

"He spoke to me of his wife, his darling Rosa. The name made me start, but I could not know it was you. At last he was strong enough to write a few lines, and he made me promise to take them to his wife."

"Ah!" said Rosa. "Show them me."

"I will."

"This moment!" And her hands began to work convulsively.

"I can not," said Falcon. "I have not brought them with me."

Rosa cast a keen eye of suspicion and terror on him. His not bringing the letter seemed monstrous; and so, indeed, it was. The fact is, the letter was not written.

Falcon affected not to notice her keen look. He flowed on: "The address he put on that letter astonished me. 'Kent Villa.' Of course I knew Kent Villa: and he called you 'Rosa.'"

"How could you come to me without that letter?" cried Rosa, wringing her hands. "How am I to know? It is all so strange, so incredible."

"Don't you believe me?" said Falcon, sadly. "Why should I deceive you? The first time I came down to tell you all this I did not *know* who Mrs. Staines was. I suspected; but no more. The second time, I saw you in the church, and then I knew; and followed you, to try and tell you all this; and you were not at home to me."

"Forgive me," said Rosa, carelessly: then, earnestly, "The letter! when can I see it?"

"I will send, or bring it."

"Bring it! I am in agony till I see it. Oh, my darling! my darling! It can't be true. It was not my Christie. He lies in the depths of ocean. Lord Tadcaster was in the ship, and he says so: every body says so."

"And I say he sleeps in hallowed ground, and these hands laid him there."

Rosa lifted her hands to heaven, and cried, piteously, "I don't know what to think. You would not willingly deceive me. But how can this be? Oh, Uncle Philip, why are you away from me? Sir, you say he gave you a letter."

"Yes."

"Oh, why, why did you not bring it?"

"Because he told me the contents; and I thought he prized my poor efforts too highly. It did not occur to me you would doubt my word."

"Oh no; no more I do: but I fear it was not my Christie."

"I'll go for the letter at once, Mrs. Staines."

"Oh, thank you! Bless you! Yes, this minute!"

The artful rogue did not go; never intended.

He rose to go; but had a sudden inspiration; very sudden, of course. "Had he nothing about him you could recognize him by?"

"Yes, he had a ring I gave him."

Falcon took a black-edged envelope out of his pocket.

"A ruby ring," said she, beginning to tremble at his quiet action.

"Is that it?" and he handed her a ruby ring.

THE TWELFTH OF AUGUST.

DO any of my readers know why the British Parliament invariably adjourns just before the 12th of August? Because, if the session continued beyond that date, both Houses would be left without a quorum. Can any of my American readers tell what happens in merry old England on the 12th of August, and why on that particular day the average British legislator would fail to be in his place, supposing the session to be continued on or beyond that date? I answer that on the 12th of August the shooting season is inaugurated, and for days, if not weeks, previous the minds of a large mass of the titled and wealthy classes are occupied, to the exclusion of almost every thing else, in preparations for the moors. The member of Parliament and lord of the manor of —, to whom I was last summer indebted for my first experience of English grouse shooting, stopped almost daily at my London quarters to give me the latest intelligence from his gamekeeper as to the condition of the grouse, and to ask if my shooting boots and knickerbockers were ordered; if he should direct his steward to send down the guns for me to try, etc.; and when near the close of the season I left London for a short visit to the Isle of Wight, he pursued me with letters on the same topics, and urging the necessity of my being at the manor on the 10th inst., that we might be in readiness to open the campaign on Monday morning, the 12th of August.

"You should wear your boots a few days," he writes, "before using them on my moors. We start at 8 A.M., and return to an eight-o'clock dinner, so there is plenty of very hard work. Of course there is no necessity for you to walk all the time if you find it fatiguing; but between the long hours, and the very steep ground of the moors, you will test sinews and boots to any extent." The day after he writes: "Shall I send for my guns for you to try if they suit your arm and neck? The gamekeeper sends the pleasant information that the grouse are doing admirably. The young birds look very well." Soon after, my friend informs me: "I have to speak on Wednesday, but the day after I set out for the North, although the House does not adjourn till Saturday. My carriage will be at the — station to meet you on Saturday by the five-o'clock train. Perhaps you would prefer to walk up (nine miles), to get into training. It is a lovely walk." His

last epistle concludes with: "Don't fail to come on Saturday, as all my guests will arrive on that day, and we shall take the field at eight o'clock on Monday morning. This game-killing is a sort of solemn duty with us squires; we go through it in the usual sad manner of Englishmen enjoying themselves; indeed, a real game-keeping squire, who lives for nothing else (and there are many of this class), is one of the curious creations of modern civilization. But it is amusing enough for a time, and I have no doubt that you will enjoy it.....My house is 1300 feet above the level of the sea, and we shoot over ground going up to 2200 feet. Some of our scenery is considered to be among the finest in England."

I have never happened to spend a Christmas in England, and therefore can not safely assert that on the working-day previous to the 25th of December there may not be as much confusion as I witnessed on the railroads on my way to — station, Yorkshire; but certainly no other day in the year can be compared to the day before the 12th of August. Trains are all late, and are overcrowded with gentlemen bound for the moors of England, Ireland, and Scotland, accompanied by their servants, dogs, guns, and huge piles of baggage, including ample supplies of solid and liquid ammunition, and every one—travelers no less than the over-worked railroad employes—in a frenzy of excitement. I expected that the train would be late, and I was not disappointed. We were two hours behind time in arriving at the station where my friend's carriage was in waiting, and I then and there discovered that one of my three pieces of luggage was missing. It was my Russia leather bag containing my brushes and foot-gear, but fortunately I had put on my shooting boots to get them broken in, and the loss was of less consequence. The English have as yet failed to adopt our excellent system of checking baggage; hence, in times of confusion such as I have described, travelers in England are not overwhelmingly astonished if their baggage goes astray. I may, *en passant*, add that after much trouble and telegraphing my bag was found, and forwarded to me three days afterward.

There are some things in life which it appears no experience ever teaches. Here I have been a traveler for twenty years, and on a hundred different occasions I have found the practical inconvenience of traveling with much luggage; but it appears that the older I grow the more trunks I accumulate, until I become the slave of my own *impedimenta*, by which name the Romans happily designate what we call baggage.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the delightful drive, or the nine-o'clock dinner of nearly a dozen courses that followed; but I will premise that our host was a bachelor, who had

invited me to spend a fortnight with him in his grand old Elizabethan mansion, surrounded by twenty thousand acres of moorland, in the wapentake of Craven—from the British Craigvan (district of rocks)—in the West Riding of Yorkshire, not far distant from the beautiful ruins of Bolton and Fountains abbeys, and Gordale, Scour, and Cove—places celebrated by Gray in a letter to his friend Wharton, and by Wordsworth in verse. The other guests were two titled members of Parliament, a wealthy country gentleman, a rising young London barrister, and a handsome Guardsman.

At breakfast on Sunday it was put to the vote whether we should take the four-in-hand or proceed to church on foot. All were in favor of walking; so we set off a few minutes after nine, accomplishing the six miles in less than an hour and a half, and walked in as the sweet old chimes were calling the congregation together in a venerable fane, which remains unaltered as it was originally built in the days of Henry the Seventh. To quote the words of an old writer,

"There is an holy chapel edifyde,"

with quaint old square worm-eaten oaken pews nearly four centuries old, and a three-decker pulpit; first, the clerk's desk, above, the reading-desk, and still higher, the pulpit, and over that an ancient sounding-board. The church was garrisoned during the Parliamentary wars, and, as usual, robbed of monumental brasses, etc. Several of the columns have niches for the reception of statues of saints, and the church contains numerous emblazoned shields of Banks, Cliffords, Tempests, and other great families. Our friend's large square pew was nearly in the centre of the church, was surrounded by a railing about eight feet in height, and stood almost directly in front of the pulpit, which was not, as they are usually placed, near the chancel, but on one side and nearly half-way down the middle aisle. After the service we were taken by the rector to the vestry-room and shown the silver communion service, in use since the days of the Stuarts, and the parish register, in which the bold signature of Oliver Cromwell occurs several times, being attached to notices of marriages which took place in the presence of the Protector while he was on a visit to his friend and comrade, General Lambert, in 1665.

Punctually at seven on Monday, the 12th of August, the valet entered, threw aside the heavy curtains of my chamber windows, and while I was taking my morning bath, laid out my shooting suit, and announced breakfast at half past seven. At eight o'clock we were driven down to the game-keeper's, and selecting six dogs from the kennel, we started for the moor, where we were that day to open the campaign of 1872..

followed in another vehicle by the six gamekeepers and dogs. Reaching our shooting ground, a distance of five miles from the manor-house, we were divided into parties of two each, accompanied by the same number of pointers and keepers carrying the game bags, each squad taking by agreement different directions, with the understanding that we were to meet at the appointed rendezvous for lunch at one o'clock. Our guns being loaded, and each gentleman carrying fifty rounds in his pouch, and the pointers enfranchised from their couples, the three parties separated, and took off their several ways, the dogs bounding and barking around us with joy.

With our double-barreled breech-loaders held horizontally in our hands, my companion and myself set off at a swinging pace for the mountain or hill side allotted to us. The bold Briton at whose side I walked was in his day the best oar at Oxford, and a thorough athlete, and had for years been accustomed to pedestrian excursions in the Highlands of Scotland and the Swiss passes, as well as to the use of his gun on the heath-covered moors; so, although accounted the best walker among my New York chums, and accustomed when at home to a daily constitutional of from four to eight miles, I was not accustomed to the heavy English shooting boots and the exceedingly rough and hard walking among the heather, and looked forward with some anxiety to the work before me, but with a determination to do my very best for the credit of Yankee-land, and prove that there were Americans who could tramp, gun in hand, over Yorkshire moors by the day or week with England's best walkers.

As we moved on rapidly toward the rising fell and dome-like summit of Penyghent, I was suddenly surprised by the sight of a large circular chasm in the moor, the local name for which is pot—such as Hellen Pot, Diccan Pot, etc. One of these which we afterward visited measured at its perpendicular mouth one hundred and eighty feet by sixty. The ground being funnel-shaped around the gulf, it was walled in to prevent cattle from falling in, and it is exceedingly dangerous if not impossible to approach the edge near enough to obtain a view of the lowest depth, but sufficient is seen to strike the spectator with awe. I may here mention that the district also abounds in huge caves, containing combinations of water, foliage, and detached rock.

Hark! there is the sound of the first shot of the season, and we see in the distance the smoke wreath up above the heads of one of the other parties that had already reached their ground. Other reports followed in quick succession, and as we pushed on to Penyghent, our dogs fetching long circles through the heath before us, we heard both

squads blazing away vigorously. We had but just reached the foot of the mountain where our keepers promised that we should find game, when my dog Jack, a superb white and liver-colored pointer, with a skin soft and smooth as velvet, and showing the delicate tracing of each cord and vein, made a dead point. He was distant perhaps fifty yards when he made his sudden halt, and there he stood, motionless as a statue, his neck slightly curved, his nostrils inhaling with tremulous delight the tainted breeze, his tail stretched out stiffly toward us, and the off fore-paw slightly suspended in the air. Springing over the intervening space as rapidly as the rough nature of the ground (studded with knolls of heath and pools of water, into one of which I stumbled over my knees) would permit, I soon found myself by Jack's side. Still he stood motionless. I urged him onward with a slight push of the knee. He crouched steadily forward a few paces and again checked. I repeated the admonition, and he once more moved forward, more rapidly, but noiselessly as ever, his belly almost touching the ground, and his whole body quivering with excitement. The game is almost under the muzzle of my gun, but still I can see nothing, when suddenly up springs an old bird, a patriarch of the moors, and with a whirr, whirr, darted down the wind. I know that six critical eyes are upon me—yes, ten, for even the two dogs, with an almost human instinct, are alternately looking at me and the flying bird—and I feel that I must not miss him. As much excited as when years ago I made my first cavalry charge, I am still able to appear outwardly cool. My gun is at my shoulder, the bird has placed a distance of forty yards between us, and, as old Leatherstocking said, "has a chance for his life;" my attendant excitedly cries, "Fire, Sir, fire," when I at length feel that the moment has arrived, a trigger is pulled, and he falls heavily to the ground—a dead bird. With a most hypocritical pretense of indifference I order Jack to "down charge," and proceed to reload with the greatest deliberation. This done, Jack hears the words "seek dead;" the old bird of resplendent plumage, which the length of the shot had saved even from being ruffled, is soon found and put in my gamekeeper's bag, and with a "hi on" to the dogs, the party, which had halted, moves onward, meeting with an abundance of birds and good luck.

At one o'clock we arrived at the rendezvous with two well-filled bags, and found the other equally successful parties already there. It was a lovely spot on the sodded bank of a musical mountain stream, and we saw spread out on a spotless cloth what the Squire of the Grove in *Don Quixote* calls his *fiambreras*, that magniloquent Castilian word for cold collation. In a shaded pool of the

rushing and roaring streamlet there were several bottles of Champagne and other wines, and a huge earthen jug of good English ale, placed there to cool. Our hunger and thirst being appeased with the tempting array spread before us, the remaining viands were removed by the attendants, and while they sat down at a distance to enjoy their plainer and more substantial lunch of cold meat, buttered bread, and beer, the smokers among the party of gentlemen lighted their cigars, and the events of the morning's sport were recounted. A few minutes before two the remains of the feast, with the eating utensils, were replaced in the pony wagon and driven back to the manor-house by "old Thomas," a venerable retainer of threescore-and-ten, who had spent his whole life in the service of my friend's family, and who was occasionally employed in some slight and easy duty.

Punctually at two o'clock we again shouldered our guns, and with refilled ammunition pouches and empty game bags again set out in the same order as before on the various routes assigned to us by the chief gamekeeper. With an instinct and training that obey the slightest word or wave of the hand, the dogs again range over the moors, and again are soon heard the *fusilados* from hill, valley, and mountain-side. After a capital afternoon's shooting we again assemble at half past six at a farm-yard, where the carriage is in waiting for us. As each party came in the bags were emptied, and the result of the day's sport was spread out before us, the grouse being placed in lines of twenty, with the hares and snipe in the rear, and summing up as follows: 264 grouse, seven hares, and eight snipe. After seeing the game placed in large baskets, and resigning our guns to the attendants, we were driven to the hall, stopping *en route* to have a glass of milk fresh from the afternoon milking, and gushing forth as we proceeded homeward the following little song, prepared for the occasion by the poet of the party, and sung in stentorian tones by six pairs of lungs to a merry old English air heard on similar occasions in the days when Will Shakespeare fished and sailed and swam in sweet Avon:

"The west wind sighs across the heath,
The dawn is looming gray;
My forehead feels the early breath
Of slow-awakening day.
Aim well, my merry, merry men;
Hi on, good dogs, hi on.

"Jack, Neil, and Blanche bound on before,
And ranging cross the beat;
Then back again, and then once more
Their up-wind course repeat.
Aim well, etc., etc.

"But see! old Jack has something there!
Just round that rock a whiff
Of grousy odor tinged the air,
And stopped him stark and stiff.
Aim well, etc., etc.

"A gentle word, and on we creep,
While past the nestling rock
Small stealthy heads begin to peep,
Scared by the clicking lock.
Aim well, etc., etc.

"A wild, proud cock!—the covey flown—
Sharp rings the double sound;
The two old birds come fluttering down
Straightway upon the ground.
Aim well, etc., etc.

"Then lightly o'er the moor we tread,
And few the grouse we spare;
And here and there a snipe falls dead,
And here and there a hare.
Aim well, etc., etc.

"And so to rest with thankful hearts
That life, that air, are sweet,
In hope the joy to-day imparts
To-morrow will repeat.
Aim well, etc., etc."

At the front-door we were met by servants and slippers, which latter were a pleasant exchange for our wet and heavy shooting boots. Going to our rooms to dress for dinner (after receiving our letters, which arrived during the afternoon of each day, together with the London morning papers), I found a hot bath prepared for me, and my evening dress laid out in an artistic manner by the servant assigned to my service. Descending to the drawing-room at eight o'clock, we proceeded to dinner. And such a dinner! 'Twould have tempted a dyspeptic anchorite, while our nine hours of hard walking and "carrying weight," as the Country Parson says, had given us tremendous appetites, that would have served as sauce and seasoning for even such soldiers' fare as was served out to us at Vicksburg.

"Coffee and cigars in the library," said our host to his butler, as we rose from the table at ten o'clock and retired to that quaint apartment, wainscoted with oak, and filled with the gradual accumulations of two centuries, including many early Caxtons and the first editions of Shakespeare and Milton; also a fine copy in full Russia of that noblest monument yet erected in honor of ornithology—our own Audubon's *Birds of America*. Although midsummer, several logs of wood were blazing brightly in the huge fire-place, and the high mountain air made the heat so acceptable that we made a circle round the hearth. Two hours having been pleasantly spent in looking over the London papers, in canvassing the chances of equally good sport on the morrow, and with a few songs and stories, including a recitation of two of John Hay's Pike County ballads—received with immense applause—we separated for the night, and so terminated the 12th of August and my first day's experience of grouse shooting on the moors of Yorkshire.

The following morning I was called as before, my shooting suit laid out for me, and my evening dress placed carefully in the armoire. After breakfast Lord — desired us to write the address on parchment tags

lying on his desk of any friends to whom we desired to send some grouse. This done, the steward received orders to attach them to little hampers containing six brace of birds each, and have them forwarded to their various destinations by that day's trains, the charges being prepaid. All being prepared for a start, our boots, which had been carefully dried during the night and oiled, were brought out and put on, and we were, as before, driven to the game-keeper's to select dogs for the day, when we proceeded to fresh shooting grounds, on a different portion of the estate from where we had been the previous day—the attendants following in a carry-all drawn by two horses, and bringing with them the dogs and shooting paraphernalia, including the guns, cleaned and oiled, like the boots, every night.

The succeeding days of the week were substantially repetitions of the first, and it is therefore unnecessary to describe them. While Monday and Tuesday were sunny, Wednesday and Thursday were showery; but nevertheless we went to the moors in our light water-proofs, and were not the worse of our wet feet. Englishmen, by-the-way, do not entertain the American's dread of rain. Not only do they go out to shoot in a pouring rain, but I have started with a party of ladies and gentlemen on a horse-back excursion in a heavy shower, and I attempted under the same circumstances, last summer, the ascent of Ben Nevis in company with a London physician and his young wife. On Saturday guests who had been invited for a week took their departure, others arriving the same evening and the following Monday morning to occupy their places. All of my readers may not possibly know that in England persons are usually invited to a country-house for a certain period, and at the expiration of the time are expected to take their departure, other guests having been previously asked to occupy their rooms. You may be invited to come on a stated day and spend a week: if you arrive behind the time fixed, you simply curtail by so many days the period that you are expected to remain.

"The circles of our felicities," writes Sir Thomas Browne, "make short arches." Who shall question the wise axiom of the stout old knight of Norwich? The span of my two weeks' enjoyment on the moors and mountains of Yorkshire seemed all too short, and I would fain have prolonged my sojourn, being strongly urged so to do from the circumstance that sickness kept the gentleman who was to have occupied my room from coming, but other engagements previously made prevented. I had promised to be at Castle —, in the Highlands of Scotland, on a certain day, to participate in the pleasure of shooting ptarmigan and blackcock, that noble

bird which Joanna Baillie celebrated in several sweet verses:

"Good-morrow to thy sable beak
And glossy plumage, dark and sleek;
Thy crimson moon and azure eye,
Cock of the heath, so wildly shy!"

It so happens that I have had wide and varied sporting experiences: have shot pinnated grouse, deer, and wolves on the prairies of Illinois; wild turkeys and geese in Michigan; alligators and bears in Louisiana bayous and swamps; ducks on the shores of New Jersey, and on the islands that skirt the shores of Texas and Mexico; have caught white-fish at Mackinac, and gamy two-pound trout while camping among the mountain streams and lakes of the Adirondacks. But I can most conscientiously aver that none of those experiences, delightful as many of them were, gave me the same amount of solid satisfaction and pleasure that was afforded me by my last summer's sojourn at the old manor-house *outré mer*.

NUMBER TWO.

"YOU won't forget me, 'Mandy?"
"Why, John?"

She laughed, with a sort of ripple in the tone, that showed excitement instead of amusement, and the flush on her face was additional witness to her inward disturbance. John Griswold leaned against the maple-tree by the door, and looked at Amanda Lee with his heart in his eyes. Let us look at her, and admire too, for she made a lovely picture, though its frame was nothing more than the open door—and the back-door too—of an old farm-house, whose long sloping roof almost touched the hill-side rising abruptly behind it. In that frame of dark gray wood, showing like a ray of pure sunshine against the sunless interior, stood this figure of a young girl, slender and erect, crowned with a face of delicate outline, around which fell a mass of yellow curls—a real New England face of one type, pretty and weak, exquisite in color, but expressionless, even when mirth or anger revealed the beautiful glittering teeth between those scarlet lips, or flushed the fair skin into deeper color than the wild-rose tint of girlhood. Yet John Griswold, with the ordinary infatuation of a lover, considered Amanda as good as she was beautiful, and if some instinctive distrust of her nature prompted his question, he was heartily ashamed of it as soon as he heard her indignant response.

Now John himself offered to any observer an aspect far more full of solace than 'Mandy presented, as he stood under the maple-tree that showered its golden tassels above him in one great pyramid of graceful bloom. His, too, was a New England face, but of the highest order: brown hair, keen gray eyes, a resolute mouth, and an outline so