

Rudolf Raspe

**The
Surprising
Adventures
of**

Baron Munchausen

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«Издательские решения»

Raspe R.

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Содержание

TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN	6
CHAPTER I	6
CHAPTER II	9
CHAPTER III	11
CHAPTER IV	13
CHAPTER V	15
CHAPTER VI	18
CHAPTER VII	20
CHAPTER VIII	22
CHAPTER IX	23
CHAPTER X	25
CHAPTER XI	28
CHAPTER XII	30
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	31

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Rudolf Raspe

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TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

CHAPTER I

(THE BARON IS SUPPOSED TO RELATE THESE ADVENTURES TO HIS FRIENDS OVER A BOTTLE.)

The Baron relates an account of his first travels – The astonishing effects of a storm – Arrives at Ceylon; combats and conquers two extraordinary opponents – Returns to Holland._

Some years before my beard announced approaching manhood, or, in other words, when I was neither man nor boy, but between both, I expressed in repeated conversations a strong desire of seeing the world, from which I was discouraged by my parents, though my father had been no inconsiderable traveller himself, as will appear before I have reached the end of my singular, and, I may add, interesting adventures. A cousin, by my mother's side, took a liking to me, often said I was fine forward youth, and was much inclined to gratify my curiosity. His eloquence had more effect than mine, for my father consented to my accompanying him in a voyage to the island of Ceylon, where his uncle had resided as governor many years.

We sailed from Amsterdam with despatches from their High Mightinesses the States of Holland. The only circumstance which happened on our voyage worth relating was the wonderful effects of a storm, which had torn up by the roots a great number of trees of enormous bulk and height, in an island where we lay at anchor to take in wood and water; some of these trees weighed many tons, yet they were carried by the wind so amazingly high, that they appeared like the feathers of small birds floating in the air, for they were at least five miles above the earth: however, as soon as the storm subsided they all fell perpendicularly into their respective places, and took root again, except the largest, which happened, when it was blown into the air, to have a man and his wife, a very honest old couple, upon its branches, gathering cucumbers (in this part of the globe that useful vegetable grows upon trees): the weight of this couple, as the tree descended, over-balanced the trunk, and brought it down in a horizontal position: it fell upon the chief man of the island, and killed him on the spot; he had quitted his house in the storm, under an apprehension of its falling upon him, and was returning through his own garden when this fortunate accident happened. The word fortunate, here, requires some explanation. This chief was a man of a very avaricious and oppressive disposition, and though he had no family, the natives of the island were half-starved by his oppressive and infamous impositions.

The very goods which he had thus taken from them were spoiling in his stores, while the poor wretches from whom they were plundered were pining in poverty. Though the destruction of this tyrant was accidental, the people chose the cucumber-gatherers for their governors, as a mark of their gratitude for destroying, though accidentally, their late tyrant.

After we had repaired the damages we sustained in this remarkable storm, and taken leave of the new governor and his lady, we sailed with a fair wind for the object of our voyage.

In about six weeks we arrived at Ceylon, where we were received with great marks of friendship and true politeness. The following singular adventures may not prove unentertaining.

After we had resided at Ceylon about a fortnight I accompanied one of the governor's brothers upon a shooting party. He was a strong, athletic man, and being used to that climate (for he had resided there some years), he bore the violent heat of the sun much better than I could; in our excursion he had made a considerable progress through a thick wood when I was only at the entrance.

Near the banks of a large piece of water, which had engaged my attention, I thought I heard a rustling noise behind; on turning about I was almost petrified (as who would not be?) at the sight of a lion, which was evidently approaching with the intention of satisfying his appetite with my poor carcass, and that without asking my consent. What was to be done in this horrible dilemma? I had not even a moment for reflection; my piece was only charged with swan-shot, and I had no other about me: however, though I could have no idea of killing such an animal with that weak kind of ammunition, yet I had some hopes of frightening him by the report, and perhaps of wounding him also. I immediately let fly, without waiting till he was within reach, and the report did but enrage him, for he now quickened his pace, and seemed to approach me full speed: I attempted to escape, but that only added (if an addition could be made) to my distress; for the moment I turned about I found a large crocodile, with his mouth extended almost ready to receive me. On my right hand was the piece of water before mentioned, and on my left a deep precipice, said to have, as I have since learned, a receptacle at the bottom for venomous creatures; in short I gave myself up as lost, for the lion was now upon his hind-legs, just in the act of seizing me; I fell involuntarily to the ground with fear, and, as it afterwards appeared, he sprang over me. I lay some time in a situation which no language can describe, expecting to feel his teeth or talons in some part of me every moment: after waiting in this prostrate situation a few seconds I heard a violent but unusual noise, different from any sound that had ever before assailed my ears; nor is it at all to be wondered at, when I inform you from whence it proceeded: after listening for some time, I ventured to raise my head and look round, when, to my

unspeakable joy, I perceived the lion had, by the eagerness with which he sprung at me, jumped forward, as I fell, into the crocodile's mouth! which, as before observed, was wide open; the head of the one stuck in the throat of the other! and they were struggling to extricate themselves! I fortunately recollected my *_couteau de chasse_*, which was by my side; with this instrument I severed the lion's head at one blow, and the body fell at my feet! I then, with the butt-end of my fowling-piece, rammed the head farther into the throat of the crocodile, and destroyed him by suffocation, for he could neither gorge nor eject it.

Soon after I had thus gained a complete victory over my two powerful adversaries, my companion arrived in search of me; for finding I did not follow him into the wood, he returned, apprehending I had lost my way, or met with some accident.

After mutual congratulations, we measured the crocodile, which was just forty feet in length.

As soon as we had related this extraordinary adventure to the governor, he sent a waggon and servants, who brought home the two carcasses. The lion's skin was properly preserved, with its hair on, after which it was made into tobacco-pouches, and presented by me, upon our return to Holland, to the burgomasters, who, in return, requested my acceptance of a thousand ducats.

The skin of the crocodile was stuffed in the usual manner, and makes a capital article in their public museum at Amsterdam, where the exhibitor relates the whole story to each spectator, with such additions as he thinks proper. Some of his variations are rather extravagant; one of them is, that the lion jumped quite through the crocodile, and was making his escape at the back door, when, as soon as his head appeared, Monsieur the Great Baron (as he is pleased to call me) cut it off, and three feet of the crocodile's tail along with it; nay, so little attention has this fellow to the truth, that he sometimes adds, as soon as the crocodile missed his tail, he turned about, snatched the *_couteau de chasse_* out of Monsieur's hand, and swallowed it with such eagerness that it pierced his heart and killed him immediately!

The little regard which this impudent knave has to veracity makes me sometimes apprehensive that my *_real facts_* may fall under suspicion, by being found in company with his confounded inventions.

CHAPTER II

In which the Baron proves himself a good shot – He loses his horse, and finds a wolf – Makes him draw his sledge – Promises to entertain his company with a relation of such facts as are well deserving their notice.

I set off from Rome on a journey to Russia, in the midst of winter, from a just notion that frost and snow must of course mend the roads, which every traveller had described as uncommonly bad through the northern parts of Germany, Poland, Courland, and Livonia. I went on horseback, as the most convenient manner of travelling; I was but lightly clothed, and of this I felt the inconvenience the more I advanced north-east. What must not a poor old man have suffered in that severe weather and climate, whom I saw on a bleak common in Poland, lying on the road, helpless, shivering, and hardly having wherewithal to cover his nakedness? I pitied the poor soul: though I felt the severity of the air myself, I threw my mantle over him, and immediately I heard a voice from the heavens, blessing me for that piece of charity, saying —

«You will be rewarded, my son, for this in time.»

I went on: night and darkness overtook me. No village was to be seen. The country was covered with snow, and I was unacquainted with the road.

Tired, I alighted, and fastened my horse to something like a pointed stump of a tree, which appeared above the snow; for the sake of safety I placed my pistols under my arm, and laid down on the snow, where I slept so soundly that I did not open my eyes till full daylight. It is not easy to conceive my astonishment to find myself in the midst of a village, lying in a churchyard; nor was my horse to be seen, but I heard him soon after neigh somewhere above me. On looking upwards I beheld him hanging by his bridle to the weather-cock of the steeple. Matters were now very plain to me: the village had been covered with snow overnight; a sudden change of weather had taken place; I had sunk down to the churchyard whilst asleep, gently, and in the same proportion as the snow had melted away; and what in the dark I had taken to be a stump of a little tree appearing above the snow, to which I had tied my horse, proved to have been the cross or weather-cock of the steeple!

Without long consideration I took one of my pistols, shot the bridle in two, brought the horse, and proceeded on my journey. [Here the Baron seems to have forgot his feelings; he should certainly have ordered his horse a feed of corn, after fasting so long.]

He carried me well – advancing into the interior parts of Russia. I found travelling on horseback rather unfashionable in winter, therefore I submitted, as I always do, to the custom of the country, took a single

horse sledge, and drove briskly towards St. Petersburg. I do not exactly recollect whether it was in Eastland or Jugemanland, but I remember that in the midst of a dreary forest I spied a terrible wolf making after me, with all the speed of ravenous winter hunger. He soon overtook me. There was no possibility of escape. Mechanically I laid myself down flat in the sledge, and let my horse run for our safety. What I wished, but hardly hoped or expected, happened immediately after. The wolf did not mind me in the least, but took a leap over me, and falling furiously on the horse, began instantly to tear and devour the hind-part of the poor animal, which ran the faster for his pain and terror. Thus unnoticed and safe myself, I lifted my head slyly up, and with horror I beheld that the wolf had ate his way into the horse's body; it was not long before he had fairly forced himself into it, when I took my advantage, and fell upon him with the butt-end of my whip. This unexpected attack in his rear frightened him so much, that he leaped forward with all his might: the horse's carcass dropped on the ground, but in his place the wolf was in the harness, and I on my part whipping him continually: we both arrived in full career safe at St. Petersburg, contrary to our respective expectations, and very much to the astonishment of the spectators.

I shall not tire you, gentlemen, with the politics, arts, sciences, and history of this magnificent metropolis of Russia, nor trouble you with the various intrigues and pleasant adventures I had in the politer circles of that country, where the lady of the house always receives the visitor with a dram and a salute. I shall confine myself rather to the greater and nobler objects of your attention, horses and dogs, my favourites in the brute creation; also to foxes, wolves, and bears, with which, and game in general, Russia abounds more than any other part of the world; and to such sports, manly exercises, and feats of gallantry and activity, as show the gentleman better than musty Greek or Latin, or all the perfume, finery, and capers of French wits or *_petit-maîtres_*.

CHAPTER III

An encounter between the Baron's nose and a door-post, with its wonderful effects – Fifty brace of ducks and other fowl destroyed by one shot – Flogs a fox out of his skin – Leads an old sow home in a new way, and vanquishes a wild boar.

It was some time before I could obtain a commission in the army, and for several months I was perfectly at liberty to sport away my time and money in the most gentleman-like manner. You may easily imagine that I spent much of both out of town with such gallant fellows as knew how to make the most of an open forest country. The very recollection of those amusements gives me fresh spirits, and creates a warm wish for a repetition of them. One morning I saw, through the windows of my bed-room, that a large pond not far off was covered with wild ducks. In an instant I took my gun from the corner, ran down-stairs and out of the house in such a hurry, that I imprudently struck my face against the door-post. Fire flew out of my eyes, but it did not prevent my intention; I soon came within shot, when, levelling my piece, I observed to my sorrow, that even the flint had sprung from the cock by the violence of the shock I had just received. There was no time to be lost. I presently remembered the effect it had on my eyes, therefore opened the pan, levelled my piece against the wild fowls, and my fist against one of my eyes. [The Baron's eyes have retained fire ever since, and appear particularly illuminated when he relates this anecdote.] A hearty blow drew sparks again; the shot went off, and I killed fifty brace of ducks, twenty widgeons, and three couple of teals. Presence of mind is the soul of manly exercises. If soldiers and sailors owe to it many of their lucky escapes, hunters and sportsmen are not less beholden to it for many of their successes. In a noble forest in Russia I met a fine black fox, whose valuable skin it would have been a pity to tear by ball or shot. Reynard stood close to a tree. In a twinkling I took out my ball, and placed a good spike-nail in its room, fired, and hit him so cleverly that I nailed his brush fast to the tree. I now went up to him, took out my hanger, gave him a cross-cut over the face, laid hold of my whip, and fairly flogged him out of his fine skin.

Chance and good luck often correct our mistakes; of this I had a singular instance soon after, when, in the depth of a forest, I saw a wild pig and sow running close behind each other. My ball had missed them, yet the foremost pig only ran away, and the sow stood motionless, as fixed to the ground. On examining into the matter, I found the latter one to be an old sow, blind with age, which had taken hold of her pig's tail, in order to be led along by filial duty. My ball, having passed between the two, had cut his leading-string, which the old sow continued to hold in her mouth; and as her former guide did not draw her on any longer, she had stopped of course; I therefore laid hold of the remaining end of the pig's tail, and led the old beast home without any

further trouble on my part, and without any reluctance or apprehension on the part of the helpless old animal.

Terrible as these wild sows are, yet more fierce and dangerous are the boars, one of which I had once the misfortune to meet in a forest, unprepared for attack or defence. I retired behind an oak-tree just when the furious animal levelled a side-blow at me, with such force, that his tusks pierced through the tree, by which means he could neither repeat the blow nor retire. Ho, ho! thought I, I shall soon have you now! and immediately I laid hold of a stone, wherewith I hammered and bent his tusks in such a manner, that he could not retreat by any means, and must wait my return from the next village, whither I went for ropes and a cart, to secure him properly, and to carry him off safe and alive, in which I perfectly succeeded.

CHAPTER IV

Reflections on Saint Hubert's stag – Shoots a stag with cherry-stones; the wonderful effects of it – Kills a bear by extraordinary dexterity; his danger pathetically described – Attacked by a wolf, which he turns inside out – Is assailed by a mad dog, from which he escapes – The Baron's cloak seized with madness, by which his whole wardrobe is thrown into confusion.

You have heard, I dare say, of the hunter and sportsman's saint and protector, St. Hubert, and of the noble stag, which appeared to him in the forest, with the holy cross between his antlers. I have paid my homage to that saint every year in good fellowship, and seen this stag a thousand times, either painted in churches, or embroidered in the stars of his knights; so that, upon the honour and conscience of a good sportsman, I hardly know whether there may not have been formerly, or whether there are not such crossed stags even at this present day. But let me rather tell what I have seen myself. Having one day spent all my shot, I found myself unexpectedly in presence of a stately stag, looking at me as unconcernedly as if he had known of my empty pouches. I charged immediately with powder, and upon it a good handful of cherry-stones, for I had sucked the fruit as far as the hurry would permit. Thus I let fly at him, and hit him just on the middle of the forehead, between his antlers; it stunned him – he staggered – yet he made off. A year or two after, being with a party in the same forest, I beheld a noble stag with a fine full grown cherry-tree above ten feet high between his antlers. I immediately recollected my former adventure, looked upon him as my property, and brought him to the ground by one shot, which at once gave me the haunch and cherry-sauce; for the tree was covered with the richest fruit, the like I had never tasted before. Who knows but some passionate holy sportsman, or sporting abbot or bishop, may have shot, planted, and fixed the cross between the antlers of St. Hubert's stag, in a manner similar to this? They always have been, and still are, famous for plantations of crosses and antlers; and in a case of distress or dilemma, which too often happens to keen sportsmen, one is apt to grasp at anything for safety, and to try any expedient rather than miss the favourable opportunity. I have many times found myself in that trying situation.

What do you say of this, for example? Daylight and powder were spent one day in a Polish forest. When I was going home a terrible bear made up to me in great speed, with open mouth, ready to fall upon me; all my pockets were searched in an instant for powder and ball, but in vain; I found nothing but two spare flints: one I flung with all my might into the monster's open jaws, down his throat. It gave him pain and made him turn about, so that I could level the second at his back-door, which, indeed, I did with wonderful success; for it flew in, met the first flint in the stomach, struck fire, and blew up the bear with a terrible

explosion. Though I came safe off that time, yet I should not wish to try it again, or venture against bears with no other ammunition.

There is a kind of fatality in it. The fiercest and most dangerous animals generally came upon me when defenceless, as if they had a notion or an instinctive intimation of it. Thus a frightful wolf rushed upon me so suddenly, and so close, that I could do nothing but follow mechanical instinct, and thrust my fist into his open mouth. For safety's sake I pushed on and on, till my arm was fairly in up to the shoulder. How should I disengage myself? I was not much pleased with my awkward situation – with a wolf face to face; our ogling was not of the most pleasant kind. If I withdrew my arm, then the animal would fly the more furiously upon me; that I saw in his flaming eyes. In short, I laid hold of his tail, turned him inside out like a glove, and flung him to the ground, where I left him.

The same expedient would not have answered against a mad dog, which soon after came running against me in a narrow street at St. Petersburg. Run who can, I thought; and to do this the better, I threw off my fur cloak, and was safe within doors in an instant. I sent my servant for the cloak, and he put it in the wardrobe with my other clothes. The day after I was amazed and frightened by Jack's bawling, «For God's sake, sir, your fur cloak is mad!» I hastened up to him, and found almost all my clothes tossed about and torn to pieces. The fellow was perfectly right in his apprehensions about the fur cloak's madness. I saw him myself just then falling upon a fine full-dress suit, which he shook and tossed in an unmerciful manner.

CHAPTER V

The effects of great activity and presence of mind – A favourite hound described, which pups while pursuing a hare; the hare also litters while pursued by the hound – Presented with a famous horse by Count Przobosky, with which he performs many extraordinary feats.

All these narrow and lucky escapes, gentlemen, were chances turned to advantage by presence of mind and vigorous exertions, which, taken together, as everybody knows, make the fortunate sportsman, sailor, and soldier; but he would be a very blamable and imprudent sportsman, admiral, or general, who would always depend upon chance and his stars, without troubling himself about those arts which are their particular pursuits, and without providing the very best implements, which insure success. I was not blamable either way; for I have always been as remarkable for the excellency of my horses, dogs, guns, and swords, as for the proper manner of using and managing them, so that upon the whole I may hope to be remembered in the forest, upon the turf, and in the field. I shall not enter here into any detail of my stables, kennel, or armoury; but a favourite bitch of mine I cannot help mentioning to you; she was a greyhound, and I never had or saw a better. She grew old in my service, and was not remarkable for her size, but rather for her uncommon swiftness. I always coursed with her. Had you seen her you must have admired her, and would not have wondered at my predilection, and at my coursing her so much. She ran so fast, so much, and so long in my service, that she actually ran off her legs; so that, in the latter part of her life, I was under the necessity of working and using her only as a terrier, in which quality she still served me many years.

Coursing one day a hare, which appeared to me uncommonly big, I pitied my poor bitch, being big with pups, yet she would course as fast as ever. I could follow her on horseback only at a great distance. At once I heard a cry as it were of a pack of hounds – but so weak and faint that I hardly knew what to make of it. Coming up to them, I was greatly surprised. The hare had littered in running; the same had happened to my bitch in coursing, and there were just as many leverets as pups. By instinct the former ran, the latter coursed: and thus I found myself in possession at once of six hares, and as many dogs, at the end of a course which had only begun with one.

I remember this, my wonderful bitch, with the same pleasure and tenderness as a superb Lithuanian horse, which no money could have bought. He became mine by an accident, which gave me an opportunity of showing my horsemanship to a great advantage. I was at Count Przobosky's noble country-seat in Lithuania, and remained with the ladies at tea in the drawing-room, while the gentlemen were down in the yard, to see a young horse of blood which had just arrived from the stud. We suddenly heard a noise of distress; I hastened down-stairs, and

found the horse so unruly, that nobody durst approach or mount him. The most resolute horsemen stood dismayed and aghast; despondency was expressed in every countenance, when, in one leap, I was on his back, took him by surprise, and worked him quite into gentleness and obedience with the best display of horsemanship I was master of. Fully to show this to the ladies, and save them unnecessary trouble, I forced him to leap in at one of the open windows of the tea-room, walked round several times, pace, trot, and gallop, and at last made him mount the tea-table, there to repeat his lessons in a pretty style of miniature which was exceedingly pleasing to the ladies, for he performed them amazingly well, and did not break either cup or saucer. It placed me so high in their opinion, and so well in that of the noble lord, that, with his usual politeness, he begged I would accept of this young horse, and ride him full career to conquest and honour in the campaign against the Turks, which was soon to be opened, under the command of Count Munich.

I could not indeed have received a more agreeable present, nor a more ominous one at the opening of that campaign, in which I made my apprenticeship as a soldier. A horse so gentle, so spirited, and so fierce – at once a lamb and a Bucephalus, put me always in mind of the soldier's and the gentleman's duty! of young Alexander, and of the astonishing things he performed in the field.

We took the field, among several other reasons, it seems, with an intention to retrieve the character of the Russian arms, which had been blemished a little by Czar Peter's last campaign on the Pruth; and this we fully accomplished by several very fatiguing and glorious campaigns under the command of that great general I mentioned before.

Modesty forbids individuals to arrogate to themselves great successes or victories, the glory of which is generally engrossed by the commander – nay, which is rather awkward, by kings and queens who never smelt gunpowder but at the field-days and reviews of their troops; never saw a field of battle, or an enemy in battle array.

Nor do I claim any particular share of glory in the great engagements with the enemy. We all did our duty, which, in the patriot's, soldier's, and gentleman's language, is a very comprehensive word, of great honour, meaning, and import, and of which the generality of idle quidnuncs and coffee-house politicians can hardly form any but a very mean and contemptible idea. However, having had the command of a body of hussars, I went upon several expeditions, with discretionary powers; and the success I then met with is, I think, fairly and only to be placed to my account, and to that of the brave fellows whom I led on to conquest and to victory. We had very hot work once in the van of the army, when we drove the Turks into Oczakow. My spirited Lithuanian had almost brought me into a scrape: I had an advanced fore-post, and saw the enemy coming against me in a cloud of dust, which left me rather uncertain about their actual numbers and real intentions: to wrap myself up in a

similar cloud was common prudence, but would not have much advanced my knowledge, or answered the end for which I had been sent out; therefore I let my flankers on both wings spread to the right and left and make what dust they could, and I myself led on straight upon the enemy, to have nearer sight of them: in this I was gratified, for they stood and fought, till, for fear of my flankers, they began to move off rather disorderly. This was the moment to fall upon them with spirit; we broke them entirely – made a terrible havoc amongst them, and drove them not only back to a walled town in their rear, but even through it, contrary to our most sanguine expectation.

The swiftness of my Lithuanian enabled me to be foremost in the pursuit; and seeing the enemy fairly flying through the opposite gate, I thought it would be prudent to stop in the market-place, to order the men to rendezvous. I stopped, gentlemen; but judge of my astonishment when in this market-place I saw not one of my hussars about me! Are they scouring the other streets? or what is become of them? They could not be far off, and must, at all events, soon join me. In that expectation I walked my panting Lithuanian to a spring in this market-place, and let him drink. He drank uncommonly, with an eagerness not to be satisfied, but natural enough; for when I looked round for my men, what should I see, gentlemen! the hind part of the poor creature – croup and legs were missing, as if he had been cut in two, and the water ran out as it came in, without refreshing or doing him any good! How it could have happened was quite a mystery to me, till I returned with him to the town-gate. There I saw, that when I rushed in pell-mell with the flying enemy, they had dropped the portcullis (a heavy falling door, with sharp spikes at the bottom, let down suddenly to prevent the entrance of an enemy into a fortified town) unperceived by me, which had totally cut off his hind part, that still lay quivering on the outside of the gate. It would have been an irreparable loss, had not our farrier contrived to bring both parts together while hot. He sewed them up with sprigs and young shoots of laurels that were at hand; the wound healed, and, what could not have happened but to so glorious a horse, the sprigs took root in his body, grew up, and formed a bower over me; so that afterwards I could go upon many other expeditions in the shade of my own and my horse's laurels.

CHAPTER VI

The Baron is made a prisoner of war, and sold for a slave – Keeps the Sultan's bees, which are attacked by two bears – Loses one of his bees; a silver hatchet, which he throws at the bears, rebounds and flies up to the moon; brings it back by an ingenious invention; falls to the earth on his return, and helps himself out of a pit – Extricates himself from a carriage which meets his in a narrow road, in a manner never before attempted nor practised since – The wonderful effects of the frost upon his servant's French horn.

I was not always successful. I had the misfortune to be overpowered by numbers, to be made prisoner of war; and, what is worse, but always usual among the Turks, to be sold for a slave. [The Baron was afterwards in great favour with the Grand Seignior, as will appear hereafter.] In that state of humiliation my daily task was not very hard and laborious, but rather singular and irksome. It was to drive the Sultan's bees every morning to their pasture-grounds, to attend them all the day long, and against night to drive them back to their hives. One evening I missed a bee, and soon observed that two bears had fallen upon her to tear her to pieces for the honey she carried. I had nothing like an offensive weapon in my hands but the silver hatchet, which is the badge of the Sultan's gardeners and farmers. I threw it at the robbers, with an intention to frighten them away, and set the poor bee at liberty; but, by an unlucky turn of my arm, it flew upwards, and continued rising till it reached the moon. How should I recover it? how fetch it down again? I recollected that Turkey-beans grow very quick, and run up to an astonishing height. I planted one immediately; it grew, and actually fastened itself to one of the moon's horns. I had no more to do now but to climb up by it into the moon, where I safely arrived, and had a troublesome piece of business before I could find my silver hatchet, in a place where everything has the brightness of silver; at last, however, I found it in a heap of chaff and chopped straw. I was now for returning: but, alas! the heat of the sun had dried up my bean; it was totally useless for my descent: so I fell to work, and twisted me a rope of that chopped straw, as long and as well as I could make it. This I fastened to one of the moon's horns, and slid down to the end of it. Here I held myself fast with the left hand, and with the hatchet in my right, I cut the long, now useless end of the upper part, which, when tied to the lower end, brought me a good deal lower: this repeated splicing and tying of the rope did not improve its quality, or bring me down to the Sultan's farm. I was four or five miles from the earth at least when it broke; I fell to the ground with such amazing violence, that I found myself stunned, and in a hole nine fathoms deep at least, made by the weight of my body falling from so great a height: I recovered, but knew not how to get out again; however, I dug slopes or steps with my finger-nails [the Baron's nails were then of forty years' growth], and easily accomplished it.

Peace was soon after concluded with the Turks, and gaining my liberty, I left St. Petersburg at the time of that singular revolution, when the emperor in his cradle, his mother, the Duke of Brunswick, her father, Field-Marshal Munich, and many others were sent to Siberia. The winter was then so uncommonly severe all over Europe, that ever since the sun seems to be frost-bitten. At my return to this place, I felt on the road greater inconveniences than those I had experienced on my setting out.

I travelled post, and finding myself in a narrow lane, bid the postillion give a signal with his horn, that other travellers might not meet us in the narrow passage. He blew with all his might; but his endeavours were in vain, he could not make the horn sound, which was unaccountable, and rather unfortunate, for soon after we found ourselves in the presence of another coach coming the other way: there was no proceeding; however, I got out of my carriage, and being pretty strong, placed it, wheels and all, upon my head: I then jumped over a hedge about nine feet high (which, considering the weight of the coach, was rather difficult) into a field, and came out again by another jump into the road beyond the other carriage: I then went back for the horses, and placing one upon my head, and the other under my left arm, by the same means brought them to my coach, put to, and proceeded to an inn at the end of our stage. I should have told you that the horse under my arm was very spirited, and not above four years old; in making my second spring over the hedge, he expressed great dislike to that violent kind of motion by kicking and snorting; however, I confined his hind legs by putting them into my coat-pocket. After we arrived at the inn my postillion and I refreshed ourselves: he hung his horn on a peg near the kitchen fire; I sat on the other side.

Suddenly we heard a _tereng! tereng! teng! teng!_ We looked round, and now found the reason why the postillion had not been able to sound his horn; his tunes were frozen up in the horn, and came out now by thawing, plain enough, and much to the credit of the driver; so that the honest fellow entertained us for some time with a variety of tunes, without putting his mouth to the horn – «The King of Prussia's March,» «Over the Hill and over the Dale,» with many other favourite tunes; at length the thawing entertainment concluded, as I shall this short account of my Russian travels.

Some travellers are apt to advance more than is perhaps strictly true; if any of the company entertain a doubt of my veracity, I shall only say to such, I pity their want of faith, and must request they will take leave before I begin the second part of my adventures, which are as strictly founded in fact as those I have already related.

CHAPTER VII

The Baron relates his adventures on a voyage to North America, which are well worth the reader's attention – Pranks of a whale – A sea-gull saves a sailor's life – The Baron's head forced into his stomach – A dangerous leak stopped à posteriori.

I embarked at Portsmouth in a first-rate English man-of-war, of one hundred guns, and fourteen hundred men, for North America. Nothing worth relating happened till we arrived within three hundred leagues of the river St. Laurence, when the ship struck with amazing force against (as we supposed) a rock; however, upon heaving the lead we could find no bottom, even with three hundred fathom. What made this circumstance the more wonderful, and indeed beyond all comprehension, was, that the violence of the shock was such that we lost our rudder, broke our bowsprit in the middle, and split all our masts from top to bottom, two of which went by the board; a poor fellow, who was aloft furling the mainsheet, was flung at least three leagues from the ship; but he fortunately saved his life by laying hold of the tail of a large sea-gull, who brought him back, and lodged him on the very spot from whence he was thrown. Another proof of the violence of the shock was the force with which the people between decks were driven against the floors above them; my head particularly was pressed into my stomach, where it continued some months before it recovered its natural situation. Whilst we were all in a state of astonishment at the general and unaccountable confusion in which we were involved, the whole was suddenly explained by the appearance of a large whale, who had been basking, asleep, within sixteen feet of the surface of the water. This animal was so much displeased with the disturbance which our ship had given him – for in our passage we had with our rudder scratched his nose – that he beat in all the gallery and part of the quarter-deck with his tail, and almost at the same instant took the mainsheet anchor, which was suspended, as it usually is, from the head, between his teeth, and ran away with the ship, at least sixty leagues, at the rate of twelve leagues an hour, when fortunately the cable broke, and we lost both the whale and the anchor. However, upon our return to Europe, some months after, we found the same whale within a few leagues of the same spot, floating dead upon the water; it measured above half a mile in length. As we could take but a small quantity of such a monstrous animal on board, we got our boats out, and with much difficulty cut off his head, where, to our great joy, we found the anchor, and above forty fathom of the cable, concealed on the left side of his mouth, just under his tongue. [Perhaps this was the cause of his death, as that side of his tongue was much swelled, with a great degree of inflammation.] This was the only extraordinary circumstance that happened on this voyage. One part of our distress, however, I had like to have forgot: while the whale was running away with the ship she sprung a leak, and the water poured in so fast, that all our pumps could not keep us from sinking; it was, however, my good

fortune to discover it first. I found it a large hole about a foot diameter; you will naturally suppose this circumstance gives me infinite pleasure, when I inform you that this noble vessel was preserved, with all its crew, by a most fortunate thought! in short, I sat down over it, and could have dispensed with it had it been larger; nor will you be surprised when I inform you I am descended from Dutch parents. [The Baron's ancestors have but lately settled there; in another part of his adventures he boasts of royal blood.]

My situation, while I sat there, was rather cool, but the carpenter's art soon relieved me.

CHAPTER VIII

Bathes in the Mediterranean – Meets an unexpected companion – Arrives unintentionally in the regions of heat and darkness, from which he is extricated by dancing a hornpipe – Frightens his deliverers, and returns on shore.

I was once in great danger of being lost in a most singular manner in the Mediterranean: I was bathing in that pleasant sea near Marseilles one summer's afternoon, when I discovered a very large fish, with his jaws quite extended, approaching me with the greatest velocity; there was no time to be lost, nor could I possibly avoid him. I immediately reduced myself to as small a size as possible, by closing my feet and placing my hands also near my sides, in which position I passed directly between his jaws, and into his stomach, where I remained some time in total darkness, and comfortably warm, as you may imagine; at last it occurred to me, that by giving him pain he would be glad to get rid of me: as I had plenty of room, I played my pranks, such as tumbling, hop, step, and jump, &c., but nothing seemed to disturb him so much as the quick motion of my feet in attempting to dance a hornpipe; soon after I began he put me out by sudden fits and starts: I persevered; at last he roared horridly, and stood up almost perpendicularly in the water, with his head and shoulders exposed, by which he was discovered by the people on board an Italian trader, then sailing by, who harpooned him in a few minutes. As soon as he was brought on board I heard the crew consulting how they should cut him up, so as to preserve the greatest quantity of oil. As I understood Italian, I was in most dreadful apprehensions lest their weapons employed in this business should destroy me also; therefore I stood as near the centre as possible, for there was room enough for a dozen men in this creature's stomach, and I naturally imagined they would begin with the extremities; however, my fears were soon dispersed, for they began by opening the bottom of the belly. As soon as I perceived a glimmering of light I called out lustily to be released from a situation in which I was now almost suffocated. It is impossible for me to do justice to the degree and kind of astonishment which sat upon every countenance at hearing a human voice issue from a fish, but more so at seeing a naked man walk upright out of his body; in short, gentlemen, I told them the whole story, as I have done you, whilst amazement struck them dumb.

After taking some refreshment, and jumping into the sea to cleanse myself, I swam to my clothes, which lay where I had left them on the shore. As near as I can calculate, I was near four hours and a half confined in the stomach of this animal.

CHAPTER IX

Adventures in Turkey, and upon the river Nile – Sees a balloon over Constantinople; shoots at, and brings it down; finds a French experimental philosopher suspended from it – Goes on an embassy to Grand Cairo, and returns upon the Nile, where he is thrown into an unexpected situation, and detained six weeks.

When I was in the service of the Turks I frequently amused myself in a pleasure-barge on the Marmora, which commands a view of the whole city of Constantinople, including the Grand Seignior's Seraglio. One morning, as I was admiring the beauty and serenity of the sky, I observed a globular substance in the air, which appeared to be about the size of a twelve-inch globe, with somewhat suspended from it. I immediately took up my largest and longest barrel fowling-piece, which I never travel or make even an excursion without, if I can help it; I charged with a ball, and fired at the globe, but to no purpose, the object being at too great a distance. I then put in a double quantity of powder, and five or six balls: this second attempt succeeded; all the balls took effect, and tore one side open, and brought it down. Judge my surprise when a most elegant gilt car, with a man in it, and part of a sheep which seemed to have been roasted, fell within two yards of me. When my astonishment had in some degree subsided, I ordered my people to row close to this strange aërial traveller.

I took him on board my barge (he was a native of France): he was much indisposed from his sudden fall into the sea, and incapable of speaking; after some time, however, he recovered, and gave the following account of himself, viz.: «About seven or eight days since, I cannot tell which, for I have lost my reckoning, having been most of the time where the sun never sets, I ascended from the Land's End in Cornwall, in the island of Great Britain, in the car from which I have been just taken, suspended from a very large balloon, and took a sheep with me to try atmospheric experiments upon: unfortunately, the wind changed within ten minutes after my ascent, and instead of driving towards Exeter, where I intended to land, I was driven towards the sea, over which I suppose I have continued ever since, but much too high to make observations.

«The calls of hunger were so pressing, that the intended experiments upon heat and respiration gave way to them. I was obliged, on the third day, to kill the sheep for food; and being at that time infinitely above the moon, and for upwards of sixteen hours after so very near the sun that it scorched my eyebrows, I placed the carcass, taking care to skin it first, in that part of the car where the sun had sufficient power, or, in other words, where the balloon did not shade it from the sun, by which method it was well roasted in about two hours. This has been my food ever since.» Here he paused, and seemed lost in viewing the objects about him. When I told him the buildings before us were the Grand

Seignior's Seraglio at Constantinople, he seemed exceedingly affected, as he had supposed himself in a very different situation. «The cause,» added he, «of my long flight, was owing to the failure of a string which was fixed to a valve in the balloon, intended to let out the inflammable air; and if it had not been fired at, and rent in the manner before mentioned, I might, like Mahomet, have been suspended between heaven and earth till doomsday.»

The Grand Seignior, to whom I was introduced by the Imperial, Russian, and French ambassadors, employed me to negotiate a matter of great importance at Grand Cairo, and which was of such a nature that it must ever remain a secret.

I went there in great state by land; where, having completed the business, I dismissed almost all my attendants, and returned like a private gentleman; the weather was delightful, and that famous river the Nile was beautiful beyond all description; in short, I was tempted to hire a barge to descend by water to Alexandria. On the third day of my voyage the river began to rise most amazingly (you have all heard, I presume, of the annual overflowing of the Nile), and on the next day it spread the whole country for many leagues on each side! On the fifth, at sunrise, my barge became entangled with what I at first took for shrubs, but as the light became stronger I found myself surrounded by almonds, which were perfectly ripe, and in the highest perfection. Upon plumbing with a line my people found we were at least sixty feet from the ground, and unable to advance or retreat. At about eight or nine o'clock, as near as I could judge by the altitude of the sun, the wind rose suddenly, and canted our barge on one side: here she filled, and I saw no more of her for some time. Fortunately we all saved ourselves (six men and two boys) by clinging to the tree, the boughs of which were equal to our weight, though not to that of the barge: in this situation we continued six weeks and three days, living upon the almonds; I need not inform you we had plenty of water. On the forty-second day of our distress the water fell as rapidly as it had risen, and on the forty-sixth we were able to venture down upon *terra firma*. Our barge was the first pleasing object we saw, about two hundred yards from the spot where she sunk. After drying everything that was useful by the heat of the sun, and loading ourselves with necessaries from the stores on board, we set out to recover our lost ground, and found, by the nearest calculation, we had been carried over garden-walls, and a variety of enclosures, above one hundred and fifty miles. In four days, after a very tiresome journey on foot, with thin shoes, we reached the river, which was now confined to its banks, related our adventures to a boy, who kindly accommodated all our wants, and sent us forward in a barge of his own. In six days more we arrived at Alexandria, where we took shipping for Constantinople. I was received kindly by the Grand Seignior, and had the honour of seeing the Seraglio, to which his highness introduced me himself.

CHAPTER X

Pays a visit during the siege of Gibraltar to his old friend General Elliot – Sinks a Spanish man-of-war – Wakes an old woman on the African coast – Destroys all the enemy's cannon; frightens the Count d'Artois, and sends him to Paris – Saves the lives of two English spies with the identical sling that killed Goliath; and raises the siege.

During the late siege of Gibraltar I went with a provision-fleet, under Lord Rodney's command, to see my old friend General Elliot, who has, by his distinguished defence of that place, acquired laurels that can never fade. After the usual joy which generally attends the meeting of old friends had subsided, I went to examine the state of the garrison, and view the operations of the enemy, for which purpose the General accompanied me. I had brought a most excellent refracting telescope with me from London, purchased of Dollond, by the help of which I found the enemy were going to discharge a thirty-six pounder at the spot where we stood. I told the General what they were about; he looked through the glass also, and found my conjectures right. I immediately, by his permission, ordered a forty-eight pounder to be brought from a neighbouring battery, which I placed with so much exactness (having long studied the art of gunnery) that I was sure of my mark.

I continued watching the enemy till I saw the match placed at the touch-hole of their piece; at that very instant I gave the signal for our gun to be fired also.

About midway between the two pieces of cannon the balls struck each other with amazing force, and the effect was astonishing! The enemy's ball recoiled back with such violence as to kill the man who had discharged it, by carrying his head fairly off, with sixteen others which it met with in its progress to the Barbary coast, where its force, after passing through three masts of vessels that then lay in a line behind each other in the harbour, was so much spent, that it only broke its way through the roof of a poor labourer's hut, about two hundred yards inland, and destroyed a few teeth an old woman had left, who lay asleep upon her back with her mouth open. The ball lodged in her throat. Her husband soon after came home, and endeavoured to extract it; but finding that impracticable, by the assistance of a rammer he forced it into her stomach. Our ball did excellent service; for it not only repelled the other in the manner just described, but, proceeding as I intended it should, it dismounted the very piece of cannon that had just been employed against us, and forced it into the hold of the ship, where it fell with so much force as to break its way through the bottom. The ship immediately filled and sank, with above a thousand Spanish sailors on board, besides a considerable number of soldiers. This, to be sure, was a most extraordinary exploit; I will not, however, take the whole merit to myself; my judgment was the principal engine, but chance

assisted me a little; for I afterwards found, that the man who charged our forty-eight pounder put in, by mistake, a double quantity of powder, else we could never have succeeded so much beyond all expectation, especially in repelling the enemy's ball.

General Elliot would have given me a commission for this singular piece of service; but I declined everything, except his thanks, which I received at a crowded table of officers at supper on the evening of that very day.

As I am very partial to the English, who are beyond all doubt a brave people, I determined not to take my leave of the garrison till I had rendered them another piece of service, and in about three weeks an opportunity presented itself. I dressed myself in the habit of a *Popish priest*, and at about one o'clock in the morning stole out of the garrison, passed the enemy's lines, and arrived in the middle of their camp, where I entered the tent in which the Prince d'Artois was, with the commander-in-chief, and several other officers, in deep council, concerting a plan to storm the garrison next morning. My disguise was my protection; they suffered me to continue there, hearing everything that passed, till they went to their several beds. When I found the whole camp, and even the sentinels, were wrapped up in the arms of Morpheus, I began my work, which was that of dismounting all their cannon (above three hundred pieces), from forty-eight to twenty-four pounders, and throwing them three leagues into the sea. Having no assistance, I found this the hardest task I ever undertook, except swimming to the opposite shore with the famous Turkish piece of ordnance, described by Baron de Tott in his Memoirs, which I shall hereafter mention. I then piled all the carriages together in the centre of the camp, which, to prevent the noise of the wheels being heard, I carried in pairs under my arms; and a noble appearance they made, as high at least as the rock of Gibraltar. I then lighted a match by striking a flint stone, situated twenty feet from the ground (in an old wall built by the Moors when they invaded Spain), with the breech of an iron eight-and-forty pounder, and so set fire to the whole pile. I forgot to inform you that I threw all their ammunition-waggons upon the top.

Before I applied the lighted match I had laid the combustibles at the bottom so judiciously, that the whole was in a blaze in a moment. To prevent suspicion I was one of the first to express my surprise. The whole camp was, as you may imagine, petrified with astonishment: the general conclusion was, that their sentinels had been bribed, and that seven or eight regiments of the garrison had been employed in this horrid destruction of their artillery. Mr. Drinkwater, in his account of this famous siege, mentions the enemy sustaining a great loss by a fire which happened in their camp, but never knew the cause; how should he? as I never divulged it before (though I alone saved Gibraltar by this night's business), not even to General Elliot. The Count d'Artois and all his attendants ran away in their fright, and never stopped on the

road till they reached Paris, which they did in about a fortnight; this dreadful conflagration had such an effect upon them that they were incapable of taking the least refreshment for three months after, but, chameleon-like, lived upon the air.

If any gentleman will say he doubts the truth of this story, I will fine him a gallon of brandy and make him drink it at one draught.

About two months after I had done the besieged this service, one morning, as I sat at breakfast with General Elliot, a shell (for I had not time to destroy their mortars as well as their cannon) entered the apartment we were sitting in; it lodged upon our table: the General, as most men would do, quitted the room directly; but I took it up before it burst, and carried it to the top of the rock, when, looking over the enemy's camp, on an eminence near the sea-coast I observed a considerable number of people, but could not, with my naked eye, discover how they were employed. I had recourse again to my telescope, when I found that two of our officers, one a general, the other a colonel, with whom I spent the preceding evening, and who went out into the enemy's camp about midnight as spies, were taken, and then were actually going to be executed on a gibbet. I found the distance too great to throw the shell with my hand, but most fortunately recollecting that I had the very sling in my pocket which assisted David in slaying Goliath, I placed the shell in it, and immediately threw it in the midst of them: it burst as it fell, and destroyed all present, except the two culprits, who were saved by being suspended so high, for they were just turned off: however, one of the pieces of the shell fled with such force against the foot of the gibbet, that it immediately brought it down. Our two friends no sooner felt *terra firma* than they looked about for the cause; and finding their guards, executioner, and all, had taken it in their heads to die first, they directly extricated each other from their disgraceful cords, and then ran down to the sea-shore, seized a Spanish boat with two men in it, and made them row to one of our ships, which they did with great safety, and in a few minutes after, when I was relating to General Elliot how I had acted, they both took us by the hand, and after mutual congratulations we retired to spend the day with festivity.

CHAPTER XI

An interesting account of the Baron's ancestors – A quarrel relative to the spot where Noah built his ark – The history of the sling, and its properties – A favourite poet introduced upon no very reputable occasion – queen Elizabeth's abstinence – The Baron's father crosses from England to Holland upon a marine horse, which he sells for seven hundred ducats.

You wish (I can see by your countenances) I would inform you how I became possessed of such a treasure as the sling just mentioned. (Here facts must be held sacred.) Thus then it was: I am a descendant of the wife of Uriah, whom we all know David was intimate with; she had several children by his majesty; they quarrelled once upon a matter of the first consequence, viz., the spot where Noah's ark was built, and where it rested after the flood. A separation consequently ensued. She had often heard him speak of this sling as his most valuable treasure: this she stole the night they parted; it was missed before she got out of his dominions, and she was pursued by no less than six of the king's body-guards: however, by using it herself she hit the first of them (for one was more active in the pursuit than the rest) where David did Goliath, and killed him on the spot. His companions were so alarmed at his fall that they retired, and left Uriah's wife to pursue her journey. She took with her, I should have informed you before, her favourite son by this connection, to whom she bequeathed the sling; and thus it has, without interruption, descended from father to son till it came into my possession. One of its possessors, my great-great-great-grandfather, who lived about two hundred and fifty years ago, was upon a visit to England, and became intimate with a poet who was a great deer-stealer; I think his name was Shakespeare: he frequently borrowed this sling, and with it killed so much of Sir Thomas Lucy's venison, that he narrowly escaped the fate of my two friends at Gibraltar. Poor Shakespeare was imprisoned, and my ancestor obtained his freedom in a very singular manner. Queen Elizabeth was then on the throne, but grown so indolent, that every trifling matter was a trouble to her; dressing, undressing, eating, drinking, and some other offices which shall be nameless, made life a burden to her; all these things he enabled her to do without, or by a deputy! and what do you think was the only return she could prevail upon him to accept for such eminent services? setting Shakespeare at liberty! Such was his affection for that famous writer, that he would have shortened his own days to add to the number of his friend's.

I do not hear that any of the queen's subjects, particularly the _beef-eaters_, as they are vulgarly called to this day, however they might be struck with the novelty at the time, much approved of her living totally without food. She did not survive the practice herself above seven years and a half.

My father, who was the immediate possessor of this sling before me, told me the following anecdote: —

He was walking by the sea-shore at Harwich, with this sling in his pocket; before his paces had covered a mile he was attacked by a fierce animal called a seahorse, open-mouthed, who ran at him with great fury; he hesitated a moment, then took out his sling, retreated back about a hundred yards, stooped for a couple of pebbles, of which there were plenty under his feet, and slung them both so dexterously at the animal, that each stone put out an eye, and lodged in the cavities which their removal had occasioned. He now got upon his back, and drove him into the sea; for the moment he lost his sight he lost also ferocity, and became as tame as possible: the sling was placed as a bridle in his mouth; he was guided with the greatest facility across the ocean, and in less than three hours they both arrived on the opposite shore, which is about thirty leagues. The master of the *Three Cups*, at Helvoetsluys, in Holland, purchased this marine horse, to make an exhibition of, for seven hundred ducats, which was upwards of three hundred pounds, and the next day my father paid his passage back in the packet to Harwich.

— My father made several curious observations in this passage, which I will relate hereafter.

CHAPTER XII

The frolic; its consequences – Windsor Castle – St. Paul’s – College of Physicians – Undertakers, sextons, &c., almost ruined – Industry of the apothecaries.

THE FROLIC.

This famous sling makes the possessor equal to any task he is desirous of performing.

I made a balloon of such extensive dimensions, that an account of the silk it contained would exceed all credibility; every mercer’s shop and weaver’s stock in London, Westminster, and Spitalfields contributed to it: with this balloon and my sling I played many tricks, such as taking one house from its station, and placing another in its stead, without disturbing the inhabitants, who were generally asleep, or too much employed to observe the peregrinations of their habitations. When the sentinel at Windsor Castle heard St. Paul’s clock strike thirteen, it was through my dexterity; I brought the buildings nearly together that night, by placing the castle in St. George’s Fields, and carried it back again before daylight, without waking any of the inhabitants; notwithstanding these exploits, I should have kept my balloon, and its properties a secret, if Montgolfier had not made the art of flying so public.

On the 30th of September, when the College of Physicians chose their annual officers, and dined sumptuously together, I filled my balloon,

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