

# CRIPPS, THE CARRIER

BY R. D. BLACKMORE

Author of "LORNA DOONE," "ALICE LORRAINE," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

"No, Missy; but I darsay, a thunder-a' beak, as have sent me to prison; and now I have got you in prison, too. No woin' out, wi'out paying of your fine, my dear." The scamp laid hold of poor Grace's trembling hand, and drew her towards him; while she tried vainly to shriek, for her voice had forsaken her—then bodily down went the rabbit man, felled by a most inconsiderate blow. He dropped so suddenly that he fetched poor Grace to her knees, by his violent grasp of her; and when he let go, she could not get up for a moment, because her head went round. Then two strong hands were put into hers; and she arose and faced a young gentleman.

In her confusion, and sense of vile indignity, she did the natural thing. She staggered away to a tree, and spread both hands before her eyes, and burst forth sobbing, as if her heart would break. Instead of approaching to comfort her, the young man applied himself first to revenge. He espied on the path the stick of the prostrate rabbit man, and laid hold of it. Then striving to keep his conscience clear, and by no means sit a man on the ground, he seized the poor dealer in fur by the neck and propped him well up in a saplin fork. Having him thus well situated for penal operations, he proceeded to exhaust the

was trembling and blushing; and he trembled and blushed in his turn at her.

"I am so sorry I have frightened you," he said in the most submissive way; "I have done you more harm than good, I fear. I hope you will not despise me for it."

"Despise you! Can I ever thank you? But I am not fit to do anything now. I think I had better go home, if you please. I am not likely to be annoyed again. And there is a good man in a field, half way."

"To be sure, you know best," the young man answered, cooling into disappointment. "Still, I may follow at a distance, mayn't I? The weather looks quite as if it would be dark. And at this time of year, scarcely anybody knows. There seem to be tramps almost everywhere. But I am sure I do not wish to press myself. I can go on with the business that brought me here. I am searching for the true old wind flower."

"Oh, are you?" said Grace; "how exceedingly lucky! I can show you exactly where to find it; if only you could manage to come to-morrow."

"To-morrow? Let me see—to-morrow! Yes, I believe I have no engagements. But will you not be afraid—I mean—after that blackguard's behavior to-day? Not, of course, that he should be thought



THE SCAMP LAID HOLD OF POOR GRACE'S TREMBLING HANDS, AND DREW HER TOWARDS HIM.

atity of the stick, by breaking it over its owner's back. The calm wood echoed with the sound of wooden thumps, and the young buds trembled at the activity of a stick.

"Mercy!" cried the rabbit man. "You be goin' outside of the bargain, sir!" "Oh, don't—oh, please don't!" Grace exclaimed, running forth from her retirement. "I dare say he did not know any better. Poor fellow, he has had quite enough. Oh, stop, do stop, for my sake."

"For nothing else—in the world—would I stop," said the youth, who was breathless with hitting so hard, and still looking yearningly at the stick, now splintered by so much exercise; "but if you beg him off, he gets off, of course—though he has not had half enough of it. You vile black rascal, will you ever look at a young lady in your life again?"

"Oh, no, sir—oh, no, sir!" cried the rabbit man, rubbing himself all over.

"Do 'e let me whisper a word to you."

"If I see your filthy sneaking face two seconds more, I'll take a new stick to you, and a much tougher one. Out of my sight with your carrion!"

Black George, with amazement and fury, gazed at the stern and threatening countenance. Then, seeing the elbow beginning to lift, he hobbled, as fast as his bruises allowed, to his bundle of skins in the brushwood. Then with a whipper and snivel he passed the broken staff, now thrown at him, and with exaggerated limps departed.

"See if I don't show this to your governor," he muttered, as he turned back and scowled, when out of sight and hearing; "I never were took in so over a job in all my life afore, were I! One bull for a hiding like that!" he grumbled, as he pulled out a sovereign, and looked at it. "Five bull would hardly cover it. Why, the young cove can't a' been told about it. A scurvy joke—a very scurvy joke. I ain't got a bone in me as don't ache!"

Leaving him thus to pursue his departure, young Christopher Sharp, with great self-content at the good luck of this exploit, turned toward Grace, who

of twice—but still—oh, I never can express myself."

"I understand every word you would say," the young lady answered decisively; "and I never mean to wander so far again. Still, when I know that you are botanizing; or rather, I mean when a gentleman is near—but I also can never express myself. You never must come—oh, I mean good-bye. But I feel that you ought to be careful because that bad man may lie in wait for you."

That evening Grace made one more trial to procure a little comfort in her own affairs. In the dark low parlor of the cottage, where she had lived for the last three months, with only Miss Patch and a deaf old woman for company and comfort, she sat by the fire and stitched hard, to abide her opportunity. At the corner of the table sat the good Miss Patch, with her spectacles on, and occasionally nodding over her favorite author, Ezekiel.

This tall and very clear-minded lady was by an in-and-out kind of way related to Squire Oglander. She called him her "brother;" and the Squire once had gone so far as to call her his "sister." Still that, to his mind, was a piece of flattery. From no pride on his part; but because of his ever-abiding execration of her father—the well-known Captain Patch.

Captain Patch was the man who married the last Squire Oglander's second wife, that is to say, our good Squire's stepmother. Captain Patch took her for her life-interest under the Oglander settlement; and sterling friends of his declared him much too cheap at the money. But the Oglanders took quite the contrary view, and hated his name while he drew their cash. Yet the captain proceeded to have a large family, of whom this Hannah Patch was the eldest.

"Oh, Aunt," said Grace, "when shall I hear from my father?" "Young girls must submit to those whose duty it is to guide them. The principles, or want of principle, inculcated now by bad education, can lead to nothing else, but ruin and disgrace. How different all was when I was young! My gallant and spirited father, well known

as a brave defender of his country, would never have dreamed of allowing us to be inquisitive as to his whereabouts. But all things are subverted now; filial duty is a thing unknown."

"Oh, but Aunt, of course we never pretend to be half as good as you were. Still I don't think that you can conclude that I do not love my dear father, because I am not one bit afraid of him." "Don't cry, child. It is foolish and weak. All things are ordered for our good."

"Then crying must be ordered for our good, or we should be able to help it, ma'am. But you can't call it 'crying,' when I do just what I do. It is such a long and lonely time; and I never have been away more than a week at a time from my darling father, until now; and now it is fifteen weeks and five days since I saw him! Oh, it is dreadful to think of it."

"Very well, my dear, it may be fifty weeks, or fifty years, if the Lord so wills. Self-command is one of the very first lessons that all human beings must learn."

"Yes, I know all that. And I do command myself to the very utmost. You know that you praised me—quite praised me—yesterday; which is a rare thing for you to do. What did you say then? Please not to retract, and spoil the whole beauty of your good word."

"No, my dear child, you need not be afraid. Whenever you deserve praise, you shall have it. You saw an old sack with the name of 'Beckley' on it, and although you were silly enough to set to and kiss it, as if it were your father you positively did not shed one tear!"

"For which I deserve a gold medal at least. I should like to have it for my counterpane; but you sent it away most ruthlessly. Now I want to know, Aunt, how it came to be here—miles, leagues, longitudes, away from darling Beckley?"

Miss Patch looked a little stern again at this. She perceived that her duty was to tell some stories, in a case of this kind, wherein the end justified the means so paramently. Still every new story which she had to tell seemed to make her more cross than the one before; whether from accumulated adverse score, or from the increased chances of detection.

"Sacks arrive and sacks depart," she answered, laying down an over-true dogma, "according to the decrees of Providence. Ever since the time of Joseph, sacks have had their special mission. Our limited intelligence cannot follow the mundane pilgrimage of sacks."

"No, Aunt, of course, they get stolen so! But this particular sack I saw had on it the name of a good honest man, one of the very best men in Beckley, Zachary Cripps, the Carrier. His name did bring things to my mind so—all the parcels and good nice things that he carries as if they were made of glass; and the way my father looks over the hedge to watch for his cart at the turn of the lane; and his pretty sister Etty sitting up as if she didn't want to be looked at; and old Dobbin splashing along, plod, plod; and our Mary setting her cap at him vainly; and the way he goes rubbing his boots, as if he would have every one of the nails out; and then dearest father calling out, 'Have you brought us Her Majesty's new crown, Cripps?' and Cripps, putting up his hand like that, and grinning as if it was a grand idea—oh, Aunt, shall I ever see it all again?"

"Well, Grace, you will lose very little if you don't. Unhappily you always exhibit, both in word and action, something so—I will not use at all a harsh word for it—something so sadly unsolemn."

"What can I do, Aunt? It really is not my fault. I try for five minutes together to be solemn. And then there comes something or other—how can I tell how?—that proves too much for me. My father used to love to see me laugh. He said it was quite the proper thing to do. And he was so funny that without putting anything into anybody's head he set them all off laughing. Aunt, you yourself have been amused to hear him. Quite in the quiet time, almost in the evening, I have known my father make such beautiful jokes, without thinking of them, that I often longed for the old horn lantern, to see all the people laughing. Even you would laugh, dear Aunt, if you only heard him."

"The laughter of fools is the crackling of thorns. Grace, you are nothing but a very green goose. Even a stray lamb would afford me better hopes. But knock at the wall with the poker, my dear, that Margery Daw may come in to prayers."

(To be continued.)

### A Simple Device.

By making a hole through a piece of paper or a card with a pin, moving the pin a few times round the hole to give it a smooth edge, holding the pin hole close to the eye, and looking at printed or other matter held at the normal reading distance, there is perfect definition, and any one who requires to use glasses to read can with this device read anything. When a pin hole is held to both eyes at the same time, there is a great improvement over one, with perfect binocular effect. The field of view is much smaller than that seen when glasses are used. There is less light and no magnification. The importance and utility of this simple device in many circumstances is obvious.

### Foolish Investment.

Wife—John, we'll never be able to save a cent if you don't quit being so extravagant.

Husband—Why, my dear, I'm not at all extravagant.

Wife—Yes, you are. There's the accident policy you bought nearly year ago, and you haven't even used it once; if that isn't extravagant, don't know what is.

Revenge is a gun that kicks harder than it shoots.

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

Hungary knows exactly how Norway feels about it.

Also, he who fights and runs away may live to be court-martialed another day.

A contemporary says "rattan chairs have been made for hundreds of years." How old is Rat Ann?

The Director of the Mint says 1,568,562,568 cents have been coined. And yet you have to wait for change.

"Properly done," says a Pennsylvania professor, "gambling is not a disipation." No. Properly done, it is a profession.

Emperor William says that he vowed long ago to do his best to keep the world peace. How men's reputations do belie their vows.

Violet leaves are said to be a specific for the cure of cancer. Are we to journey to health instead of to heaven on "dewy beds of ease?"

President Roosevelt says "rich men are to be pitied." Theoretically, yes; but, practically, no. It would be an unnecessary waste of pity.

In one week 32,863 immigrants have been landed in this country. It is easy to know the quantity, but our problem lies in determining the quality of these arrivals.

A No. 8 or 12 slipper also is a good cure for "attacks of high school sentiment." It should be applied at home while the young patient is in a semi-recumbent position.

A Pennsylvania town of 6,000 inhabitants has just erected its first church, though it has been in existence for 130 years. Evidently it has had no occasion to pray for its Mayors and Aldermen in public.

When a man comes home very late at night he never knows whether there is no money in his pockets the next morning because of that or because his wife was smart enough to know he wouldn't mention the subject.

There is nothing new in the trick of padding the government payrolls. Years ago a man who had been given a lucrative clerkship in Washington wrote home to a friend: "This is the best job I ever had. I haven't a thing to do, and have seven men to help me do it."

Mrs. Chadwick has been sentenced to serve ten years in the penitentiary. A New York spendthrift who once gave a \$1,000 dinner at Sherry's has gone to work for \$11 a week. In Philadelphia a millionaire has been put in jail for cheating other people, and the United States Senate is not in session. Why should the worthy be hopeless?

Kaiser Wilhelm, who gave to Harvard University the contents of the Germanic Museum, has added another gift as proof of his interest in American life and education. The new gift consists of all the maps, models, charts and books which exhibited the social ethics of Germany at the St. Louis Exposition. The debt of America to German scholarship increases as the years go on, and these material gifts from the Kaiser symbolize the gifts of the spirit with which the German universities have so long and abundantly endowed America.

Those who want to see Niagara falls in their primitive beauty and grandeur must not delay the visit long. Commercialism, that spirit that has invaded every field of endeavor and is changing the character of our civilization, is the cause of it. Already the hydraulic plants in operation at the falls, when in full head, divert 48,000 cubic feet of water a second from the river above the falls, carrying it through the flumes to the drops, where it runs the turbine wheels that produce the power. This amount of water is 29 per cent of the whole volume. But when all of the works are completed and in operation that have been authorized there will be 67,406 cubic feet of water a second diverted, which is 41 per cent of the whole volume. So here, in sight, so to speak, is a diminution of two-fifths of the volume of water that has hitherto gone over the falls; in other words, there will be but three-fifths as much Niagara falls as there has been.

The death of the author of "Ten Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" brings to mind one of the most brilliant and original romancers of the nineteenth century. Born in 1828, Jules Verne was past his seventy-seventh year at the time of his death, and for some time had been totally blind. His works have been translated into all the European languages, and not a few of them have appeared in orient-

al form. Popular as M. Verne has been all over the world, the forty immortals have never granted him that dearest hope of every French author—membership in the academy. His merit as a story teller was admitted and literary quality was not wanting, but the fastidious demands of the exclusive few relegated him outside the charmed circle. M. Verne should have made a fortune from his books, for their popularity since 1860 has been wide and continuous. Unwisely, in 1864, he sold himself to his publishers for \$4,000 a year, agreeing to furnish them two volumes annually. The two volumes have appeared regularly until two years ago, and M. Verne has received his yearly wages, but he must have envied Kipling with his one and sixpence a word or Conan Doyle working at the rate of two and sixpence a word, or our own Richard Harding Davis coining, as is said, 40 cents a word. None the less, Jules Verne must have had great joy in his work. His lively imagination was a veritable kingdom without bounds, and it must have afforded him immense delight. His romances are clean and may be put into the hands of boys and girls with safety. Wild as some of them seem, there is in them a close resemblance to truth, and not a few of them are anticipations of marvels that have actually taken place in the last fifteen years. Other writers in his own line are now superseding Jules Verne and with marked success. This, however, does not lessen the credit due him. He created what is now known as "scientific and geographical romance," and the world is broader, richer and happier for this addition to its literature.

A Chicago concern promised persons who patronized it 150 per cent dividends annually on their investments. Certain Philadelphia concerns were less niggardly. They promised their customers 48 per cent a month. The books on which these baits were struck were grabbooks and every point of them protruded. No wise fish would have nibbled at them. But the human sucker is not a wise fish. A large and beautiful bait is irresistible and he eagerly gulps it down. The Chicago and Philadelphia fishermen were successful. Money flowed to them from every part of the country. The Chicago operators are believed to have got away with hundreds of thousands of dollars and the "Storey Cotton Company," "Provident Investment Company," and affiliated concerns in Philadelphia with millions. Periods of prosperity are the times when the get-rich-quick schemer garners his harvest. In periods of adversity a large class of people distrust all financial institutions. Let a breath of suspicion be blown upon the oldest and most substantial savings bank, and they run to it at once to get their money out. When prosperous conditions return they become credulous regarding the solvency and good faith of men they never heard of before. One of the chief needs of the small investors of the United States is incredulity. When men send circulars with fairy tales of 600, or 150, or 50 per cent per annum the small investor had better put his money in the savings bank. It pays only 2 or 3 per cent; but it is better to be sure of 2 per cent and one's principal than to luxuriate on 150 per cent dividends for two or three weeks and then lose both dividend and principal. The small investor should know that men who really think they have a sure and safe way to make 50, or 100, or 200 per cent a year will not bother him. They will go to men with large capital. If large capitalists regard favorably a scheme which promises extraordinary profits the small investor will not get a chance at it; and if large capitalists, with their extensive experience in financial matters, do not think a scheme is safe the small investor had better let it alone.

Think the Czar One-Eared. The uneducated peasants in the Cherson province of Russia have an extraordinary belief that the czar has only one ear. They are confirmed in their belief by pictures and photographs of the czar showing a side face view, and naturally exhibiting only one ear. They account for the absence of the other in the following manner: Some time ago a deputation from their province waited upon the czar and in the course of the meeting the czar is said to have stated that all Russian land would be divided equally among the peasants of the various districts.

To this one of the deputation boldly said:

"As sure as you can not see your own ears you will not divide the land."

The czar's reply to this was cut off one of his (the czar's) ears, which he placed upon the table, remarking as he did so:

"As surely as I now see my ear I will divide the land."

To this day the Cherson peasants firmly believe that he has only one ear, and unless the czar visits them in person and proves to them by optical demonstration that he possesses the correct number this extraordinary belief will not be shaken.

If the citizens are all right, the city will take care of itself.