had taken a step I saw Northmour bare-headed and bowing very low, as if to apologize; and dropped again at once into my ambush. A few words were interchanged, and then, with another bow, he left the beach to return to the pavilion. He passed not far from me, and I could see him, flushed and lowering, and cutting savagely with his cane among the grass. It was not without satisfaction that I recognized my own handiwork in the great cut under his right eye, and a considerable discoloration around the socket.

For some time the girl remained where he had left her, looking out past the islet and over the bright sea. Then with a start as one who throws off preoccupation and puts energy again upon its metal, she broke into a rapid and decisive walk. She also was much incensed by what had passed. She had forgotten where she was. And I beheld her walk straight into the borders of the quicksand where it is most abrupt and dangerous. Two or three steps further and her life would have been in serious jeopardy, when I slid down the face of the sand hill, which is there precipitous, and, running half way forward, called to her to stop.

She did so, and turned round. There was not a tremor of fear in her behavior, and she marched directly up to me like a queen.

"What does this mean?" she asked. "You were walking." I told her, "directly into Graden Floe."

"You do not belong to these parts," she said again. "You speak like an educated man. What do you mean— you, a gentleman—by skulking like a spy about this desolate place? Tell me," she said, "who is it you hate?"

"I hate no one," I answered, "and I fear no one face to face. My name is Cassilis—Frank Cassilis. I lead the life of a vagabond for my own good pleasure. I am one of Northmour's oldest friends, and three nights ago when I addressed him on these links he stabbed me in the shoulder with a knife."

"It was you?" she said. "Why he did so," I continued, disregarding the interruption, "is more than I can guess and more than I care to know. I have not many friends, nor am I very susceptible to friendship, but no man shall drive me from a place by terror. I had camped in Graden Sea-wood ere he came; I camp in it still. If you think I mean harm to you or yours, madam, the remedy is in your hand. Tell him that my camp is in the Hemlock Den, and to-night he can stab me in safety while I sleep."

With this I doffed my cap to her and scrambled up once more among the sand hills. I do not know why, but I felt a prodigious sense of injustice and felt like a hero and a martyr; while, as a matter of fact, I had not a word to say in my defense nor so much as one plausible reason to offer for my conduct.

Next day she came out about the same hour alone, and, as soon as the sand hills concealed her from the pavilion, drew nearer to the edge, and called me by name in guarded tones. I was astonished to observe that she was deadly pale, and seemingly under the influence of strong emotion.

"Mr. Cassilis!" she cried. "Mr. Cassilis!"

I appeared at once, and leaped down upon the beach. A remarkable air of relief overspread her countenance as soon as she saw me.

"Oh!" she cried, with a hoarse sound, like one whose bosom has been lightened of weight. And then, "Thank God, you are still safe!" she added; "I knew if you were you would be here. Promise me that you will sleep no longer in that wood. You do not think how I suffer; all last night I could not sleep for thinking of your peril!"

"Peril?" I repeated, "Peril from whom? From Northmour?"

"Not so," she said. "Did you think I would tell him after what you said?"

"Not from Northmour?" I repeated. "Then how? From whom? I see none to be afraid of."

"You must not ask me," was her reply. "For I am not free to tell you. Only believe me, and go hence—believe me, and go away quickly, quickly, for your life!"

An appeal to his alarm is never a good plan to rid one's self of a spirited young man. My obstinacy was but increased by what she said, and I made it a point of honor to remain. And her solicitude for my safety still more confirmed me in the resolve.

"You must not think me inquisitive, madam," I replied; "but if Graden is so dangerous a place you yourself perhaps remain here at some risk."

My horse is my only companion, and even he, poor beast, is not beside me. You see, then, you may count on me for silence. So tell me the truth, my dear young lady, are you not in danger?"

"Mr. Northmour says you are an honorable man," she returned, "and I believe it when I see you. I will tell you so much, you are right; we are in dreadful, dreadful danger, and you share it by remaining where you are."

"Ah!" said I; "you have heard of me from Northmour? And he gives me a good character?"

"I asked him about you last night," was her reply. "I pretended," she hesitated, "I pretended to have met you long ago and spoken to you of him. It was not true; but I could not help myself without betraying you and you had put me in a difficulty. He praised you highly."

"And—you may permit me one question—does this danger come from Northmour?" I asked.

"From Mr. Northmour?" she cried. "Oh, no; he stays with us to share it."

"While you propose that I should run away?" I said. "You do not rate me very high."

"Why should you stay?" she asked. "You are no friend of ours."

I know not what came over me, for I had not been conscious of a similar weakness since I was a child, but I was so mortified by this retort that my eyes pricked and filled with tears as I continued to gaze upon her face.

"No, no," she said in a changed voice; "I did not mean the words unkindly."

"It was I who offended," I said; and I held out my hand with a look of appeal that somehow touched her, for she gave me hers at once and even eagerly. I held it for awhile in mine and gazed into her eyes. It was she who first tore her hand away and, forgetting all about her request and the promise she had sought to extort, ran at the top of her speed and without turning till she was out of sight.

And then I knew that I loved her, and thought in my glad heart that she—she herself—was not indifferent to my suit. Many a time she has denied it in after days, but it was with a smiling but not a serious denial. The following day we again met.

The next, and that was the fourth day of our acquaintance, we met in the same spot, but early in the morning, with much familiarity, and yet much timidity on either side. When she had once more spoken about my danger and that, I understood, was her excuse for coming—I, who had prepared a great deal of talk during the night began to tell her how highly I valued her said interest, and how no one had ever cared to hear about my life, nor had I ever cared to relate it, before yesterday. Suddenly she interrupted me, saying with vehemence:

"And yet, if you knew who I was, you would not so much as speak to me!"

I told her such a thought was madness, and, little as we had met, I counted her already a dear friend; but my protestations seemed only to make her more desperate.

"My father is in hiding!" she cried. "My dear," I said, forgetting for the first time to add "young lady," "what do I care? If he were in hiding twenty times over, would it make one thought of change in you?"

"Ah, but the cause?" she cried, "the cause! It is—" she faltered for a second—"it is disgraceful to us."

(To be continued.)

**The Dangerous Bone.**

"I have sometimes wondered whether a fever would affect a man today as it did in war time," said the veteran. "My experience isn't very extensive, but I wouldn't care to be a trained nurse if all typhoid convalescents resembled Jim Bolles. Our command was scouting in Southern Tennessee, covering a good deal of ground on a basis of very slim rations. Jim's acquaintance with field hospitals had not been wholly delightful, I imagine, and he reported for duty when he had hardly any symptoms of recovery but an appetite. Rusty ham and hardtack didn't seem to do Jim much good. He ate them, but they left him looking thinner and hungrier than ever. Two of the boys had captured a chicken somewhere, and had stolen away by themselves for a quiet feast. Wandering lonesomely around, Jim discovered them. He stood and looked at the chicken, spitted on a ramrod and roasting over a fence rail fire. The boys were hungry, too, and they didn't say a word. 'Did you ever see two dogs quarrelling over a bone, Dan?' Jim asked at length. 'Yes,' 'Well, pretty soon you may see a bone quarrelling over two dogs,' he added. 'And I'll be the bone.' They divided the chicken."

**Africa's Ancient Sea.**

Recent studies of the animal life of Lake Tanganyika has shown that that lake differs from all other African lakes in possessing inhabitants that belong to oceanic species. Still, these singular denizens of Lake Tanganyika are not exactly like the marine organisms of the present day, and the conclusion is drawn that a sea, connected with the open ocean, once occupied the part of Africa where Tanganyika now lies, and that the lake is the last remnant of the ancient sea.

**He Was Handicapped.**

Mr. Westlake says he didn't enjoy the basket picnic you got up at all. What was the trouble? "It was all because he couldn't eat any of the pie. We forgot to take knives along."

**Her Advantage.**

Mrs. Hinks—"Does your husband ever complain when he gets home and finds that the dinner is cold?" Mrs. Fuddy—"No; he always goes to the ball games."

## A HAPPY AFTERNOON.

The obliging young man in the ironmongery shop had never done anything to offend the schoolgirl of 15 who was gazing meditatively into the shop window. He had never seen her even before.

He hopes now that he will never see her again.

She entered, looking shyly around her, took the seat to which the obliging young man waved his hand, and sighed:

"I should like," she said, "to see some corkscrews."

This brought out all the young man's best qualities. He was suave in his reply, deferential in his smile, and quick with his fingers. As he unwrapped parcels, and let loose different breeds of corkscrews, one after another he inquired if she had a preference for any special kind.

"Yes," she said, "the corkscrews I want to see are patent corkscrews, those with a dodge, or trick, or catch, or lever, to make the cork come out easily."

"Certainly, miss. Quite so," said the young man, intelligently. "I have several neat little inventions of the kind. This one, you will observe, is simplicity itself. No pulling, no violence required. Screw into the cork, turn the handle so, and the cork comes out. We sell a great many of these."

"I can quite understand that," said the girl. "It looks clever. Is it dear?"

"One and nine pence, miss. We have the same thing in a better quality at—"

"Oh, thanks," said the girl. "I think the quality of this is beautiful. May I see another one?"

"Certainly, miss," said the young man. "Now, this is a clever little thing, on the lever principle; no pulling or violence required. You just—"

"May I try it?"

She was by no means a bad looking girl, and, though it was stretching a point, the assistant drove an old cork into an empty bottle, and allowed her to draw it out again.

"Yes," the girl said, "that is charming. I like that much the best. What price is it?"

"This is a little dearer. Two and four. We'll say two and three, as I see a slight speck of rust on the handle, which, however, will easily clean off."

He began to wrap it up in paper briskly.

The girl looked at him with sad, wondering eyes.

"Why are you wrapping it up like that?" she asked.

"Well, miss, I supposed that you'd sooner carry it wrapped up. If you like to take it as it is, and slip into your pocket, of course—"

"I don't think I ought to do that," said the girl. "You see, it's not my corkscrew. I don't think you ought to suggest that I should steal your employer's goods. It's not honest, is it? Of course, I don't want to preach; I have several faults myself, but—"

Here the young man broke in frigidly—

"I was under the impression that you were buying that corkscrew."

"Why?" asked the girl. "I never said anything about buying. I don't want to buy any corkscrews. It's not nice of you to pretend that I do. What does a girl of my age want with corkscrews? I don't drink. I just wanted to look at the clever mechanism, and so on, and I think you showed them off nicely. I ought to have thanked you before. I'll do it now. Thank you."

"Here," said the young man, with the intense calm of the exasperated, "you may think it a funny thing to come in here, turn over the stock, spoil it by handling, and waste my time; but let me tell you that people who don't come in here as customers come in here as trespassers, and by the law—"

She did not look quite so frightened as he had hoped.

"Yes," she said. "I know all about the law, and it doesn't affect me, because, you see, I came in as a customer. It doesn't follow because I don't want to buy corkscrews that I don't want to buy anything else. You're so hasty. This is how you get wrong."

"Is there," said the young man, "anything which you want to buy? Not want to see, mind; want to buy?"

"Yes," said the girl, "there is. But must I buy it without seeing it? It doesn't seem to me to be the usual way of doing business, but I daresay you know best."

The young man sighed.

"You can see any article which you are intending to buy."

"Well, you should have said that before. You contradict yourself, you know. I want a packet of that blue-gray Silurian note paper, with envelopes to match, and some chocolate nougat."

"You'd better get out of the shop," said the man. "I'm wrong perfectly well that this is an ironmonger's, not a stationer's."

"You really are much too hasty," said the girl. "I'm only following your own directions, and you can't buy chocolate nougat at a stationer's. There's a card in that window which says: 'If you

don't see what you want in the window kindly step inside and ask for it.' I didn't see any Silurian note paper in that window, so I kindly stepped inside, and—"

"Will you go?" said the young man, losing his self-control.

"Not immediately. If I've been misled, it's your fault, for putting notices in the window which you don't mean. Why do you do it? You shouldn't. There are other things I want as well. I want a penny box of tin tacks."

"Will you go?"

"Yes. But I think you ought to serve me first, without being impolite about it."

She turned round to the proprietor, who at that moment appeared behind the counter.

"Do you think," she said, "you could persuade this young man to sell me a penny box of tin tacks? I want them, and I have got the penny. Whenever I ask for them he roars out: 'Will you go?'"

"She comes in here—" the young man began.

"Well, he can see that for himself," said the girl. "But I don't want to talk about it any more. If, in a big ironmonger's shop like this, two grown men can't sell a pennyworth of tin tacks, I'd better try somewhere else. Good-morning."

So she spent a penny on a tram ride instead, and laughed the whole of the way, to the amazement and disgust of the conductor and fellow passengers—Today.

## GREAT NAVAL DISASTERS.

### Appalling List of Losses of Ships Not in Action.

A list of the greatest naval disasters in which war vessels figured would include the following:

Edgar, English, blew up, 1711; all on board perished.

Namor, English, 1749; 139 lost.

Prince George, English sloop, burned, 1758; 400 lost.

Royal George, English frigate, 1782; lives lost, over 600.

St. George and Defence, English frigates, 1811; nearly 2,000 lives lost.

Meduse, French frigate, 1816; nearly 200 lost.

Birkenhead, English troopship, 1852; 454 lost.

Albany, British sloop of war, 1853; 210 lost, all on board.

Lady Nugent, English troopship, 1854; 400 lives lost.

Eurydice, English training ship, 1878; 200 lost.

U. S. S. Onيدا, 1879; 115 persons lost.

Captain, English war vessel, 1879; nearly every one on board perished.

U. S. S. Huron, 1877; 100 lives lost.

Grosser Kurfurst, German ironclad, 1878; about 300 lives lost.

Dotterel, English sloop of war, exploded 1881; 143 killed and drowned.

Victoria, English battleship, 1893; 400 lost.

Reina Regente, Spanish warship, 1895; 429 lost.

U. S. S. Maine, blown up, 1898; 264 lives lost.

England has been the unfortunate victim of the two greatest naval disasters on record. On Nov. 25, 1793, the Stirling Castle, 79 guns; Mary, 79 guns; Northumberland, 79 guns; Vanguard, 79 guns; York, 79 guns; Resolution, 69 guns; Newcastle, 69 guns, and Reserve, 69 guns, were all lost in the same storm and many hundreds perished. Again, in October, 1780, the Thunderer, 74 guns; Stirling, 64 guns; Defiance, 64 guns; Phoenix, 44 guns; La Blanche, 32 guns; Laurel, 28 guns; Shark, 28 guns; Andromeda, 28 guns; Deal Castle, 24 guns; Penelope, 24 guns; Scarborough, 20 guns; Faradoos, 14 guns; Chameleon, 14 guns; Endeavour, 14 guns, and Victor, 10 guns, were lost in the West Indies.

## MILK IN THE COCOANUT.

### There Are Two Ways of Getting at It

#### When One Wants to Drink It.

Every boy knows the three eyes to be found in one end of a cocoanut, and many a boy has bored these small eyes out, or one or two of them, with the small blade of a pocket knife so as to get at the milk in the cocoanut, which he has then drained out into cup or drunk direct from the cocoanut itself. But there is a more fascinating way still of getting at the milk in the cocoanut. By this other method the cocoanut is opened at the other end from the eyes. The cocoanut is struck all around gently and repeatedly with a hammer, or a stone will do, at a distance of about one-third of the way down from the top, about where the Arctic circle would be on a globe. A continual gentle tapping will finally crack the shell of the nut all around; not in a line exactly on the circle opposite, but pretty near to it. Sometimes it cracks shell and meat of the nut, too, so that both can be lifted off together; sometimes it cracks out only a shell cap at the top, which is lifted off, and the cap of meat underneath is then cut out around with a knife. And then there you are with the white-lined cocoanut cup to drink from.

#### Merit Tells, Occasionally.

Charles Boone of Dayton, Ohio, who has been appointed to Annapolis as a cadet, was the only one of fifty applicants who did not have recommendations from wealthy men. For years he supported himself and mother, and at the same time gained a good education by selling papers in his native city.

#### Farmer's Cow Bank

Fear of robbers induced a farmer in Mishawaka, Ind., to conceal \$500 in gold in a corner. Some weeks afterward the money was missing. The farmer's cow became ill and died, and a post-mortem examination revealed the coin in the cow's stomach.

## RACCOON RITES.

### Their Immersion of Infant Coons and Their Washing of Food Before Eating.

From the Cincinnati Enquirer: You have missed a couple of mighty singular events if you never saw a coon christening or coon food cleansing out at the Zoo. The coon home at the Zoo consists simply of a plot of ground about as large as a barn door of extra generous size would cover. This is surrounded by a wire fence four feet high, topped with a broad, up-curving tin rail, which prevents the little clown-like creatures from escaping. In the center of this yard is a tree twenty feet high and having many and heavy limbs. Near the base of the tree is a several foot square pool of water. This pool marks two very exclusive, very notable characteristics that distinguish the coon from any other animal. The pool is the coon's christening and food-cleansing place. When a coon gives birth to young almost the first thing she does is to take her babies one by one in her mouth and, accompanied by the father coon, proceeds slowly and solemnly to the pool. Arriving at its brink, and while the dad coon stands thoughtfully by, the mother baptizes the little one beneath the wave with all the decorum and solemnity that a Baptist clergyman immerses a candidate for church membership. After lowering it gently down beneath the surface and lifting it up again, Mrs. Coon and her husband wind their way back again to their family corner of the yard. This service, solemn and staid, is continued by Mr. and Mrs. Coon until every mother's son of their just arrived offspring has been duly christened. Viewed soberly, it is really one of the most unique, impressive professional performances imaginable. But the indescribable drollness of the picture made by the wee husband and wife as they go through with the performance is inimitable, and smiles, if not laughter, come to almost every one who witnesses the serio-comic bit of drama. Almost any hour any day in the year you can find a group of people tossing bits of goodies to the coons. Upon picking up one of these Mr. or Mrs. Coon instantly, with the "goody" held jauntily in its teeth, trots over to the pool and swashes the morsel back and forth in the water two or three times. Then returning to its favorite corner, or up to its favorite crotch in the tree, the little chap sets to devouring it in a way so dainty and sedate as to put food-gulping humans to the blush. But of course you wouldn't blush at Clown Coon's etiquette. There is so much original comedy in every move he makes in this food-cleansing and eating process that you laugh in spite of yourself. His very appearance, particularly in motion, his judge-like sedateness, and his display of extreme neatness, his exquisiteness in all things, form a subtle and sure tickler for anybody's laugh spot. It beats the funniest man the stage can show.

**A Complacent View.** Jennie, aged 4, had been poking at the grate fire and burned a hole in her dress. "You must not do that, Jennie," said her mother, "or you'll catch fire and burn up, and there will be nothing left of you but a little pile of ashes. Then what would mamma do?" "Oh," replied Jennie, "I suppose you would call Bridget and tell her to sweep up the ashes."

**Fried.**

"Won't they let you stop at our boarding-house any more?" asked the Circassian. "No," answered the living skeleton. "It isn't my fault, either. The last time I was there one of the boarders told the landlady I looked like he felt after one of her breakfasts."

**HOUSEKEEPERS' ALPHABET.**

**Ants**—Scatter branches of sweet fern where they congregate.

**Brooms**—Hang in cellar-way to keep plant and soft.

**Coffee**—Keep securely covered, as its odor affects other articles.

**Dish**—Of hot water in oven prevents cake from scorching.

**Flour**—Keep cool, dry and closely covered.

**Glass**