

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Now, Humphrey, what do you propose to do ? ”

“ This,” replied Humphrey: “ I have marked out three acres or thereabouts of the land running in a straight line behind the garden. There is not a tree on it, and it is all good feeding ground. What I intend to do is to enclose it with the spruce-fir posts and rails that we are about to cut down, and then set a hedge upon a low bank which I shall raise all round inside the rails. I know where there are thousands of seedling thorns, which I shall take up in the winter, or early in the spring, to put in, as the bank will be ready for them by that time.”

“ Well, that’s all very good ; but I fear it will be a long while before you have such a quantity of land dug up.”

“ Yes, of course it will ; but, Edward, I have plenty of manure to spare, and I shall put it over all this land, and then it will become a rich pasture, and also an earlier pasture than what we can get from the forest, and will be very handy to turn the cows and the calves upon, or even Billy if we want him in a hurry.”

“ All that is very true,” replied Edward, “ so that it will be useful at all events if you do not dig it up.”

“ Indeed it will,” replied Humphrey. “ I only wish it were six acres instead of three.”

“ I can’t say I do,” replied Edward, laughing. “ You

are too grand in your ideas. Only think what a quantity of spruces we shall have to cut down on it, to post and rail what you just propose. Let it be three acres first, Humphrey, and when they are enclosed you may begin to talk of three more."

"Well, perhaps you are right, Edward," said Humphrey. "Why, here's Pablo coming after us. He's not coming to work, I presume, but to amuse himself by looking on."

"I don't think he is strong enough to do much hard work, Humphrey, although he appears very ingenious."

"No; I agree with you: and if he is to work, depend upon it, it must not be by having work set out for him. He would take a disgust to it directly. I have another plan for him."

"And what is that, Humphrey?"

"I shall not set him anything to do, and shall make him believe that I do not think he is able to do anything. That will pique him, and I think by that means I shall get more work out of him than you would think, especially when, after he has done it, I express my wonder and give him praise."

"Not a bad idea that. You will work upon his pride, which is probably stronger than his laziness."

"I do not think him lazy, but I think him unused to hard work, and, having lived a life of wandering and idleness, not very easy to be brought to constant and daily work, except by degrees, and by the means which I propose. Here we are," continued Humphrey, throwing his axe and billhook down and proceeding to take off his doublet. "Now for an hour or two's fulfilment of the sentence of our first parents—to wit, 'the sweat of the brow.'"

Edward followed Humphrey's example in taking off his doublet. They selected the long thin trees most

fitted for rails, and were hard at work when Pablo came up to them. More than a dozen trees had fallen, and lay one upon the other, before they stopped a while to recover themselves a little.

"Well, Pablo," said Humphrey, wiping his forehead, "I suppose you think looking on better than cutting down trees; and so it is."

"What cut down trees for?"

"To make posts and rails to fence in more ground. I shall not leave the boughs on."

"No; cut them off by-and-by, and then put poles on the cart and carry them home."

Edward and Humphrey then recommenced their labour, and worked for another half-hour, when they paused to recover their wind.

"Hard work, Pablo," said Humphrey.

"Yes, very hard work; Pablo not strong enough."

"Oh no, you are not able to do anything of this kind, I know. No work this for gipsies: they take birds' nests and catch rabbits."

"Yes," replied Pablo, nodding, "and you eat them."

"So he does, Pablo," said Edward; "so you are useful in your way; for if he had nothing to eat he would not be able to work. Strong man cut down trees, weak man catch rabbits."

"Both good," said Pablo.

"Yes, but strong man like work; not strong man not like work, Pablo. So now look on again, for we must have another spell."

"Strong man cut down trees, not strong man cut off branches," said Pablo, taking up the billhook and setting to work to cut off the boughs, which he did with great dexterity and rapidity.

Edward and Humphrey exchanged glances and smiles, and then worked away in silence till it was, as they sup-

posed, dinner-time. They were not wrong in their supposition, although they had no other clock than their appetites, which, however, tell the time pretty correctly to those who work hard. Alice had the platters on the table, and was looking out to see if they were coming.

"Why, Pablo, have you been at work?" said Edith.

"Yes, little missy—work all the mornin'g."

"Indeed he has, and has worked very well, and been very useful," said Edward.

"It has given you an appetite for your dinner, Pablo, has it not?" said Humphrey.

"Have that without work," replied the boy.

"Pablo, you are a very good gipsy boy," said Edith, patting his head with a patronizing air. "I shall let you walk out with me and carry the basket to put the eggs in when you come home in the evening."

"That is a reward," said Humphrey, laughing.

After dinner they continued their labour, and by supper-time had so many trees cut down that they determined to carry home the next day, and lay them along, to see how many more they would want. While they put the trees in the cart and took them home, Pablo contrived to lop off the boughs and prepare the poles for them to take away. As soon as they had cut down sufficient and carted them home, they then selected shorter trees for posts; and when Pablo had cleared them of the boughs, they sawed them out the proper lengths, and then carted them home. This occupied nearly the whole week, and then they proceeded to dig holes and set the posts in. The railing was then to be nailed to the posts, and that occupied them three days more; so that it was altogether a fortnight of hard work before the three acres were enclosed.

"There," said Humphrey, "that's a good job over. Many thanks, Edward, for your assistance—and thank

you too, Pablo, for you really have helped us very much indeed, and are a very useful, good boy. Now for raising the bank—that I must do when I can spare time; but my garden is overrun with weeds, and I must get Edith and Alice to help me there.”

“If you don’t want me any longer, Humphrey,” said Edward, “I think I shall go over to see Oswald, and take Pablo with me. I want to know how that fellow Corbould is, and what he says; and whether the Intendant has come back—not that I shall go near him or his good little daughter, but I think I may as well go, and it will be a good opportunity of showing Pablo the way to Oswald’s cottage.”

“I think so too; and when you come back, Edward, one of us must go to Lymington; for I require some tools, and Pablo is very ragged. He must have better clothes than these old ones of ours if he is to be sent messages. Don’t you think so?”

“Certainly I do.”

“And I want a thousand things,” said Alice.

“Indeed, mistress, won’t less than a thousand content you?”

“Yes, perhaps not quite a thousand; but I really do want a great many, and I will make you a list of them. I have not pans enough for my milk; I want salt; I want tubs: but I will make out a list, and you will find it a very long one.”

“Well, I hope you have something to sell to pay for them?”

“Yes; I have plenty of butter salted down.”

“What have you, Edith?”

“Oh, my chickens are not large enough yet: as soon as they are, Humphrey must get me some ducks and geese, for I mean to keep some; and by-and-by I will have some turkeys, but not yet. I must wait till

Humphrey builds me the new house for them he has promised me."

"I think you are right, Edith, about the ducks and geese: they will do well on the water behind the yard, and I will dig you out a bigger pool for them."

"Edith, my dear, your little fingers are just made to weed my onions well, and I wish you would do it to-morrow morning, if you have time."

"Yes, Humphrey, but my little fingers won't smell very nice afterwards."

"Not till you have washed them, I guess; but there is soap and water, you know."

"Yes, I know there is. But if I weed the onions, I cannot help Alice to make the butter; however, if Alice can do without me, I will do it."

"I want some more seeds sadly," said Humphrey, "and I must make out my list. I must go to Lymington myself this time, Edward, for you will be puzzled with all our wants."

"Not if I know exactly what you do want; but as I really do not, and probably should make mistakes, I think it will be better if you do go. But it is bed-time, and as I shall start early, good-night, sisters. I beg you will let me have something to eat before I start. I shall try for some venison as I come back, and shall take Smoker with me. He is quite well again, and his ribs are as stout as ever."

"And, Edward," said Alice, "I wish, when you kill any venison, that you would bring home some of those parts which you usually throw away; for I assure you, now that we have three dogs, I hardly know how to find enough for them to eat."

"I'll not fail, Alice," replied Edward; "and now once more good-night."

Early the next morning Edward took his gun, and

with Pablo and Smoker set off for Oswald's cottage.

Edward talked a great deal with Pablo relative to his former life, and, by the answers which the boy gave him, was satisfied that, notwithstanding his doubtful way of bringing-up, the lad was not corrupted, but was a well-minded boy. As they walked through a grove of trees, Edward still talking, Pablo stopped and put his hand before Edward's mouth, and then stooping down, at the same time seizing Smoker by the neck, he pointed with his finger. Edward at first could see nothing, but eventually he made out the horns of an animal just rising above a hillock. It was evidently one of the wild cattle. Edward cocked his gun and advanced cautiously, while Pablo remained where he was, holding Smoker. As soon as he was near enough to hit the head of the animal, Edward levelled and fired, and Pablo let Smoker loose, who bounded forward over the hillock. They followed the dog, and found him about to seize a calf which stood by a heifer that Edward had shot. Edward called him over, and went up to the animal: it was a fine young heifer, and the calf was not more than a fortnight old.

"We cannot stop now, Pablo," said Edward. "Humphrey would like to have the calf, and we must take our chance of its remaining by its mother till we come back. I think it will for a day or two, so let us push on."

No further adventure happened, and they arrived a little after noon at Oswald's cottage. He was not at home, his wife saying that she believed that he was with the Intendant, who had come back from London the day before.

"But I will put on my hood and see," said the young woman.

In a few minutes she returned with Oswald.

"I am glad that you have come, sir," said Oswald, as Edward extended his hand, "as I have just seen the Intendant, and he has been asking many questions about you. I am certain he thinks that you are not the grandson of Jacob Armitage, and that he supposes I know who you are. He asked me where your cottage was, and whether I could not take him to it, as he wished to speak to you, and said that he felt great interest about you."

"And what did you say?"

"I said that your cottage was a good day's journey from here, and I was not certain that I knew the exact way, as I had been there but seldom; but that I knew where to find it after I saw the forests of Arnwood. I told him about Corbould and his attempt upon you, and he was very wroth. I never saw him moved before; and young Mistress Patience, she was indeed angry and perplexed, and begged her father to send the assailant away as soon as he could be moved.

"Master Heatherstone replied, 'Leave it to me, my dear,' and then asked me what account Corbould gave of himself and his falling into the pit. I told him that Corbould stated that he was following a deer, which he had severely wounded about noonday, and having no dog with him he could not overtake it, although he knew by its bleeding track that it could not hold out much longer; that he followed it until nightfall, and had it in view and close to him, when he fell into the pit."

"Well, the story was not badly made up," said Edward, "only for a *stag head man*. And what did the Intendant say to that?"

"He said that he believed you, and that Corbould's story was false, as, if it had been a stag that he was following, no one would have known that he had fallen

into the pit, and he would have remained there till now. I quite forgot to say that when the Intendant said that he wished to call at your cottage, the young mistress said that she would go with him, as you had told her that you had two sisters living with you, and she wished very much to see them and make their acquaintance."

"I am afraid that we shall not be able to prevent this visit, Oswald," replied Edward. "He is in command here, and the forest is in his charge. We must see to it. I only should like, if possible, to have notice of his coming; that we may be prepared."

"You need no preparation, sir, if he should come," replied Oswald.

"Very true," said Edward—"we have nothing to conceal; and if he finds us in a pickle, it is of no consequence."

"Rather the better, sir," replied Oswald. "Let your sisters be at the wash-tub, and you and your brother carting manure; he will then be more likely to have no suspicion of your being otherwise than what you assume to be."

"Have you heard any news from London, Oswald?"

"Not as yet. I was away yesterday evening, when Master Heatherstone came back, and I have not seen his man this morning. While you eat your dinner I will go into the kitchen; and if he is not there, Phœbe will be sure to tell me all that she has heard."

"Do not say that I am here, Oswald, as I do not wish to see the Intendant."

"Mum's the word, sir; but you must stay in the cottage, or others will see you, and it may come to his ears."

Oswald's wife then put before him a large pie and some wheaten bread, with a biggin of good beer. Ed-

ward helped Pablo to a large allowance, and then filled his own platter. While thus occupied, Oswald Partridge had left the cottage as agreed.

“What do you say, Pablo? Do you think you can walk back to-night?”

“Yes. Like walking at night. My people always do; sleep in the daytime.”

“Well, I think it will be better to go home. Oswald has only one bed, and I do not wish them to know that I am here; so, Pablo, eat heartily, and then we shall not be so tired. I want to get home, that I may send Humphrey after the calf.”

“One bed here; you stay,” replied Pablo. “I go home, and tell Master Humphrey.”

“Do you think you would be able to find your way, Pablo?”

“Once go one way, always know same way again.”

“You are a clever fellow, Pablo, and I have a mind to try you. Now drink some beer. I think, Pablo, you shall go home, and tell Humphrey that I and Smoker will be where the heifer lies dead, and have it skinned by nine o'clock to-morrow morning; so if he comes he will find me there.”

“Yes, I go now.”

“No, not now; you must rest yourself a little more.”

“Pablo not tired,” replied the gipsy, getting up; “be back before supper. As I go along, look at calf and dead cow—see if calf stay with mother.”

“Very well then, if you wish it you may go now,” said Edward.

Pablo nodded his head, and disappeared.

A few minutes afterwards Oswald made his appearance.

“Is the boy gone?”

“Yes; he is gone back to the cottage,” and Edward

then stated how he had killed the heifer, and wanted to obtain the calf.

"I've an idea that you will find that boy very useful if he is properly managed."

"I think so too," replied Edward; "and I am glad to perceive that he is already attached to all of us. We treat him as ourselves."

"You are right. And now for the news that I have to tell you. The Duke Hamilton, the Earl of Holland, and Lord Capel have been tried, condemned, and executed."

Edward sighed. "More murder! But we must expect it from those who have murdered their King. Is that all?"

"No. King Charles the Second has been proclaimed in Scotland, and invited to come over."

"That is indeed news," replied Edward. "Where is he now?"

"At the Hague; but it was said that he was going to Paris."

"That is all that you have heard?"

"Yes; that was what was current when Master Heatherstone was in town. His man Samson gave me the news; and he further said 'that his master's journey to London was to oppose the execution of the three lords, but it was all in vain.'"

"Well," replied Edward, after a pause, "if the King does come over, there will be some work cut out for some of us, I expect. Your news has put me in a fever," continued Edward, taking up the biggin and drinking a large draught of beer.

"I thought it would," replied Oswald; "but until the time comes, the more quiet you keep the better."

"Yes, Oswald. But I can't talk any more; I must be left alone to think. I will go to bed, as I shall be

off early in the morning. Is that fellow Corbould getting well ? ”

“ Yes, sir : he is out of bed, and walks a little with a stick ; but he is still very lame, and will be for some time.”

“ Good-night, Oswald ; if I have anything to say, I will write and send the boy. I do not want to be seen here any more.”

“ It will be best, sir. Good-night. I will put Smoker in the kennel to the right, as he will not be friendly with the other dogs.”

Edward retired to bed, but not to sleep. The Scots had proclaimed the King, and invited him over. “ He will surely come,” thought Edward, “ and he will have an army round him as soon as he lands.” Edward made up his resolution to join the army as soon as he had heard that the King had landed ; and what with considering how he should be able so to do, and afterwards building castles as to what he would do, it was long before he fell asleep ; and when he did, he dreamt of battles and victory : he was charging at the head of his troops ; he was surrounded by the dying and the dead ; he was wounded, and he was somehow or another well again, as it by magic. And then the scene was changed, and he was rescuing Patience Heatherstone from his own lawless men, and preserving the life of her father, which was about to be sacrificed. And at last he awoke and found that the daylight peeped through the windows, and that he had slept longer than he intended to do. He arose and dressed himself quickly, and not waiting for breakfast, went to the kennel, released Smoker from his durance, and set off on his return.

Before nine o'clock he had arrived at the spot where the heifer lay dead. He found the calf still by its side, bleating and walking round uneasily. As he approached

with the dog it went to a farther distance, and there remained. Edward took out his knife, and commenced skinning the heifer, and then took out the inside. The animal was quite fresh and good, but not very fat, as may be supposed. While thus occupied Smoker growled and then sprang forward, bounding away in the direction of the cottage, and Edward thought Humphrey was at hand. In a few minutes the pony and cart appeared between the trees, with Humphrey and Pablo in it, and Smoker leaping up at his friend Billy.

"Good-morning, Humphrey," said Edward. "I am almost ready for you; but the question is, how are we to take the calf? It is as wild as a deer."

"It will be a puzzler, without Smoker can run it down," said Humphrey.

"I take him with Smoker," said Pablo.

"How will you take it, Pablo?"

Pablo went to the cart, and took out a long small cord which Humphrey had brought with them, and made a noose at one end; he coiled the rope in his hand, and then threw it out to its full length, by way of trial. "This way I take him, suppose I get near enough. This way take bulls in Spain—call him lasso. Now come with me." Pablo had his rope again coiled in his hand, and then went round to the other side of the calf, which still remained lowing at about two hundred yards' distance.

"Now tell Smoker," cried Pablo.

Humphrey set Smoker upon the calf, which retreated from the dog, presenting his head to run at it; and Pablo kept behind the animal, while Smoker attacked it, and drove it near to him.

As soon as the calf, which was so busy with the dog that it did not perceive Pablo, came sufficiently near to him, Pablo threw his rope, and caught the loop

round the animal's neck. The calf set off galloping towards Humphrey, and dragging Pablo after him, for the latter was not strong enough to hold it.

Humphrey went to his assistance, and then Edward, and the calf was thrown down by Smoker, who seized it by the neck, and it was tied and put on the cart in a few minutes.

"Well done, Pablo! You are a clever fellow," said Edward, "and this calf shall be yours."

"It is a cow calf," said Humphrey, "which I am glad of.—Pablo, you did that well, and, as Edward says, the calf belongs to you."

Pablo looked pleased, but said nothing.

The meat and hide were put into the cart with some of the offal which Alice had asked for the dogs, and they set off on their return home.

Humphrey was very anxious to go to Lymington, and was not sorry that he had some meat to take with him. He determined to get off the next morning; and Edward proposed that he should take Pablo with him, that he might know the way there in case of any emergency, for they both felt that Pablo could be trusted. Edward said he would remain at home with his sisters, and see if he could be of any use to Alice; if not, there would be work in the garden. Humphrey and Pablo went away after breakfast, with Billy, and the meat and skin of the heifer in the cart. Humphrey had also a large basket of eggs, and three dozen of chickens from Alice, to be disposed of, and a list, as long as the tail of a kite, of articles which she and Edith required. Fortunately there was nothing very expensive on the list, long as it was; but women in those days required needles, pins, buttons, tapes, thread, worsted, and a hundred other little necessaries, as they do now. As soon as they were gone Edward, who was still castle-building instead of

offering his services to Alice, brought out his father's sword and commenced cleaning it. When he had polished it up to his satisfaction he felt less inclined than ever to do anything; so after dinner he took his gun and walked out into the forest, that he might indulge in his reveries. He walked on, quite unconscious of the direction in which he was going, and more than once finding his hat knocked off his head by the branch of a tree which he had not perceived—for the best of all possible reasons, because his eyes were cast on the ground—when his ears were saluted with the neighing of a horse. He looked up, and perceived that he was near to a herd of forest ponies, the first that he had seen since he had lived in the forest.

This roused him, and he looked about him. "Where can I have been wandering to?" thought Edward. "I never fell in with any of the forest ponies before; I must therefore have walked in a direction quite contrary to what I usually do. I do not know where I am; the scenery is new to me. What a fool I am! It's lucky that nobody except Humphrey digs pitfalls, or I should probably have been in one by this time; and I've brought out my gun and left the dog at home. Well, I suppose I can find my way back." Edward then surveyed the whole herd of ponies, which were at no great distance from him. There was a fine horse or two among them, which appeared to be the leaders of the herd. They allowed Edward to approach to within two hundred yards, and then, with manes and tails streaming in the air, they darted off with the rapidity of the wind.

"Now I'll puzzle Humphrey when I go back," thought Edward. "He says that Billy is getting old, and that he wishes he could get another pony. I will tell him what a plenty there are, and propose that he should

invent some way of catching one. That will be a poser for him; yet I'm sure that he'll try, for he is very ingenious. And now which way am I to turn to find my way home? I think it ought to be to the north; but which is north? for there is no sun out, and now I perceive it looks very like rain. I wonder how long I have been walking! I'm sure I don't know." Edward then hurried in a direction which he considered might lead him homeward, and walked fast; but he once more fell into his habit of castle-building, and was talking to himself: "The King proclaimed in Scotland! He will come over of course. I will join his army, and then——" Thus he went on, again absorbed in the news which he had gained from Oswald, till on a sudden he again recollected himself, and perceived that he had lost sight of the copse of trees on a high hill, to which he had been directing his steps. Where was it? He turned round and round, and at last found out that he had been walking away from it. "I must dream no more," thought he; "or if I do indulge in any more day-dreams, I certainly shall neither sleep nor dream to-night. It is getting dark already, and here am I lost in the forest, and all through my own foolishness. If the stars do not shine, I shall not know how to direct my steps; indeed, if they do, I don't know whether I have walked south or north, and I am in a pretty pickle—not that I care for being out in the forest on a night like this; but my sisters and Humphrey will be alarmed at my absence. The best thing I can do is to decide upon taking some straight line, and continue in it. I must then get out of the forest at last, even if I walk right across it. That will be better than going backwards and forwards, or round and round, as I otherwise shall do, just like a puppy running after its own tail. So now shine out, stars!" Edward waited

until he could make out Charles's Wain, which he well knew, and then the Polar Star. As soon as he was certain of that, he resolved to travel by it due north, and he did so, sometimes walking fast, and at others keeping up a steady trot for half a mile without stopping. As he was proceeding on his travels he observed under some trees ahead of him a spark of fire emitted. He thought it was a glowworm at first, but it was more like the striking of a flint against steel; and as he saw it a second time, he stopped that he might ascertain what it might be before he advanced further.