

# Th Wind in th Wiloes

(moderniezd orthografy)

**Grahame, Kenneth**

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**Grahame, Kenneth**

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**Kenneth Grahame**

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June 1995 corrector Kelly Tetterton added header and minimal TEI tagging; changed Keller's italics references to conform to TEI tagging; I have not dealt with Kellers' {sic} marks or some of what appeared to be misspellings because the library text is a later printing; removed unambiguous line-end hyphenation

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Final checking: David Seaman

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# TH WIND IN TH WILOES

BY KENNETH GRAHAME,  
AUTHOR OF  
"TH GOELDEN AEJ," "DREEM DAES," ETS.

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
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# Chapter 1

## I

### TH RIVER BANK

TH Moel had bin wurking verry hard all th morning, spring-cleening his litl hoem. Furst with brooms, then with dusters; then on laders and steps and chaers, with a brush and a pael of whietwosh; til he had dust in his throet and ies, and splashes of whietwosh all oever his blak fur, and an aeking bak and weery arms. Spring wuz mooving in th aer abuv and in th urth beloe and around him, penetraeting eeven his dark and loely litl hous with its spirit of divien discontent and longing. It wuz smaul wunder, then, that he sudenly flung doun his brush on th flor, sed 'Bother!'

and 'O blo!' and aulso 'Hang spring-cleening!' and boelted out of th hous without eeven waeting to puut on his coet. Sumthing up abuv wuz cauling him impeeriusly, and he maed for th steep litl tunel which anserd in his caess to th graveld carrej-driev oend bi animals hoos rezidenses ar neerer to th sun and aer. So he scraept and scracht and scrabld and scroojd and then he scroojd agen and scrabld and scracht and scraept, wurking bizily with his litl paws and mutering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' til at last, pop! his snout caem out into th sunliet, and he found himself roeling in th worm gras of a graet medo.

'This is fien!' he sed to himself. 'This is beter than whietwoshing!' Th sunshien struk hot on his fur, soft breezes carest his heeted brow, and after th secloozhon of th selarej he had livd in so long th carrol of hapy burds fel on his duld heering aulmoest liek a shout. Jumping off all his foer legs at wunss, in th joy of living and th deliet of spring without its cleening, he persood his wae acros th medo til he reecht th hej on th further sied.

‘Hoeld up!’ sed an elderly rabit at th gap. ‘Sixpenss for th privilej of pasing bi th prievat roed!’ He wuz boeld oever in an instant bi th impaeshent and contempchu’us Moel, hoo troted along th sied of th hej chafing th uther rabits as thae peep hurdydly from thaer hoels to see whot th row wuz about. ‘Unyon-saus! Unyon-saus!’ he remarkt jeeringly, and wuz gon befor thae cuud think of a thuroely satisfaktory replie. Then thae all started grumbling at eech uther. ‘How *stupid* U ar! Whi didn’t *U* tel him -- --’ ‘Wel, whi didn’t *U* sae -- --’ ‘*U* miet hav remiended him -- --’ and so on, in th uezhual wae; but, of corss, it wuz then much too laet, as is aulwaes th caess.

It all seemd too guud to be troo. Hither and thither thru th medoes he rambld bizily, along th hejroes, acros th copsis, fiending evrywhaer burds bilding, flowers buding, leevs thrusting -- evrything hapy, and progresiv, and ocuepied. And insted of having an uneozy conshenss priking him and whispering ‘whietwosh!’ he sumhow cuud oenly feel how joly it wuz to be th oenly iedl dog amung all thees bizy sitizens. After all,

th best part of a holidae is perhaps not so much to be resting yuurfself, as to see all th uther feloes bizy wurking.

He thaut his hapynes wuz compleet when, as he meanderd aemlesly along, sudenly he stuuud bi th ej of a fuul-fed river. Never in his lief had he seen a river befor -- this sleek, sinueus, fuul-bodyd animal, chaesing and chukling, griping things with a gurgl and leeving them with a laf, to fling itself on fresh plaemaets that shuuk themselvs free, and wer caut and held agen. All wuz a-shaek and a-shiver -- glints and gleems and sparkls, rusl and swirl, chater and bubl. Th Moel wuz bewicht, entranst, fasinaeted. Bi th sied of th river he troted as wun trots, when verry smaul, bi th sied of a man hoo hoelds wun spel-bound bi exsieting storys; and when tierd at last, he sat on th bank, whiel th river stil chaterd on to him, a babling proseshon of th best storys in th wurld, sent from th hart of th urch to be toeld at last to th insaeshabl see.

As he sat on th gras and luukt acros th river, a dark hoel in th bank oposit, just abuv th wauter's ej, caut his ie, and

dreemily he fel to considering whot a niess snug dweling-plaess it wuud maek for an animal with fue wonts and fond of a bieoo riversied rezidenss, abuv flud level and remoet from noiz and dust. As he gaezd, sumthing briet and smaul seemd to twinkl doun in th hart of it, vanisht, then twinkld wunss mor liek a tieny star. But it cuud hardly be a star in such an unliekly sichuaeshon; and it wuz too glitering and smaul for a glo-wurm. Then, as he luukt, it winkt at him, and so declaerd itself to be an ie; and a smaul faess began grajually to gro up round it, liek a fraem round a pikcher.

A broun litl faess, with whiskers.

A graev round faess, with th saem twinkl in its ie that had furst atrakted his noetis.

Smaul neet eers and thik silky haer.

It wuz th Wauter Rat!

Then th too animals stuud and regarded eech uther caushusly.

'Hulo, Moel!' sed th Wauter Rat.

'Hulo, Rat!' sed th Moel.

'Wuud U liek to cum oever?' enqierd th Rat prezently.

'O, its all verry wel to *tauk*,' sed th Moel,

rather petishly, he being nue to a river and riversied lief and its waes.

Th Rat sed nuthing, but stoopt and unfasend a roep and hauld on it; then lietly stept into a litl boet which th Moel had not obzurvd. It wuz paented bloo outsied and whiet within, and wuz just th siez for too animals; and th Moel's hoel hart went out to it at wunss, eeven tho he did not yet fuuly understand its uses.

Th Rat sculd smartly acros and maed fast. Then he held up his forpaw as th Moel stept jinjerly doun. 'Leen on that!' he sed. 'Now then, step lievly!' and th Moel to his serpriez and rapcher found himself akchualy seeted in th sturn of a reeal boet.

'This has bin a wunderful dae!' sed he, as th Rat shuvd off and tuuk to th sculs agen. 'Do U noe, I've never bin in a boet befor in all mi lief!'

'Whot?' cried th Rat, oopen-mouthd: 'Never bin in a -- U never -- wel I -- whot hav U bin doing, then?'

'Is it so niess as all that?' askt th Moel shiely, tho he wuz qiet prepaerd to beleev it as he lent bak in his seet and servaed th

cuushons, th ors, th roeloks, and all th fasinaeting fitings, and felt th boet swae lietly under him.

‘Niess? It’s th *oenly* thing,’ sed th Wauter Rat solemly, as he lent forward for his stroek. ‘Beleev me, mi yung frend, thaer is *nuthing* -- absoloot *nuthing* -- haf so much wurth doing as simply mesing about in boets. Simply mesing,’ he went on dreemily: ‘mesing -- about -- in -- boets; mesing -- -- -- ’

‘Luuk ahed, Rat!’ cried th Moel sudenly.

It wuz too laet. Th boet struk th bank fuul tilt. Th dreemer, th joyus orzman, lae on his bak at th botom of th boet, his heels in th aer.

‘ -- about in boets -- or *with* boets,’ th Rat went on compoezedly, piking himself up with a plezant laf. ‘In or out of ‘em, it duzn’t mater. Nuthing seems reealy to mater, that’s th charm of it. Whether U get awae, or whether U doen’t; whether U ariev at yuur destinaeshon or whether U reech sumwhaer elss, or whether U never get enywhaer at all, U'r aulwaes bizy, and U never do enything in particuelar; and when U've dun it thaer's aulwaes sumthing elss to do, and U can do

it if U liek, but U'd much better not. Luuk heer! If U'v reealy nuthing elss on hand this morning, supoezing we drop doun th river together, and hav a long dae of it?"

Th Moel wagld his toes from sheer hapynes, spred his chest with a sie of fuul contentment, and leend bak blisfuly into th soft cuushons. 'Whot a dae I'm having!' he sed. 'Let us start at wunss!'

'Hoeld hard a minit, then!' sed th Rat. He loopt th paenter thru a ring in his landing-staej, cliemd up into his hoel abuv, and after a short interval reapeerd stagering under a fat, wiker lunchon-basket.

'Shuv that under yuur feet,' he obzurvd to th Moel, as he past it doun into th boet. Then he untied th paenter and tuuk th sculs agen.

'Whot's insied it?' askt th Moel, rigling with cueriosity.

'Thaer's coeld chiken insied it,' replied th Rat breefly;  
'coeldtungcoeldhamcoeldbeefpikldgurkinssaladfrenchroelscressan  
dwichespotedmeetjinjerbeerlemonaedsoedawauter -- -- '

'O stop, stop,' cried th Moel in ekstasys: 'This is too much!'

'Do U reealy think so?' enqierd th Rat seeriusly. 'It's oenly whot I aulwaes taek on thees litl excurzhons; and th uther animals ar aulwaes teling me that I'm a meen beest and cut it *verry* fien!'

Th Moel never hurd a wurd he wuz saeing. Absorbd in th nue lief he wuz entering upon, intoxicaeted with th sparkl, th ripl, th sents and th sounds and th sunliet, he traeld a paw in th wauter and dreemd long waeking dreems. Th Wauter Rat, liek th guud litl felo he wuz, sculd stedily on and forboer to disturb him.

'I liek yuur cloeths awfully, oeld chap,' he remarkt after sum haf an our or so had past. 'I'm going to get a blak velvet smoeking-soot mieself sum dae, as soon as I can aford it.'

'I beg yuur pardon,' sed th Moel, puuling himself together with an efort. 'U must think me verry rood; but all this is so nue to me. So -- this -- is -- a -- River!'

'*Th* River,' corekted th Rat.

'And U reealy liv bi th river? Whot a joly lief!'

'Bi it and with it and on it and in it,' sed

th Rat. 'It's bruther and sister to me, and aunts, and cumpany, and food and drink, and (nacheraly) woshing. It's mi wurld, and I doen't wont eny uther. Whot it hasn't got is not wurth having, and whot it duzn't noe is not wurth noeing. Lord! th tiems we've had together! Whether in winter or sumer, spring or autum, it's aulwaes got its fun and its exsietments. When th fluds ar on in Februaery, and mi selars and baesment ar briming with drink that's no guud to me, and th broun wauter runs bi mi best bedroom windo; or agen when it all drops awae and, shoes paches of mud that smels liek plum-caek, and th rushes and weed clog th chanels, and I can poter about dri shod oever moest of th bed of it and fiend fresh food to eet, and things caerles peepl hav dropt out of boets!'

'But isn't it a bit dul at tiems?' th Moel vencherd to ask. 'Just U and th river, and no wun elss to pas a wurd with?'

'No wun elss to -- wel, I mustn't be hard on U,' sed th Rat with forbaeranss. 'U'r nue to it, and of corss U doen't noe. Th bank is so crowded now-a-daes that meny peepl ar mooving awae aultogether: O no, it

isn't whot it uezd to be, at all. Oters, kingfishers, dabchiks, muurhens, all of them about all dae long and aulwaes wonting U to *do* sumthing -- as if a felo had no biznes of his oen to atend to!"

'Whot lies oever *thaer*?' askt th Moel, waeving a paw tords a bakground of wuudland that darkly fraemd th wauter-medoes on wun sied of th river.

'That? O, that's just th Wield Wuud,' sed th Rat shortly. 'We doen't go *thaer* verry much, we river-bankers.'

'Arn't thae -- arn't thae verry *niess* peopl in *thaer*?' sed th Moel, a triefl nurvusly.

'W-e-l,' replied th Rat, 'let me see. Th squarels ar all riet. And th rabits -- sum of 'em, but rabits ar a mixt lot. And then *thaer*'s Bajer, of corss. He livs riet in th hart of it; wuudn't liv enywhaer elss, eether, if U paed him to do it. Deer oeld Bajer! Nobody interfeers with *him*. Thae'd beter not,' he aded significantly.

'Whi, hoo *shuud* interfeer with him?' askt th Moel.

'Wel, of corss -- *thaer* -- ar uthers,' explaend th Rat in a hezitaeting sort of wae.

‘Weezels -- and stoets -- and foxes -- and so on. Thae'r all riet in a wae -- I'm verry guud frends with them -- pas th tiem of dae when we meet, and all that -- but thae braek out sumtiems, thaer's no denieing it, and then -- wel, U can't reealy trust them, and that's th fakt.’

Th Moel nue wel that it is qiet agenst animal-etiket to dwel on posibl trubl ahed, or eeven to alood to it; so he dropt th subjekt.

‘And beyond th Wield Wuud agen?’ he askt: ‘Whaer it's all bloo and dim, and wun sees whot mae be hils or perhaps thae maen’t, and sumthing liek th smoek of touns, or is it oenly cloud-drift?’

‘Beyond th Wield Wuud cums th Wied Wurld,’ sed th Rat. ‘And that's sumthing that duzn't mater, eether to U or me. I've never bin thaer, and I'm never going, nor U eether, if U've got eny senss at all. Doen’t ever refur to it agen, pleez. Now then! Heer's our bakwauter at last, whaer we'r going to lunch.’

Leevинг th maen streem, thae now past into whot seemd at furst siet liek a litl land-

lokt laek. Green turf sloped doun to eether ej, broun snaeky tree-roots gleemd beloe th surfis of th qieet wauter, whiel ahed of them th silvery shoelder and foemy tumbl of a weer, arm-in-arm with a restles dripping mil-wheel, that held up in its turn a grae-gaeblt mil-hous, fild th aer with a soothing murmer of sound, dul and smuthery, yet with litl cleer voises speeking up cheerfully out of it at intervals. It wuz so verry buetyful that th Moel cuud oenly hoeld up boeth forpaws and gasp, 'O mi! O mi! O mi!'

Th Rat braut th boet alongsied th bank, maed her fast, helpt th stil aukward Moel saefly ashore, and swung out th lunchon-basket. Th Moel begd as a faevor to be alowd to unpak it all bi himself; and th Rat wuz verry pleezd to indulj him, and to spraul at fuul length on th gras and rest, whiel his exsieted frend shuuk out th taebel-clauth and spred it, tuuk out all th misterius pakets wun bi wun and araenjd thaer contents in due order, stil gasping, 'O mi! O mi!' at eech fresh revelaeshon. When all wuz redy, th Rat sed, 'Now, pich in, oeld felo!' and th Moel wuz indeed verry glad to oebae, for he had

started his spring-cleening at a verry urly our that morning, as peopl *wil* do, and had not pauzd for biet or sup; and he had bin thru a verry graet deel sinss that distant tiem which now seemd so meny daes ago.

'Whot ar U luuking at?' sed th Rat prezently, when th ej of thaer hunger wuz sumwhot duld, and th Moel's ies wer aeb'l to wonder off th taebl-clauth a litl.

'I am luuking,' sed th Moel, 'at a streek of bubls that I see traveling along th surfis of th wauter. That is a thing that strieks me as funy.'

'Bubls? Oeho!' sed th Rat, and chirupt cheerily in an invieting sort of wae.

A braud glisening muzl shoed itself abuv th ej of th bank, and th Oter hauld himself out and shuuk th wauter from his coet.

'Greedy begars!' he obzurvd, maeking for th provender. 'Whi didn't U inviet me, Raty?'

'This wuz an impromptoo afær,' explaend th Rat. 'Bi th wae -- mi frend Mr. Moel.'

'Proud, I'm shuur,' sed th Oter, and th too animals wer frends forthwith.

‘Such a rumpus evrywhaer!’ continued th Oter. ‘All th wurld seems out on th river to-dae. I caem up this bakwauter to tri and get a moment’s peess, and then stumbl upon U feloes! -- At leest -- I beg pardon -- I doen’t exaktly meen that, U noe.’

Thaer wuz a rusl behiend them, proseeding from a hej whaerin last yeer’s leevs stil clung thik, and a striepy hed, with hie shoelders behiend it, peerd forth on them.

‘Cum on, oeld Bajer!’ shouted th Rat.

Th Bajer troted forward a paess or too; then grunted, ‘H’m! Cumpany,’ and turnd his bak and disapeerd from vue.

‘That’s *just* th sort of felo he is!’ obzurvd th disapointed Rat. ‘Simply haets Sosieety! Now we shan’t see eny mor of him to-dae. Wel, tel us, *hoo*’s out on th river?’

‘Toed’s out, for wun,’ replied th Oter. ‘In his brand-nue waejer-boet; nue togs, nue evrything!’

Th too animals luukt at eech uther and laft.

‘Wunss, it wuz nuthing but saeling,’ sed th Rat, ‘Then he tierd of that and tuuk to punting.

Nuthing wuud pleez him but to punt all dae and evry dae, and a niess mes he maed of it. Last yeer it wuz hous-boeting, and we all had to go and stae with him in his hous-boet, and pretend we liekt it. He wuz going to spend th rest of his lief in a hous-boet. It's all th saem, whotever he taeks up; he gets tierd of it, and starts on sumthing fresh.'

'Such a guud felo, too,' remarkt th Oter reflektivly: 'But no staebility -- espeshaly in a boet!'

From whaer thaer sat thaer cuud get a glimps of th maen streem acros th ieland that separaeted them; and just then a waejer-boet flasht into vue, th roeer -- a short, stout figuer -- splashing badly and roeling a guud deel, but wurking his hardest. Th Rat stuu'd up and haeld him, but Toed -- for it wuz he -- shuuk his hed and setld sturnly to his wurk.

'He'l be out of th boet in a minit if he roels liek that,' sed th Rat, siting doun agen.

'Of corss he wil,' chukld th Oter. 'Did I ever tel U that guud story about Toed and th lok-keeper? It hapend this wae. Toed. . . .'

An errant Mae-fli swurvd unstedily

athwort th curent in th intoxicaeted fashon afekted bi yung bluds of Mae-flies seeing lief. A swirl of wauter and a 'cloop!' and th Mae-fli wuz vizibl no mor.

Neether wuz th Oter.

Th Moel luukt doun. Th vois wuz stil in his eers, but th turf whaeron he had sprauld wuz cleerly vaecant. Not an Oter to be seen, as far as th distant horiezon.

But agen thaer wuz a streek of bubls on th surfis of th river.

Th Rat humd a tuen, and th Moel recolekted that animal-etiket forbaed eny sort of coment on th suden disapeeranss of wun's frends at eny moement, for eny reezon or no reezon whotever.

'Wel, wel,' sed th Rat, 'I supoez we aut to be mooving. I wunder which of us had beter pak th lunchon-basket?' He did not speek as if he wuz frietfully eeger for th treet.

'O, pleez let me,' sed th Moel. So, of corss, th Rat let him.

Paking th basket wuz not qiet such plezant wurk as unpaking' th basket. It never is. But th Moel wuz bent on enjoying

evrything, and aultho just when he had got th basket pakt and strapt up tietyl he saw a plaet staering up at him from th gras, and when th job had bin dun agen th Rat pointed out a fork which enybody aut to hav seen, and last of all, behoeld! th mustard pot, which he had bin siting on without noeing it -- stil, sumhow, th thing got finisht at last, without much los of temper.

Th afternoon sun wuz geting loe as th Rat sculd jently hoemwards in a dreemy mood, murmering poeetry-things oever to himself, and not paeing much atenshon to Moel. But th Moel wuz verry fuul of lunch, and self-satisfakshon, and pried, and aulredy qiet at hoem in a boet (so he thaut) and wuz geting a bit restles besieds: and prezently he sed, 'Raty! Pleez, I wont to roe, now!'

Th Rat shuuk his hed with a smiel. 'Not yet, mi yung frend,' he sed -- 'waet til U'v had a fue lesions. It's not so eezy as it luuks.'

Th Moel wuz qieet for a minit or too. But he began to feel mor and mor jelus of Rat, sculing so strongly and so eezily along, and his pried began to whisper that he cuud do it evry bit as wel. He jumpt up and

seezd th sculs, so sudenly, that th Rat, hoo wuz gaezing out oever th wauter and saeing mor poetry-things to himself, wuz taeken bi serpierz and fel bakwards off his seet with his legs in th aer for th second tiem, whiel th triumfant Moel tuuk his plaess and grabd th sculs with entier confidenss.

'Stop it, U *sily* ass!' cried th Rat, from th botom of th boet. 'U can't do it! U'l hav us oever!'

Th Moel flung his sculs bak with a flurish, and maed a graet dig at th wauter. He mist th surfis aultogether, his legs floo up abuv his hed, and he found himself lieing on th top of th prostraet Rat. Graetly alarmd, he maed a grab at th sied of th boet, and th next moement -- Sploosh!

Oever went th boet, and he found himself strugling in th river.

O mi, how coeld th wauter wuz, and O, how *verry* wet it felt. How it sang in his eers as he went doun, doun, doun! How briet and welcum th sun luukt as he roez to th surfis caufing and splutering! How blak wuz his despaer when he felt himself sinking agen! Then a furm paw gript him bi th

bak of his nek. It wuz th Rat, and he wuz evidently lafing -- th Moel cuud *feel* him lafing, riet doun his arm and thru his paw, and so into his -- th Moel's -- nek.

Th Rat got hoeld of a scul and shuvd it under th Moel's arm; then he did th saem bi th uther sied of him and, swiming behiend, propeld th helples animal to shor, hauld him out, and set him doun on th bank, a sqoshy, pulpy lump of mizery.

When th Rat had rubd him doun a bit, and rung sum of th wet out of him, he sed, 'Now, then, oeld felo! Trot up and doun th toeing-path as hard as U can, til U'r worm and dri agen, whiel I diev for th lunchon-basket.'

So th dizmal Moel, wet without and ashaemd within, troted about til he wuz faerly dri, whiel th Rat plunjd into th wauter agen, recuverd th boet, rieted her and maed her fast, fecht his floeting property to shor bi degrees, and fiendly dievd suksesfuly for th lunchon-basket and strugld to land with it.

When all wuz redy for a start wunss mor, th Moel, limp and dejekted, tuuk his seet in th sturn of th boet; and as thae set off, he

sed in a loe vois, broeken with emoeshon, 'Raty, mi jenerus frend! I am verry sorry indeed for mi foolish and ungraetful conduct. Mi hart qiet faels me when I think how I miet hav lost that buetyful lunchon-basket. Indeed, I hav bin a compleet ass, and I noe it. Wil U oeverluuk it this wunss and forgiv me, and let things go on as befor?'

'That's all riet, bles U!' responded th Rat cheerily. 'Whot's a litl wet to a Wauter Rat? I'm mor in th wauter than out of it moest daes. Doen't U think eny mor about it; and, luuk heer! I reealy think U had beter cum and stop with me for a litl tiem. It's verry plaen and ruf, U noe -- not liek Toed's hous at all -- but U havn't seen that yet; stil, I can maek U comfortabl. And I'l teech U to roe, and to swim, and U'l soon be as handy on th wauter as eny of us.'

Th Moel wuz so tucht bi his kiend maner of speeking that he cuud fiend no vois to anser him; and he had to brush awae a teer or too with th bak of his paw. But th Rat kiendly luukt in another direkshon, and prezently th Moel's spirits reviewd agen, and he wuz eeven aebl to giv sum straat bak-tauk

to a cupl of muurhens hoo wer snigering to eech uther about his bedragld apeeranss.

When thae got hoem, th Rat maed a briet fier in th parlor, and planted th Moel in an arm-chaer in frunt of it, having fecht doun a dresing-goun and slipers for him, and toeld him river storys til super-tiem. Verry thriling storys thae wer, too, to an urch-dweling animal liek Moel. Storys about weers, and suden fluds, and leeping piek, and steemers that flung hard botls -- at leest botls wer surtenly flung, and *from* steemers, so prezoomably *bi* them; and about herrons, and how particuelar thae wer hoom thae spoek to; and about advenchers doun draens, and niet-fishings with Oter, or excurzhons far a-feeld with Bajer. Super wuz a moest cheerful meel; but verry shortly afterwards a terribly sleepy Moel had to be escorted upstaers bi his consideret hoest, to th best bedroom, whaer he soon laed his hed on his pilo in graet peess and contentment, noeing that his nue-found frend th River wuz laping th sil of his windo.

This dae wuz oenly th furst of meny similar wuns for th emansipaeted Moel, eech of them

longger and fuul of interest as th riepening sumer moovd onward. He lurnt to swim and to roe, and enterd into th joy of runing wauter; and with his eer to th reed-stems he caut, at intervals, sumthing of whot th wind went whispering so constantly amung them.

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## Chapter 2

### II

### TH OEPEN ROED

'RATY,' sed th Moel sudenly, wun briet sumer morning, 'if U pleez, I wont to ask U a faevor.'

Th Rat wuz siting on th river bank, singing a litl song. He had just compoezd it himself, so he wuz verry taeken up with it, and wuud not pae proper atenshon to Moel or enything elss. Sinss urly morning he had bin swiming in th river, in cumpany with his frends th duks. And when th duks stued on thaer heds sudenly, as duks wil, he wuud diev doun and tikkl thaer neks, just under whaer thaer chins wuud be if duks had chins, til thae wer forst to come to th surfis agen in a hury, spluttering and anggry and shaeking thaer fethers at him, for it is imposibl to sae qiet *all* U feel when yuur hed is

under wauter. At last thaе implord him to go awae and atend to his oen  
afaers and leev them to miend thaers. So th Rat went awae, and sat on th  
river bank in th sun, and maed up a song about them, which he cauld

'DUKS' DITY.'  
All along th bakwauter,  
Thru th rushes taul,  
Duks ar a-dabbling,  
Up taels all!

Duks' taels, draeks' taels,  
Yelo feet a-qiver,  
Yelo bils all out of siet  
Bizy in th river!

Slushy green undergroeth  
Whaer th roech swim --  
Heer we keep our larder,  
Cool and ful and dim.

Evrywun for whot he lieks!  
*We* liek to be  
Heds doun, taels up,  
Dabbling free!

Hie in th bloo abuv  
Swifts whurl and caul --  
*We* ar doun a-dabbling  
Up taels all!

'I doen't noe that I think so *verry* much of that litl song, Rat,' obzurvd th  
Moel

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caushusly. He wuz no poeet himself and didn't caer hoo nue it; and he had a candid naecher.

'Nor doen't th duks neether,' replied th Rat cheerfully. 'Thae sae, "*Whi* can't feloes be alowd to do whot thae liek *when* thae liek and *as* thae liek, insted of uther feloes siting on banks and woching them all th tiem and maeking remarks and poeetry and things about them? Whot *nonsenss* it all is!' That's whot th duks sae.'

'So it is, so it is,' sed th Moel, with graet hartynes.

'No, it isn't!' cried th Rat indignantly.

'Wel then, it isn't, it isn't,' replied th Moel soothingly. 'But whot I wonted to ask U wuz, woen't U taek me to caul on Mr. Toed? I've hurd so much about him, and I do so wont to maek his aqaentanss.'

'*Whi*, surtenly,' sed th guud-naeched Rat, jumping to his feet and dismissing poeetry from his miend for th dae. 'Get th boet out, and we'l padl up thaer at wunss. It's never th rong tiem to caul on Toed. Urly or laet he's aulwaes th saem felo. Aulwaes guud-temperd, aulwaes glad to see U, aulwaes sorry when U go!'

'He must be a verry niess animal,' obzurvd th Moel, as he got into th boet and tuuk th sculs, whiel th Rat setld himself comfortably in th sturn.

'He is indeed th best of animals,' replied Rat. 'So simpl, so guud-naecherd, and so afekshonet. Perhaps he's not verry clever -- we can't all be jeeniuses; and it mae be that he is boeth boestful and conseeted. But he has got sum graet qolitys, has Toedy.'

Rounding a bend in th river, thae caem in siet of a hansum, dignified oeld hous of meloed red brik, with wel-kept launs reeching doun to th wauter's ej.

'Thaer's Toed Haul,' sed th Rat; 'and that creek on th left, whaer th noetis-bord ses, "Prievat. No landing alowd," leads to his boet-hous, whaer we'l leev th boet. Th staebls ar oever thaer to th riet. That's th banqeting-haul U'r luuking at now -- verry oeld, that is. Toed is rather rich, U noe, and this is reealy wun of th niesest houses in thees parts, tho we never admit as much to Toed.'

Thae glieded up th creek, and th Moel slipt his sculs as thae past into th

shado of a larj boet-hous. Heer thae saw meny hansum boets, slung from th cros beems or hauld up on a slip, but nun in th wauter; and th plaess had an unuezd and a dezurted aer.

Th Rat luukt around him. 'I understand,' sed he. 'Boeting is plaed out. He's tierd of it, and dun with it. I wunder whot nue fad he has taeken up now? Cum along and let's luuk him up. We shal heer all about it qiet soon enuf.'

Thae disembarked, and stroeld acros th gae flower-dekt launs in surch of Toed, hoom thae prezently hapend upon resting in a wiker garden-chaer, with a pre-ocuepied expreshon of faess, and a larj map spred out on his nees.

'Hoorae!' he cried, jumping up on seeing them, 'this is splendid!' He shuuk th paws of boeth of them wormly, never waeting for an introdukshon to th Moel. 'How *kiend* of U!' he went on, dansing round them. 'I wuz just going to send a boet doun th river for U, Raty, with strikt orders that U wer to be fecht up heer at wunss, whotever U wer doing. I wont U badly -- boeth of U.

Now whot wil U taek? Cum insied and hav sumthing! U doen't noe how luky it is, yuur turning up just now!

'Let's sit qieet a bit, Toedy!' sed th Rat, throeing himself into an eozy chaer, whiel th Moel tuuk anuther bi th sied of him and maed sum sivil remark about Toed's 'delietful rezidenss.'

'Fienest hous on th hoel river,' cried Toed boisterusly. 'Or enywhaer elss, for that mater,' he cuud not help ading.

Heer th Rat nujd th Moel. Unforchunetly th Toed saw him do it, and turnd verry red. Thaer wuz a moment's paenful sielenss. Then Toed burst out lafing. 'All riet, Raty,' he sed. 'It's oenly mi wae, U noe. And it's not such a verry bad hous, is it? U noe U rather liek it yuурself. Now, luuk heer. Let's be sensibl. U ar th verry animals I wonted. U've got to help me. It's moest important!'

'It's about yuur roeing, I supoez,' sed th Rat, with an inosent aer. 'U'r geting on faerly wel, tho U splash a guud bit stil. With a graet deel of paeshenss, and eny qontity of coeching, U mae -- -- '

'O, poo! boeting!' interupted th Toed, in graet disgust. Sily boyish amuezment. I've given that up *long* ago. Sheer waest of tiem, that's whot it is. It maeks me dounriet sorry to see U feloes, hoo aut to noe beter, spending all yuur enerjys in that aemles maner. No, I've discuverd th reeal thing, th oenly jenuein ocuepaeshon for a lief tiem. I propoez to devoet th remaender of mien to it, and can oenly regret th waested yeers that lie behiend me, sqonderd in trivialitys. Cum with me, deer Raty, and yuur aemiabl frend aulso, if he wil be so verry guud, just as far as th staeblyard, and U shal see whot U shal see!"

He led th wae to th staeblyard acordingly, th Rat foloeing with a moest mistrustful expreshon; and thaer, drawn out of th coech hous into th oopen, thae saw a jipsy caravan, shiening with nuenes, paented a canaery-yelo pikt out with green, and red wheels.

'Thaer U ar!' cried th Toed, stradling and expanding himself. 'Thaer's reeal lief for U, embodyd in that litl cart. Th oopen roed, th dusty hiewae, th heeth, th comon, th hej-roes, th roeling douns!

Camps, vilejes, touns, sitys! Heer to-dae, up and off to sumwhaer elss to-morro! Travel, chaenj, interest, exsietment! Th hoel wurld befor U, and a horiezon that's aulwaes chaenjing! And miend! this is th verry fieneest cart of its sort that wuz ever bilt, without eny exsepshon. Cum insied and luuk at th araenjments. Pland 'em all mieself, I did!"

Th Moel wuz tremendusly interested and exsieted, and foloed him eegerly up th steps and into th inteerior of th caravan. Th Rat oenly snorted and thrust his hands deep into his pokets, remaening whaer he wuz.

It wuz indeed verry compakt and comfortabl. Litl sleeping bunks -- a litl taeb'l that foelded up agenst th waul -- a cuuking-stoev, lokers, buukshelvs, a burd-caej with a burd in it; and pots, pans, jugs and ketls of evry siez and varieety.

'All compleet!' sed th Toed triumfantly, puuling oepen a loker. 'U see -- biskits, poted lobster, sardineens -- evrything U can possibly wont. Soeda-wauter heer -- baky thaer -- leter-paepers, baecon, jam, cards and dominoes -- U'l fiend,' he continued, as thae desended th steps agen, 'U'l fiend that nuthing whot

ever has bin forgoten, when we maek our start this afternoon.'

'I beg yuur pardon,' sed th Rat sloely, as he chood a straw, 'but did I oeverheer U sae sumthing about "*we*," and "*start*," and "*this afternoon*?"'

'Now, U deer guud oeld Raty,' sed Toed, imploringly, 'doen't begin tauking in that stif and snify sort of wae, becauz U noe U've got to cum. I can't possibly manej without U, so pleez consider it setld, and doen't argue -- it's th wun thing I can't stand. U shuurly doen't meen to stik to yuur dul fusty oeld river all yuur lief, and just liv in a hoel in a bank, and *boet*? I wont to sho U th wurld! I'm going to maek an *animal* of U, mi boy!'

'I doen't caer,' sed th Rat, dogedly. 'I'm not cuming, and that's flat. And I *am* going to stik to mi oeld river, *and* liv in a hoel, *and* boet, as I've aulwaes dun. And whot's mor, Moel's going to stik me and do as I do, arn't U, Moel?'

'Of corss I am,' sed th Moel, loyalty. 'I'll aulwaes stik to U, Rat, and whot U sae is to be -- has got to be. All th saem, it sounds as

if it miet hav bin -- wel, rather fun, U noe!' he aded, wistfuly. Puur Moel! Th Lief Advencherus wuz so nue a thing to him, and so thriling; and this fresh aspekt of it wuz so tempting; and he had faulen in luv at furst siet with th canaery-culord cart and all its litl fitments.

Th Rat saw whot wuz pasing in his miend, and waeverd. He haeted disapointing peepl, and he wuz fond of th Moel, and wuud do aulmoest enything to obliej him. Toed wuz woching boeth of them cloesly.

'Cum along in, and hav sum lunch,' he sed, diplomatkaly, 'and we'l tauk it oever. We needn't desied enything in a hury. Of corss, *I* doen't reealy caer. I oenly wont to giv plezher to U feloes. "Liv for uthers!" That's mi moto in lief.'

Duuring lunchon -- which wuz exselenent, of corss, as evrything at Toed Haul aulwaes wuz -- th Toed simply let himself go. Disregarding th Rat, he proseeded to plae upon th inexpeeri'enst Moel as on a harp. Nacheraly a valuebl animal, and aulwaes masterd bi his imajinaeshon, he paented th prospekts of th trip and th joys of th oopen lief and th roed

sied in such gloeing culors that th Moel cuud hardly sit in his chaer for exsietment. Sumhow, it soon seemd taeken for granted bi all three of them that th trip wuz a setld thing; and th Rat, tho stil unconvinst in his miend, alowd his guud-naecher to oever-ried his pursonal objekshons. He cuud not baer to disappoint his too frends, hoo wer aulredy deep in skeems and antisipaeshons, planing out eech dae's separat ocuepaeshon for several weeks ahed.

When thae wer qiet redy, th now trieumfant Toed led his companyons to th padok and set them to capcher th oeld grae horss, hoo, without having bin consulted, and to his oen extreem anoyanss, had bin toeld off bi Toed for th dustyest job in this dusty expedishon. He frankly prefurd th padok, and tuuk a deel of caching. Meentiem Toed pakt th lokers stil tieter with nesesaerys, and hung noezbags, nets of unyons, bundls of hae, and baskets from th botom of th cart. At last th horss wuz caut and harnest, and thae set off, all tauking at wunss, eech animal eether trujing bi th sied of th cart or siting on th shaft, as th huemor tuuk him. It wuz a

goelden afternoon. Th smel of th dust thaе kikt up wuz rich and satisfieing; out of thik orchards on eether sied th roed, burds cauld and whisld to them cheerily; guud-naecherd waefærers, pasing them, gaev them 'Guud-dae,' or stopt to sae niess things about thaer buetyful cart; and rabits, siting at thaer frunt dors in th hej-roes, held up thaer for-paws, and sed, 'O mi! O mi! O mi!'

Laet in th eevning, tierd and hapy and miels from hoem, thaе droo up on a remoet comon far from habitaeshons, turnd th horss looss to graez, and aet thaer simpl super siting on th gras bi th sied of th cart. Toed taukt big about all he wuz going to do in th daes to cum, whiel stars groo fuuler and larjer all around them, and a yelo moon, apeering sudenly and sielently from noewhaer in particuelar, caem to keep them cumpany and lisen to thaer tauk. At last thaе turnd in to thaer litl bunks in th cart; and Toed, kiking out his legs, sleepily sed, 'Wel, guud niet, U feloes! This is th reeal lief for a jentlman! Tauk about yuor oeld river!'

'I *doen't* tauk about mi river,' replied th

paeshent Rat. 'U *noe* I doen't, Toed. But I *think* about it,' he aded pathetikaly, in a loeer toen: 'I think about it -- all th tiem!'

Th Moel reecht out from under his blanket, felt for th Rat's paw in th darknes, and gaev it a sqeez. 'I'l do whotever U liek, Raty,' he whisperd. 'Shal we run awae to-morro morning, qiet urly -- *verry* urly -- and go bak to our deer oeld hoel on th river?'

'No, no, we'l see it out,' whisperd bak th Rat. 'Thanks awfully, but I aut to stik bi Toed til this trip is ended. It wuudn't be saef for him to be left to himself. It woen't taek *verry* long. His fads never do. Guud niet!'

Th end wuz indeed neerer than eeven th Rat suspekted.

After so much oepen aer and exsietment th Toed slept *verry* soundly, and no amount of shaeking cuud rouz him out of bed next morning. So th Moel and Rat turnd to, qieetly and manfuly, and whiel th Rat saw to th horss, and lit a fier, and cleend last niet's cups and platers, and got things redy for brekfast, th Moel trujd off to th neerest viley, a long wae off, for milk and egs and vaerius nesesaerys th Toed had, of

corss, forgoten to provied. Th hard wurk had all bin dun, and th too animals wer resting, thuroely exausted, bi th tiem Toed apeerd on th seen, fresh and gae, remarking whot a plezant eozy lief it wuz thae wer all leeding now, after th caers and wurys and fateegs of houskeeping at hoem.

Thae had a plezant rambl that dae oever grasy douns and along narro bi-laens, and campt as befor, on a comon, oenly this tiem th too gests tuuk caer that Toed shuud do his faer shaer of wurk. In conseqenss, when th tiem caem for starting next morning, Toed wuz bi no meens so rapcherus about th simplisity of th primitiv lief, and indeed attempted to rezoom his plaess in his bunk, whenss he wuz hauld bi forss. Thaer wae lae, as befor, acros cuntry bi narro laens, and it wuz not til th afternoon that thae caem out on th hi-roed, thaer furst hi-roed; and thaer dizaster, fleet and unforseen, sprang out on them -- dizaster moementus indeed to thaer expedishon, but simply oeverwhelming in its efekt on th after-career of Toed.

Thae wer stroeling along th hi-roed eezily,

th Moel bi th hors'es hed, tauking to him, sinss th horss had complaend that he wuz being frietfully left out of it, and noebody considerd him in th leest; th Toed and th Wauter Rat wauking behiend th cart tauking together -- at leest Toed wuz tauking, and Rat wuz saeing at intervals, 'Yes, presiesly; and whot did *U* sae to *him*?' -- and thinking all th tiem of sumthing verry diferent, when far behiend them thae hurd a faent worning hum; liek th droen of a distant bee. Glansing bak, thae saw a smaul cloud of dust, with a dark senter of enerjy, advansing on them at incredibl speed, whiel from out th dust a faent 'Poop-poop!' waeld liek an uneozy animal in paen. Hardly regarding it, thae turnd to rezoom thaer conversaeshon, when in an instant (as it seemd) th peesful seen wuz chaenjd, and with a blast of wind and a whurl of sound that maed them jump for th neerest dich, It wuz on them! Th 'Poop-poop' rang with a braezen shout in thaer eers, thae had a moment's glimps of an intteerior of glitering plaat-glas and rich moroco, and th magnifisent moetor-car, imenss, breth-snaching, pashonet, with its pielot tenss and hugging his wheel, pozest all urth and aer

for th frakshon of a second, flung an enveloping cloud of dust that bliended and enrapt them uteily, and then dwindld to a spek in th far distanss, chaenjd bak into a droning bee wunss mor.

Th oeld grae horss, dreeming, as he ploded along, of his qieet padok, in a nue raw sichuaeshon such as this simply abandond himself to his nacheral emoeshons. Reering, plunjing, baking stedily, in spiet of all th Moel's eforts at his hed, and all th Moel's lievly langgwej direkted at his beter feelings, he droev th cart bakwards tords th deep dich at th sied of th roed. It waeverd an instant -- then thaer wuz a hart-rending crash -- and th canaery-culord cart, thaer pried and thaer joy, lae on its sied in th dich, an iredeemabl rek.

Th Rat danst up and doun in th roed, simply transported with pashon. 'U vilans!' he shouted, shaeking boeth fists, 'U scoundrels, U hiewaemen, U -- U -- roed-hogs! -- I'l hav th law of U! I'l report U! I'l taek U thru all th Corts!' His hoem-siknes had qiet slipt awae from him, and for th moement he wuz th skiper of

th canaery-culord vessel driven on a shoel bi th rekles jokying of rieval marriners, and he wuz trieing to recolekt all th fien and bieting things he uezd to sae to masters of steem-launches when thaer wosh, as thae droev too neer th bank, uezd to flud his parlor-carpet at hoem.

Toed sat straet doun in th midl of th dusty roed, his legs strecht out befor him, and staerd fixsedly in th direkshon of th disapeering moetor-car. He breethd short, his faess wor a plasid satisfied expreshon, and at intervals he faently murmerd 'Poop-poop!'

Th Moel wuz bizy trieing to qieet th horss, which he sukseeded in doing after a tiem. Then he went to luuk at th cart, on its sied in th dich. It wuz indeed a sorry siet. Panels and windoes smasht, axls hoeplesly bent, wun wheel off, sarddeen-tins scaterd oever th wied wurld, and th burd in th burd-caej sobing pityfuly and cauling to be let out.

Th Rat caem to help him, but thaer uenited eforts wer not sufishent to riet th cart. 'Hi! Toed!' thae cried. 'Cum and baer a hand, can't U!'

Th Toed never anserd a wurd, or bujd from his seet in th roed; so thae went to see whot wuz th mater with him. Thae found him in a sort of a transs, a hapy smiel on his faess, his ies stil fixt on th dusty waek of thaer destroyer. At intervals he wuz stil hurd to murmer 'Poop-poop!'

Th Rat shuuk him bi th shoelder. 'Ar U cuming to help us, Toed?' he demanded sturnly.

'Glorius, sturing siet!' murmerd Toed, never ofering to moov. 'Th poeetry of moeshon! Th *reeal* wae to travel! Th *oonly* wae to travel! Heer to-dae -- in next week to-morro! Vilejes skipt, touns and sitys jump -- aulwaes sumbody els'es horiezon! O blis! O poop-poop! O mi! O mi!'

'O *stop* being an ass, Toed!' cried th Moel despaeringly.

'And to think I never *nue!*' went on th Toed in a dreemy monotoen. 'All thoes waested yeers that lie behiend me, I never *nue*, never eeven *dremt!* But *now* -- but now that I *noe*, now that I *fuuly reealiez!* O whot a flowery trak lies spred befor me, hensforth! Whot dust-clouds shal spring up behiend me as I

speed on mi rekles wae! Whot carts I shal fling caerlesly into th dich in th waek of mi magnifisent onset! Horrid litl carts -- comon carts -- canaery-culord carts!"

'Whot ar we to do with him?' askt th Moel of th Wauter Rat.

'Nuthing at all,' replied th Rat furmly. 'Becauz thaer is reealy nuthing to be dun. U see, I noe him from of oeld. He is now pozest. He has got a nue craez, and it aulwaes taeks him that wae, in its furst staej. He'l continue liek that for daes now, liek an animal wauking in a hapy dreem, qiet uesles for all praktikal purposes. Never miend him. Let's go and see whot thaer is to be dun about th cart.'

A caerful inspekshon shoed them that, eeven if thae sukseeded in rieting it bi themselvs, th cart wuud travel no longer. Th axls wer in a hoeples staet, and th mising wheel wuz shaterd into peeses.

Th Rat noted th hors'es raens oever his bak and tuuk him bi th hed, carrying th burd caej and its histerrikal ocuepat in th uther hand. 'Cum on!' he sed grimly to th Moel. 'It's fiev or six miels to th neerest toun, and

we shal just hav to wauk it. Th sooner we maek a start th beter.'

'But whot about Toed?' askt th Moel ankshusly, as thae set off together.  
'We can't leev him heer, siting in th midl of th roed bi himself, in th  
distrakted staet he's in! It's not saef. Supoezing anuther Thing wer to cum  
along?'

'O, *bother* Toed,' sed th Rat savejly; 'I've dun with him!'

Thae had not proseeded verry far on thaer wae, however, when thaer wuz a  
patering of feet behiend them, and Toed caut them up and thrust a paw insied  
th elbo of eech of them; stil breething short and staering into vaecansy.

'Now, luuk heer, Toed!' sed th Rat sharply: 'as soon as we get to th toun,  
U'l hav to go straet to th poleess-staeshon, and see if thae noe enything about  
that moetor-car and hoo it belongs to, and loj a complaent agenst it. And  
then U'l hav to go to a blaksmith's or a wheelriet's and araenj for th cart to be  
fecht and mended and puut to riets. It'l taek tiem, but it's not qiet a hoeples  
smash. Meenwhiel, th Moel and I wil go to an in and fiend comfortabl rooms  
whaer we can stae til

th cart's redy, and til yuur nurvs hav recuverd thaer shok.'

'Poleess-staeshon! Complaent!' murmerd Toed dreemily. 'Me *complaen* of that buetyful, that hevenly vizhon that has bin vouchsaeft me! *Mend th cart!* I've dun with carts for ever. I never wont to see th cart, or to heer of it, agen. O, Raty! U can't think how obliejd I am to U for consenting to cum on this trip! I wuudn't hav gon without U, and then I miet never hav seen that -- that swaan, that sunbeem, that thunderboelt! I miet never hav hurd that entrancing sound, or smelt that bewiching smel! I oe it all to U, mi best of frends!'

Th Rat turnd from him in despaer. 'U see whot it is?' he sed to th Moel, adresing him acros Toed's hed: 'He's qiet hoeples. I giv it up -- when we get to th toun we'l go to th raelwae staeshon, and with luk we mae pik up a traen thaer that'l get us bak to riverbank to-niet. And if ever U cach me going a-plezhering with this provoeking animal agen!'

He snorted, and duuring th rest of that weery truj adrest his remarks excloosivly to Moel.

On reeching th toun thae went straat to th staeshon and depozited Toed in th second-clas waeting-room, giving a porter tupenss to keep a strikt ie on him. Thae then left th horss at an in staebl, and gaev whot direkshons thae cuud about th cart and its contents. Evenchualy, a slo traen having landed them at a staeshon not verry far from Toed Haul, thae escorted th spel-bound, sleep-wauking Toed to his dor, puut him insied it, and instrukted his houskeeper to feed him, undres him, and puut him to bed. Then thae got out thaer boet from th boet-hous, sculd doun th river hoem, and at a verry laet our sat doun to super in thaer oen coozy riversied parlor, to th Rat's graet joy and contentment.

Th foloeing eevning th Moel, hoo had rizen laet and taeken things verry eozy all dae, wuz siting on th bank fishing, when th Rat, hoo had bin luuking up his frends and gosiping, caem stroeling along to fiend him. 'Hurd th nues?' he sed. 'Thaer's nuthing elss being taukt about, all along th river bank. Toed went up to Toun bi an urly traen this morning. And he has orderd a larj and verry expensiv moetor-car.'

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## Chapter 3

### III

### TH WIELD WUUD

TH Moel had long wonted to maek th I aqaentanss of th Bajer. He seemd, bi all accounts, to be such an important pursonej and, tho raerly vizibl, to maek his unseen inflooenss felt bi evrybody about th plaess. But whenever th Moel menshond his wish to th Wauter Rat he aulwaes found himself puut off. 'It's all riet,' th Rat wuud sae. 'Bajer'l turn up sum dae or uther -- he's aulwaes turning up -- and then I'l introduess U. Th best of feloes! But U must not oenly taek him *as* U fiend him, but *when* U fiend him.'

'Cuudn't U ask him heer diner or sumthing?' sed th Moel.

'He wuudn't cum,' replied th Rat simply. 'Bajer haets Sosieety, and invitaeshons, and diner, and all that sort of thing.'

‘Wel, then, supoezing we go and caul on *him*?’ sugjested th Moel.

‘O, I’m shuur he wuudn’t liek that at *all*,’ sed th Rat, qiet alarmd. ‘He’s s verry shi, he’d be shuur to be ofended. I’ve never eeven vencherd to caul on him at his oen hoem mieself, tho I noe him so wel. Besieds, we can’t. It’s qiet out of th queschon, becauz he livils in th verry midl of th Wield Wuud.’

‘Wel, supoezing he duz,’ sed th Moel. ‘U toeld me th Wield Wuud wuz all riet, U noe.’

‘O, I noe, I noe, so it is,’ replied th Rat evaesivly. ‘But I think we woen’t go thaer just now. Not *just* yet. It’s a long wae, and he wuudn’t be at hoem at this tiem of yeer enyhow, and he’l be cuming along sum dae, if U’l waet qieetly.’

Th Moel had to be content with this. But th Bajer never caem along, and evry dae braut its amuezments, and it wuz not til sumer wuz long oever, and coeld and frost and miery waes kept them much indors, and th swoelen river raest past outsied thaer windoes with a speed that mokt at boeting of

eny sort or kiend, that he found his thauts dweling agen with much persistenss on th solitaery grae Bajer, hoo livd his oen lief bi himself, in his hoel in th midl of th Wield Wuud.

In th winter tiem th Rat slept a graet deel, retiering urly and riezing laet. Duuring his short dae he sumtiems scribld poeetry or did uther smaul domestik jobs about th hous; and, of corss, thaer wer aulwaes animals droping in for a chat, and consequently thaer wuz a guud deel of story-teling and compaering noets on th past sumer and all its doings.

Such a rich chapter it had bin, when wun caem to luuk bak on it all! With ilustraeshons so nuumerus and so verry hiely culord! Th pajent of th river bank had marcht stedily along, unfoelding itself in seen-pikchers that sukseeded eech uther in staetly proseshon. Purpl looss-strief arievd urly, shaeking lugzhuuriant tanggld loks along th ej of th miror whenss its oen faess laft bak at it. Wilo-hurb, tender and wistful, liek a pink sunset cloud, wuz not slo to folo. Cumfry, th purpl hand-in-hand with th whiet, crept forth to taek its plaess in th lien; and at last wun

morning th difident and delaeing dog-roez stept deliketly on th staej, and wun nue, as if string-muezik had anounst it in staetyl cords that straed into a gavot, that Joon at last wuz heer. Wun member of th cumpany wuz stil awaeted; th sheperd-boy for th nimfs to woo, th niet for hoom th laedys waeted at th windo, th prinss that wuz to kis th sleeping sumer bak to lief and luv. But when medo-sweet, debonaer and oedorus in amber jurkin, moovd graeshusly to his plaess in th groop, then th plae wuz redy to begin.

And whot a plae it had bin! Drouzy animals, snug in thaer hoels whiel wind and raen wer batering at thaer dors, recauld stil keen mornings, an our befor sunriez, when th whiet mist, as yet undisurst, clung cloesly along th surfis of th wauter; then th shok of th urly plunj, th scamper along th bank, and th raediant transformaeshon of urth, aer, and wauter, when sudenly th sun wuz with them agen, and grae wuz goeld and culor wuz born and sprang out of th urth wunss mor. Thae recauld th langgorus syesta of hot mid-dae, deep in green undergroeth, th sun strieking thru in tieny goelden shafts and

spots; th boeting and baething of th afternoon, th rambls along dusty laens and thru yelo cornfeelds; and th long, cool eevning at last, when so meny threds wer gatherd up, so meny frendships rounded, and so meny advenchers pland for th morro. Thaer wuz plenty to tauk about on thoes short winter daes when th animals found themselvs round th fier; stil, th Moel had a guud deel of spaer tiem on his hands, and so wun afternoon, when th Rat in his arm-chaer befor th blaez wuz auternetly doezing and trieing oever riems that wuudn't fit, he formd th rezolooshon to go out bi himself and explor th Wield Wuud, and perhaps striek up an aqaentanss with Mr. Bajer.

It wuz a coeld stil afternoon with a hard steely ski oeverhed, when he slipt out of th worm parlor into th oopen aer. Th cuntry lae baer and entierly leefles around him, and he thaut that he had never seen so far and so intimetly into th insieds of things as on that winter dae when Naecher wuz deep in her anveal slumber and seemd to hav kikt th cloeths off. Copses, dels, qorys and all hiden plaeses, which had

bin misteerijs miens for exploraeshon in leefy sumer, now expoezd themselvs and thaer seecrets pathetikaly, and seemd to ask him to oeverluuk thaer shaby poverty for a whiel, til thae cuud rieot in rich maskeraed as befor, and trik and entiess him with th oeld desepshons. It wuz pityful in a wae, and yet cheering -- eeven exileraeting. He wuz glad that he liekt th cuntry undecoraeted, hard, and stript of its fienery. He had got doun to th baer boens of it, and thae wer fien and strong and simpl. He did not wont th worm cloever and th plae of seeding grases; th screens of qikset, th biloey draepery of beech and elm seemd best awae; and with graet cheerfulness of spirit he puusht on tords th Wield Wuud, which lae befor him loe and threatening, liek a blak reef in sum stil suthern see.

Thaer wuz nuthing to alarm him at furst entry. Twigs crakld under his feet, logs tript him, funguses on stumps rezembld carriacahuurs, and startld him for th moement bi thaer lieknes to sumthing familyar and far awae; but that wuz all fun, and exsieting. It led him on, and he penetraeted to whaer th liet wuz

les, and trees croucht neerer and neerer, and hoels maeđ ugly mouths at him on eether sied.

Evrything wuz verry stil now. Th dusk advanst on him stedily, rapidly, gathering in behiend and befor; and th liet seemd to be draening awae liek flud-wauter.

Then th faeses began.

It wuz oever his shoelder, and indistinktly, that he furst thaut he saw a faess; a litl eevil wej-shaept faess, luuking out at him from a hoel. When he turnd and confrunited it, th thing had vanisht.

He qikend his paess, teling himself cheerfully not to begin imajining things, or thaer wuud be simply no end to it. He past another hoel, and another, and another; and then -- yes! -- no! -- yes! surtenly a litl narro faess, with hard ies, had flasht up for an instant from a hoel, and wuz gon. He hezitaeted -- braest himself up for an efort and stroed on. Then sudenly, and as if it had bin so all th tiem, evry hoel, far and neer, and thaer wer hundreds of them, seemd to pozess its faess, cuming and going rapidly, all fixing on him glances of malis and haetred: all hard-ied and eevil and sharp.

If he cuud oenly get awae from th hoels in th banks, he thaut, thaer wuud be no mor faeses. He swung off th path and plunjd into th untroden plaeses of th wuud.

Then th whisling began.

Verry faent and shril it wuz, and far behiend him, when furst he hurd it; but sumhow it maed him hury forward. Then, stil verry faent and shril, it sounded far ahed of him, and maed him hezitaet and wont to go bak. As he haulted in indesizhon it broek out on eether sied, and seemd to be caut up and past on thruout th hoel length of th wuud to its farthest limit. Thae wer up and alurt and redy, evidently, hooever thae wer! And he -- he wuz aloen, and unarmd, and far from eny help; and th niet wuz cloezing in.

Then th patering began.

He thaut it wuz oenly fauling leevs at furst, so sliet and deliket wuz th sound of it. Then as it groo it tuuk a reguelar rithm, and he nue it for nuthing elss but th pat-pat-pat of litl feet stil a verry long wae off. Wuz it in frunt or behiend? It seemd to be furst wun, and then th uther, then boeth. It groo and

it multiplied, til from evry qorter as he lisend ankshusly, leening this wae and that, it seemd to be cloezing in on him. As he stuud stil to harken, a rabbit caem runing hard tords him thru th trees. He waeted, expeking it to slaken paess, or to swurv from him into a diferen corss. Insted, th animal aulmoest brusht him as it dasht past, his faess set and hard, his ies staering. 'Get out of this, U fool, get out!' th Moel hurd him muter as he swung round a stump and disapeerd doun a frendly buro.

Th patering increest til it sounded liek suden hael on th dri leef-carpet spred around him. Th hoel wuud seemd runing now, runing hard, hunting, chaesing, cloezing in round sumthing or -- sumbody? In panik, he began to run too, aemlesly, he nue not whither. He ran up agenst things, he fel oever things and into things, he darted under things and dojd round things. At last he tuuk refuej in th deep dark holo of an oeld beech tree, which oferd shelter, conseelment -- perhaps eeven saefty, but hoo cuud tel? Enyhow, he wuz too tierd to run eny further, and cuud oenly snugl doun into th

dri leevs which had drifted into th holo and hoep he wuz saef for a tiem. And as he lae thaer panting and trembling, and lisend to th whislings and th paterings outsied, he nue it at last, in all its fuulnes, that dred thing which uther litl dwelers in feeld and hejro had encounterd heer, and noen as thaer darkest moement -- that thing which th Rat had vaenly tried to sheeld him from -- th Terror of th Wield Wuud!

Meentiem th Rat, worm and cumfortabl, doezd bi his fiersied. His paeper of haf-finisht vurses slipt from his nee, his hed fel bak, his mouth oepend, and he wonderd bi th vurdant banks of dreem-rivers. Then a coel slipt, th fier crakld and sent up a spurt of flaem, and he woeek with a start. Remembering whot he had bin engaejd upon, he reecht doun to th flor for his vurses, pord oever them for a minit, and then luukt round for th Moel to ask him if he nue a guud riem for sumthing or uther.

But th Moel wuz not thaer.

He lisend for a tiem. Th hous seemd verry qieet.

Then he cauld 'Moely!' several tiems, and,

reseeveng no anser, got up and went out into th haul.

Th Moel's cap wuz mising from its acustomd peg. His goloshes, which aulwaes lae bi th umbrela-stand, wer aulso gon.

Th Rat left th hous, and caerfuly examind th mudy surfis of th ground outsied, hoeping to fiend th Moel's traks. Thaer thaer wer, shuur enuf. Th goloshes wer nue, just baut for th winter, and th pimpls on thaer soels wer fresh and sharp. He cuud see th imprints of them in th mud, runing along straet and purposful, leeding direkt to th Wield Wuud.

Th Rat luukt verry graev, and stuud in deep thaut for a minit or too. Then he re-enterd th hous, strapt a belt round his waest, shuvd a braess of pistols into it, tuuk up a stout cujel that stuud in a corner of th haul, and set off for th Wield Wuud at a smart paess.

It wuz aulredy geting tords dusk when he reecht th furst frinj of trees and plunjd without hezitaeshon into th wuud, luuking ankshusly on eether sied for eny sien of his frend. Heer and thaer wiked litl faeses

popt out of hoels, but vanisht imeedi'etly at siet of th valorus animal, his pistols, and th graet ugly cujel in his grasp; and th whisling and patering, which he had hurd qiet plaenly on his furst entry, died awae and seest, and all wuz verry stil. He maed his wae manfuly thru th length of th wuud, to its furthest ej; then, forsaking all paths, he set himself to travurss it, laboriusly wurking oever th hoel ground, and all th tiem cauling out cheerfully, 'Moely, Moely, Moely! Whaer ar U? It's me -- it's oeld Rat!'

He had paeshently hunted thru th wuud for an our or mor, when at last to his joy he hurd a litl ansering cri. Gieding himself bi th sound, he maed his wae thru th gathering darknes to th fuut of an oeld beech tree, with a hoel in it, and from out of th hoel caem a feebl vois, saeing 'Raty! Is that reealy U?'

Th Rat crept into th holo, and thaer he found th Moel, exausted and stil trembling. 'O Rat!' he cried, 'I've bin so frietend, U can't think!'

'O, I qiet understand,' sed th Rat soothingly. 'U shuudn't reealy hav gon and

dun it, Moel. I did mi best to keep U from it. We river-bankers, we hardly ever cum heer bi ourselvs. If we hav to cum, we cum in cupls, at leest; then we'r jeneraly all riet. Besieds, thaer ar a hundred things wun has to noe, which we understand all about and U doen't, as yet. I meen paswurds, and siens, and saeings which hav power and efekt, and plants U carry in yuor poket, and vurses U repeet, and dojes and triks U praktis; all simpl enuf when U noe them, but thae've got to be noen if U'r smaul, or U'l fiend yuурself in trubl. Of corss if U wer Bajer or Oter, it wuud be qiet anuther mater.'

‘Shuurly th braev Mr. Toed wuudn't miend cuming heer bi himself, wuud he?’ inqierd th Moel.

‘Oeld Toed?’ sed th Rat, lafing hartily. ‘He wuudn't sho his faess heer aloen, not for a hoel hatful of goelden ginys, Toed wuudn't.’

Th Moel wuz graetly cheerd bi th sound of th Rat's caerles lafter, as wel as bi th siet of his stik and his gleeming pistols, and he stopt shivering and began to feel boelder and mor himself agen.

'Now then,' sed th Rat prezently, 'we reealy must puul ourselvs together and maek a start for hoem whiel thaer's stil a litl liet left. It wil never do to spend th niet heer, U understand. Too coeld, for wun thing.'

'Deer Raty,' sed th puur Moel, 'I'm dredfully sorry, but I'm simply ded beet and that's a solid fakt. U *must* let me rest heer a whiel longger, and get mi strength bak, if I'm to get hoem at all.'

'O, all riet,' sed th guud-naecherd Rat, 'rest awae. It's prity neerly pich dark now, enyhow; and thaer aut to be a bit of a moon laeter.'

So th Moel got wel into th dri leevs and strecht himself out, and prezently dropt off into sleep, tho of a broeken and trubld sort; whiel th Rat cuverd himself up, too, as best he miet, for wormth, and lae paeshently waeting, with a pistol in his paw.

When at last th Moel wook up, much refresht and in his uezhual spirits, th Rat sed, 'Now then! I'l just taek a luuk outsied and see if everything's qieet, and then we reealy must be off.'

He went to th entranss of thaer retreet and

puut his hed out. Then th Moel hurd him saeing qieetly to himself, 'Hulo! hulo! heer -- is -- a -- go!'

'Whot's up, Raty?' askt th Moel.

'*Sno* is up,' replied th Rat breefly; 'or rather, *doun*. It's snoeing hard.'

Th Moel caem and croucht besied him, and, luuking out, saw th wuud that had bin so dredful to him in qiet a chaenjd aspekt. Hoels, holoes, pools, pitfauls, and uther blak menases to th waefaeer wer vanishing fast, and a gleeming carpet of faery wuz springing up evrywhaer, that luukt too deliket to be troden upon bi ruf feet. A fien pouder fild th aer and carest th cheek with a tinggl in its tuch, and th blak boels of th trees shoed up in a liet that seemd to cum from beloe.

'Wel, wel, it can't be helpt,' sed th Rat, after pondering. 'We must maek a start, and taek our chanss, I supoez. Th wurst of it is, I doen't exakly noe whaer we ar. And now this sno maeks evrything luuk so verry diferen.'

It did indeed. Th Moel wuud not hav noen that it wuz th saem wuud. However,

thae set out braevly, and tuuk th lien that seemd moest promising, hoelding on to eech uther and pretending with invinsibl cheerfulness that thae recogniezd an oeld frend in evry fresh tree that grimly and sielently greeted them, or saw oopenings, gaps, or paths with a familyar turn in them, in th monotony of whiet spaess and blak tree-trunks that refuezd to vaery.

An our or too laeter -- thae had lost all count of tiem -- thae puuld up, dispirited, weery, and hoeplesly at see, and sat doun on a faulen tree-trunk to recuver thaer breth and consider whot wuz to be dun. Thae wer aeking with fateeg and broozd with tumbls; thae had faulen into several hoels and got wet thru; th sno wuz geting so deep that thae cuud hardly drag thaer litl legs thru it, and th trees wer thiker and mor liek eech uther than ever. Thaer seemd to be no end to this wuud, and no begining, and no differenss in it, and, wurst of all, no wae out.

'We can't sit heer verry long,' sed th Rat. 'We shal hav to maek another puush for it, and do sumthing or uther. Th coeld is too awful for enything, and th sno wil soon be too deep for us to waed thru.' He peerd about

him and considerd. 'Luuk heer,' he went on, 'this is whot occurs to me. Thaer's a sort of del doun heer in frunt of us, whaer th ground seems all hily and humpy and humoky. We'l maek our wae doun into that, and tri and fiend sum sort of shelter, a caev or hoel with a dri flor to it, out of th sno and th wind, and thaer we'l hav a guud rest befor we tri agen, for we'r boeth of us prity ded beet. Besieds, th sno mae leev off, or sumthing mae turn up.'

So wunss mor thae got on thaer feet, and strugld doun into th del, whaer thae hunted about for a caev or sum corner that wuz dri and a protekshon from th keen wind and th whurling sno. Thae wer investigaeting wun of th humoky bits th Rat had spoeken of, when sudenly th Moel tript up and fel forward on his faess with a sqeel.

'O mi leg!' he cried. 'O mi puur shin!' and he sat up on th sno and nurst his leg in boeth his frunt paws.

'Puur oeld Moel!' sed th Rat kiendly.

'U doen't seem to be having much luk to-dae, do U? Let's hav a luuk at th leg. Yes,' he went on, going doun on his nees

to luuk, 'U'v cut yuur shin, shuur enuf. Waet til I get at mi hankerchif, and I'l tie it up for U.'

'I must hav tript oever a hiden branch or a stump,' sed th Moel mizerably.  
'O, mi! O, mi!'

'It's a verry cleen cut,' sed th Rat, examining it agen atentivly. 'That wuz never dun bi a branch or a stump. Luuks as if it wuz maed bi a sharp ej of sumthing in metal. Funy!' He ponderd awhiel, and examind th humps and sloeps that serounded them.

'Wel, never miend whot dun it,' sed th Moel, forgeting his gramar in his paen. 'It hurts just th saem, whotever dun it.'

But th Rat, after caerfully tieing up th leg with his hankerchif, had left him and wuz bizy scraeping in th sno. He scracht and shuveld and explord, all foer legs wurking bizily, whiel th Moel waeted impaeshently, remarking at intervals, 'O, *cum* on, Rat!'

Sudenly th Rat cried 'Hoorae!' and then 'Hoorae-oo-rae-oo-rae-oo-rae!' and fel to execueting a feebl jig in th sno.

'Whot *hav* U found, Raty?' askt th Moel, stil nursing his leg.

‘Cum and see!’ sed th delited Rat, as he jigd on.

Th Moel hobld up to th spot and had a guud luuk.

‘Wel,’ he sed at last, sloely, ‘I *see* it riet enuf. Seen th saem sort of thing befor, lots of tiems. Familyar objekt, I caul it. A dor-sraeper! Wel, whot of it? Whi danss jigs around a dor-sraeper?’

‘But doen’t U see whot it meens, U -- U dul-wited animal?’ cried th Rat impae-shently.

‘Of corss I see whot it meens,’ replied th Moel. ‘It simply meens that sum verry caerles and forgetful purson has left his dor-sraeper lieing about in th midl of th Wield Wuud, *just* whaer it’s *shuur* to trip *evrybody* up. Verry thautles of him, I caul it. When I get hoem I shal go and complaen about it to -- to sumbody or uther, see if I doen’t!’

‘O, deer! O, deer!’ cried th Rat, in despaer at his obtoosnes. ‘Heer, stop argueing and cum and sraeep!’ And he set to wurk agen and maed th sno fli in all direkshons around him.

After sum further toil his eforts wer reworded, and a verry shaby dor-mat lae expoezd to vue.

‘Thaer, whot did I tel U?’ exclaeemd th Rat in graet trieumf.

‘Absolootly nuthing whotever,’ replied th Moel, with purfekt troothfulnes. ‘Wel now,’ he went on, ‘U seem to hav found another peess of domestik liter, dun for and throen awae, and I supoez U'r purfeklty hapy. Beter go ahed and danss yuur jig round that if U've got to, and get it oever, and then perhaps we can go on and not waest eny mor tiem oever rubbish-heeps. Can we *eet* a dormat? or sleep under a dor-mat? Or sit on a dor-mat and slej hoem oever th sno on it, U exasperaeting roedent?’

‘Do -- U -- meen -- to -- sae,’ cried th exsited Rat, ‘that this dor-mat duzn’t *tel* U enything?’

‘Reealy, Rat,’ sed th Moel, qiet petishly, ‘I think we’d had enuf of this foly. Hoo ever hurd of a dor-mat *teling* enywun enything? Thae simply doen’t do it. Thae ar not that sort at all. Dor-mats noe thaer plaess.’

‘Now luuk heer, U -- U thik-heded beest,’ replied th Rat, reealy anggrgry, ‘this must stop. Not another wurd, but scraep -- scraep and scrach and dig and hunt round, espeshaly

on th sieds of th humoks, if U wont to sleep dri and worm to-niet, for it's our last chanss!"

Th Rat atakt a sno-bank besied them with ardor, proebing with his cujel evrywhaer and then digging with fuery; and th Moel scraept bizily too, mor to obliej th Rat than for eny uther reezon, for his opinyon wuz that his frend wuz geting liet-heded.

Sum ten minits' hard wurk, and th point of th Rat's cujel struk sumthing that sounded holo. He wurkt til he cuud get a paw thru and feel; then cauld th Moel to cum and help him. Hard at it went th too animals, til at last th rezult of thaer laebors stuud fuul in vue of th astonisht and hitherto increjulus Moel.

In th sied of whot had seemd to be a sno-bank stuud a solid-luuking litl dor, paented a dark green. An ieern bel-puul hung bi th sied, and beloe it, on a smaul bras plae, neetly engraevd in sqaer capital leters, thae cuud reed bi th aed of moonliet MR. BAJER.

Th Moel fel bakwards on th sno from sheer serpierz and deliet. 'Rat!' he cried in

penitenss, 'U'r a wunder! A reeal wunder, that's whot U ar. I see it all now! U argued it out, step bi step, in that wiez hed of yuurs, from th verry moement that I fel and cut mi shin, and U luukt at th cut, and at wunss yuur majestik miend sed to itself, "Dor-sraeper!" And then U turnd to and found th verry dor-sraeper that dun it! Did U stop thaer? No. Sum peopl wuud hav bin quiet satisfied; but not U. Yuur intelekt went on wurking. "Let me oenly just fiend a dor-mat," ses U to yuурself, "and mi theeoery is proovd!" And of corss U found yuur dor-mat. U'r so clever, I beleev U cuud fiend enything U liekt. "Now," ses U, "that dor exists, as plaen as if I saw it. Thaer's nuthing elss remaens to be dun but to fiend it!" Wel, I've reed about that sort of thing in buuks, but I've never cum acros it befor in reeal lief. U aut to go whaer U'l be properly apreeshiaeted. U'r simply waested heer, amung us feloes. If I oenly had yuur hed, Raty -- -- '

'But as U havn't,' interupted th Rat, rather unkiendly, 'I supoez U'r going to sit on th sno all niet and *tauk*? Get up at

wunss and hang on to that bel-puul U see thaer, and ring hard, as hard as U can, whiel I hamer!

Whiel th Rat atakt th dor with his stik, th Moel sprang up at th bel-puul, clucht it and swung thaer, boeth feet wel off th ground, and from qiet a long wae off thae cuud faently heer a deep-toend bel respond.

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## Chapter 4

### IV

### MR. BAJER

THAE waeted paeshently for whot seemd a verry long tiem, stamping in th sno to keep thaer feet worm. At last thae hurd th sound of slo shufling fuutsteps aproeching th dor from th insied. It seemd, as th Moel remarkt to th Rat, liek sum wun wauking in carpet slipers that wer too larj for him and doun at heel; which wuz intelijent of Moel, becauz that wuz exaktly whot it wuz.

Thaer wuz th noiz of a boelt shot bak, and th dor oepend a fue inches, enuf to sho a long snout and a paer of sleepy blinking ies.

'Now, th *verry* next tiem this hapens,' sed a gruf and suspishus vois, 'I shal be exseedingly anggry. Hoo is it *this* tiem, disturbing peepl on such a niet? Speek up!'

'O, Bajer,' cried th Rat, 'let us in, pleez.

It's me, Rat, and mi frend Moel, and we've lost our wae in th sno.'

'Whot, Raty, mi deer litl man!' exclaeemd th Bajer, in qiet a diferent vois.  
'Cum along in, boeth of U, at wunss. Whi, U must be perrisht. Wel I never!  
Lost in th sno! And in th Wield Wuud, too, and at this tiem of niet! But cum  
in with U!'

Th too animals tumbld oever eech uther in thaer eegernes to get insied, and  
hurd th dor shut behiend them with graet joy and releef.

Th Bajer, hoo wor a long dresing-goun, and hoos slipers wer indeed verry  
doun at heel, carryd a flat candlstik in his paw and had probably bin on his  
wae to bed when thaer sumons sounded. He luukt kiendly doun on them and  
pated boeth thaer heds. 'This is not th sort of niet for smaul animals to be  
out,' he sed paturnaly. 'I'm afraed U've bin up to sum of yuur pranks agen,  
Raty. But cum along; cum into th kichen. Thaer's a furst-raet fier thaer, and  
super and evrything.'

He shuflid on in frunt of them, carrying th liet, and thae foloed him, nujing  
eech uther in an antisipaeting sort of wae, doun

a long, gloomy, and, to tel th trooth, desiederly shaby pasej, into a sort of a sentral haul; out of which thaе cuud dimly see uther long tunel-liek pasejes branching, pasejes misteerieus and without apparrent end. But thaer wer dors in th haul as wel -- stout oeken cumfortabl-luuking dors. Wun of thees th Bajer flung oopen, and at wunss thaе found themselvs in all th glo and wormth of a larj fier-lit kichen.

Th flor wuz wel-worn red brik, and on th wied harth burnt a fier of logs, between too atraktiv chimny-corners tukt awae in th waul, wel out of eny suspishon of draaft. A cupl of hi-bakt setls, faesing eech uther on eether sied of th fier, gaev further siting acomodaeshons for th soeshably dispoezd. In th midl of th room stuud a long taebл of plaen bords plaest on tresls, with benches doun eech sied. At wun end of it, whaer an arm-chaer stuud puusht bak, wer spred th remaens of th Bajer's plaen but ampl super. Roes of spotles plaets winkt from th shelvs of th dreser at th far end of th room, and from th rafters oeverhed hung hams, bundls of dried hurbs, nets of unyons,

and baskets of egs. It seemd a plaess whaer heeroes cuud fitly feest after viktory, whaer weery harvesters cuud lien up in scors along th taebel and keep thaer Harvest Hoem with murth and song, or whaer too or three frends of simpl taests cuud sit about as thae pleezd and eet and smoek and tauk in cumfort and contentment. Th rudy brik flor smield up at th smoeky seeling; th oeken setls, shieny with long waer, exchaenjd cheerful glances with eech uther; plaets on th dreser grind at pots on th shelf, and th merry fierliet flikerd and plaed oever evrything without distinkshon.

Th kiendly Bajer thrust them doun on a setl to toest themselvs at th fier, and bad them remoov thaer wet coets and boots. Then he fecht them dresing-gouns and slipers, and himself baethd th Moel's shin with worm wauter and mended th cut with stiking-plaster til th hoel thing wuz just as guud as nue, if not beter. In th embraesing liet and wormth, worm and dri at last, with weery legs propt up in frunt of them, and a sugjestiv clink of plaets being araenjd on th taebel behiend, it seemd to th storm-driven animals, now in

saef ankorej, that th coeld and trakles Wield Wuud just left outsied wuz miels and miels awae, and all that thae had suferd in it a haf-forgoten dreem.

When at last thae wer thuroely toested, th Bajer sumond them to th taebel, whaer he had bin bizy laeing a repast. Thae had felt prity hunggry befor, but when thae akchualy saw at last th super that wuz spred for them, reealy it seemd oenly a qeschon of whot thae shuud atak furst whaer all wuz so atraktiv, and whether th uther things wuud obliejingly waet for them til thae had tiem to giv them atenshon. Conversaeshon wuz impossibl for a long tiem; and when it wuz sloely rezoomd, it wuz that regretabl sort of conversaeshon that rezults from tauking with yuor mouth fuul. Th Bajer did not miend that sort of thing at all, nor did he taek eny noetis of elboes on th taebel, or evrybody speeking at wunss. As he did not go into Sosieety himself, he had got an iedeea that thees things belongd to th things that didn't reealy mater. (We noe of corss that he wuz rong, and tuuk too narro a vue; becauz thae do mater verry much, tho it wuud

taek too long to explaen whi.) He sat in his arm-chaer at th hed of th taebli, and noded graevly at intervals as th animals toeld thaer story; and he did not seem serpriezd or shokt at enything, and he never sed, 'I toeld U so,' or, 'Just whot I aulwaes sed,' or remarkt that thae aut to hav dun so-and-so, or aut not to hav dun sumthing elss. Th Moel began to feel verry frendly tords him.

When super wuz reealy finisht at last, and eech animal felt that his skin wuz now as tiet as wuz deesently saef, and that bi this tiem he didn't caer a hang for enybody or enything, thae gatherd round th gloeing embers of th graet wuud fier, and thaut how joly it wuz to be siting up *so* laet, and *so* independent, and *so* fuul; and after thae had chated for a tiem about things in jeneral, th Bajer sed hartily, 'Now then! tel us th nues from yuur part of th wurld. How's oeld Toed going on?'

'O, from bad to wurss,' sed th Rat graevly, whiel th Moel, cokt up on a setl and basking in th fierliet, his heels hieer than his hed, tried to luuk properly mornful. 'Anuther smash-up oenly last week, and a bad wun. U see, he wil insist on drieving himself,

and he's hoeplesly incaepabl. If he'd oenly employ a deesent, stedy, wel-traend animal, pae him guud waejes, and leev evrything to him, he'd get on all riet. But no; he's convinst he's a heven-born driever, and noebody can teech him enything; and all th rest foloes.'

'How meny has he had?' inqierd th Bajer gloomily.

'Smashes, or masheens?' askt th Rat. 'O, wel, after all, it's th saem thing -- with Toed. This is th seventh. As for th uthers -- U noe that coech-hous of his? Wel, it's pield up -- literaly pield up to th roof -- with fragments of moetor-cars, nun of them bigger than yuur hat! That accounts for th uther six -- so far as thae can be accounted for.'

'He's bin in hospital three tiems,' puut in th Moel; 'and as for th fiens he's had to pae, it's simply awful to think of.'

'Yes, and that's part of th trubl,' continued th Rat. 'Toed's rich, we all noe; but he's not a milyonaer. And he's a hoeplesly bad driever, and qiet regardles of law and order. Kild or rooind -- it's got to be wun of

th too things, sooner or laeter. Bajer! we'r his frends -- autn't we to do sumthing?'

Th Bajer went thru a bit of hard thinking. 'Now luuk heer!' he sed at last, rather seveerly; 'of corss U noe I can't do enything *now*!'

His too frends asented, qiet understanding his point. No animal, acording to th rools of animal-etiket, is ever expekted to do enything strenueus, or heroeik, or eeven moderetly aktiv duuring th off-seezon of winter. All ar sleepy -- sum akchualy asleep. All ar wether-bound, mor or les; and all ar resting from arjuos daes and niets, duuring which evry musl in them has bin seveerly tested, and evry enerjy kept at fuul strech.

'Verry wel then!' continued th Bajer. '*But*, when wunss th yeer has reealy turnd, and th niets ar shorter, and hafwae thru them wun rouzes and feels fijety and wonting to be up and doing bi sunriez, if not befor -- *U noe!* -- -- '

Boeth animals noded graevly. *Thae* nue!

'Wel, *then*,' went on th Bajer, 'we -- that is, U and me and our frend th Moel heer -- we'l taek Toed seeriusly in hand. We'l stand

no nonsenss whotever. We'l bring him bak to reezon, bi forss if need be. We'l *maek* him be a sensibl Toed. We'l -- U'r asleep, Rat!"

'Not me!' sed th Rat, waeking up with a jurk.

'He's bin asleep too or three tiems sinss super,' sed th Moel, lafing. He himself wuz feeling quiet waekful and eeven lievly, tho he didn't noe whi. Th reezon wuz, of corss, that he being nacheraly an underground animal bi burth and breeding, th sichuaeshon of Bajer's hous exaktly sooted him and maed him feel at hoem; whiel th Rat, hoo slept evry niet in a bedroom th windoes of which oepend on a breezy river, nacheraly felt th atmosfeer stil and opresiv.

'Wel, it's tiem we wer all in bed,' sed th Bajer, geting up and feching flat candlstiks. 'Cum along, U too, and I'l sho U yuur qorters. And taek yuur tiem morro morning -- brekfast at eny our U pleez!'

He condukted th too animals to a long room that seemd haf bedchaember and haf loft. Th Bajer's winter stors, which indeed wer

vizibl evrywhaer, tuuk up haf th room -- piels of apls, turnips, and potaetoes, baskets fuul of nuts, and jars of huny; but th too litl whiet beds on th remaender of th flor luukt soft and invieting, and th linen on them, tho corss, wuz cleen and smelt buetyfuly of lavender; and th Moel and th Wauter Rat, shaeking off thaer garments in sum thurty seconds, tumblid in between th sheets in graet joy and contentment.

In acordanss with th kiendly Bajer's injunkshons, th too tierd animals caem doun to brekfast verry laet next morning, and found a briet fier burning in th kichen, and too yung hejhogs siting on a bench at th taebel, eeting oetmeel porrij out of wuuden boels. Th hejhogs dropt thaer spoons, roez to thaer feet, and dukt thaer heds respektfuly as th too enterd.

'Thaer, sit doun, sit doun,' sed th Rat plezantly, 'and go on with yuur porrij. Whaer hav U yungsters cum from? Lost yuur wae in th sno, I supoez?'

'Yes, pleez, sur,' sed th elder of th too hejhogs respektfuly. 'Me and litl Bily heer, we wuz trieing to fiend our wae to scool –

muther *wuud* hav us go, wuz th wether ever so -- and of corss we lost ourselvs, sur, and Bily he got frietend and tuuk and cried, being yung and faent-harted. And at last we hapend up agenst Mr. Bajer's bak dor, and maed so boeld as to nok, sur, for Mr. Bajer he's a kiend-harted jentlman, as evrywun noes -- -- '

'I understand,' sed th Rat, cuting himself sum rashers from a sied of baecon, whiel th Moel dropt sum eggs into a sauspan. 'And whot's th wether liek outsied? U needn't "sur" me qiet so much?' he aded.

'O, terribl bad, sur, terribl deep th sno is,' sed th hejhog. 'No geting out for th lieks of U jentlmen to-dae.'

'Whaer's Mr. Bajer?' inqierd th Moel, as he wormd th cofy-pot befor th fier.

'Th master's gon into his study, sur,' replied th hejhog, 'and he sed as how he wuz going to be particuelar bizy this morning, and on no acount wuz he to be disturb'd.'

This explanaeshon, of corss, wuz thuroely understuud bi evry wun prezent. Th fakt is, as aulredy set forth, when U liv a lief of intenss aktivity for six munths in th yeer, and

of comparrativ or akchual somnolenss for th uther six, duuring th later peeriod U cannot be continuealy pleading sleepynes when thaer ar peopl about or things to be dun. Th excuess gets monotonus. Th animals wel nue that Bajer, having eeten a harty brekfast, had retierd to his study and setld himself in an arm-chaer with his legs up on another and a red coton hankerchif oever his faess, and wuz being 'bizy' in th uezhual wae at this tiem of th yeer.

Th frunt-dor bel clangd loudly, and th Rat, hoo wuz verry greesy with buterd toest, sent Bily, th smauler hejhog, to see hoo it miet be. Thaer wuz a sound of much stamping in th haul, and prezently Bily returnd in frunt of th Oter, hoo throo himself on th Rat with an embraess and a shout of afekshonet greeting.

'Get off!' spluterd th Rat, with his mouth ful.

'Thaut I shuud fiend U heer all riet,' sed th Oter cheerfuly. 'Thae wer all in a graet staet of alarm along River Bank when I ariev'd this morning. Rat never bin hoem all niet -- nor Moel eether -- sumthing dredful

must hav hapend, thae sed; and th sno had cuverd up all yuur traks, of corss. But I nue that when peopl wer in eny fix thae moestly went to Bajer, or elss Bajer got to noe of it sumhow, so I caem straet off heer, thru th Wield Wuud and th sno! Mi! it wuz fien, cuming thru th sno as th red sun wuz riezing and shoeing agenst th blak tree-trunks! As U went along in th stilnes, evry now and then mases of sno slid off th branches sudenly with a flop! maeking U jump and run for cuver. Sno-casls and sno-caverns had sprung up out of noewhaer in th niet -- and sno brijes, terreses, ramparts -- I cuud hav staed and plaed with them for ours. Heer and thaer graet branches had bin torn awae bi th sheer waet of th sno, and robins purcht and hopt on them in thaer purky conseeted wae, just as if thae had dun it themselvs. A raged string of wield geess past oeverhed, hie on th grae ski, and a fue ruuks whurld oever th trees, inspekted, and flapt off hoemwards with a discusted expreshon; but I met no sensibl being to ask th nues of. About hafwae acros I caem on a rabbit

siting on a stump, cleening his sily faess with his paws. He wuz a prity scaerd animal when I crept up behiend him and plaest a hevy forpaw on his shoelder. I had to cuf his hed wunss or twies to get eny senss out of it at all. At last I manejd to extrakt from him that Moel had bin seen in th Wield Wuud last niet bi wun of them. It wuz th tauk of th buroes, he sed, how Moel, Mr. Rat's particuelar frend, wuz in a bad fix; how he had lost his wae, and "Thae" wer up and out hunting, and wer chivying him round and round. "Then whi didn't eny of U *do* sumthing?" I askt. "U maen't be blest with braens, but thaer ar hundreds and hundreds of U, big, stout feloes, as fat as buter, and yuor buroes runing in all direkshons, and U cuud hav taeken him in and maed him saef and comfortabl, or tried to, at all events." "Whot, *us*?" he meerly sed: "*do* sumthing? us rabbits?" So I cuft him agen and left him. Thaer wuz nuthing elss to be dun. At eny raet, I had lurnt sumthing; and if I had had th luk to meet eny of "Them" I'd hav lurnt sumthing mor -- or *thae* wuud.'

‘Wern’t U at all -- er -- nurvus?’ askt th Moel, sum of yesterdae’s terror cuming bak to him at th menshon of th Wield Wuud.

‘Nurvus?’ Th Oter shoed a gleeming set of strong whiet teeth as he laft. ‘I’d giv ‘em nurvs if eny of them tried enything on with me. Heer, Moel, fri me sum sliesses of ham, liek th guud litl chap U ar. I’m frietfully hunggry, and I’v got eny amount to sae to Raty heer. Havn’t seen him for an aej.’

So th guud-naecherd Moel, having cut sum sliesses of ham, set th hejhogs to fri it, and returnd to his oen brekfast, whiel th Oter and th Rat, thaer heds together, eegerly taukt river-shop, which is long shop and tauk that is endles, runing on liek th babling river itself.

A plae of fried ham had just bin cleerd and sent bak for mor, when th Bajer enterd, yauning and rubbing his ies, and greeted them all in his qieet, simpl wae, with kiend enqiryrs for evry wun. ‘It must be geting on for lunchon tiem,’ he remarkt to th Oter. ‘Beter stop and hav it with us. U must be hunggry, this coeld morning.’

'Rather!' replied th Oter, winking at th Moel. 'Th siet of thees greedy yung hejhogs stufing themselvs with fried ham maeks me feel pozitivly famisht.'

Th hejhogs, hoo wer just begining to feel hunggry agen after thaer porrij, and after wurking so hard at thaer frieing, luukt timidly up at Mr. Bajer, but wer too shi to sae enything.

'Heer, U too yungsters be off hoem to yuur muther,' sed th Bajer kiendly. 'I'l send sum wun with U to sho U th wae. U woen't wont eny diner to-dae, I'l be bound.'

He gaev them sixpenss apeess and a pat on th hed, and thae went off with much respektful swinging of caps and tuching of forloks.

Prezently thae all sat doun to lunchon together. Th Moel found himself plaest next to Mr. Bajer, and, as th uther too wer stil deep in river-gosip from which nuthing cuud divurt them, he tuuk th oportuenity to tel Bajer how cumfortabl and hoem-liek it all felt to him. 'Wunss wel underground,' he sed, 'U noe exaktly whaer U ar. Nuthing

can hapen to U, and nuthing can get at U. U'r entierly yuor oen master, and U doen't hav to consult enybody or miend whot thae sae. Things go on all th saem oeverhed, and U let 'em, and doen't bother about 'em. When U wont to, up U go, and thaer th things ar, waeting for U.'

Th Bajer simply beemd on him. 'That's exaktly whot I sae,' he replied. 'Thaer's no secuerity, or peess and tranqility, exsept underground. And then, if yuor iedeeas get larjer and U wont to expand -- whi, a dig and a scraep, and thaer U ar! If U feel yuor hous is a bit too big, U stop up a hoel or too, and thaer U ar agen! No bilders, no traedzmen, no remarks past on U bi feloes luuking oever yuor waul, and, abuv all, no *wether*. Luuk at Rat, now. A cupl of feet of flud wauter, and he's got to moov into hierd lojings; uncumfortabl, inconveenently sichuaeted, and horribly expensiv. Taek Toed. I sae nuthing agenst Toed Haul; qiet th best hous in thees parts, *as a* hous. But supoezing a fier braeks out -- whaer's Toed? Supoezing tiels ar bloen off, or wauls sink or crak, or windoes get broeken -- whaer's Toed?

Supoezing th rooms ar draafthy -- I *haet* a draaft mieself -- whaer's Toed? No, up and out of dors is guud enuf to roem about and get wun's living in; but underground to cum bak to at last -- that's mi iedeea of *hoem*!"

Th Moel asented hartily; and th Bajer in conseqenss got verry frendly with him. 'When lunch is oever,' he sed, 'I'l taek U all round this litl plaess of mien. I can see U'l apreeshiaet it. U understand whot domestik arkitekcher aut to be, U do.'

After lunchon, acordingly, when th uther too had setld themselvs into th chimny-corner and had started a heeted arguement on th subjekt of *eels*, th Bajer lieted a lantern and bad th Moel folo him. Crosing th haul, thae past doun wun of th prinsipal tunels, and th waevering liet of th lantern gaev glimpses on eether sied of rooms boeth larj and smaul, sum meer cubords, uthers neerly as braud and impoezing as Toed's diening-haul. A narro pasej at riet angglis led them into another corridor, and heer th saem thing wuz repeeted. Th Moel wuz stagerd at th siez, th extent, th ramificaeshons of it all; at th length of th dim pasejes, th solid

vaultings of th cramd stor-chaembes, th maesonry evrywhaer, th pilars, th arches, th paevments. 'How on urth, Bajer,' he sed at last, 'did U ever fiend tiem and strength to do all this? It's astonishing!'

'It *wiud* be astonishing indeed,' sed th Bajer simply, 'if I *had* dun it. But as a mater of fakt I did nun of it -- oenly cleend out th pasejes and chaembes, as far as I had need of them. Thaer's lots mor of it, all round about. I see U doen't understand, and I must explaen it to U. Wel, verry long ago, on th spot whaer th Wield Wuud waevs now, befor ever it had planted itself and groen up to whot it now is, thaer wuz a sity -- a sity of peepl, U noe. Heer, whaer we ar standing, thae livd, and waukt, and taukt, and slept, and carryd on thaer biznes. Heer thae staebld thaer horses and feested, from heer thae roed out to fiet or droev out to traed. Thae wer a powerful peepl, and rich, and graet bilders. Thae bilt to last, for thae thaut thaer sity wuud last for ever.'

'But whot has becum of them all?' askt th Moel.

'Hoo can tel?' sed th Bajer. 'Peopl

cum -- thaer stae for a whiel, thaer flurish, thaer bild -- and thaer go. It is thaer wae. But we remaen. Thaer wer bajers heer, I've bin toeld, long befor that saem sity ever caem to be. And now thaer ar bajers heer agen. We ar an enduuring lot, and we mae moov out for a tiem, but we waet, and ar paeshent, and bak we cum. And so it wil ever be.'

'Wel, and when thaer went at last, thoes peopl?' sed th Moel.

'When thaer went,' continued th Bajer, 'th strong winds and persistent raens tuuk th mater in hand, paeshently, seeslesly, yeer after yeer. Perhaps we bajers too, in our smaul wae, helpt a litl -- hoo noes? It wuz all doun, doun, doun, grajually -- rooin and leveling and disapeeranss. Then it wuz all up, up, up, grajually, as seeds groo to saplings, and saplings to forest trees, and brambl and furn caem creeping in to help. Leef-moeld roez and obliteraeted, streems in thaer winter freshets braut sand and soil to clog and to cuver, and in corss of tiem our hoem wuz redy for us agen, and we moovd in. Up abuv us, on th surfis, th saem thing hapend. Animals arievd, liekt th luuk of th plaess, tuuk up

thaer qorters, setld doun, spred, and flurisht. Thae didn't bother themselvs about th past -- thae never do; thae'r too bizy. Th plaess wuz a bit humpy and hiloky, nacheraly, and ful of hoels; but that wuz rather an advantej. And thae doen't bother about th fuecher, eether -- th fuecher when perhaps th peepl wil moov in agen -- for a tiem -- as mae verry wel be. Th Wield Wuud is prity wel popuelaeted bi now; with all th uezhual lot, guud, bad, and indiferent -- I naem no naems. It taeks all sorts to maek a wurld. But I fansy U noe sumthing about them yuурself bi this tiem.'

'I do indeed,' sed th Moel, with a sliet shiver.

'Wel, wel,' sed th Bajer, pating him on th shoelder, 'it wuz yuur furst expeeri'enss of them, U see. Thae'r not so bad reealy; and we must all liv and let liv. But I'l pas th wurd around to-morro, and I think U'l hav no further trubl. Eny frend of *mien* wauks whaer he lieks in this cuntry, or I'l noe th reezon whi!'

When thae got bak to th kichen agen, thae found th Rat wauking up and doun, verry

restles. Th underground atmosfeer wuz opresing him and geting on his nurvs, and he seemd reealy to be afraed that th river wuud run awae if he wasn't thaer to luuk after it. So he had his oevercoet on, and his pistols thrust into his belt agen. 'Cum along, Moel,' he sed ankshusly, as soon as he caut siet of them. 'We must get off whiel it's daeliet. Doen't wont to spend anuther niet in th Wield Wuud agen.'

'It'l be all riet, mi fien felo,' sed th Oter. 'I'm cuming along with U, and I noe evry path bliendfoeld; and if thaer's a hed that needs to be puncht, U can confidently relie upon me to punch it.'

'U reealy needn't fret, Raty,' aded th Bajer plasidly. 'Mi pasejes run further than U think, and I've boelt-hoels to th ej of th wuud in several direkshons, tho I doen't caer for evrybody to noe about them. When U reealy hav to go, U shal leev bi wun of mi short cuts. Meentiem, maek yuурself eezy, and sit doun agen.'

Th Rat wuz nevertheless stil ankshus to be off and atend to his river, so th Bajer, taeking up his lantern agen, led th wae along

a damp and aerles tunel that wound and dipt, part vaulted, part huen thru solid rok, for a weery distanss that seemd to be miels. At last daeliet began to sho itself confuezedly thru tanggld groeth oeverhanging th mouth of th pasej; and th Bajer, biding them a haesty guud-bi, puusht them hurydly thru th oepening, maed evrything luuk as nacheral as posibl agen, with creepers, brushwuud, and ded leevs, and retreated.

Thae found themselvs standing on th verry ej of th Wield Wuud. Roks and brambls and tree-roots behiend them, confuezedly heept and tanggld; in frunt, a graet spaess of qieet feelds, hemd bi liens of hejes blak on th sno, and, far ahed, a glint of th familyar oeld river, whiel th wintry sun hung red and loe on th horiezon. Th Oter, as noeing all th paths, tuuk charj of th party, and thaе traeld out on a bee-lien for a distant stiel. Pauzing thaer a moement and luuking bak, thaе saw th hoel mas of th Wield Wuud, denss, menising, compakt, grimly set in vast whiet seroundings; siemultaeniusly thaе turnd and maed swiftly for hoem, for fierliet and th familyar things it plaed on,

for th vois, sounding cheerily outsied thaer windo, of th river that thae nue  
and trusted in all its moods, that never maed them afraed with eny  
amaezment.

As he huryd along, eegerly antisipaeting th moement when he wuud be at  
hoem agen amung th things he nue and liekt, th Moel saw clearly that he  
wuz an animal of tild feeld and hej-roe, linkt to th plowd furo, th freeqented  
pascher, th laen of eevning linggerings, th cultivaeted garden-plot. For uthers  
th asperritys, th stubborn enduuranss, or th clash of akchual conflikt, that went  
with Naecher in th ruf; he must be wiez, must keep to th plezant plaeses in  
which his liens wer laed and which held advencher enuf, in thaer wae, to last  
for a lieftiem.

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## Chapter 5

### V

### DULCE DOMUM

TH sheep ran hudling together agenst th hurdls, bloeing out thin nostrils and stamping with deliket for-feet, thaer heds throen bak and a liet steem riezing from th crowded sheep-pen into th frosty aer, as th too animals haesend bi in hie spirits, with much chater and lafter. Thae wer returning acros cuntry after a long dae's outing with Oter, hunting and exploring on th wied uplands whaer surten streems tribuetaery to thaer oen River had thaer furst smaul beginings; and th shaeds of th short winter dae wer cloezing in on them, and thae had stil sum distanss to go. Ploding at random acros th plow, thae had hurd th sheep and had maed for them; and now, leeding from th sheep-pen, thae found a beeten trak that maed wauking a lieter biznes, and responded,

moroever, to that smaul inqiering sumthing which all animals carry insied them, saeing unmistaekably, 'Yes, qiet riet; *this* leeds hoem!'

'It luuks as if we wer cuming to a viley,' sed th Moel sumwhot doobiusly, slakening his paess, as th trak, that had in tiem becum a path and then had developt into a laen, now handed them oever to th charj of a wel-metald roed. Th animals did not hoeld with vileyes, and thaer oen hiewaes, thikly freeqented as thae wer, tuuk an independent corss, regardles of church, poest ofis, or publik-hous.

'O, never miend!' sed th Rat. 'At this seezon of th yeer thae'r all saef indors bi this tiem, siting round th fier; men, wimen, and children, dogs and cats and all. We shal slip thru all riet, without eny bother or unplezantnes, and we can hav a luuk at them thru thaer windoes if U liek, and see whot thae'r doing.'

Th rapid nietfaul of mid-Desember had qiet beset th litl viley as thae aproecht it on soft feet oever a furst thin faul of poudery sno. Litl wuz vizibl but sqaers of a dusky

orenj-red on eether sied of th street, whaer th fierliet or lampliet of eech cotej oeverfloed thru th caesments into th dark wurld without. Moest of th loe latist windoes wer inosent of bliends, and to th luukers-in from outsied, th inmaets, gatherd round th tee-taeb, absorbd in handywurk, or tauking with lafter and jescher, had eech that hapy graess which is th last thing th skild aktor shal capcher -- th nacheral graess which goes with purfekt unconshusnes of obzervaeshon. Mooving at wil from wun theeater to another, th too spektaetors, so far from hoem themselvs, had sumthing of wistfulnes in thaer ies as thae wocht a cat being stroekt, a sleepy chield pikt up and hudld off to bed, or a tierd man strech and nok out his piep on th end of a smoeldering log.

But it wuz from wun litl windo, with its bliend drawn doun, a meer blank transpaerensy on th niet, that th senss of hoem and th litl curtend wurld within wauls -- th larjer stresful wurld of outsied Naecher shut out and forgotten -- moest pulsaeted. Cloess agenst th whiet bliend hung a burd-caej, cleerly silooeted, evry wier, purch, and apurtenanss distinkt

and recogniezabl, eeven to yesterdae's dul-ejd lump of shuuger. On th midl purch th flufy ocuepart, hed tukt wel into fethers, seemd so neer to them as to be eezily stroekt, had thaе tried; eeven th deliket tips of his plump-t-out ploomej pensild plaenly on th iloominaeted screen. As thaе luukt, th sleepy litl felo sturd uneezily, wook, shuuk himself, and raezd his hed. Thaе cuud see th gaep of his tieny beek as he yaund in a bord sort of wae, luukt round, and then setld his hed into his bak agen, whiel th rufld fethers grajualy subsieder into purfekt stilnes. Then a gust of biter wind tuuk them in th bak of th nek, a smaul sting of froezen sleet on th skin wook them as from a dreem, and thaе nue thaer toes to be coeld and thaer legs tierd, and thaer oen hoem distant a weery wae.

Wunss beyond th viley, whaer th cotejes seest abruptly, on eether sied of th roed thaе cuud smel thru th darknes th frendly feedls agen; and thaе braest themselvs for th last long strech, th hoem strech, th strech that we noe is bound to end, sum tiem, in th ratl of th dor-lach, th suden fierliet, and th siet of familyar things greeting

us as long-absent travelers from far oever-see. Thae ploded along stedily and sielently, eech of them thinking his oen thauts. Th Moel's ran a guud deel on super, as it wuz pich-dark, and it wuz all a straenj country for him as far as he nue, and he wuz foloeing oebeedi'ently in th waek of th Rat, leeving th giedanss entierly to him. As for th Rat, he wuz wauking a litl wae ahed, as his habit wuz, his shoelders humpt, his ies fixt on th straat grae roed in frunt of him; so he did not noetis puur Moel when sudenly th sumons reecht him, and tuuk him liek an elektrik shok.

We uthers, hoo hav long lost th mor sutl of th fizikal senses, hav not eeven proper turms to expres an animal's inter-comuenicaeshons with his seroundings, living or utherwiez, and hav oenly th wurd 'smel,' for instanss, to inclood th hoel raenj of deliket thrils which murmer in th noeze of th animal niet and dae, sumoning, worning? insieting, repeling. It wuz wun of thees misterius faery cauls from out th void that sudenly reecht Moel in th darknes, maeking him tinggl thru and thru with its verry familyar apeel, eeven

whiel yet he cuud not clearly remember whot it wuz. He stopt ded in his traks, his noezy surching hither and thither in its eforts to re-capcher th fien filament, th telegrafik curent, that had so strongly moovd him. A moement, and he had caut it agen; and with it this tiem caem recolekshon in fuulest flud.

Hoem! That wuz whot thae ment, thoes caresing apeels, thoes soft tuches waafted thru th aer, thoes invisibl litl hands puuling and tugging, all wun wae! Whi, it must be qiet cloess bi him at that moement, his oeld hoem that he had hurydly forsaeken and never saut agen, that dae when he furst found th river! And now it wuz sending out its scouts and its mesenjers to capcher him and bring him in. Sinss his escaep on that briet morning he had hardly given it a thaut, so absorbd had he bin in his nue lief, in all its plezgers, its serpriezes, its fresh and captivaeting expeeri'enses. Now, with a rush of oeld memorys, how clearly it stuud up befor him, in th darknes! Shaby indeed, and smaul and puurly furnisht, and yet his, th hoem he had maed for himself, th hoem he had bin so hapy to get bak to after his dae's wurk.

And th hoem had bin hapy with him, too, evidently, and wuz mising him, and wonted him bak, and wuz teling him so, thru his noezy, sorroefuly, reproechfuly, but with no biternes or angger; oenly with plaentiv remiender that it wuz thaer, and wonted him.

Th caul wuz clear, th sumons wuz plaen. He must oebae it instantly, and go. 'Raty!' he cauld, fuul of joyful exsietment, 'hoeld on! Cum bak! I wont U, qik!'

'O, *cum* along, Moel, do!' replied th Rat cheerfuly, stil ploding along.

'Pleez stop, Raty!' pleeded th puur Moel, in anggish of hart. 'U doen't understand! It's mi hoem, mi oeld hoem! I've just cum acros th smel of it, and it's cloess bi heer, reealy qiet cloess. And I *must* go to it, I must, I must! O, cum bak, Raty! Pleez, pleez cum bak!'

Th Rat wuz bi this tiem verry far ahed, too far to heer clearly whot th Moel wuz cauling, too far to cach th sharp noet of paenful apeel in his vois. And he wuz much taeken up with th wether, for he too cuud smel sumthing -- sumthing suspishusly liek aproeching sno.

'Moel, we mustn't stop now, reealy!' he cauld

bak. 'We'l cum for it to-morro, whotever it is U'v found. But I daern't stop now -- it's laet, and th snoe's cuming on agen, and I'm not shuur of th wae! And I wont yuur noezy, Moel, so cum on qik, thaer's a guud felo!' And th Rat prest forward on his wae without waeting for an anser.

Puur Moel stuud aloen in th roed, his hart torn asunder, and a big sob gathering, gathering, sumwhaer loe doun insied him, to leep up to th surfis prezently, he nue, in pashonet escaep. But eeven under such a test as this his loyalty to his frend stuud furm. Never for a moement did he dreem of abandoning him. Meenwhiel, th waafsts from his oeld hoem pleeded, whisperd, conjerd, and fienaly claemd him impeiriusly. He daerd not tarry longger within thaer majik surkl. With a rench that tor his verry hartstrings he set his faess doun th roed and foloed submisivly in th trak of th Rat, whiel faent, thin litl smels, stil doging his retreeting noezy, reproecht him for his nue frendship and his calus forgetfulnes.

With an efort he caut up to th unsuspekting Rat, hoo began chatering cheerfully about whot thae wuud do when thae got bak, and

how joly a fier of logs in th parlor wuud be, and whot a super he ment to eet; never noetising his companion's sielenss and distresful staet of miend. At last, however, when thae had gon sum considerabl wae further, and wer pasing sum tree-stumps at th ej of a cops that borderd th roed, he stopt and sed kiendly, 'Luuk heer, Moel oeld chap, U seem ded tierd. No tauk left in U, and yuor feet draging liek led. We'l sit doun heer for a minit and rest. Th sno has held off so far, and th best part of our jurny is oever.'

Th Moel subsieded forlornly on a tree-stump and tried to controel himself, for he felt it shuurly cuming. Th sob he had faut with so long refuezd to be beeten. Up and up, it forst its wae to th aer, and then another, and another, and uthers thik and fast; til puur Moel at last gaev up th strugl, and cried freely and helplessly and oopenly, now that he nue it wuz all oever and he had lost whot he cuud hardly be sed to hav found.

Th Rat, astonisht and dismaed at th vieolenss of Moel's parroxizm of greef, did not daer to speek for a whiel. At last he sed, verry

qieetly and sympathetikaly, 'Whot is it, oeld felo? Whotever can be th mater?  
Tel us yuur trubl, and let me see whot I can do.'

Puur Moel found it dificult to get eny wurdz out between th upheevals of his chest that foloed wun upon another so qikly and held bak speech and choekt it as it caem. 'I noe it's a -- shaby, dinjy litl plaess,' he sobd forth at last, broekenly: 'not liek -- yuur coozy qorters -- or Toed's buetyful haul -- or Bajer's graet hous -- but it wuz mi oen litl hoem -- and I wuz fond of it -- and I went awae and forgot all about it -- and then I smelt it suddenly -- on th roed, when I cauld and U wuudn't lisen, Rat -- and evrything caem bak to me with a rush -- and I *wonted* it! -- O deer, O deer! -- and when U *wuudn't* turn bak, Raty -- and I had to leev it, tho I wuz smeling it all th tiem -- I thaut mi hart wuud braek. -- We miet hav just gon and had wun luuk at it, Raty -- oenly wun luuk -- it wuz cloess bi -- but U wuudn't turn bak, Raty, U wuudn't turn bak! O deer, O deer!'

Recolekshon braut fresh waevs of sorro,

and sobs agen tuuk fuul charj of him, preventing further speech.

Th Rat staerd straet in frunt of him, saeing nuthing, oenly pating Moel jently on th shoelder. After a tiem he muterd gloomily, 'I see it all now! Whot a *pig* I hav bin! A pig -- that's me! Just a pig -- a plaen pig!'

He waeted til Moel's sobs becaem grajually les stormy and mor rithmikal; he waeted til at last snifs wer freeqent and sobs oenly intermitent. Then he roez from his seet, and, remarking caerlesly, 'Wel, now we'd reealy beter be geting on, oeld chap!' set off up th roed agen, oever th toilsum wae thae had cum.

'Whaever ar U (hik) going to (hik), Raty?' cried th teerful Moel, luuking up in alarm.

'We'r going to fiend that hoem of yuurs, oeld felo,' replied th Rat plezantly; 'so U had beter cum along, for it wil taek sum fiending, and we shal wont yuur noezi.'

'O, cum bak, Raty, do!' cried th Moel, geting up and hurying after him.  
'It's no guud, I tel U! It's too laet, and too dark,

and th plaess is too far off, and th snoe's cuming! And -- and I never ment to let U noe I wuz feeling that wae about it -- it wuz all an aksident and a mistaek! And think of River Bank, and yuor super!"

'Hang River Bank, and super too!' sed th Rat hartily. 'I tel U, I'm going to fiend this plaess now, if I stae out all niet. So cheer up, oeld chap, and taek mi arm, and we'l verry soon be bak thaer agen.'

Stil snufling, pleeding, and reluktant, Moel suferd himself to be dragd bak along th roed bi his impeerius companyon, hoo bi a flo of cheerful tauk and anekdoet endevord to begiel his spirits bak and maek th weery wae seem shorter. When at last it seemd to th Rat that thae must be neering that part of th roed whaer th Moel had bin 'held up,' he sed, 'Now, no mor tauking. Biznes! Uez yuor noezi, and giv yuor miend to it.'

Thae moovd on in sielenss for sum litl wae, when sudenly th Rat wuz conshus, thru his arm that wuz linkt in Moel's, of a faent sort of elektrik thril that wuz pasing doun that animal's body. Instantly he

disengaejd himself, fel bak a paess, and waeted, all atenshon.

Th signals wer cuming thru!

Moel stuud a moement rijid, whiel his uplifted noeze, qivering slietly, felt th aer.

Then a short, qik run forward -- a fault -- a chek -- a tri bak; and then a slo, stedy, confident advanss.

Th Rat, much exsited, kept cloess to his heels as th Moel, with sumthing of th aer of a sleep-wauker, crost a dri dich, scrambld thru a hej, and noezd his wae oever a feeld oepen and trakles and baer in th faent starliet.

Sudenly, without giving worning, he dievd; but th Rat wuz on th alurt, and promptly foloed him doun th tunel to which his unuring noeze had faethfuly led him.

It wuz cloess and aerles, and th urthy smel wuz strong, and it seemd a long tiem to Rat aer th pasej ended and he cuud stand erektd and strech and shaek himself. Th Moel struk a mach, and bi its liet th Rat saw that thae wer standing in an oepen spaess, neetly swept and sanded underfuit, and direktly faesing them wuz Moel's litl frunt dor, with

‘Moel End’ paented, in Gothik letering, oever th bel-puul at th sied.

Moel reecht doun a lantern from a nael on th waul and lit it, and th Rat, luuking round him, saw that thae wer in a sort of for-cort. A garden-seet stuud on wun sied of th dor, and on th uther a roeler; for th Moel, hoo wuz a tiedy animal when at hoem, cuud not stand having his ground kikt up bi uther animals into litl runs that ended in urth-heeps. On th wauls hung wier baskets with furns in them, aulternaeting with brakets carrying plaster stachuaery -- *Garibaldi*, and th infant Samueel, and Queen Viktoria, and uther heeroes of modern Italy. Doun on wun sied of th forcort ran a skitl-aly, with benches along it and litl wuuden taebls markt with rings that hinted at beer-mugs. In th midl wuz a smaul round pond contaening goeld-fish and serounded bi a cokl-shel border. Out of th senter of th pond roez a fansyful erekshon cloethd in mor cokl-shels and topt bi a larj silverd glas baul that reflekted evrything all rong and had a verry pleezing efekt.

Moel's faess-beemd at th siet of all thees objekts so deer to him, and he huryd Rat

thru th dor, lit a lamp in th haul, and tuuk wun glanss round his oeld hoem. He saw th dust lieing thik on evrything, saw th cheerles, dezurted luuk of th long-neglekted hous, and its narro, meeger dimenshons, its worn and shaby contents -- and colapst agen on a haul-chaer, his noezy to his paws. 'O Raty!' he cried dizmaly, 'whi ever did I do it? Whi did I bring U to this puur, coeld litl plaess, on a niet liek this, when U miet hav bin at River Bank bi this tiem, toesting yuor toes befor a blaezing fier, with all yuor oen niess things about U!'

Th Rat paed no heed to his doelful self-reproeches. He wuz runing heer and thaer, oepening dors, inspekting rooms and cubords, and lieting lamps and candls and stiking them, up evrywhaer. 'Whot a capital litl hous this is!' he cauld out cheerily. 'So compakt! So wel pland! Evrything heer and evrything in its plaess! We'l maek a joly niet of it. Th furst thing we wont is a guud fier; I'l see to that -- I aulwaes noe whaer to fiend things. So this is th parlor? Splendid! Yuor oen iedeea, thoes litl sleeping-bunks in th waul? Capital! Now, I'l fech th wuud

and th coels, and U get a duster, Moel -- U'l fiend wun in th dror of th kichen taeb'l -- and tri and smarten things up a bit. Busl about, oeld chap!'

Encurejd bi his inspiriting companyon, th Moel rouzd himself and dusted and polisht with enerjy and hartynes, whiel th Rat, runing to and fro with armfuls of fueel, soon had a cheerful blaez roring up th chimny. He haeld th Moel to cum and worm himself; but Moel promptly had anuther fit of th bloos, droping doun on a couch in dark despaer and berrying his faess in his duster. 'Rat,' he moend, 'how about yuor super, U puur, coeld, hunggry, weery animal? I've nuthing to giv U -- nuthing -- not a crum!'

'Whot a felo U ar for giving in!' sed th Rat reproechfuly. 'Whi, oenly just now I saw a sardeen-oepener on th kichen dreser, qiet distinktly; and evrybody noes that meens thaer ar sardeens about sumwhaer in th naeborhuud. Rouz yuorself! puul yuorself together, and cum with me and forej.'

Thae went and forejd acordingly, hunting thru evry cubord and turning out evry dror. Th result wuz not so verry depresing

after all, tho of corss it miet hav bin beter; a tin of sardeens -- a box of capten's biskits, neerly fuul -- and a Gurman sausej encaest in silver paeper.

'Thaer's a banqet for U!' obzurvd th Rat, as he araenjd th taabl. 'I noe sum animals hoo wuud giv thaer eers to be siting doun to super with us to-niet!'

'No bred!' groend th Moel doelorusly; 'no buter, no --- '

'No *pate de foie gras*, no shampaen!' continued th Rat, grining. 'And that remiends me -- whot's that litl dor at th end of th pasej? Yuur selar, of corss! Evry lugzhery in this hous! Just U waet a minit.'

He maed for th selar-dor, and prezently re-apeerd, sumwhot dusty, with a botl of beer in eech paw and another under eech arm, 'Self-indulgent begar U seem to be, Moel,' he obzurvd. 'Denie yuurselv nuthing. This is reealy th jolyest litl plaess I ever wuz in. Now, whaever did U pik up thoes prints? Maek th plaess luuk so hoem-liek, thae do. No wunder U'r so fond of it, Moel. Tel us all about it, and how U caem to maek it whot it is.'

Then, whiel th Rat bizyd himself feching plaets, and nievs and forks, and mustard which he mixt in an eg-cup, th Moel, his buuzom stil heeving with th stres of his reesent emoeshon, relaeted -- sumwhot shiely at furst, but with mor freedom as he wormd to his subjekt -- how this wuz pland, and how that wuz thaut out, and how this wuz got thru a windfaul from an aunt, and that wuz a wunderful fiend and a bargen, and this uther thing wuz baut out of laborius saevings and a surten amount of 'going without.' His spirits fienalyst quiet restord, he must needs go and cares his pozeshons, and taek a lamp and sho off thaer points to his vizitor and expaeshiaet on them, quiet forgetful of th super thaer boeth so much needed; Rat, hoo wuz desperetly hungry but stroev to conseel it, noding seeriusly, examining with a pukerd brow, and saeing, 'wunderful,' and 'moest remarkabl,' at intervals, when th chanss for an obzervaeshon wuz given him.

At last th Rat sukseeded in decoying him to th taebli, and had just got seeriusly to wurk with th sardeen-oepener when sounds wer hurd from th for-cort without -- sounds liek th

scufling of smaul feet in th gravel and a confuezd murmer of tieny voises, whiel broeken sentenses reecht them -- 'Now, all in a lien -- hoeld th lantern up a bit, Tomy -- clearer yuur throets furst -- no caufing after I sae wun, too, three. -- Whaer's yung Bil? -- Heer, cum on, do, we'r all a-waeting -- -- '

'Whot's up?' inquierd th Rat, pauzing in his laebors.

'I think it must be th feeld-miess,' replied th Moel, with a tuch of pried in his maner. 'Thae go round carrol-singing reguelarly at this tiem of th yeer. Thae'r qiet an institooshon in thees parts. And thae never pas me oever -- thae cum to Moel End last of all; and I uezd to giv them hot drinks, and super too sumtiems, when I cuud afford it. It wil be liek oeld tiems to heer them agen.'

'Let's hav a luuk at them!' cried th Rat, jumping up and runing to th dor.

It wuz a prity siet, and a seezonabl wun, that met thaer ies when thae flung th dor oopen. In th for-cort, lit bi th dim raes of a horn lantern, sum aet or ten litl feeld-miess stuud in a semysurkl, red wuusted comforters round thaer throets, thaer for-paws

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thrust deep into thaer pokets, thaer feet jizing for wormth. With briet beedy ies thaer glanst shiely at eech uther, snigering a litl, snifing and aplieing coet-sleevs a guud deel. As th dor oepend, wun of th elder wuns that carryd th lantern wuz just saeing, 'Now then, wun, too, three!' and forthwith thaer shril litl voises uproez on th aer, singing wun of th oeld-tiem carrols that thaer forfaathers compoezd in feelds that wer falo and held bi frost, or when sno-bound in chimny corners, and handed doun to be sung in th miery street to lamp-lit windoes at Yool-tiem.

## **CARROL**

*Vilejers all, this frosty tied,  
Let yuor dors swing oepen wied,  
Tho wind mae folo, and sno besied,  
Yet draw us in bi yuor fier to bied;  
Joy shal be yuurs in th morning!  
Heer we stand in th coeld and th sleet,  
Bloeing finggers and stamping feet,  
Cum from far awae U to greet --  
U bi th fier and we in th street --  
Biding U joy in th morning!  
For aer wun haf of th niet wuz gon,  
Suden a star has led us on,  
Raening blis and benizon --  
Blis to-morro and mor anon,  
Joy for evry morning!*

*Guudman Joezef toild thru th sno --  
Saw th star oe'er a staeb'l loe;  
Maery she miet not further go --  
Welcum thach, and liter beloe!  
Joy wuz hers in th morning!  
And then thae hurd th aenjels tel  
'Hoo wer th furst to cri Noewel?  
Animals all, as it befel,  
In th staeb'l whaer thae did dwel!  
Joy shal be thaers in th morning!*

Th voises seest, th singers, bashful but smieling, exchaenjd siedlong glanses, and sielenss sukseeded -- but for a moement oenly. Then, from up abuv and far awae, doun th tunel thae had so laetly traveld wuz born to thaer eers in a faent muezikal hum th sound of distant bels ringing a joyful and clangorus peel.

'Verry wel sung, boys!' cried th Rat hartily. 'And now cum along in, all of U, and worm yuurselvs bi th fier, and hav sumthing hot!'

'Yes, cum along, feeld-miess,' cried th Moel eegerly. 'This is qiet liek oeld tiems! Shut th dor after U. Puul up that setl to th fier. Now, U just waet a minit, whiel we -- O, Raty!' he cried in despaer, plumping doun on a seet, with teers impending. 'Whotever ar we doing? We've nuthing to giv them!'

'U leev all that to me,' sed th masterful Rat. 'Heer, U with th lantern! Cum oever this wae. I wont to tauk to U. Now, tel me, ar thaer eny shops oopen at this our of th niet?'

'Whi, surtenly, sur,' replied th feeld-mous respektfuly. 'At this tiem of th yeer our shops keep oopen to all sorts of ours.'

'Then luuk heer!' sed th Rat. 'U go off at wunss, U and yuur lantern, and U get me --- '

Heer much muterd conversaeshon ensood, and th Moel oenly hurd bits of it, such as -- 'Fresh, miend! -- no, a pound of that wil do -- see U get Bugins's, for I woen't hav eny uther -- no, oenly th best -- if U can't get it thaer, tri sumwhaer elss -- yes, of corss, hoem-maed, no tind stuf -- wel then, do th best U can!' Fienaly, thaer wuz a chink of coin pasing from paw to paw, th feeld-mous wuz provieded with an ampl basket for his purchases, and off he huryd, he and his lantern.

Th rest of th feeld-miess, purcht in a roe on th setl, thaer smaul legs swinging, gaev themselvs up to enjoyment of th fier, and toested thaer chilblaens til thaе tingled;

whiel th Moel, faeling to draw them into eezy conversaeshon, plunjd into family history and maed eech of them resiet th naems of his nuumerus bruthers, hoo wer too yung, it apeerd, to be alowd to go out a-carroling this yeer, but luukt forward verry shortly to wining th parental consent.

Th Rat, meenwhiel, wuz bizy examining th laebel on wun of th beer-botls. 'I perseev this to be Oeld Burton,' he remarkt aproovingly. '*Sensibl* Moel! Th verry thing! Now we shal be aegl to mul sum ael! Get th things redy, Moel, whiel I draw th corks.'

It did not taek long to prepaer th broo and thrust th tin heeter wel into th red hart of th fier; and soon evry feeld-mous wuz siping and caufing and choeking (for a litl muld ael goes a long wae) and wieping his ies and lafing and forgeting he had ever bin coeld in all his lief.

'Thae akt plaes too, thees feloes,' th Moel explaend to th Rat. 'Maek them up all bi themselvs, and akt them afterwards. And verry wel thae do it, too! Thae gaev us a capital wun last yeer, about a feeld-mous hoo

wuz capched at see bi a Barbary corsaer, and maed to roe in a galy; and when he escaept and got hoem agen, his laedy-luv had gon into a convent. Heer, *U!* U wer in it, I remember. Get up and resiet a bit.'

Th feeld-mous adrest got up on his legs, gigld shiely, luukt round th room, and remaend absolootly tung-tied. His comrads cheerd him on, Moel coext and encurejd him, and th Rat went so far as to taek him bi th shoelders and shaek him; but nuthing cuud oevercum his staej-friet. Thae wer all bizily engaejd on him liek wautermen aplieing th Royal Huemaen Sosieety's reguelaeshons to a caess of long submurzhon, when th lach clikt, th dor oepend, and th feeld-mous with th lantern re-apeerd, stagering under th waet of his basket.

Thaer wuz no mor tauk of plae-akting wunss th verry reeal and solid contents of th basket had bin tumbld out on th taebl. Under th jeneralship of Rat, evrybody wuz set to do sumthing or to fech sumthing. In a verry fue minits super wuz redy, and Moel, as he tuuk th hed of th taebl in a sort of a dreem, saw a laetly barren bord set thik with saevory

cumforts; saw his litl friends' faeses brieten and beem as thae fel to without delae; and then let himself looss -- for he wuz famisht indeed -- on th provender so majikaly provieder, thinking whot a hapy hoem-cuming this had turnd out, after all. As thae aet, thae taukt of oeld tiems, and th feeld-miess gaev him th loekal gosip up to daet, and anserd as wel as thae cuud th hundred qeschons he had to ask them. Th Rat sed litl or nuthing, oenly taiking caer that eech gest had whot he wonted, and plenty of it, and that Moel had no trubl or angzieity about enything.

Thae claterd off at last, verry graetful and showering wishes of th seezon, with thaer jaket pokets stuft with remembrances for th smaul bruthers and sisters at hoem. When th dor had cloezd on th last of them and th chink of th lanterns had died awae, Moel and Rat kikt th fier up, droo thaer chaers in, brood themselvs a last nietcap of muld ael, and discust th events of th long dae. At last th Rat, with a tremendus yaun, sed, 'Moel, oeld chap, I'm redy to drop. Sleepy is simply not th wurd. That yuur oen bunk oever on that sied? Verry wel, then, I'l taek this.

Whot a riping litl hous this is! Evrything so handy!

He clamberd into his bunk and roeld himself wel up in th blankets, and slumber gatherd him forthwith, as a swoth of barly is foeldorfed into th arms of th reeping masheen.

Th weery Moel aulso wuz glad to turn in without delae, and soon had his hed on his pilo, in graet joy and contentment. But aer he cloezd his ies he let them wonder round his oeld room, melo in th glo of th fierliet that plaed or rested on familyar and frendly things which had long bin unconshusly a part of him, and now smielingly reseeevd him bak, without rancor. He wuz now in just th fraem of miend that th taktful Rat had qieetly wurkt to bring about in him. He saw clearly how plaen and simpl -- how narro, eeven -- it all wuz; but clearly, too, how much it all ment to him, and th speshal value of sum such ankorej in wun's existenss. He did not at all wont to abandon th nue lief and its splendid spaeses, to turn his bak on sun and aer and all thaе oferd him and creep hoem and stae thaer; th uper wurld wuz all too strong, it cauld to him stil, eeven doun thaer, and he

nue he must return to th larjer staej. But it wuz guud to think he had this to cum bak to; this plaess which wuz all his oen, thees things which wer so glad to see him agen and cuud aulwaes be counted upon for th saem simpl welcum.

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## Chapter 6

### VI

### MR. TOED

IT wuz a briet morning in th urly part of sumer; th river had rezoomd its wonted banks and its acustomd paess, and a hot sun seemd to be puuling evrything green and buushy and spieky up out of th urch tords him, as if bi strings. Th Moel and th Wauter Rat had bin up sinss daun, verry bizy on maters conekted with boets and th oepening of th boeting seezon; paenting and varnishing, mending padls, repaering cuushons, hunting for mising boethuiks, and so on; and wer finishing brekfast in thaer litl parlor and eegerly discusing thaer plans for th dae, when a hevy nok sounded at th dor.

'Bother!' sed th Rat, all oever eg. 'See hoo it is, Moel, liek a guud chap, sinss U'v finisht.'

Th Moel went to atend th sumons, and

th Rat hurd him ute a cri of serpriez. Then he flung th parlor dor oopen, and anounst with much importanss, 'Mr. Bajer!'

This wuz a wunderful thing, indeed, that th Bajer shuud pae a formal caul on them, or indeed on enybody. He jeneraly had to be caut, if U wonted him badly, as he slipt qieetly along a hejro of an urly morning or a laet eevning, or elss hunted up in his oen hous in th midl of th Wuud, which wuz a seerius undertaeking.

Th Bajer stroed hevily into th room, and stuud luuking at th too animals with an expreshon fuul of seeriusnes. Th Rat let his eg-spoon faul on th taebi-clauth, and sat oopen-mouthd.

'Th our has cum!' sed th Bajer at last with graet solemnity.

'Whot our?' askt th Rat uneezily, glansing at th clok on th mantelpoess .

'Hoos our, U shuud rather sae,' replied th Bajer. 'Whi, Toed's our! Th our of Toed! I sed I wuud taek him in hand as soon as th winter wuz wel oever, and I'm going to taek him in hand to-dae!'

'Toed's our, of corss!' cried th Moel de-

lietedly. 'Hoorae! I remember now! *We'l* teech him to be a sensibl Toed!'

'This verry morning,' continued th Bajer, taeking an armchaer, 'as I lurnt last niet from a trustwurthy sorss, anuther nue and exsepshonaly powerful moetor-car wil ariev at Toed Haul on aprooval or return. At this verry moement, perhaps, Toed is bizy araeing himself in thoes singguelarly hidius habiliments so deer to him, which transform him from a (comparrativly) guud-luuking Toed into an Objekt which throes eny deesent-miended animal that cumcros it into a vieolent fit. We must be up and doing, aer it is too laet. U too animals wil acumpany me instantly to Toed Haul, and th wurk of rescue shal be accomplisht.'

'Riet U ar!' cried th Rat, starting up. 'We'l rescue th puur unhappy animal! We'l convurt him! He'l be th moest convurted Toed that ever wuz befor we've dun with him!'

Thae set off up th roed on thaer mishon of mursy, Bajer leeding th wae. Animals when in cumpany wauk in a proper and sensibl maner, in singgl fiel, insted of sprauling all

acros th roed and being of no uess or suport to eech uther in caess of suden  
trubl or daenjer.

Thae reecht th carrej-driev of Toed Haul to fiend, as th Bajer had  
antisipaeted, a shieny nue moetor-car, of graet siez, paented a briet red  
(Toed's faavorit culor), standing in frunt of th hous. As thae neerd th dor it  
wuz flung oopen, and Mr. Toed, araed in gogls, cap, gaeters, and enormous  
oevercoet, caem swagering doun th steps, drawing on his gauntleted gluvs.

'Hulo! cum on, U feloes!' he cried cheerfuly on caching siet of them. 'U'r  
just in tiem to cum with me for a joly -- to cum for a joly -- for a -- er -- joly  
-- -- '

His harty aksents faulterd and fel awae as he noetist th sturn unbending  
luuk on th countenances of his siilent frends, and his invitaeshon remaend  
unfinisht.

Th Bajer stroed up th steps. 'Taek him insied,' he sed sturnly to his  
companions. Then, as Toed wuz husld thru th dor, strugling and proetesting,  
he turnd to th *shoefer* in charj of th nue moetor-car.

'I'm afraed U woen't be wonted to-dae,' he

sed. 'Mr. Toed has chaenjd his miend. He wil not reqier th car. Pleez understand that this is fienal. U needn't waet.' Then he foloed th uthers insied and shut th dor.

'Now then!' he sed to th Toed, when th foer of them stuud together in th Haul, 'furst of all, taek thoes ridicuelus things off!'

'Shan't!' replied Toed, with graet spirit. 'Whot is th meening of this groess outraej? I demand an instant explanaeshon.'

'Taek them off him, then, U too,' orderd th Bajer breefly.

Thae had to lae Toed out on th flor, kiking and cauling all sorts of naems, befor thae cuud get to wurk properly. Then th Rat sat on him, and th Moel got his moetor-cloeths off him bit bi bit, and thae stuud him up on his legs agen. A guud deel of his blustering spirit seemd to hav evaporaeted with th remoaval of his fien panoply. Now that he wuz meerly Toed, and no longer th Terror of th Hiewae, he gigld feebly and luukt from wun to th uther apeelingly, seeming qiet to understand th sichuaeshon.

'U nue it must cum to this, sooner or laeter, Toed,' th Bajer explaend seveerly.

U'v disregarded all th worngs we'v given U, U'v gon on sqondering th muny yuur faather left U, and U'r geting us animals a bad naem in th distrikts bi yuur fuerius drieving and yuur smashes and yuur rows with th poleess. Independenss is all verry wel, but we animals never allow our frends to maek fools of themselvs beyond a surten limit; and that limit U'v reecht. Now, U'r a guud felo in meny respekts, and I doen't wont to be too hard on U. I'l maek wun mor efort to bring U to reezon. U wil cum with me into th smoeking-room, and thaer U wil heer sum fakts about yuurselv; and we'l see whether U cum out of that room th saem Toed that U went in.'

He tuuk Toed furmly bi th arm, led him into th smoeking-room, and cloezd th dor behiend them.

*'That's no guud!' sed th Rat contempchuosly. 'Tauking to Toed'l never cuer him. He'l *sae* enything.'*

Thae maed themselvs comfortabl in armchaers and waeted paeshently. Thru th cloezd dor thae cuud just heer th long continueus droen of th Bajer's vois, riezing

and faulng in waevs of oratory; and prezently thae noetist that th surmon began to be punkchuaeted at intervals bi long-drawn sobs, evidently proseeding from th buuzom of Toed, hoo wuz a soft-harted and afekshonet felo, verry eezily convurted -- for th tiem being -- to eny point of vue.

After sum three-qorters of an our th dor oepend, and th Bajer re-apeerd, solemnly leeding bi th paw a verry limp and dejekted Toed. His skin hung bagily about him, his legs wobld, and his cheeks wer furoed bi th teers so plentifully cauld forth bi th Bajer's mooving discorss.

'Sit doun thaer, Toed,' sed th Bajer kiendly, pointing to a chaer. 'Mi frends,' he went on, 'I am pleezd to inform U that Toed has at last seen th error of his waes. He is trooly sorry for his misgieded conduit in th past, and he has undertaeken to giv up moetor-cars entierly and for ever. I hav his solem promis to that efekt.'

'That is verry guud nues,' sed th Moel graevly.

'Verry guud nues indeed,' obzurvd th Rat doobiusly,  
'if oenly -- *if* oenly -- -- '

He wuz luuking verry hard at Toed as he sed this, and cuud not help thinking he perseevd sumthing vaegly rezemblng a twinkl in that animal's stil sorroeful ie.

'Thaer's oenly wun thing mor to be dun,' continued th gratified Bajer. 'Toed, I wont U solemnly to repeet, befor yuur frends heer, whot U fuuly admited to me in th smoeking-room just now. Furst, U ar sorry for whot U've dun, and U see th foly of it all?'

Thaer wuz a long, long pauz. Toed luukt desperetly this wae and that, whiel th uther animals waeted in graev sielenss. At last he spoek.

'No!' he sed, a litl sulenly, but stoutly; 'I'm *not* sorry. And it wasn't foly at all! It wuz simply glorius!'

'Whot?' cried th Bajer, graetly scandaliezd. 'U bakslieding animal, didn't U tel me just now, in thaer -- -- '

'O, yes, yes, in *thaer*,' sed Toed impaeshently. 'I'd hav sed enything in *thaer*. U'r so eloquent, deer Bajer, and so mooving, and so convinsing, and puut all yuur points so frietfully wel -- U can do whot U

liek with me in *thaer*, and U noe it. But I've bin surching mi miend sinss, and going oever things in it, and I fiend that I'm not a bit sorry or repentant reealy, so it's no urthly guud saeing I am; now, is it?"

'Then U doen't promis,' sed th Bajer, 'never to tuch a moetor-car agen?'

'Surtenly not!' replied Toed emfatikaly. 'On th contraery, I faethfuly promis that th verry furst moetor-car I see, poop-poop! off I go in it!'

'Toeld U so, didn't I?' obzurvd th Rat to th Moel.

'Verry wel, then,' sed th Bajer furmly, riezing to his feet. 'Sinss U woen't yeeld to perswaezhon, we'l tri whot forss can do. I feerd it wuud cum to this all along. U've ofen askt us three to cum and stae with U, Toed, in this hansum hous of yuurs; wel, now we'r going to. When we've convurted U to a proper point of vue we mae qit, but not befor. Taek him upstaers, U too, and lok him up in his bedroom, whiel we araenj maters between ourselvs.'

'It's for yuur oen guud, Toedy, U noe,' sed th Rat kiendly, as Toed, kiking and

strugling, wuz hauld up th staers bi his too faethful frends. 'Think whot fun we shal all hav together, just as we uezd to, when U've qiet got oever this -- this paenful atak of yuurs!'

'We'l taek graet caer of evrything for U til U'r wel, Toed,' sed th Moel; 'and we'l see yuur muny isn't waested, as it has bin.'

'No mor of thoes regretabl insidents with th poleess, Toed,' sed th Rat, as thae thrust him into his bedroom.

'And no mor weeks in hospital, being orderd about bi feemael nurses, Toed,' aded th Moel, turning th kee on him.

Thae desended th staer, Toed shouting abuez at them thru th keehoel; and th three frends then met in conferenss on th sichuaeshon.

'It's going to be a teedius biznes,' sed th Bajer, sieing. 'I've never seen Toed so deturmind. However, we wil see it out. He must never be left an instant ungarded. We shal hav to taek it in turns to be with him, til th poizon has wurkt itself out of his sistem.'

Thae araenjd woches acordingly. Eech animal tuuk it in turns to sleep in Toed's room at niet, and thae divieded th dae up between them. At furst Toed wuz undoutedly verry trieing to his caerful gardians. When his vieolent parroxsizms pozest him he wuud araenj bedroom chaers in rood rezemblanss of a moetorcar and wuud crouch on th formoest of them, bent forward and staering fixsedly ahed, maeking uncooth and gastly noizes, til th cliemax wuz reecht, when, turning a compleet sumersault, he wuud lie prostraet amidst th rooins of th chaers, aparrently compleetly satisfied for th moement. As tiem past, however, thees paenful seezheres groo grajuly les freeqent, and his frends stroev to divurt his miend into fresh chanels. But his interest in uther maters did not seem to reviev, and he groo aparrently langgwid and deprest.

Wun fien morning th Rat, hoos turn it wuz to go on duety, went upstaers to releev Bajer, hoom he found fijeting to be off and strech his legs in a long rambl round his wuud and doun his urths and buroes. 'Toed's stil in bed,' he toeld th Rat, outsied th dor. 'Can't get much out of him, exsept, "O leev

him aloen, he wonts nuthing, perhaps he'l be beter prezently, it mae pas off in tiem, doen't be unduely ankshus," and so on. Now, U luuk out, Rat! When Toed's qieet and submisiv and plaeing at being th heero of a Sundae-scool priez, then he's at his artfulest. Thaer's shuur to be sumthing up. I noe him. Wel, now, I must be off.'

'How ar U to-dae, oeld chap?' inqierd th Rat cheerfuly, as he aproecht Toed's bedsied.

He had to waet sum minits for an anser. At last a feebl vois replied, 'Thank U so much, deer Raty! So guud of U to inqier! But furst tel me how U ar yuурself, and th exselent Moel?'

'O, *we'r* all riet,' replied th Rat. 'Moel,' he aded incaushusly, 'is going out for a run round with Bajer. Thae'l be out til lunchon tiem, so U and I wil spend a plezant morning together, and I'l do mi best to amuez U. Now jump up, thaer's a guud felo, and doen't lie moeping thaer on a fien morning liek this!'

'Deer, kiend Rat,' murmerd Toed, 'how litl U reealiez mi condishon, and how verry far I am from "jumping up" now -- if ever! But do

not trubl about me. I haet being a burden to mi frends, and I do not expekt to be wun much longger. Indeed, I aulmoest hoep not.'

'Wel, I hoep not, too,' sed th Rat hartily. 'U've bin a fien bother to us all this tiem, and I'm glad to heer it's going to stop. And in wether liek this, and th boeting seezon just begining! It's too bad of U, Toed! It isn't th trubl we miend, but U'r maeking us mis such an awful lot.'

'I'm afraed it is th trubl U miend, tho,' replied th Toed langgwidly. 'I can qiet understand it. It's nacheral enuf. U'r tierd of bothering about me. I mustn't ask U to do enything further. I'm a nuesanss, I noe.'

'U ar, indeed,' sed th Rat. 'But I tel U, I'd taek eny trubl on urth for U, if oenly U'd be a sensibl animal.'

'If I thaut that, Raty,' murmerd Toed, mor feebly than ever, 'then I wuud beg U -- for th last tiem, probably -- to step round to th vilej as qikly as posibl -- eeven now it mae be too laet -- and fech th doktor. But doen't U bother. It's oenly a trubl, and perhaps we mae as wel let things taek thaer corss.'

'Whi, whot do U wont a doktor for?' inquierd th Rat, cuming cloeser and examining him. He surtenly lae verry stil and flat, and his vois wuz weaker and his maner much chaenjd.

'Shuurly U hav noetist of laet --- ' murmerd Toed. 'But, no -- whi shuud U? Noetising things is oenly a trUBL. Tomorro, indeed, U mae be saeing to yuурself, "O, if oenly I had noetist sooner! If oenly I had dun sumthing!" But no; it's a trUBL. Never miend -- forget that I askt.'

'Luuk heer, oeld man,' sed th Rat, begining to get rather alarmd, 'of corss I'l fech a doktor to U, if U reealy think U wont him. But U can hardly be bad enuf for that yet. Let's tauk about sumthing elss.'

'I feer, deer frend,' sed Toed, with a sad smiel, 'that "tauk" can do litl in a caess liek this -- or doktors eether, for that mater; stil, wun must grasp at th slietest straw. And, bi th wae -- whiel U ar about it -- I *haet* to giv U adishonal trUBL, but I hapen to remember that U wil pas th dor -- wuud U miend at th saem tiem asking th lawyer to step up? It wuud be a conveenyenss to me,

and thaer ar moements -- perhaps I shuud sae thaer is *a* moement -- when wun must faess disagreeabl tasks, at whatever cost to exausted naecher!'

‘A lawyer! O, he must be reealy bad!’ th afrieted Rat sed to himself, as he huryd from th room, not forgetting, however, to lok th dor caerfuly behiend him.

Outsied, he stopt to consider. Th uther too wer far awae, and he had no wun to consult.

‘It's best to be on th saef sied,’ he sed, on reflekshon. ‘I've noen Toed fansy himself frietfully bad befor, without th slietest reezon; but I've never hurd him ask for a lawyer! If thaer's nuthing reealy th mater, th doktor wil tel him he's an oeld ass, and cheer him up; and that wil be sumthing gaend. I'd beter huemor him and go; it woen't taek verry long.’ So he ran off to th viley on his errand of mursty.

Th Toed, hoo had hopt lietly out of bed as soon as he hurd th kee turnd in th lok, wocht him eegerly from th windo til he disapeerd doun th carrejdriev. Then, lafing hartily, he drest as qikly as

posibl in th smartest soot he cuud lae hands on at th moement, fild his pokets with cash which he tuuk from a smaul dror in th dresing-taebel, and next, noting th sheets from his bed together and tieing wun end of th improviezd roep round th sentral mulyon of th hansum Toodor windo which formd such a feecher of his bedroom, he scrambld out, slid lietly to th ground, and, taeking th opozit direkshon to th Rat, marcht off liet-hartedly, whisling a merry tuen.

It wuz a gloomy lunchon for Rat when th Bajer and th Moel at length returnd, and he had to faess them at taebl with his pityful and unconvinsing story. Th Bajer's caustik, not to sae brootal, remarks mae be imajind, and thaerfor past oever; but it wuz paenful to th Rat that eeven th Moel, tho he tuuk his friend's sied as far as possibl, cuud not help saeing, 'U've bin a bit of a dufer this tiem, Raty! Toed, too, of all animals!'

'He did it awfully wel,' sed th crestfaulen Rat.

'He did *U* awfully wel!' rejoind th Bajer hotly. 'However, taulking woen't mend maters. He's got cleer awae for th tiem,

that's surten; and th wurst of it is, he'l be so conseeted with whot he'l think is his clevernes that he mae comit eny foly. Wun cumfort is, we'r free now, and needn't waest eny mor of our preshus tiem doing sentry-go. But we'd beter continue to sleep at Toed Haul for a whiel longer. Toed mae be braut bak at eny moement -- on a strecher, or between too poleesmen.'

So spoek th Bajer, not noeing whot th fuecher held in stor, or how much wauter, and of how turbid a carraakter, wuz to run under brijes befor Toed shuud sit at eez agen in his ansestral Haul.

Meenwhiel, Toed, gae and irresponsibl, wuz wauking briskly along th hie roed, sum miels from hoem. At furst he had taeken bi-paths, and crost meny feelds, and chaenjd his corss several tiems, in caess of persoot; but now, feeling bi this tiem saef from re-capcher, and th sun smieling brietyl on him, and all Naecher joining in a corus of aprooval to th song of self-praez that his oen hart wuz singing to him, he aulmoest danst along th roed in his satisfakshon and conseet.

'Smart peess of wurk that!' he remarkt to himself chukling. 'Braen agenst broot forss -- and braen caem out on th top -- as it's bound to do. Puur oeld Raty! Mi! woen't he cach it when th Bajer gets bak! A wurthy felo, Raty, with meny guud qolitys, but verry littl intelijenss and absoloootly no ejucaeshon. I must taek him in hand sum dae, and see if I can maek sumthing of him.'

Fild ful of conseeted thauts such as thees he stroed along, his hed in th aer, til he reecht a litl toun, whaer th sien of 'Th Red Lieon,' swinging acros th roed hafwae doun th maen street, remiended him that he had not brekfasted that dae, and that he wuz exseedingly hunggry after his long wauk. He marcht into th In, orderd th best lunchon that cuud be provieded at so short a noetis, and sat doun to eet it in th cofy-room.

He wuz about haf-wae thru his meel when an oenly too familyar sound, aproeching doun th street, maed him start and faul a-trembling all oever. Th poop-poop! droo neerer and neerer, th car cuud be hurd to turn into th in-yard and cum to a stop, and

Toed had to hoeld on to th leg of th taebel to conseel his oever-mastering emoshon. Prezently th party enterd th cofy-room, hunggry, taukativ, and gae, valuebl on thaer expeeri'enses of th morning and th merrits of th charriot that had braut them along so wel. Toed lisend eegerly, all eers, for a tiem; at last he cuud stand it no longger. He slipt out of th room qieetly, paed his bil at th bar, and as soon as he got outsied saunterd round qieetly to th in-yard. 'Thaer cannot be eny harm,' he sed to himself, 'in mi oenly just *luuking* at it!'

Th car stuud in th midl of th yard, qiet unatended, th staebel-helps and uther hangers-on being all at thaer diner. Toed waukt sloely round it, inspekting, critisiezing, muezing deeply.

'I wunder,' he sed to himself prezently, 'I wunder if this sort of car *starts* eezily?'

Next moement, hardly noeing how it caem about, he found he had hoeld of th handl and wuz turning it. As th familyar sound broek forth, th oeld pashon seezd on Toed and compleetly masterd him, body and soel. As if in a dreem he found himself, sumhow, seeted in th

driver's seet; as if in a dreem, he puuld th lever and swung th car round th yard and out thru th archwae; and, as if in a dreem, all senss of riet and rong, all feer of obvius conseqenses, seemd temporaerily suspended. He increest his paess, and as th car devourd th street and lept forth on th hie roed thru th oepen cuntry, he wuz oenly conshus that he wuz Toed wunss mor, Toed at his best and hieest, Toed th terror, th trafik-qeler, th Lord of th loen trael, befor hoom all must giv wae or be smiten into nuthingnes and everlasting niet. He chanted as he floo, and th car responded with sonorus droen; th miels wer eeten up under him as he sped he nue not whither, fuulfilng his instinkts, living his our, rekles of whot miet cum to him. \* \* \* \* \*

'To mi miend,' obzurvd th Chaerman of th Bench of Majistraets cheerfuly, 'th *oenly* dificulty that prezents itself in this utherwiez verry cleer caess is, how we can posibly maek it sufishently hot for th incorijibl roeg and hardend rufian hoom we see cowering in th dok befor us. Let me see: he has bin

found guilty, on th clearest evidenss, furst, of steeling a valueabl mootor-car; secondly, of drieving to th publik daenjer; and, thurdly, of groess impurtinenss to th ruural poleess. Mr. Clurk, wil U tel us, pleez, whot is th verry stifest penalty we can impoez for eech of thees ofenses? Without, of corss, giving th prizoner th benefit of eny dout, becauz thaer isn't eny.'

Th Clurk scracht his noezy with his pen. 'Sum peepl wuud consider,' he obzurvd, 'that steeling th mootor-car wuz th wurst ofenss; and so it is. But cheeking th poleess undoutedly carrys th seveerest penalty; and so it aut. Supoezing U wer to sae twelv munths for th theft, which is mield; and three yeers for th fuerius drieving, which is leeni'ent; and fifteen yeers for th cheek, which wuz prity bad sort of cheek, jujing bi whot we've hurd from th witnes-box, eeven if U oenly beleev wun-tenth part of whot U hurd, and I never beleev mor mieself -- thoes figuers, if aded together corekty, tot up to nienteen yeers -- -- '

'Furst-raet!' sed th Chaerman.

' -- So U had beter maek it a round

twenty yeers and be on th saef sied,' conclooded th Clurk.

'An exselent sugjeschon!' sed th Chaerman aproovingly. 'Prizoner! Puul yuурself together and tri and stand up straet. It's going to be twenty yeers for U this tiem. And miend, if U apeer befor us agen, upon eny charj whotever, we shal hav to deel with U verry seeriusly!'

Then th brootal minyons of th law fel upon th haples Toed; loeded him with chaens, and dragd him from th Cort Hous, shreeking, praeing, protesting; acros th marketplaess, whaer th plaeful popuelis, aulwaes as seveer upon detekted criem as thae ar sympathetik and helpful when wun is meerly 'wonted,' asaeld him with jeers, carrots, and popuelar cach-wurds; past hooting scool children, thaer inosent faeses lit up with th plezher thae ever deriev from th siet of a jentlman in dificulty; acros th holo-sounding drawbrij, beloe th spieky portculis, under th frouning archwae of th grim oeld casl, hoos aenshent towers sord hie oeverhed; past gardrooms ful of grining soeljery off duety, past sentrys hoo cauft in a horrid,

sarcastik wae, becauz that is as much as a sentry on his poest daer do to sho his contempt and abhorenss of criem; up tiem-worn wiending staers, past men-at-arms in casket and corslet of steel, darting thretening luuks thru thaer vizards; acros cort-yards, whaer mastifs straend at thaer leesh and pawed th aer to get at him; past aenshent worders, thaer halberds lent agenst th waul, doezing oever a pasty and a flagon of broun ael; on and on, past th rak-chaember and th thumscroo-room, past th turning that led to th prievat scafold, til thae reecht th dor of th grimest dunjon that lae in th hart of th inermoest keep. Thaer at last thaе pauzd, whaer an aenshent jaeler sat finggering a bunch of miety kees.

‘Odsbodikins!’ sed th sargent of poleess, taeking off his helmet and wieping his forhed. ‘Rouz thee, oeld loon, and taek oever from us this viel Toed, a criminal of deepest gilt and machles artfulnes and resorss. Woch and word him with all thi skil; and mark thee wel, graebeerd, shuud aut untord befaul, thi oeld hed shal anser for his -- and a murin on boeth of them!’

Th jaeler noded grimly, laeing his witherd

hand on th shoelder of th mizerabl Toed. Th rusty kee creekit in th lok, th  
graet dor clangd behiend them; and Toed wuz a helples prizoner in th  
remoetest dunjon of th best-garded keep of th stoutest casl in all th length  
and bredth of Merry Ingland.

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## Chapter 7

### VII

### TH PIEPER AT TH GAETS OF DAUN

TH Wilo-Ren wuz twitering his thin litl song, hiden himself in th dark selvej of th river bank. Tho it wuz past ten o'clok at niet, th ski stil clung to and retaend sum linggering scurts of liet from th departed dae; and th sulen heets of th torid afternoon broek up and roeld awae at th dispursing tuch of th cool finggers of th short midsumer niet. Moel lae strecht on th bank, stil panting from th stres of th feerss dae that had bin cloudles from daun to laet sunset, and waeted for his frend to return. He had bin on th river with sum companyons, leeving th Wauter Rat free to keep a engaejment of long standing with Oter; and he had cum bak to fiend th hous dark and dezurted, and no sien of Rat, hoo wuz doutles

keeping it up laet with his oeld comrad. It wuz stil too hot to think of staeing indors, so he lae on sum cool dok-leevs, and thaut oever th past dae and its doings, and how verry guud thaе all had bin.

Th Rat's liet fuutfaul wuz prezently hurd aproeching oever th parcht gras. 'O, th blesed coolnes!' he sed, and sat doun, gaezing thautfuly into th river, sielent and preocuepied.

'U staed to super, of corss?' sed th Moel prezently.

'Simply had to,' sed th Rat. 'Thae wuudn't heer of mi going befor. U noe how kiend thae aulwaes ar. And thae maed things as joly for me as ever thae cuud, riet up to th moement I left. But I felt a broot all th tiem, as it wuz cleer to me thae wer verry unhappy, tho thae tried to hied it. Moel, I'm afraed thae'r in trubl. Litl Portly is mising agen; and U noe whot a lot his faather thinks of him, tho he never ses much about it.'

'Whot, that chield?' sed th Moel lietly. 'Wel, supoez he is; whi wury about it? He's aulwaes straeing off and geting lost, and turning

up agen; he's so advencherus. But no harm ever hapens to him. Evrybody heerabouts noes him and lieks him, just as thae do oeld Oter, and U mae be shuur sum animal or uther wil cum acros him and bring him bak agen all riet. Whi, we've found him ourselvs, miels from hoem, and qiet self-pozest and cheerful!"

'Yes; but this tiem it's mor seerius,' sed th Rat graevly. 'He's bin mising for sum daes now, and th Oters hav hunted evrywhaer, hie and loe, without fiending th slietest traess. And thae've askt evry animal, too, for miels around, and no wun noes enything about him. Oter's evidently mor ankshus than he'l admit. I got out of him that yung Portly hasn't lurnt to swim verry wel yet, and I can see he's thinking of th weer. Thaer's a lot of wauter cuming doun stil, considering th tiem of th yeer, and th plaess aulwaes had a fasinaeshon for th chield. And then thaer ar -- wel, traps and things -- *U* noe. Oter's not th felo to be nurvus about eny sun of his befor it's tiem. And now he *is* nurvus. When I left, he caem out with me -- sed he wonted sum aer, and taukt about

streching his legs. But I cuud see it wasn't that, so I droo him out and pumpt him, and got it all from him at last. He wuz going to spend th niet woching bi th ford. U noe th plaess whaer th oeld ford uezd to be, in bi-gon daes befor thae bilt th brij?"

'I noe it wel,' sed th Moel. 'But whi shuud Oter chooz to woch thaer?'

'Wel, it seems that it wuz thaer he gaev Portly his furst swiming-leson,' continued th Rat. 'From that shalo, gravely spit neer th bank. And it wuz thaer he uezd to teech him fishing, and thaer yung Portly caut his furst fish, of which he wuz so verry proud. Th chield luvd th spot, and Oter thinks that if he caem wondering bak from whaerever he is -- if he *is* enywhaer bi this tiem, puur litl chap -- he miet maek for th ford he wuz so fond of; or if he caem acros it he'd remember it wel, and stop thaer and plae, perhaps. So Oter goes thaer evry niet and woches -- on th chanss, U noe, just on th chanss!'

Thae wer siilent for a tiem, boeth thinking of th saem thing -- th loenly, hart-sor animal, croucht bi th ford, woching and waeting, th long niet thru -- on th chanss.

'Wel, wel,' sed th Rat prezently, 'I supoez we aut to be thinking about turning in.' But he never oferd to moov.

'Rat,' sed th Moel, 'I simply can't go and turn in, and go to sleep, and *do* nuthing, eeven tho thaer duzn't seem to be enything to be dun. We'l get th boet out, and padl up stream. Th moon wil be up in an our or so, and then we wil surch as wel as we can -- enyhow, it wil be beter than going to bed and doing *nuthing*.'

'Just whot I wuz thinking mieself,' sed th Rat. 'It's not th sort of niet for bed enyhow; and daebraek is not so verry far off, and then we mae pik up sum nues of him from urly riezers as we go along.'

Thae got th boet out, and th Rat tuuk th sculs, padling with caushon. Out in midstreem, thaer wuz a clearer, narro trak that faently reflekted th ski; but whaerever shadoes fel on th wauter from bank, buush, or tree, thae wer as solid to all apeeranss as th banks themselvs, and th Moel had to steer with jujment acordingly. Dark and dezurted as it wuz, th niet wuz ful of smaul noizes, song and chater and rusling, teling of th bizy

litl popuelaeshon hoo wer up and about, plieing thaer traeds and vocaeshons thru th niet til sunshien shuud faul on them at last and send them off to thaer wel-urnd repoez. Th wauter's oen noizes, too, wer mor aparrent than bi dae, its gurglings and 'cloops' mor unexpekted and neer at hand; and constantly thae started at whot seemd a suden clearer caul from an akchual articuelat vois.

Th lien of th horiezon wuz clearer and hard agenst th ski, and in wun particuelar qorter it shoed blak agenst a silvery clieming fosforesenss that groo and groo. At last, oever th rim of th waeting urch th moon lifted with slo majesty til it swung clearer of th horiezon and roed off, free of muurings; and wunss mor thae began to see surfises -- medoes wied-spred, and qieet gardens, and th river itself from bank to bank, all softly discloezd, all wosht cleen of mistery and terror, all raediant agen as bi dae, but with a differenss that wuz tremendus. Thaer oeld haunts greeted them agen in uther raement, as if thae had slipt awae and puut on this puer nue aparrel and cum qieetly bak, smieling as thae shiely waeted to see if thae wuud be recogniezd agen under it.

Fasening thaer boet to a wilo, th frends landed in this siilent, silver kingdom, and paeshently explord th hejes, th holo trees, th runels and thaer litl culverts, th ditches and dri wauter-waes. Embarking agen and crosing oever, thae wurkt thaer wae up th streem in this maner, whiel th moon, sereen and detacht in a cloudles ski, did whot she cuud, tho so far off, to help them in thaer quest; til her our caem and she sank urchwards reluktantly, and left them, and mistery wunss mor held feeld and river.

Then a chaenj began sloely to declaer itself. Th horiezon becaem clearer, feeld and tree caem mor into siet, and sumhow with a diferent luuk; th mistery began to drop awae from them. A burd piept sudenly, and wuz stil; and a liet breez sprang up and set th reeds and buulrushes rusling. Rat, hoo wuz in th sturn of th boet, whiel Moel sculd, sat up sudenly and lisend with a pashonet intentnes. Moel, hoo with jentl strooks wuz just keeping th boet mooving whiel he scand th banks with caer, luukt at him with cueriosity.

‘It's gon!’ sied th Rat, sinking bak in his seet agen. ‘So buetyful and straenj and

nue. Sinss it wuz to end so soon, I aulmoest wish I had never hurd it. For it has rouzd a longing in me that is paen, and nuthing seems wurth whiel but just to heer that sound wunss mor and go on lisening to it for ever. No! Thaer it is agen!' he cried, alurt wunss mor. Entranst, he wuz siilent for a long spaess, spelbound.

'Now it pases on and I begin to looz it,' he sed prezently. 'O Moel! th buety of it! Th merry bubl and joy, th thin, clearer, hapy caul of th distant pieping! Such muezik I never dreemd of, and th caul in it is strongger eeven than th muezik is sweet! Roe on, Moel, roe! For th muezik and th caul must be for us.'

Th Moel, graetly wundering, oebaed. 'I heer nuthing mieself,' he sed, 'but th wind plaeing in th reeds and rushes and oezhers.'

Th Rat never anserd, if indeed he hurd. Rapt, transported, trembling, he wuz pozest in all his senses bi this nue divien thing that caut up his helples soel and swung and dandld it, a powerles but hapy infant in a strong sustaening grasp.

In sielenss Moel roed stedily, and soon thae caem to a point whaer th river divieded, a long

bakwauter branching off to wun sied. With a sliet moovment of his hed Rat, hoo had long dropt th ruder-liens, direkted th roeer to taek th bakwauter. Th creeping tied of liet gaend and gaend, and now thaе cuud see th culor of th flowers that jemd th wauter's ej.

'Cleerer and neerer stil,' cried th Rat joyusly. 'Now U must shuurly heer it! Aa -- at last -- I see U do!'

Brethles and transfixt th Moel stopt roeing as th liqid run of that glad pieping broek on him liek a waev, caut him up, and pozest him uteily. He saw th teers on his comrad's cheeks, and bowd his hed and understuud. For a spaess thaе hung thaer, brusht bi th purpl looss-strief that frinjd th bank; then th cheer impeerieus sumons that marcht hand-in-hand with th intoxicaeting melody impoezd its wil on Moel, and mecanikaly he bent to his ors agen. And th liet groo stedily stronger, but no burds sang as thaе wer wont to do at th aproech of daun; and but for th heavenly muezik all wuz marvelusly stil.

On eether sied of them, as thaе glied onwards,

th rich medo-gras seemd that morning of a freshnes and a greennes unserpasabl. Never had thae noetist th roezes so vivid, th wilo-hurb so rieotus, th medo-sweet so oedorus and pervaeding. Then th murmer of th aproeching weer began to hoeld th aer, and thae felt a conshusnes that thae wer neering th end, whotever it miet be, that shuurly awaeted thaer expedishon.

A wied haf-surkl of foem and glinting liets and shiening shoelders of green wauter, th graet weer cloezd th bakwauter from bank to bank, trubld all th qieet surfis with twurling edys and floeting foem-streeks, and dedend all uther sounds with its solem and soothing rumbl. In midmoest of th streem, embraest in th weer's shimering arm-spred, a smaul ieland lae ankord, frinjd cloess with wilo and silver burch and aulder. Rezurvd, shi, but ful of significanss, it hid whotever it miet hoeld behiend a vael, keeping it til th our shuud cum, and, with th our, thoes hoo wer cauld and choezen.

Sloely, but with no dout or hezitaeshon whotever, and in sumthing of a solem expektansy, th too animals past thru th broeken

toomulchus wauter and muurd thaer boet at th flowery margin of th ieland. In sielenss thae landed, and puusht thru th blosom and sented hurbej and undergroeth that led up to th level ground, til thae stuud on a litl laun of a marvelus green, set round with Naecher's oen orchard-trees -- crab-apl, wield cherry, and slo.

'This is th plaess of mi song-dreem, th plaess th muezik plaed to me,' whisperd th Rat, as if in a transs. 'Heer, in this hoely plaess, heer if enywhaer, shuurly we shal fiend Him!'

Then sudenly th Moel felt a graet Aw faul upon him, an aw that turnd his musls to wauter, bowd his hed, and rooted his feet to th ground. It wuz no panik terror -- indeed he felt wunderfuly at peess and hapy -- but it wuz an aw that smoet and held him and, without seeing, he nue it cuud oenly meen that sum august Prezenss wuz verry, verry neer. With dificulty he turnd to luuk for his frend. and saw him at his sied cowd, striken, and trembling vieolently. And stil thaer wuz uter sielenss in th popuelus burd-haunted branches around them; and stil th liet groo and groo.

Perhaps he wuud never hav daerd to raez his ies, but that, tho th pieping wuz now husht, th caul and th sumons seemd stil dominant and impeerius. He miet not refuez, wer Deth himself waeting to striek him instantly, wunss he had luukt with mortal ie on things rietly kept hiden. Trembling he oebaed, and raezd his humbl hed; and then, in that ute cleernes of th iminent daun, whiel Naecher, flusht with fuulnes of incredibl culor, seemd to hoeld her breth for th event, he luukt in th verry ies of th Frend and Helper; saw th bakward sweep of th curvd horns, gleeming in th groeing daeliet; saw th sturn, huukt noez between th kiendly ies that wer luuking doun on them huemorusly, whiel th beeredd mouth broek into a haf-smiel at th corners; saw th rippling musls on th arm that lae acros th braud chest, th long supl hand stil hoelding th pan-pieps oenly just faulen awae from th parted lips; saw th splendid curvs of th shagy lims dispoezd in majestik eez on th sword; saw, last of all, nesling between his verry huuvs, sleeping soundly in entier peess and contentment, th litl, round, pojy, chieldish form of th

baeby oter. All this he saw, for wun moement brethles and intenss, vivid on th morning ski; and stil, as he luukt, he livd; and stil, as he livd, he wunderd.

‘Rat!’ he found breth to whisper, shaeking. ‘Ar U afraed?’

‘Afraed?’ murmerd th Rat, his ies shiening with unuterabl luv. ‘Afraed! Of *Him*? O, never, never! And yet -- and yet -- O, Moel, I am afraed!’

Then th too animals, crouching to th urth, bowd thaer heds and did wurship.

Suden and magnifisent, th sun's braud goelden disk shoed itself oever th horiezon faesing them; and th furst raes, shooting acros th level wauter-medoes, tuuk th animals fuul in th ies and dazld them. When thae wer aebl to luuk wunss mor, th Vizhon had vanisht, and th aer wuz fuul of th carrol of burds that haeld th daun.

As thae staerd blankly, in dum mizery deepening as thae sloely reealiezd all thae had seen and all thae had lost, a caprishus litl breez, dansing up from th surfis of th wauter, tost th aspens, shuuk th duey roezes and bloo lietly and caresingly in thaer faeses;

and with its soft tuch caem instant oblivion. For this is th last best gift that th kiendly demy-god is caerful to bestoe on thoes to hoom he has reveeld himself in thaer helping: th gift of forgetfulnes. Lest th awful remembranss shuud remaen and gro, and oevershado murth and plezher, and th graet haunting memory shuud spoil all th after-lievs of litl animals helpt out of dificulty, in order that thae shuud be hapy and liet-harted as befor.

Moel rubd his ies and staerd at Rat, hoo wuz luuking about him in a puzld sort of wae. 'I beg yuor pardon; whot did U sae, Rat?' he askt.

'I think I wuz oenly remarking,' sed Rat sloely, 'that this wuz th riet sort of plaess, and that heer, if enywhaer, we shuud fiend him. And luuk! Whi, thaer he is, th litl felo!' And with a cri of deliet he ran tords th slumbering Portly.

But Moel stuuud stil a moement, held in thaut. As wun waekend sudenly from a buetyful dreem, hoo strugls to recal it, and can re-capcher nuthing but a dim senss of th buety of it, th buety! Til that, too, faeds

awae in its turn, and th dreemer biterly aksepts th hard, coeld waeking and all its penalty; so Moel, after strugling with his memory for a breet spaess, shuuk his hed sadly and foloed th Rat.

Portly wook up with a joyus sqeek, and rigld with plezher at th siet of his faather's frends, hoo had plaed with him so ofen in past daes. In a moement, however, his faess groo blank, and he fel to hunting round in a surkl with pleeding whien. As a chield that has faulen hapily asleep in its nurs'es arms, and waeks to fiend itself aloen and laed in a straenj plaess, and surches corners and cubords, and runs from room to room, despaer groeing sielently in its hart, eeven so Portly surcht th ieland and surcht, doged and unweeryng, til at last th blak moement caem for giving it up, and siting doun and crieing biterly.

Th Moel ran qikly to cumfort th litl animal; but Rat, linggering, luukt long and doutfuly at surten huuf-marks deep in th sword.

'Sum -- graet -- animal -- has bin heer,' he murmerd sloely and thautfuly; and stuuud muezing, muezing; his miend straenly sturd.

'Cum along, Rat!' cauld th Moel. 'Think of puur Oter, waeting up thaer bi th ford!'

Portly had soon bin cumforted bi th promis of a treet -- a jaunt on th river in Mr. Rat's reeal boet; and th too animals condukted him to th wauter's sied, plaest him secuerly between them in th botom of th boet, and padld off doun th bakwauter. Th sun wuz fuuly up bi now, and hot on them, burds sang lustily and without restraint, and flowers smield and noded from eether bank, but sumhow -- so thaut th animals -- with les of richnes and blaez of culor than thae seemd to remember seeing qiet reesently sumwhaer -- thae wunderd whaer.

Th maen river reecht agen, thae turnd th boat's hed upstreem, tords th point whaer thae nue thaer frend wuz keeping his loenly vijil. As thae droo neer th familyar ford, th Moel tuuk th boet in to th bank, and thae lifted Portly out and set him on his legs on th toe-path, gaev him his marching orders and a frendly faerwel pat on th bak, and shuvd out into mid-streem. Thae wocht th litl animal as he wodld along th path

contentedly and with importanss; wocht him til thae saw his muzl sudenly lift and his wodl braek into a clumzy ambl as he qikend his paess with shril whiens and rigls of recognishon. Luuking up th river, thae cuud see Oter start up, tenss and rijid, from out of th shalows whaer he croucht in dum paeshenss, and cuud heer his amaezd and joyus bark as he bounded up thru th oezhers on to th path. Then th Moel, with a strong puul on wun or, swung th boet round and let th fuul streem baer them doun agen whither it wuud, thaer quest now hapily ended.

'I feel straenly tierd, Rat,' sed th Moel, leening weerily oever his ors as th boet drifted. 'It's being up all niet, U'l sae, perhaps; but that's nuthing. We do as much haf th niets of th week, at this tiem of th yeer. No; I feel as if I had bin thru sumthing verry exsieting and rather terribl, and it wuz just oever; and yet nuthing particuelar has hapend.'

'Or sumthing verry serpriezing and splendid and buetyful,' murmerd th Rat, leening bak and cloezing his ies. 'I feel just as U do, Moel; simply ded tierd, tho not body

tierd. It's luky we've got th streem with us, to taek us hoem. Isn't it joly to feel th sun agen, soeking into wun's boens! And hark to th wind plaeing in th reeds!"

'It's liek muezik -- far awae muezik,' sed th Moel noding drouzily.

'So I wuz thinking,' murmerd th Rat, dreemful and langgwid. 'Danss-muezik -- th lilting sort that runs on without a stop -- but with wurdz in it, too -- it pases into wurdz and out of them agen -- I cach them at intervals -- then it is danss-muezik wunss mor, and then nuthing but th reeds' soft thin whispering.'

'U heer beter than I,' sed th Moel sadly. 'I cannot cach th wurdz.'

'Let me tri and giv U them,' sed th Rat softly, his ies stil cloezd. 'Now it is turning into wurdz agen -- faent but clearer -- *Lest th aw shuud dwel -- And turn yuur frolik to fret -- U shal luuk on mi power at th helping our -- But then U shal forget!* Now th reeds taek it up -- *forget, forget,* thae sie, and it dies awae in a rusl and a whisper. Then th vois returns --

'Lest lims be redend and rent -- I spring th trap that is set -- As I looss th snaer U mae

glimps me thaer -- For shuurly U shal forget! Roe neerer, Moel, neerer to th reeds! It is hard to cach, and groes eech minit faenter.

*'Helper and heeler, I cheer -- Smaul waefs in th wuudland wet -- Straes I fiend in it, woonds I biend in it -- Biding them all forget! Neerer, Moel, neerer! No, it is no guud; th song has died awae into reed-tauk.'*

'But whot do th wurds meen?' askt th wundering Moel.

'That I do not noe,' sed th Rat simply. 'I past them on to U as thae reecht me. Aa! now thae return agen, and this tiem fuul and clearer! This tiem, at last, it is th reeal, th unmistaekabl thing, simpl -- pashonet -- purfekt -- -- '

'Wel, let's hav it, then,' sed th Moel, after he had waeted paeshently for a fue minits, haf-doezing in th hot sun.

But no anser caem. He luukt, and understuud th sielenss. With a smiel of much hapynes on his faess, and sumthing of a lisening luuk stil linggering thaer, th weery Rat wuz fast asleep.

## Chapter 8

### VIII

### TOED'S ADVENCHERS

WHEN Toed found himself imuerd in a dank and noisum dunjon, and nue that all th grim darknes of a meedi'eeval fortres lae between him and th outer wurld of sunshien and wel-metald hie roeds whaer he had laetly bin so hapy, disporting himself as if he had baut up evry roed in Ingland, he flung himself at fuul length on th flor, and shed biter teers, and abandond himself to dark despaer. 'This is th end of everything' (he sed), 'at leest it is th end of th career of Toed, which is th saem thing; th popuelar and hansum Toed, th rich and hospitabl Toed, th Toed so free and caerles and debonaer! How can I hoep to be ever set at larj again' (he sed), 'hoo hav bin imprizond so justly for steeling so hansum a moetor-car in such an audaeshus maner, and

for such luurid and imajinativ cheek, bestoed upon such a number of fat, red-faest poleesmen!' (Heer his sobs choekt him.) 'Stoopid animal that I wuz' (he sed), 'now I must langgwish in this dunjon, til peopl hoo wer proud to sae thae nue me, hav forgoten th verry naem of Toed! O wiez oeld Bajer!' (he sed), 'O clever, intelijent Rat and sensibl Moel! Whot sound jujments, whot a nolej of men and maters U pozes! O unhappy and forsaeken Toed!' With lamentaeshons such as thees he past his daes and niets for several weeks, refuezing his meels or intermeedi'et liet refreshments, tho th grim and aenshent jaeler, noeing that Toed's pokets wer wel liend, freeqently pointed out that meny cumforts, and indeed lugzherys, cuud bi araenjment be sent in -- at a priess -- from outsied.

Now th jaeler had a dauter, a plezant wench and guud-harted, hoo asisted her faather in th lieter duetys of his poest. She wuz particuelarly fond of animals, and, besieds her canaery, hoos caej hung on a nael in th masiv waul of th keep bi dae, to th graet anoyanss of prizoners hoo relisht an after

diner nap, and wuz shrouded in an antimacasar on th parlor taabl at niet, she kept several piebauld miess and a restles revolving squarel. This kiend-harted gurl, pitying th mizery of Toed, sed to her faather wun dae, 'Faather! I can't baer to see that puur beest so unhapy, and geting so thin! U let me hav th manejing of him. U noe how fond of animals I am. I'l maek him eet from mi hand, and sit up, and do all sorts of things.'

Her faather replied that she cuud do whot she liekt with him. He wuz tierd of Toed, and his sulks and his aers and his meennes. So that dae she went on her errand of mursy, and nokt at th dor of Toed's sel.

'Now, cheer up, Toed,' she sed, coexsingly, on entering, 'and sit up and dri yuur ies and be a sensibl animal. And do tri and eet a bit of diner. See, I've braut U sum of mien, hot from th uven!'

It wuz bubl-and-sqeek, between too plaets, and its fraegranss fild th narro sel. Th penetraeting smel of cabej reecht th noez of Toed as he lae prostraet in his mizery on th flor, and gaev him th iedeea for a moement that perhaps lief wuz not such a blank and desperet

thing as he had imajind. But stil he waeld, and kikt with his legs, and refuezd to be cumforted. So th wiez gurl retierd for th tiem, but, of corss, a guud deel of th smel of hot cabej remaend behiend, as it wil do, and Toed, between his sobs, snift and reflekted, and grajualy began to think nue and inspiering thauts: of shivalry, and poeetry, and deeds stil to be dun; of braud medoes, and catl brouzing in them, raekt bi sun and wind; of kichen-gardens, and straet hurb-borders, and worm snap-dragon beset bi bees; and of th cumforting clink of dishes set doun on th taebel at Toed Haul, and th scraep of chaer-legs on th flor as evry wun puuld himself cloess up to his wurk. Th aer of th narro sel tuuk a roezy tinj; he began to think of his frends, and how thae wuud shuurly be aebel to do sumthing; of lawyers, and how thae wuud hav enjoyd his caess, and whot an ass he had bin not to get in a fue; and lastly, he thaut of his oen graet clevernes and resorss, and all that he wuz caepabl of if he oenly gaev his graet miend to it; and th cuer wuz aulmoest compleet.

When th gurl returnd, sum ours laeter, she

carryd a trae, with a cup of fraegrant tee steeming on it; and a plaet pield up with verry hot buterd toest, cut thik, verry broun on boeth sieds, with th buter runing thru th hoels in it in graet goelden drops, liek huny from th hunycoem. Th smel of that buterd toest simply taukt to Toed, and with no unsurten vois; taukt of worm kichens, of brekfasts on briet frosty mornings, of coezy parlor fiersieds on winter eevnings, when wun's rambl wuz oever and sliperd feet wer propt on th fender; of th puring of contented cats, and th twiter of sleepy canaerys. Toed sat up on end wunss mor, dried his ies, sipt his tee and muncht his toest, and soon began tauking freely about himself, and th hous he livd in, and his doings thaer, and how important he wuz, and whot a lot his frends thaut of him.

Th jaeler's dauter saw that th topik wuz doing him as much guud as th tee, as indeed it wuz, and encurejd him to go on.

'Tel me about Toed Haul,' sed she. 'It sounds buetyful.'

'Toed Haul,' sed th Toed proudly, 'is an elijibl self-contaend jentlman's rezidenss

verry ueneek; daeting in part from th forteenth senchery, but replete with evry modern conveenyenss. Up-to-daet sanitaeshon. Fiev minits from church, poest-ofis, and golf-links, Sootabl for --- '

'Bles th animal,' sed th gurl, lafing, 'I doen't wont to *taek* it. Tel me sumthing *reeal* about it. But furst waet til I fech U sum mor tee and toest.'

She tript awae, and prezently returnnd with a fresh traeful; and Toed, piching into th toest with avidity, his spirits qiet restord to thaer uezhual level, toeld her about th boet-hous, and th fish-pond, and th oeld wauld kichen-garden; and about th pig-sties, and th staebls, and th pijon-hous, and th hen-hous; and about th daery, and th wosh-hous, and th chiena-cubords, and th linen-preses (she liekt that bit espeshaly); and about th banqueting-haul, and th fun thae had thaer when th uther animals wer gatherd round th taebel and Toed wuz at his best, singing songs, teling storys, carrying on jeneraly. Then she wonted to noe about his animal-frends, and wuz verry interested in all he had to tel her about them and how thae livd, and

whot thae did to pas thaer tiem. Of corss, she did not sae she wuz fond of animals as *pets*, becauz she had th senss to see that Toed wuud be extreemly ofended. When she sed guud niet, having fild his wauter-jug and shaeken up his straw for him, Toed wuz verry much th saem sanggwin, self-satisfied animal that he had bin of oeld. He sang a litl song or too, of th sort he uezd to sing at his diner -- partys, curld himself up in th straw, and had an exselent niet's rest and th plezantest of dreems.

Thae had meny interesting tauks together, after that, as th dreery daes went on; and th jaeler's dauter groo verry sorry for Toed, and thaut it a graet shaem that a puur litl animal shuud be lokt up in prizon for whot seemd to her a verry trivial ofenss. Toed, of corss, in his vanity, thaut that her interest in him proseeded from a groeing tendernes; and he cuud not help haf-regreting that th soeshal gulf between them wuz so verry wied, for she wuz a cumly las, and evidently admierd him verry much.

Wun morning th gurl wuz verry thautful, and anserd at random, and did not seem to

Toed to be paeing proper atenshon to his wity saeings and sparkling coments.

'Toed,' she sed prezently, 'just lisen, pleez. I hav an aunt hoo is a wosherwuuman.'

'Thaer, thaer,' sed Toed, graeshusly and afably, 'never miend; think no mor about it. *I* hav several aunts hoo *aut* to be wosherwimen.'

'Do be qieet a minit, Toed,' sed th gurl. 'U tauk too much, that's yuur cheef fault, and I'm trieing to think, and U hurt mi hed. As I sed, I hav an aunt hoo is a wosherwuuman; she duz th woshing for all th prisoners in this casl -- we tri to keep eny paeing biznes of that sort in th family, U understand. She taeks out th woshing on Mondae morning, and brings it in on Fridae eevning. This is a Thursdae. Now, this is whot occurs to me: U'r verry rich -- at leest U'r aulwaes teling me so -- and she's verry puur. A fue pounds wuudn't maek eny differenss to U, and it wuud meen a lot to her. Now, I think if she wer properly aproecht -- sqaerd, I beleev is th wurd U animals uez -- U cuud cum to sum araenjment bi which she wuud let U hav her dres and

bonet and so on, and U cuud escaep from th casl as th ofishal wosherwuuman. U'r verry aliek in meny respekte -- particuelarly about th figuer.'

'We'r *not*,' sed th Toed in a huf. 'I hav a verry elegant figuer -- for whot I am.'

'So has mi aunt,' replied th gurl, 'for whot *she* is. But hav it yuur oen wae. U horrid, proud, ungraetful animal, when I'm sorry for U, and trieing to help U!'

'Yes, yes, that's all riet; thank U verry much indeed,' sed th Toed hurydly. 'But luuk heer! U wuudn't shuurly hav Mr. Toed of Toed Haul, going about th cuntry disgiezd as a wosherwuuman!'

'Then U can stop heer as a Toed,' replied th gurl with much spirit. 'I supoez U wont to go off in a coech-and-foer!'

Onest Toed wuz aulwaes redy to admit himself in th rong. 'U ar a guud, kiend, clever gurl,' he sed, 'and I am indeed a proud and a stoopid toed. Introduess me to yuur wurthy aunt, if U wil be so kiend, and I hav no dout that th exselent laedy and I wil be aebl to araenj turms satisfaktory to boeth partys.'

Next eevning th gurl usherd her aunt into

Toed's sel, baering his week's woshing pind up in a towel. Th oeld laedy had bin prepaerd beforhand for th intervue, and th siet of surten goeld sovrins that Toed had thautfuly plaest on th taebel in fuul vue praktikaly compleeted th mater and left litl further to discus. In return for his cash, Toed reseevd a coton print goun, an aepron, a shaul, and a rusty blak bonet; th oenly stipuelaeshon th oeld laedy maed being that she shuud be gagd and bound and dumpt doun in a corner. Bi this not verry convinsing artifis, she explaend, aeeded bi pikcheresk fikshon which she cuud suplie herself, she hoept to retaen her sichuaeshon, in spiet of th suspishus apeeranss of things.

Toed wuz delighted with th sugjeschon. It wuud enaebl him to leev th prizon in sum stiel, and with his repuetaeshon for being a desperet and daenjerus felo untarnisht; and he redily helpt th jaeler's dauter to maek her aunt apeer as much as possibl th viktim of surcumstanses oever which she had no controel.

'Now it's yuur turn, Toed,' sed th gurl. 'Taek off that coet and weskit of yuurs; U'r fat enuf as it is.'

Shaeking with lafter, she proseeded to 'huuk-and-ie' him into th coton print goun, araenjd th shaul with a profeshonal foeld, and tied th strings of th rusty bonet under his chin.

'U'r th verry imej of her,' she gigld, 'oenly I'm shuur U never luukt haf so respektabl in all yuur lief befor. Now, guud-bi, Toed, and guud luk. Go straet doun th wae U caem up; and if eny wun ses enything to U, as thae probably wil, being but men, U can chaf bak a bit, of corss, but remember U'r a wido wuuman, qiet aloen in th wurld, with a carrakter to looz.'

With a qaeking hart, but as furm a fuutstep as he cuud comand, Toed set forth caushusly on whot seemd to be a moest haer-braend and hazardus undertaeking; but he wuz soon agreeably serpriezd to fiend how eezy evrything wuz maed for him, and a litl humbld at th thaut that boeth his popuelarrrity, and th sex that seemd to inspirer it, wer reealy another's. Th wosherwuuman's sqot figuer in its familyar coton print seemd a pasport for evry bard dor and grim gaetwae; eeven when he hezitaeted, unsurten as to th riet turning to taek,

he found himself helpt out of his dificulty bi th worder at th next gaet, ankshus to be off to his tee, sumoning him to cum along sharp and not keep him waeting thaer all niet. Th chaf and th huemorus salys to which he wuz subjekted, and to which, of corss, he had to provied prompt and efektiv replie, formd, indeed, his cheef daenjer; for Toed wuz an animal with a strong senss of his oen dignity, and th chaf wuz moestly (he thaut) puur and clumzy, and th huemor of th salys entierly laking. However, he kept his temper, tho with graet dificulty, sooted his retorts to his cumpany and his supoezd carrakter, and did his best not to oeverstep th limits of guud taest.

It seemd ours befor he crost th last cort-yard, rejekted th presing invitaeshons from th last gardroom, and dojd th outspred arms of th last worder, pleeding with simuelaeted pashon for just wun faerwel embraess. But at last he hurd th wiket-gaet in th graet outer dor clik behiend him, felt th fresh aer of th outer wurld upon his ankshus brow, and nue that he wuz free!

Dizy with th eezy suksess of his daering

exploit, he waukt qikly tords th liets of th toun, not noeing in th leest whot he shuud do next, oenly qiet surten of wun thing, that he must remoov himself as qikly as posibl from th naeborhuud whaer th laedy he wuz forst to reprezent wuz so wel-noen and so popuelar a carrakter.

As he waukt along, considering, his atenshon wuz caut bi sum red and green liets a litl wae off, to wun sied of th toun, and th sound of th pufing and snorting of enjins and th banging of shunted truks fel on his eer.

'Aahaa!' he thaut, 'this is a peess of luk! A raelwae staeshon is th thing I wont moest in th hoel wurld at this moement; and whot's mor, I needn't go thru th toun to get it, and shan't hav to suport this huemiliaeting carrakter bi repartees which, tho thuroely efektiv, do not asist wun's senss of self-respekt.'

He maed his wae to th staeshon acordingly, consulted a tiem-taebel, and found that a traen, bound mor or les in th direkshon of his hoem, wuz due to start in haf-an-our. 'Mor luk!' sed Toed, his spirits riezing rapidly, and went off to th buuking-ofis to bi his tiket.

He gaev th naem of th staeshon that he nue to be neerest to th viley of which Toed Haul wuz th prinsipal feecher, and mecanikaly puut his finggers, in surch of th nesesaery muny, whaer his weskit poket shuud hav bin. But heer th coton goun, which had noebley stuud bi him so far, and which he had baesly forgoten, interveend, and frustraeted his eforts. In a sort of nietmaer he strugld with th straenj uncany thing that seemd to hoeld his hands, turn all muscuelar strievings to wauter, and laf at him all th tiem; whiel uther travelers, forming up in a lien behiend, waeted with impaeshenss, maeking sugjeschons of mor or les value and coments of mor or les strinjensy and point. At last -- sumhow -- he never rietly understuud how -- he burst th barryers, ataend th goel, arievd at whaer all weskit pokets ar eturnaly sichuaeted, and found -- not oenly no muny, but no poket to hoeld it, and no weskit to hoeld th poket!

To his horror he recolekted that he had left boeth coet and weskit behiend him in his sel, and with them his poket-buuk, muny, kees, woch, maches, pensil-caess -- all that maeks lief wurth living, all that distinggwishes th meny-

poketed animal, th lord of creaeshon, from th infeerior wun-poketed or no-poketed produkshons that hop or trip about permisivly, un-eqipt for th reeal contest.

In his mizery he maed wun desperet efort to carry th thing off, and, with a return to his fien oeld maner -- a blend of th Sqier and th Colej Don -- he sed, 'Luuk heer! I fiend I've left mi purss behiend. Just giv me that tiket, wil U, and I'll send th muny on to-morro? I'm wel-noen in thees parts.'

Th clurk staerd at him and th rusty blak bonet a moement, and then laft. 'I shuud think U wer prity wel noen in thees parts,' he sed, 'if U've tried this gaem on ofen. Heer, stand awae from th windo, pleez, madam; U'r obstrukting th uther pasenjers!'

An oeld jentlman hoo had bin proding him in th bak for sum moements heer thrust him awae, and, whot wuz wurss, arrest him as his guud wuuman, which anggerd Toed mor than enything that had ocurd that eevning.

Bafld and fuul of despaer, he wonderd bliendly doun th platform whaer th traen wuz standing, and teers trikld doun eech sied of

his noezy. It wuz hard, he thaut, to be within siet of saefty and aulmoest of hoem, and to be baukt bi th wont of a fue reched shilings and bi th petifoging mistrustfulnes of paed ofishals. Verry soon his escaep wuud be discuverd, th hunt wuud be up, he wuud be caut, revield, loeded with chaens, dragd bak agen to prizon and bred-and-wauter and straw; his gards and penalitys wuud be dubld; and O, whot sarcastik remarks th gurl wuud maek! Whot wuz to be dun? He wuz not swift of fuut; his figuer wuz unforchunetly recognisabl. Cuud he not sqeez under th seet of a carrej? He had seen this method adopted bi scoolboys, when th jurny-muny provieded bi thautful paerents had bin divurted to uther and beter ends. As he ponderd, he found himself opozit th enjin, which wuz being oild, wiept, and jeneraly carest bi its afekshonet drievers, a burly man with an oil-can in wun hand and a lump of coton-waest in th uther.

'Hulo, muther!' sed th enjin-drievers, 'whot's th trubl? U doen't luuk particuelarly cheerful.'

'O, sur!' sed Toed, crieing afresh, 'I am a

puur unhappy wosherwuuman, and I've lost all mi muny, and can't pae for a tiket, and I must get hoem to-niet sumhow, and whatever I am to do I doen't noe. O deer, O deer!"

'That's a bad biznes, indeed,' sed th enjin-driever reflektivly. 'Lost yuur muny -- and can't get hoem -- and got sum kids, too, waeting for U, I daer sae?"

'Eny amount of 'em,' sobd Toed. 'And thae'l be hunggry -- and plaeing with maches -- and upsetting lamps, th litl inosents! -- and qoreling, and going on jeneraly. O deer, O deer!"

'Wel, I'l tel U whot I'l do,' sed th guud enjin-driever. 'U'r a wosherwuuman to yuur traed, ses U. Verry wel, that's that. And I'm an enjin-driever, as U wel mae see, and thaer's no denieing it's terribly durty wurk. Ueses up a power of shurts, it duz, til mi misus is faer tierd of woshing of 'em. If U'l wosh a fue shurts for me when U get hoem, and send 'em along, I'l giv U a ried on mi enjin. It's agenst th Cumpany's reguelaeshons, but we'r not so verry particuelar in thees out-of-th-wae parts.'

Th Toed's mizery turnd into rapcher as he

eegerly scrambld up into th cab of th enjin. Of corss, he had never wosht a shurt in his lief, and cuudn't if he tried and, enyhow, he wasn't going to begin; but he thaut: 'When I get saefly hoem to Toed Haul, and hav muny agen, and pokets to puut it in, I wil send th enjin-driever enuf to pae for qiet a qontity of woshing, and that wil be th saem thing, or beter.'

Th gard waevd his welcum flag, th enjin-driever whisld in cheerful responss, and th traen moovd out of th staeshon. As th speed increest, and th Toed cuud see on eether sied of him reeal feelds, and trees, and hejes, and cows, and horses, all flieing past him, and as he thaut how evry minit wuz bringing him neerer to Toed Haul, and sympathetik frends, and muny to chink in his poket, and a soft bed to sleep in, and guud things to eet, and praez and admeraeshon at th resietal of his advenchers and his serpasing clevernes, he began to skip up and doun and shout and sing snaches of song, to th graet astonishment of th enjin-driever, hoo had cum acros wosherwimen befor, at long intervals, but never wun at all liek this.

Thae had cuverd meny and meny a miel, and Toed wuz aulredy considering whot he wuud hav for super as soon as he got hoem, when he noetist that th enjin-driever, with a puzzd expreshon on his faess, wuz leening oever th sied of th enjin and lisening hard. Then he saw him cliem on to th coels and gaez out oever th top of th traen; then he returnd and sed to Toed: 'It's verry straenj; we'r th last traen runing in this direkshon to-niet, yet I cuud be sworn that I hurd another foloeing us!'

Toed seest his frivolus antiks at wunss. He becaem graev and deprest, and a dul paen in th loeer part of his spien, comuenicaeting itself to his legs, maed him wont to sit doun and tri desperetly not to think of all th possibilitys.

Bi this tiem th moon wuz shiening brietyl, and th enjin-driever, stedyng himself on th coel, cuud comand a vue of th lien behiend them for a long distanss.

Prezently he cauld out, 'I can see it clearly now! It is an enjin, on our raelz, cuming along at a graet paess! It luuks as if we wer being persood!'

Th mizerabl Toed, crouching in th coel-

dust, tried hard to think of sumthing to do, with dizmal wont of suksess.

'Thae ar gaening on us fast!' cried th enjin-driever. And th enjin is crowded with th queerest lot of peopl! Men liek aenshent worders, waaving halberds; poleesmen in thaer helmets, waaving trunchons; and shably drest men in pot-hats, obvius and unmistaekabl plaen-cloeths detektivs eeven at this distanss, waaving revolvers and wauking-stiks; all waaving, and all shouting th saem thing -- "Stop, stop, stop!"'

Then Toed fel on his nees amung th coels and, raezing his claspt paws in suplicaeshon, cried, 'Saev me, oenly saev me, deer kiend Mr. Enjin-driever, and I wil confes evrything! I am not th simpl wosherwuuman I seem to be! I hav no children waeting for me, inosent or utherwiez! I am a toed -- th wel-noen and popuelar Mr. Toed, a landed proprieetor; I hav just escaept, bi mi graet daering and clevernes, from a loethsum dunjon into which mi enemys had flung me; and if thoes feloes on that enjin re-capcher me, it wil be chaens and bred-and-wauter and straw and mizery wunss mor for puur, unhappy, inosent Toed!'

Th enjin-driever luukt doun upon him verry sturnly, and sed, 'Now tel th trooth; whot wer U puut in prizon for?'

'It wuz nuthing verry much,' sed puur Toed, culoring deeply. 'I oenly borroed a moetorcar whiel th oeners wer at lunch; thae had no need of it at th tiem. I didn't meen to steel it, reealy; but peopl -- espeshaly majistraets -- taek such harsh vues of thautles and hi-spirited akshons.'

Th enjin-driever luukt verry graev and sed, 'I feer that U hav bin indeed a wiked toed, and bi riets I aut to giv U up to ofended justis. But U ar evidently in sor trubl and distres, so I wil not dezurt U. I doen't hoeld with moetor-cars, for wun thing; and I doen't hoeld with being orderd about bi poleesmen when I'm on mi oen enjin, for anuther. And th siet of an animal in teers aulwaes maeks me feel queer and soft-harted. So cheer up, Toed! I'l do mi best, and we mae beet them yet!'

Thae pield on mor coels, shuveling fueriusly; th furnis rord, th sparks floo, th enjin lept and swung but stil thaer persoopers sloely gaend. Th enjin-driever, with a sie, wiept

his brow with a handful of coton-waest, and sed, 'I'm afraed it's no guud, Toed. U see, thae ar runing liet, and thae hav th beter enjin. Thaer's just wun thing left for us to do, and it's yuur oenly chanss, so atend verry caerfuly to whot I tel U. A short wae ahed of us is a long tunel, and on th uther sied of that th lien pases thru a thik wuud. Now, I wil puut on all th speed I can whiel we ar runing thru th tunel, but th uther feloes wil slo doun a bit, nacheraly, for feir of an aksident. When we ar thru, I wil shut off steem and puut on braeks as hard as I can, and th moement it's saef to do so U must jump and hied in th wuud, befor thae get thru th tunel and see U. Then I wil go fuul speed ahed agen, and thae can chaes me if thae liek, for as long as thae liek, and as far as thae liek. Now miend and be redy to jump when I tel U!'

Thae pield on mor coels, and th traen shot into th tunel, and th enjin rusht and rord and ratld, til at last thae shot out at th uther end into fresh aer and th peesful moonliet, and saw th wuud lieing dark and helpful upon eether sied of th lien. Th driever

shut off steem and puut on braeks, th Toed got doun on th step, and as th traen sloed doun to aulmoest a wauking paess he hurd th drierer caul out, 'Now, jump!'

Toed jumpet, roeld doun a short embankment, pikt himself up unhurt, scramblid into th wuud and hid.

Peeping out, he saw his traen get up speed agen and disapeer at a graet paess. Then out of th tunel burst th persooing enjin, roring and whisling, her motly croo waeving thaer vaerius wepons and shouting, 'Stop! stop! stop!' When thaer wer past, th Toed had a harty laf -- for th furst tiem sinss he wuz throen into prizon.

But he soon stopt lafing when he caem to consider that it wuz now verry laet and dark and coeld, and he wuz in an unnoen wuud, with no muny and no chanss of super, and stil far from frends and hoem; and th ded sielenss of evrything, after th ror and ratl of th traen, wuz sumthing of a shok. He daerd not leev th shelter of th trees, so he struk into th wuud, with th iedeea of leeven th raelwae as far as posibl behiend him.

After so meny weeks within wauls, he found

th wuud straenj and unfriendly and incliend, he thaut, to maek fun of him. Niet-jars, sounding thaer mecanikal ratl, maed him think that th wuud wuz ful of surching worders, cloezing in on him. An oul, swooping noizlesly tords him, brusht his shoelder with its wing, maeking him jump with th horrid surtenty that it wuz a hand; then flited off, mauth-liek, lafing its lo ho! ho! ho; which Toed thaut in verry puur taest. Wunss he met a fox, hoo stopt, luukt him up and doun in a sarcastik sort of wae, and sed, 'Hulo, wosherwuuman! Haf a paer of soks and a pilo-caess short this week! Miend it duzn't ocur agen!' and swagerd off, snigering. Toed luukt about for a stoen to thro at him, but cuud not sukseed in fiending wun, which vext him mor than enything. At last, coeld, hunggry, and tierd out, he saut th shelter of a holo tree, whaer with branches and ded leevs he maed himself as comfortabl a bed as he cuud, and slept soundly til th morning.

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## **Chapter 9**

### **IX**

### **WAEFAERERS ALL**

TH Wauter Rat wuz restles, and he did not exaktly noe whi. To all apeeranss th sumer's pomp wuz stil at fuulest hiet, and aultho in th tild aekers green had given wae to goeld, tho roeans wer redening, and th wuuds wer dasht heer and thaer with a tauny feersnes, yet liet and wormth and culor wer stil prezent in undiminisht mezher, cleen of eny chily premonishons of th pasing yeer. But th constant corus of th orchards and hejes had shrunk to a cazhual eevensong from a fue yet unweeryd performers; th robin wuz begining to asurt himself wunss mor; and thaer wuz a feeling in th aer of chaenj and deparcher. Th cookoo, of corss, had long bin sielent; but meny another fetherd frend, for munths a part of th familyar landscaep and its smaul sosieety, wuz mising too

and it seemd that th ranks thind stedily dae bi dae. Rat, ever obzurvant of all wingd moovment, saw that it wuz taeking daely a southing tendensy; and eeven as he lae in bed at niet he thaut he cuud maek out, pasing in th darknes oeverhed, th beet and qiver of impaeshent pinyons, oebeedyent to th peremptory caul.

Naecher's Grand Hoetel has its Seezon, liek th uthers. As th gests wun bi wun pak, pae, and depart, and th seets at th *table-d'hote* shrink pityfuly at eech sukseeding meel; as sweets of rooms ar cloezd, carpets taeken up, and waeters sent awae; thoes borders hoo ar staeing on, *en pension*, until th next yeer's fuul re-oepening, cannot help being sumwhot afekted bi all thees flitings and faerwels, this eeger discusshon of plans, roots, and fresh qorters, this daely shrinkej in th streem of comradship. Wun gets unsetld, deprest, and incliend to be qerrulus. Whi this craeving for chaenj? Whi not stae on qieetly heer, liek us, and be joly? U doen't noe this hoetel out of th seezon, and whot fun we hav amung ourselvs, we feloes hoo remaen and see th hoel interesting yeer out. All verry troo, no dout

th uthers aulwaes repli; we qjet envy U -- and sum uther yeer perhaps -- but just now we hav engaejments -- and thaer's th bus at th dor -- our tiem is up! So thae depart, with a smiel and a nod, and we mis them, and feel rezentful. Th Rat wuz a self-sufiesing sort of animal, rooted to th land, and, hooever went, he staed; stil, he cuud not help noetising whot wuz in th aer, and feeling sum of its inflooenss in his boens.

It wuz dificult to setl doun to enything seeriusly, with all this fliting going on. Leaving th wauter-sied, whaer rushes stuud thik and taul in a streeem that wuz becuming slugish and loe, he wonderd cuntry-words, crost a feeld or too of pascherej aulredy luuking dusty and parcht, and thrust into th graet see of wheat, yelo, waevy, and murmerus, fuul of qieet moeshon and smaul whisperings. Heer he ofen luvd to wonder, thru th forest of stif strong stauks that carryd thaer oen goelden ski awae oever his hed -- a ski that wuz aulwaes dansing, shimering, softly tauking; or swaeing strongly to th pasing wind and recovering itself with a tos and a merry laf. Heer, too, he had meny smaul frends,

a sosieety compleet in itself, leeding fuul and bizy lievs, but aulwaes with a spaer moement to gosip, and exchaenj nues with a vizitor. Todae, however, tho thae wer sivil enuf, th feeld-miess and harvest-miess seemd preocuepied. Meny wer digging and tuneling bizily; uthers, gatherd together in smaul groops, examind plans and drawings of smaul flats, staeted to be dezierabl and compakt, and sichuaeted conveenently neer th Stors. Sum wer hauling out dusty trunks and dres-baskets, uthers wer aulredy elbo-deep paking thaer belongings; whiel evrywhaer piels and bundls of wheet, oets, barley, beech-mast and nuts, lae about redy for transport.

‘Heer’s oeld Raty!’ thae cried as soon as thae saw him. ‘Cum and baer a hand, Rat, and doen’t stand about iedl!’

‘Whot sort of gaems ar U up to?’ sed th Wauter Rat seveerly. ‘U noe it isn’t tiem to be thinking of winter qorters yet, bi a long wae!’

‘O yes, we noe that,’ explaend a feeld-mous rather shaemfaesedly; ‘but it’s aulwaes as wel to be in guud tiem, isn’t it? We reealy *must* get all th furnicher and bagej and

stors moovd out of this befor thoes horrid masheens begin cliking round th feelds; and then, U noe, th best flats get pict up so qikly now-a-daes, and if U'r laet U hav to puut up with *enylting*; and thae wont such a lot of doing up, too, befor thae'r fit to moov into. Of corss, we'r urly, we noe that; but we'r oenly just maeking a start.'

'O, bother *starts*,' sed th Rat. 'It's a splendid dae. Cum for a roe, or a stroel along th hejes, or a piknik in th wuuds, or sumthing.'

'Wel, I *think* not *to-dae*, thank U,' replied th feeld-mous hurydly. 'Perhaps sum *uther* dae -- when we've mor *tiem* -- -- '

Th Rat, with a snort of contempt, swung round to go, tript oever a hat-box, and fel, with undignified remarks.

'If peopl wuud be mor caerful,' sed a feeld-mous rather stifly, 'and luuk whaer thae'r going, peopl wuudn't hurt themselvs -- and forget themselvs. Miend that hoeld-all, Rat! U'd beter sit doun sumwhaer. In an our or too we mae be mor free to atend to U.'

'U woen't be "free" as U caul it much

this sied of Crismas, I can see that,' retorted th Rat grumpily, as he pict his wae out of th feeld.

He returnd sumwhot despondently to his river agen -- his faethful, stedy-going oeld river, which never pakt up, flited, or went into winter qorters.

In th oezhers which frinjd th bank he spied a swolo siting. Prezently it wuz joind bi another, and then bi a thurd; and th burds, fijeting restlesly on thaer bow, taukt together urnestly and loe.

'Whot, *aulredy*,' sed th Rat, stroeling up to them. 'Whot's th hury? I caul it simply ridicuelus.'

'O, we'r not off yet, if that's whot U meen,' replied th furst swolo. 'We'r oenly maeking plans and araenjing things. Tauking it oever, U noe -- whot root we'r taeking this yeer, and whaer we'l stop, and so on. That's haf th fun!'

'Fun?' sed th Rat; 'now that's just whot I doen't understand. If U've got to leev this plezant plaess, and yuur frends hoo wil mis U, and yuur snug hoems that U've just setld into, whi, when th our strieks I've no

dout U'l go braevly, and faess all th trubl and discumfort and chaenj and  
nuenes, and maek beleev that U'r not verry unhappy. But to wont to tauk  
about it, or eeven think about it, til U reealy need -- -- '

'No, U doen't understand, nacheraly,' sed th second swolo. 'Furst, we feel  
it sturing within us, a sweet unrest; then bak cum th recolekshons wun bi  
wun, liek hoeming pijons. Thae fluter thru our dreems at niet, thae fli with us  
in our wheelings and surklings bi dae. We hungger to inqier of eech uther, to  
compaer noets and ashuur ourselvs that it wuz all reealy troo, as wun bi wun  
th sents and sounds and naems of long-forgoten plaeses cum grajuly bak  
and bekon to us.'

'Cuudn't U stop on for just this yeer?' sugested th Wauter Rat, wistfuly.  
'We'l all do our best to maek U feel at hoem. U've no iedeea whot guud tiems  
we hav heer, whiel U ar far awae.'

'I tried "stoping on" wun yeer,' sed th thurd swolo. 'I had groen so fond of  
th plaess that when th tiem caem I hung bak and let th uthers go on without  
me. For a fue weeks it wuz all wel enuf, but afterwards, O

th weery length of th niets! Th shivering, sunles daes! Th aer so clamy and chil, and not an insekt in an aeker of it! No, it wuz no guud; mi curej broek doun, and wun coeld, stormy niet I tuuk wing, flieing wel inland on account of th strong eesterly gaels. It wuz snoeing hard as I beet thru th pases of th graet mountens, and I had a stif fiet to win thru; but never shal I forget th blisful feeling of th hot sun agen on mi bak as I sped doun to th laeks that lae so bloo and plasid beloe me, and th taest of mi furst fat insekt! Th past wuz liek a bad dreem; th fuecher wuz all hapy holidae as I moovd southwards week bi week, eezily, laezily, linggering as long as I daerd, but aulwaes heeding th caul! No, I had had mi worning; never agen did I think of disoebeedi'enss.'

‘Aa, yes, th caul of th South, of th South!’ twiterd th uther too dreemily. ‘Its songs its hues, its raediant aer! O, do U remember --- and, forgeting th Rat, thae slid into pashonet reminisenss, whiel he lisend fasinaeted, and his hart burnd within him. In himself, too, he nue that it wuz viebraeting at last, that cord hitherto dormant and

unsuspected. Th meer chater of thees suthern-bound burds, thaer pael and second-hand reports, had yet power to awaeken this wield nue sensaeshon and thril him thru and thru with it; whot wuud wun moement of th reeal thing wurk in him -- wun pashonet tuch of th reeal suthern sun, wun waافت of th authentik oedor? With cloezd ies he daerd to dreem a moement in fuul abandonment, and when he luukt agen th river seemd steely and chil, th green feels grae and lietles. Then his loyal hart seemd to cri out on his weaker self for its trechery.

‘Whi do U ever cum bak, then, at all?’ he demanded of th swoloes jelusly.  
‘Whot do U fiend to atrakt U in this puur drab litl cuntry?’

‘And do U think,’ sed th furst swolo, ‘that th uther caul is not for us too, in its due seezon? Th caul of lush medo-gras, wet orchards, worm, insekt-haunted ponds, of brouzing catl, of haemaking, and all th farm-bildings clustering round th Hous of th purfekt Eevs?’

‘Do U supoez,’ askt th second wun, that U ar th oenly living thing that craevs

with a hunggry longing to heer th coocoo's noet agen?'

'In due tiem,' sed th thurd, 'we shal be hoem-sik wunss mor for qieet wauter-lilys swaeing on th surfis of an Inglish streem. But to-dae all that seems pael and thin and verry far awae. Just now our blud dances to uther muezik.'

Thae fel a-twitering amung themselvs wunss mor, and this tiem thaer intoxicaeting babl wuz of violet sees, tauny sands, and lizard-haunted wauls.

Restlesly th Rat wonderd off wunss mor, cliemd th sloep that roez jently from th north bank of th river, and lae luuking out tords th graet ring of Douns that bard his vizhon further southwards -- his simpl horiezon hitherto, his Mountens of th Moon, his limit behiend which lae nuthing he had caerd to see or to noe. To-dae, to him gaezing South with a nueborn need sturing in his hart, th cheer ski oever thaer long loe outlien seemd to pulsaet with promis; to-dae, th unseen wuz evrything, th unnoen th oenly reeal fakt of lief. On this sied of th hils wuz now th reeal blank, on th uther lae th crowded and culord

panorama that his iner ie wuz seeing so clearly. Whot sees lae beyond, green, leeping, and crested! Whot sun-baethd coests, along which th whiet vilas gliterd agenst th oliv wuuds! Whot qieet harbors, throngd with galant shiping bound for purpl islands of wien and spiess, islands set loe in langgorus wauters!

He roez and desended river-wards wunss mor; then chaenjd his miend and saut th sied of th dusty laen. Thaer, lieing haf-berryd in th thik, cool under-hej tanggl that borderd it, he cuud muez on th metald roed and all th wundrus wurld that it led to; on all th waefaeerers, too, that miet hav troden it, and th forchuns and advenchers thaе had gon to seek or found unseeking -- out thaer, beyond -- beyond!

Fuutsteps fel on his eer, and th figuer of wun that waukt sumwhot weerily caem into vue; and he saw that it wuz a Rat, and a verry dusty wun. Th waefaeerer, as he reecht him, salooted with a jescher of courtesy that had sumthing forin about it -- hezitaeted a moement -- then with a plezant smiel turnd from th trak and sat doun bi his sied in th cool hurbej. He seemd tierd, and th

Rat let him rest unqueschond, understanding sumthing of whot wuz in his thauts; noeing, too, th value all animals atach at tiems to meer siilent companyonship, when th weery musls slaken and th miend marks tiem.

Th waefaeer wuz leen and keen-feeched, and sumwhot bowd at th shoelders; his paws wer thin and long, his ies much rinkld at th corners, and he wor smaul goeld eer rings in his neetly-set wel-shaept eers. His nited jurzy wuz of a faeeded bloo, his breeches, pacht and staend, wer baest on a bloo foundaeshon, and his smaul belongings that he carryd wer tied up in a bloo coton hankerchif.

When he had rested awhiel th straenjer sied, snuft th aer, and luukt about him.

'That wuz cloever, that worm whif on th breez,' he remarkt; 'and thoes ar cows we heer croping th gras behiend us and bloeing softly between mouthfuls. Thaer is a sound of distant reepers, and yonder riezies a bloo lien of cotej smoek agenst th wuudland. Th river runs sumwhaer cloess bi, for I heer th caul of a muurhen, and I see bi yuur bild that U'r a freshwauter marriner.

Evrything seems asleep, and yet going on all th tiem. It is a guudly lief that U leed, frend; no dout th best in th wurld, if oenly U ar strong enuf to leed it!

‘Yes, it's *th* lief, th oenly lief, to liv,’ responded th Wauter Rat dreemily, and without his uezhual hoel-harted convikshon.

‘I did not sae exaktly that,’ replied th straenjer caushusly; ‘but no dout it's th best. I've tried it, and I noe. And becauz I've just tried it -- six munths of it -- and noe it's th best, heer am I, fuutsor and hunggry, tramping awae from it, tramping southward, foloeing th oeld caul, bak to th oeld lief, *th* lief which is mien and which wil not let me go.’

‘Is this, then, yet another of them?’ muezd th Rat. ‘And whaer hav U just cum from?’ he askt. He hardly daerd to ask whaer he wuz bound for; he seemd to noe th anser oenly too wel.

‘Niess litl farm,’ replied th waefarer, breefly. ‘Upalong in that direkshon’ -- he noded northwards. ‘Never miend about it. I had evrything I cuud wont -- evrything I had eny riet to expekt of lief, and mor; and heer I am! Glad to be heer all th saem, tho,

glad to be heer! So meny miels further on th roed, so meny ours neerer to mi hart's dezier!

His shiening ies held fast to th horiezon, and he seemd to be lisening for sum sound that wuz wonting from that inland aekerej, voekal as it wuz with th cheerful muezik of pascherej and farm-yard.

'U ar not wun of us,' sed th Wauter Rat, 'nor yet a farmer; nor eeven, I shuud juj, of this cuntry.'

'Riet,' replied th straenjer. 'I'm a seefaering rat, I am, and th port I orijinaly hael from is Constantinoapl, tho I'm a sort of a foriner thaer too, in a maner of speeking. U wil hav hurd of Constantinoapl, frend? A faer sity, and an aenshent and glorius wun. And U mae hav hurd, too, of Sigerd, King of Norwae, and how he saeld thither with sixty ships, and how he and his men roed up thru streets all canopyd in thaer onor with purpl and goeld; and how th Emperor and Empres caem doun and banqueted with him on bord his ship. When Sigerd returnd hoem, meny of his Northmen remaend behiend and enterd th Emperor's

body-gard, and mi ansestor, a Norweejan born, staed behiend too, with th ships that Sigerd gaev th Emperor. Seefaeerers we hav ever bin, and no wunder; as for me, th sity of mi burth is no mor mi hoem than eny plezant port between thaer and th Lundon River. I noe them all, and thae noe me. Set me doun on eny of thaer kees or forshors, and I am hoem agen.'

'I supoez U go graet voyejes,' sed th Wauter Rat with groeing interest.  
'Munths and munths out of siet of land, and provizhons runing short, and alowanst as to wauter, and yuur miend comuening with th miety oeshan, and all that sort of thing?'

'Bi no meens,' sed th See Rat frankly. 'Such a lief as U descrieb wuud not soot me at all. I'm in th coesting traed, and raerly out of siet of land. It's th joly tiems on shor that apeel to me, as much as eny seefaering. O, thoes suthern seeports! Th smel of them, th rieding-liets at niet, th glamor!'

'Wel, perhaps U hav choezen th beter wae,' sed th Wauter Rat, but rather doutfuly. 'Tel me sumthing of yuur coesting, then, if

U hav a miend to, and whot sort of harvest an animal of spirit miet hoep to bring hoem from it to worm his later daes with galant memorys bi th fiersied; for mi lief, I confes to U, feels to me to-dae sumwhot narro and surcumscriebd.'

'Mi last voyej,' began th See Rat, 'that landed me evenchualy in this cuntry, bound with hie hoeps for mi inland farm, wil surv as a guud exempl of eny of them, and, indeed, as an epitomy of mi hiely-culord lief. Family trubls, as uezhual, began it. Th domestik storm-coen wuz hoisted, and I shipt mieself on bord a smaul traeding vessel bound from Constantinoapl, bi clasik sees hoos evry waev throbs with a dethles memory, to th Greeshan Ielands and th Levant. Thoes wer goelden daes and baamy niets! In and out of harbor all th tiem -- oeld frends evrywhaer -- sleeping in sum cool templ or rooind sistern duuring th heet of th dae -- feesting and song after sundoun, under graet stars set in a velvet ski! Thenss we turnd and coested up th Aedriatik, its shors swiming in an atmosfeer of amber, roez, and aqamareen; we lae in wied land-lokt harbors,

we roemd thru aenshent and noebl sitys, until at last wun morning, as th sun roez roaly behiend us, we roed into Venis doun a path of goeld. O, Venis is a fien sity, whaerin a rat can wonder at his eez and taek his plezher! Or, when weery of wondering, can sit at th ej of th Grand Canal at niet, feesting with his frends, when th aer is ful of muezik and th ski ful of stars, and th liets flash and shimer on th polisht steel prows of th swaeing gondolas, pakt so that U cuud wauk acros th canal on them from sied to sied! And then th food -- do U liek shelfish? Wel, wel, we woen't lingger oever that now.'

He wuz siilent for a tiem; and th Wauter Rat, siilent too and enthrauld, floeted on dreem-canals and hurd a fantom song peeling hie between vaeporus grae waev-lapt wauls.

'Southwards we saeld agen at last,' continued th See Rat, 'coesting doun th Italyan shor, til fiendly we maed *Palermo*, and thaer I qited for a long, hapy spel on shor. I never stik too long to wun ship; wun gets narro-miended and prejudist. Besieds, Sisily is wun of mi hapy hunting-grounds. I noe

evrybody thaer, and thaer waes just soot me. I spent meny joly weeks in th ieland, staeing with frends up cuntry. When I groo restles agen I tuuk advantej of a ship that wuz traeding to Sardinia and Corsica; and verry glad I wuz to feel th fresh breez and th see-sprae in mi faess wunss mor.'

'But isn't it verry hot and stufy, doun in th -- hoeld, I think U caul it?' askt th Wauter Rat.

Th seefaeerer luukt at him with th suspishus goest of a wink. 'I'm an oeld hand,' he remarkt with much simplisity. 'Th capten's cabin's guud enuf for me.'

'It's a hard lief, bi all acounts,' murmerd th Rat, sunk in deep thaut.

'For th croo it is,' replied th seefaeerer graevly, agen with th goest of a wink.

'From Corsica,' he went on, 'I maed ues of a ship that wuz taeking wien to th maenland. We maed *Alassio* in th eevning, lae to, hauld up our wien-casks, and hoev them oeverbord, tied wun to th uther bi a long lien. Then th croo tuuk to th boets and roed shorwards, singing as thae went, and drawing after them th long bobing proseshon of casks, liek a

miel of porpuses. On th sands thaе had horses waeting, which dragd th casks up th steep street of th litl toun with a fien rush and clater and scrambl. When th last cask wuz in, we went and refresht and rested, and sat laet into th niet, drinking with our frends, and next morning I tuuk to th graet oliv-wuuds for a spel and a rest. For now I had dun with ielands for th tiem, and ports and shiping wer plentiful; so I led a laezy lief amung th pezants, lieing and woching them wurk, or strecht hie on th hilsied with th bloo Mediterraenian far beloe me. And so at length, bi eezy staejes, and partly on fuut, partly bi see, to *Marseilles*, and th meeting of oeld shipmaets, and th viziting of graet oeshan-bound vesels, and feesting wunss mor. Tauk of shel-fish! Whi, sumtiems I dreem of th shel-fish of *Marseilles*, and waek up crieing!"

'That remiends me,' sed th poliet Wauter Rat; 'U hapend to menshon that U wer hunggry, and I aut to hav spoeken uryer. Of corss, U wil stop and taek yuur middae meel with me? Mi hoel is cloess bi; it is sum tiem past noon, and U ar verry welcum to whotever thaer is.'

'Now I caul that kiend and brutherly of U,' sed th See Rat. 'I wuz indeed hunggry when I sat doun, and ever sinss I inadvurtently hapend to menshon shel-fish, mi pangs hav bin extreem. But cuudn't U fech it along out heer? I am nun too fond of going under haches, unles I'm obliejd to; and then, whiel we eet, I cuud tel U mor consurning mi voyejes and th plezant lief I leed -- at leest, it is verry plezant to me, and bi yuur atenshon I juj it comends itself to U; whaeras if we go indors it is a hundred to wun that I shal prezently faul asleep.'

'That is indeed an exselent sugjeschon,' sed th Wauter Rat, and huryd off hoem. Thaer he got out th lunchon-basket and pakt a simpl meel, in which, remembering th straenjer's orijin and preferenses, he tuuk caer to inclood a yard of long French bred, a sausej out of which th garlik sang, sum cheez which lae doun and cried, and a long-nekt straw-cuverd flask whaerin lae botld sunshien shed and garnerd on far Suthern sloeps. Thus laeden, he returnd with all speed, and blusht for plezher at th oeld seaman's comendashons of his taest and jujment, as

together thaе unpakt th basket and laed out th contents on th gras bi th roedsied.

Th See Rat, as soon as his hunger wuz sumwhot aswaejd, continued th history of his laetest voyej, condukting his simpl heerer from port to port of Spaen, landing him at Lizbon, Oporto, and Bordoe, introducesing him to th plezant harbors of Cornwaul and Devon, and so up th Chanel to that fienal kee-sied, whaer, landing after winds long contraery, storm-driven and wether-beeten, he had caut th furst majikal hints and herraldings of another Spring, and, fierd bi thees, had sped on a long tramp inland, hunggry for th experriment of lief on sum qieet farmsted, verry far from th weery beeting of eny see.

Spel-bound and qivering with exsietment, th Wauter Rat foloed th Advencherer leeg bi leeg, oever stormy baes, thru crowded roedsteds, acros harbor bars on a raesing tied, up wiending rivers that hid thaer bizy litl touns round a suden turn; and left him with a regretful sie planted at his dul inland farm, about which he dezierd to heer nuthing.

Bi this tiem thaer meel wuz oever, and th Seefaeerer, refresht and strengthend, his vois mor

viebrant, his ie lit with a brietnes that seemd caut from sum far-awae see-beacon, fild his glas with th red and gloeing vintej of th South, and, leening tords th Wauter Rat, compeld his gaez and held him, body and soel, whiel he taukt. Thoes ies wer of th chaenjing foem-streekt grae-green of leeping Northern sees; in th glas shoen a hot rooby that seemd th verry hart of th South, beeting for him hoo had curej to respond to its pulsaeshon. Th twin liets, th shifting grae and th stedfast red, masterd th Wauter Rat and held him bound, fasinaeted, powerles. Th qieet wurld outsied thaer raes reseeded far awae and seest to be. And th tauk, th wunderful tauk floed on -- or wuz it speech entierly, or did it pas at tiems into song -- chanty of th saelors waeing th driping ankor, sonorus hum of th shrouds in a taering North-Eester, balad of th fisherman hauling his nets at sundoun agenst an aepricot ski, cords of gitar and mandolin from gondola or caaeek? Did it chaenj into th cri of th wind, plaentiv at furst, anggrily shril as it freshend, riezing to a taering whisl, sinking to a muezikal trikl of aer from th leech of th belying sael? All

thees sounds th spel-bound lisener seemd to heer, and with them th hunggry complaent of th guls and th see-mues, th soft thunder of th braeking waev, th cri of th proetesting shinggl. Bak into speech agen it past, and with beeting hart he wuz foloeing th advenchers of a dozen seeports, th fiets, th escaeaps, th ralys, th comradships, th galant undertaekings; or he surcht ielands for trezher, fisht in stil lagoons and doezd dae-long on worm whiet sand. Of deep-see fishings he hurd tel, and miety silver gatherings of th miel-long net; of suden perrils, noiz of braekers on a moonles niet, or th taul bows of th graet liener taeking shaep oeverhed thru th fog; of th merry hoem-cuming, th hedland rounded, th harbor liets oepend out; th groops seen dimly on th kee, th cheery hael, th splash of th hauzer; th truj up th steep litl street tords th cumforting glo of red-curtend windoes.

Lastly, in his waeking dreem it seemd to him that th Advencherer had rizen to his feet, but wuz stil speeking, stil hoelding him fast with his see-grae ies.

'And now,' he wuz softly saeing, 'I taek to

th roed agen, hoelding on southwestwards for meny a long and dusty dae; til at last I reech th litl grae see toun I noe so wel, that clings along wun steep sied of th harbor. Thaer thru dark dorwaes U luuk doun fliets of stoen steps, overhung bi graet pink tufts of valeerian and ending in a pach of sparkling bloo wauter. Th litl boets that lie tetherd to th rings and stanchons of th oeld see-waul ar gaely paented as thoes I clamberd in and out of in mi oen chieldhuud; th samon leep on th flud tied, scools of makerel flash and plae past keesieds and for-shors, and bi th windoes th graet vesels glied, niet and dae, up to thaer muurings or forth to th oepen see. Thaer, sooner or laeter, th ships of all seefaering naeshons ariev; and thaer, at its destind our, th ship of mi chois wil let go its ankor. I shal taek mi tiem, I shal tarry and bied, til at last th riet wun lies waeting for me, worpt out into midstreem, loeded loe, her bowsprit pointing doun harbor. I shal slip on bord, bi boet or along hauzer; and then wun morning I shal waek to th song and tramp of th saelors, th clink of th capstan, and th ratl of th ankor-chaen

cuming merrily in. We shal braek out th jib and th forsael, th whiet houzes on th harbor sied wil glied sloely past us as she gathers steering-wae, and th voyej wil hav begun! As she forjes tords th hedland she wil cloeth herself with canvas; and then, wunss outsied, th sounding slap of graet green sees as she heels to th wind, pointing South!

‘And U, U wil cum too, yung bruther; for th daes pas, and never return, and th South stil waets for U. Taek th Advencher, heed th caul, now aer th irevoecabl moement pases!’ 'Tis but a banging of th dor behiend U, a bliethsum step forward, and U ar out of th oeld lief and into th nue! Then sum dae, sum dae long henss, jog hoem heer if U wil, when th cup has bin draend and th plae has bin plaed, and sit doun bi yuur qieet river with a stor of guudly memorys for cumpany. U can eezily oevertaek me on th roed, for U ar yung, and I am aejing and go softly. I wil lingger, and luuk bak; and at last I wil shuurly see U cuming, eeger and liet-harted, with all th South in yuur faess!’

Th vois died awae and seest as an insekt's tieny trumpet dwindls swiftly into sielenss;

and th Wauter Rat, parraliezd and staering, saw at last but a distant spek on th whiet surfis of th roed.

Mecanikaly he roez and proseeded to repak th lunchon-basket, caerfuly and without haest. Mecanikaly he returnd hoem, gatherd together a fue smaul nesesaerys and speshal trezgers he wuz fond of, and puut them in a sachel; akting with slo deliberaeshon, mooving about th room liek a sleep-wauker; lisening ever with parted lips. He swung th sachel oever his shoelder, caerfuly selekted a stout stik for his waefaring, and with no haest, but with no hezitaeshon at all, he stept acros th threshhoeld just as th Moel apeerd at th dor.

'Whi, whaer ar U off to, Raty?' askt th Moel in graet serpriez, grasping him bi th arm.

'Going South, with th rest of them,' murmerd th Rat in a dreemy monotoen, never luuking at him. 'Seewards furst and then on shipbord, and so to th shors that ar cauling me!'

He prest rezolootly forward, stil without haest, but with doged fixity of purpos; but

th Moel, now thuroely alarmd, plaest himself in frunt of him, and luuking into his ies saw that thae wer glaezd and set and turnd a streekt and shifting grae -- not his friend's ies, but th ies of sum uther animal! Grapling with him strongly he dragd him insied, throo him doun, and held him.

Th Rat strugld desperetly for a fue moements, and then his strength seemd sudenly to leev him, and he lae stil and exausted, with cloezd ies, trembling. Prezently th Moel asisted him to riez and plaest him in a chaer, whaer he sat colapst and shrunken into himself, his body shaeken bi a vioalent shivering, pasing in tiem into an histerrikal fit of dri sobing. Moel maed th dor fast, throo th sachel into a dror and lokt it, and sat doun qieetly on th taebi his frend, waeting for th straenj seezher to pas. Grajuly th Rat sank into a trubld doeze, broeken bi starts and confuezd murmerings of things straenj and wield and forin to th unenlieten Moel; and from that he past into a deep slumber. Ok

Verry ankshus in miend, th Moel left him for a tiem and bizyd himself with hous-hoeld

maters; and it wuz geting dark when he returnd to th parlor and found th Rat whaer he had left him, wied awaek indeed, but listles, sielent, and dejekted. He tuuk wun haesty glanss at his ies; found them, to his graet gratificaeshon, clearer and dark and broun agen as befor; and then sat doun and tried to cheer him up and help him to relaet whot had hapend to him.

Puur Raty did his best, bi degrees, to explaen things; but how cuud he puut into coeld wurdz whot had moestly bin sugjeschon? How recal, for another's benefit, th haunting see voises that had sung to him, how reproduess at second-hand th majik of th Seefarer's hundred reminisenses? Eeven to himself, now th spel wuz broeken and th glamor gon, he found it dificult to acount for whot had seemd, sum ours ago, th inevitabl and oenly thing. It is not serpriezing, then, that he faeld to convae to th Moel eny clearer ideea of whot he had bin thru that dae.

To th Moel this much wuz plaen: th fit, or atak, had past awae, and had left him saen agen, tho shaeken and cast doun bi th reakshon. But he seemd to hav lost all interest

for th tiem in th things that went to maek up his daely lief, as wel as in all plezant forcastings of th aulterd daes and doings that th chaenjing seezon wuz shuurly bringing.

Cazhualy, then, and with seeming indiferenss, th Moel turnd his tauk to th harvest that wuz being gatherd in, th towering wagons and thaer straening teems, th groeing riks, and th larj moon riezing oever baer aekers doted with sheevs. He taukt of th redening apls around, of th brouning nuts, of jams and prezurvs and th distiling of corjals; til bi eezy staejes such as thees he reecht midwinter, its harty joys and its snug hoem lief, and then he becaem simply lirikal.

Bi degrees th Rat began to sit up and to join in. His dul ie brietend, and he lost sum of his lisening aer.

Prezently th taktful Moel slipt awae and returnd with a pensil and a fue haf-sheets of paeper, which he plaest on th taeb'l at his frend's elbo.

'It's qiet a long tiem sinss U did eny poeetry,' he remarkt. 'U miet hav a tri at it this eevning, insted of -- wel, brooding oever things so much. I've an iedeea that U'

feel a lot beter when U'v got sumthing joted doun -- if it's oenly just th riems.'

Th Rat puusht th paeper awae from him weerily, but th discreet Moel tuuk ocaezhon to leev th room, and when he peept in agen sum tiem laeter, th Rat wuz absorbd and def to th wurld; aulternetly scribbling and suking th top of his pensil. It is troo that he sukt a guud deel mor than he scribld; but it wuz joy to th Moel to noe that th cuer had at leest begun.

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## Chapter 10

### X

### TH FURTHER ADVENCHERS OF TOED

TH frunt dor of th holo tree faest eestwards, so Toed wuz cauld at an urly our; partly bi th briet sunliet streeming in on him, partly bi th exseeding coeldnes of his toes, which maed him dreem that he wuz at hoem in bed in his oen hansum room with th Toodor windo, on a coeld winter's niet, and his bedcloeths had got up, grumbling and proetesting thae cuudn't stand th coeld eny longer, and had run dounstaers to th kichen fier to worm themselvs; and he had foloed, on baer feet, along miels and miels of iesy stoen-paevd pasejes, argueing and beseeching them to be reezonabl. He wuud probably hav bin arouzd much uryer, had he not slept for sum weeks on straw oever stoen flags, and

aulmoest forgoten th frendly feeling of thik blankets puuld wel up round th chin.

Siting up, he rubd his ies furst and his complaening toes next, wunderd for a moement whaer he wuz, luuking round for familyar stoen waul and litl bard windo; then, with a leep of th hart, rememberd evrything -- his escaep, his fliet, his persoot; rememberd, furst and best thing of all, that he wuz free!

Free! Th wurd and th thaut aloen wer wurth fifty blankets. He wuz worm from end to end as he thaut of th joly wurld outsied, waeting eegerly for him to maek his triumfal entranss, redy to surv him and plae up to him, ankshus to help him and to keep him cumpany, as it aulwaes had bin in daes of oeld befor misforchun fel upon him. He shuuk himself and coemd th dri leevs out of his haer with his finggers; and, his toilet compleet, marcht forth into th comfortabl morning sun, coeld but confident, hunggry but hoepful, all nurvus terrors of yesterdae dispeld bi rest and sleep and frank and hartening sunshien.

He had th wurld all to himself, that urly sumer morning. Th duey wuudland, as he threded it, wuz solitaery and stil: th green

feels that sukseeded th trees wer his oen to do as he liekt with; th roed itself, when he reecht it, in that loenlynes that wuz evrywhaer, seemd, liek a strae dog, to be luuking ankshusly for cumpany. Toed, however, wuz luuking for sumthing that cuud tauk, and tel him cleerly which wae he aut to go. It is all verry wel, when U hav a liet hart, and a cleer conshenss, and muny in yuur poket, and noebody scouring th cuntry for U to drag U off to prizon agen, to folo whaer th roed bekons and points, not caering whither. Th praktikal Toed caerd verry much indeed, and he cuud hav kikt th roed for its helples sielenss when evry minit wuz of importanss to him.

Th rezurvd rustik roed wuz prezently joind bi a shi litl bruther in th shaep of a canal, which tuuk its hand and ambld along bi its sied in purfekt confidenss, but with th saem tung-tied, uncomuenicaetiv attitud tords straenjers. 'Bother them!' sed Toed to himself. 'But, enyhow, wun thing's cleer. Thae must boeth be cuming *from* sumwhaer, and going *to* sumwhaer. U can't get oever that. Toed, mi boy!' So he marcht on paeshently bi th wauter's ej.

Round a bend in th canal caem ploding a solitaery horss, stooping forward as if in ankshus thaut. From roep traeses atacht to his colar strecht a long lien, taut, but dipping with his stried, th further part of it driping purly drops. Toed let th horss pas, and stuud waeting for whot th faets wer sending him.

With a plezant swurl of qieet wauter at its blunt bow th barj slid up alongsied of him, its gaely paented gunel level with th toeing-path, its soel ocuepart a big stout wuuman waering a linen sun-bonet, wun brauny arm laed along th tiler.

'A niess morning, ma'am!' she remarkt to Toed, as she droo up level with him.

'I daer sae it is, ma'am!' responded Toed polietly, as he waukt along th toe-path abreast of her. 'I daer it *is* a niess morning to them that's not in sor trubl, liek whot I am. Heer's mi marryd dauter, she sends off to me poest-haest to cum to her at wunss; so off I cums, not noeing whot mae be hapening or going to hapan, but feering th wurst, as U wil understand, ma'am, if U'r a muther, too. And I've left mi biznes to luuk after itself -- I'm in th

woshing and laundering lien, U must noe, ma'am -- and I've left mi yung children to luuk after themselvs, and a mor mischivus and trublsum set of yung imps duzn't exist, ma'am; and I've lost all mi muny, and lost mi wae, and as for whot mae be hapening to mi marryd dauter, whi, I doen't liek to think of it, ma'am!"

'Whaer miet yuur marryd dauter be living, ma'am?' askt th barj-wuuman.

'She lives neer to th river, ma'am,' replied Toed. 'Cloess to a fien hous cauld Toed Haul, that's sumwhaers heerabouts in thees parts. Perhaps U mae hav hurd of it.'

'Toed Haul? Whi, I'm going that wae mieself,' replied th barj-wuuman.  
'This canal joins th river sum miels further on, a litl abuv Toed Haul; and then it's an eezy wauk. U cum along in th barj with me, and I'l giv U a lift.'

She steerd th barj cloess to th bank, and Toed, with meny humbl and graetful aknolejments, stept lietly on bord and sat doun with graet satisfakshon. 'Toed's luk agen!' thaut he. 'I aulwaes cum out on top!'

‘So U'r in th woshing biznes, ma'am?’ sed th barj-wuuman polietly, as thae gliedied along. ‘And a verry guud biznes U've got too, I daer sae, if I'm not maeking too free in saeing so.’

‘Fienest biznes in th hoel cuntry,’ sed Toed aerily. ‘All th jentry cum to me -- wuudn’t go to eny wun elss if thae wer paed, thae noe me so wel. U see, I understand mi wark thuroely, and atend to it all mieself. Woshing, ieerning, clearer-starching, maeking up jents’ fien shurts for eevning waer -- everything's dun under mi oen ie!’

‘But shuurly U doen’t *do* all that wurk yuурself, ma'am?’ askt th barj-wuuman respektfuly.

‘O, I hav gurls,’ sed Toed lietly: ‘twenty gurls or thaerabouts, aulwaes at wurk. But U noe whot *gurls* ar, ma'am! Nasty litl husys, that's whot *I* caul 'em!’

‘So do I, too,’ sed th barj-wuuman with graet hartynes. ‘But I daer sae U set yuurs to riets, th iedl trollops! And ar U verry fond of woshing?’

‘I luv it,’ sed Toed. ‘I simply doet on it. Never so hapy as when I've got boeth arms in th wosh-tub. But, then, it cum so eezy to

me! No trubl at all! A reeal plezher, I ashur U, ma'am!"

'Whot a bit of luk, meeting U!' obzurvd th barj-wuuman, thautfuly. 'A reguelar peess of guud forchun for boeth of us!'

'Whi, whot do U meen?' askt Toed, nurvusly.

'Wel, luuk at me, now,' replied th barj-wuuman. 'I liek woshing, too, just th saem as U do; and for that mater, whether I liek it or not I hav got to do all mi oen, nacheraly, mooving about as I do. Now mi huzband, he's such a felo for shurking his wurk and leeving th barj to me, that never a moement do I get for seeing to mi oen afaers. Bi riets he aut to be heer now, eether steering or atending to th horss, tho lukily th horss has senss enuf to atend to himself. Insted of which, he's gon off with th dog, to see if thae can't pik up a rabit for diner sumwhaer. Ses he'l cach me up at th next lok. Wel, that's as mae be -- I doen't trust him, wunss he gets off with that dog, hoo's wurss than he is. But meentiem, how am I to get on with mi woshing?'

'O, never miend about th woshing,' sed

Toed, not lieking th subjekt. 'Tri and fix yuur miend on that rabbit. A niess fat yung rabbit, I'l be bound. Got eny unyons?'

'I can't fix mi miend on enything but mi woshing,' sed th barj-wuuman, 'and I wunder U can be tauking of rabits, with such a joyful prospekt befor U. Thaer's a heep of things of mien that U'l fiend in a corner of th cabin. If U'l just taek wun or too of th moest nesesaery sort -- I woen't vencher to descrieb them to a laedy liek U, but U'l recogniez them at a glanss -- and puut them thru th wosh-tub as we go along, whi, it'l be a plezher to U, as U rietyl sae, and a reeal help to me. U'l fiend a tub handy, and soep, and a ketl on th stoev, and a buket to haul up wauter from th canal with. Then I shal noe U'r enjoying yuursef, insted of siting heer iedl, luuking at th scenery and yauning yuur hed off.'

'Heer, U let me steer!' sed Toed, now thuroely frietend, 'and then U can get on with yuur woshing yuur oen wae. I miet spoil yuur things, or not do 'em as U liek. I'm mor uezd to jentlmen's things mieself. It's mi speshal lien.'

'Let U steer?' replied th barj-wuuman, lafing. 'It taeks sum praktis to steer a barj properly. Besieds, it's dul wurk, and I wont U to be hapy. No, U shal do th woshing U ar so fond of, and I'l stik to th steering that I understand. Doen't tri and depriev me of th plezher of giving U a treet!'

Toed wuz faerly cornerd. He luukt for escaep this wae and that, saw that he wuz too far from th bank for a flieing leep, and sulenly reziend himself to his faet. 'If it cumz to that,' he thaut in desperaeshon, 'I supoez eny fool can *wosh!*'

He fecht tub, soep, and uther nesesaerys from th cabin, selekted a fue garments at random, tried to recolekt whot he had seen in cazuual glances thru laundry windoes, and set to.

A long haf-our past, and evry minit of it saw Toed geting croser and croser. Nuthing that he cuud do to th things seemd to pleez them or do them guud. He tried coexing, he tried slaping, he tried punching; thae smield bak at him out of th tub unconvurted, hapy in thaer orijinal sin. Wunss or twiess he luukt

nurvusly oever his shoelder at th barj-wuuman, but she apeerd to be gaezing out in frunt of her, absorbd in her steering. His bak aekt badly, and he noetist with dismae that his paws wer begining to get all crinkly. Now Toed wuz verry proud of his paws. He muterd under his breth wurds that shuud never pas th lips of eether wosherwimen or Toeds; and lost th soep, for th fiftyeth tiem.

A burst of lafter maed him straeten himself and luuk round. Th barj-wuuman wuz leening bak and lafing unrestraenedly, til th teers ran doun her cheeks.

'I've bin woching U all th tiem,' she gaspt. 'I thaut U must be a humbug all along, from th conseeted wae U taukt. Prity wosherwuuman U ar! Never wosht so much as a dish-clout in yuor lief, I'l lae!'

Toed's temper which had bin simering vishusly for sum tiem, now faerly boild oever, and he lost all controel of himself.

'U comon, loe, *fat* barj-wuuman!' he shouted; 'doen't U daer to tauk to yuor beters liek that! Wosherwuuman indeed! I wuud hav U to noe that I am a Toed, a verry wel-noen, respekted, distinggisht Toed!

I mae be under a bit of a cloud at prezent, but I wil *not* be laft at bi a barjwuuman!

Th wuuman moovd neerer to him and peerd under his bonet keenly and cloesly. 'Whi, so U ar!' she cried. 'Wel, I never! A horrid, nasty, crauly Toed! And in mi niess cleen barj, too! Now that is a thing that I wil *not* hav!'

She relinqisht th tiler for a moement. Wun big motld arm shot out and caut Toed bi a for-leg, whiel th uther gript him fast bi a hiend-leg. Then th wurld turnd sudenly upsied doun, th barj seemd to flit lietly acros th ski, th wind whisld in his eers, and Toed found himself flieing thru th aer, revolving rapidly as he went.

Th wauter, when he evenchualy reecht it with a loud splash, proovd qiet coeld enuf for his taest, tho its chil wuz not sufishent to qel his proud spirit, or slaek th heet of his fuerius temper. He roez to th surfis splutering, and when he had wiept th duk-weed out of his ies th furst thing he saw wuz th fat barj-wuuman luuking bak at him oever th sturn of th retreeting barj and lafing;

and he vowd, as he cauft and choekt, to be eeven with her.

He struk out for th shor, but th coton goun graetly impeeded his eforts, and when at length he tucht land he found it hard to cliem up th steep bank unassisted. He had to taek a minit or too's rest to recuver his breth; then, gathering his wet scurts wel oever his arms, he started to run after th barj as fast as his legs wuud carry him, wield with indignaeshon, thursting for revenj.

Th barj-wuuman wuz stil lafing when he droo up level with her. 'Puut yuurfself thru yuur manggl, wosherwuuman,' she cauld out, 'and ieern yuur faess and crimp it, and U'l pas for qiet a deesent-luuking Toed!'

Toed never pauzd to repli. Solid revenj wuz whot he wonted, not cheep, windy, vurbal trieumfs, tho he had a thing or too in his miend that he wuud hav liekt to sae. He saw whot he wonted ahed of him. Runing swiftly on he oevertuuk th horss, unfasend th toeroep and cast off, jumpt lietly on th hors'es bak, and urjd it to a galop bi kiking it vigorously in th sieds. He steerd for th oepen cuntry, abandoning th toe-path, and

swinging his steed doun a ruty laen. Wunss he luukt bak, and saw that th barj had run aground on th uther sied of th canal, and th barj-wuuman wuz jesticuelaeting wieldly and shouting, 'Stop, stop, stop!' 'I've heard that song befor,' sed Toed, lafing, as he continued to spur his steed onward in its wield career.

Th barj-horss wuz not caepabl of eny verry sustaend efort, and its galop soon subsieder into a trot, and its trot into an eezy wauk; but Toed wuz qiet contented with this, noeing that he, at eny raet, wuz mooving, and th barj wuz not. He had qiet recuverd his temper, now that he had dun sumthing he thaut reealy clever; and he wuz satisfied to jog along qieetly in th sun, steering his horss along bi-waes and briedl-paths, and trieing to forget how verry long it wuz sinss he had had a sqaer meel, til th canal had bin left verry far behiend him.

He had traveld sum miels, his horss and he, and he wuz feeling drouzy in th hot sunshien, when th horss stopt, loeerd his hed, and began to nibl th gras; and Toed, waeking up, just saevd himself from faulng off bi an

efort. He luukt about him and found he wuz on a wied comon, doted with paches of gorss and brambl as far as he cuud see. Neer him stuud a dinjy jipsy caravan, and besied it a man wuz siting on a buket turnd upsied doun, verry bizy smoeking and staering into th wied wurld. A fier of stiks wuz burning neer bi, and oever th fier hung an ieern pot, and out of that pot caem forth bublings and gurglings, and a vaeg sugestiv steemynes. Aulso smels -- worm, rich, and vaeryd smels -- that twiend and twisted and reethd themselvs at last into wun compleet, volupchuos, purfekt smel that seemd liek th verry soel of Naecher taeking form and apeering to her children, a troo Godes, a muther of solis and cumfort. Toed now nue wel that he had not bin reealy hunggry befor. Whot he had felt uryer in th dae had bin a meer triefling qaam. This wuz th reeal thing at last, and no mistaek; and it wuud hav to be delt with speedily, too, or thaer wuud be trubl for sumbody or sumthing. He luukt th jipsy oever caerfully, wundering vaegly whether it wuud be eezyer to fiet him or cajoel him. So thaer he sat, and snift and snift, and luukt

at th jipsy; and th jipsy sat and smoekt, and luukt at him.

Prezently th jipsy tuuk his piep out of his mouth and remarkt in a caerles wae, 'Wont to sel that thaer horss of yuurs?'

Toed wuz compleetly taeken abak. He did not noe that jipsys wer verry fond of horss-deeling, and never mist an oportuenity, and he had not reflekted that caravans wer aulwaes on th moov and tuuk a deel of drawing. It had not ocurd to him to turn th horss into cash, but th jipsy's sugjeschon seemd to smooth th wae tords th too things he wonted so badly -- redy muny, and a solid brekfast.

'Whot?' he sed, 'me sel this buetyful yung horss of mien? O, no; it's out of th qeschon. Hoo's going to taek th woshing hoem to mi customers evry week? Besieds, I'm too fond of him, and he simply doets on me.'

'Tri and luv a donky,' sugjested th jipsy. 'Sum peopl do.'

'U doen't seem to see,' continued Toed, 'that this fien horss of mien is a cut abuv U aultogether. He's a blud horss, he is, partly; not th part U see, of corss -- another part.'

And he's bin a Priez Hakny, too, in his tiem -- that wuz th tiem befor U nue him, but U can stil tel it on him at a glanss, if U understand enything about horses. No, it's not to be thaut of for a moement. All th saem, how much miet U be dispoezd to ofer me for this buetyful yung horss of mien?"

Th jipsy luukt th horss oever, and then he luukt Toed oever with eeqal caer, and luukt at th horss agen. 'Shilin' a leg,' he sed breefly, and turnd awae, continueing to smoek and tri to staer th wied wurld out of countenanss.

'A shiling a leg?' cried Toed. 'If U pleez, I must taek a litl tiem to wurk that out, and see just whot it cumss to.'

He cliemd doun off his horss, and left it to graez, and sat doun bi th jipsy, and did sums on his finggers, and at last he sed, 'A shiling a leg? Whi, that cumss to exaktly foer shilings, and no mor. O, no; I cuud not think of aksepting foer shilings for this buetyful yung horss of mien.'

'Wel,' sed th jipsy, 'I'l tel U whot I wil do. I'l maek it fiev shilings, and that's three-and-sixpenns mor than th animal's wurth. And that's mi last wurd.'

Then Toed sat and ponderd long and deeply. For he wuz hunggry and qiet penyles, and stil sum wae -- he nue not how far -- from hoem, and enemys miet stil be luuking for him. To wun in such a sichuaeshon, fiev shilings mae verry wel apeer a larj sum of muny. On th uther hand, it did not seem verry much to get for a horss. But then, agen, th horss hadn't cost him enything; so whatever he got wuz all cleer profit. At last he sed furmly, 'Luuk heer, jipsy! I tel U whot we wil do; and this is *mi* last wurd. U shal hand me oever six shilings and sixpenss, cash doun; and further, in adishon thaerto, U shal giv me as much brekfast as I can possibly eet, at wun siting of corss, out of that ieern pot of yuurs that keeps sending forth such delishus and exsieting smels. In return, I wil maek oever to U mi spirited yung horss, with all th buetyful harnes and trapings that ar on him, freely throen in. If that's not guud enuf for U, sae so, and I'l be geting on. I noe a man neer heer hoo's wonted this horss of mien for yeers.'

Th jipsy grumbld frietfully, and declaerd if he did a fue mor deels of that sort he'd be

rooind. But in th end he lugd a durty canvas bag out of th depths of his trouzer poket, and counted out six shilings and sixpenss into Toed's paw. Then he disapeerd into th caravan for an instant, and returnd with a larj ieern plaet and a nief, fork, and spoon. He tilted up th pot, and a glorius streem of hot rich stoo gurgld into th plaet. It wuz, indeed, th moest buetyful stoo in th wurld, being maed of partrijes, and fezants, and chikens, and haers, and rabbits, and pee-hens, and giny-fouls, and wun or too uther things. Toed tuuk th plaet on his lap, aulmoest crieing, and stuft, and stuft, and stuft, and kept asking for mor, and th jipsy never grujd it him. He thaut that he had never eeten so guud a brekfast in all his lief.

When Toed had taeken as much stoo on bord as he thaut he cuud possibly hoeld, he got up and sed guud-bi to th jipsy, and tuuk an afekshonet faerwel of th horss; and th jipsy, hoo nue th riversied wel, gaev him direkshons which wae to go, and he set forth on his travels agen in th best possibl spirits. He wuz, indeed, a verry diferen Toed from th animal of an our ago. Th sun wuz shiening

brietyl, his wet cloeths wer qiet dri agen, he had muny in his poket wunss mor, he wuz neering hoem and frends and saefty, and, moest and best of all, he had had a substanshal meel, hot and nurishing, and felt big, and strong, and caerles, and self-confident.

As he tramt along gaely, he thaut of his advenchers and escaeeps, and how when things seemd at thaer wurst he had aulwaes manejd to fiend a wae out; and his pried and conseet began to swel within him. 'Ho, ho!' he sed to himself as he marcht along with his chin in th aer, 'whot a clever Toed I am! Thaer is shuurly no animal eeqal to me for clevernes in th hoel wurld! Mi enemys shut me up in prizon, ensurkld bi sentrys, wocht niet and dae bi worders; I wauk out thru them all, bi sheer ability cupld with curej. Thae persoos me with enjins, and poleesmen, and revolvers; I snap mi finggers at them, and vanish, lafing, into spaess. I am, unforchunetly, throen into a canal bi a wuuman fat of body and verry eevil-miended. Whot of it? I swim ashor, I seez her horss, I ried off in trieumf, and I sel th horss for a hoel poketful of muny and an exselent brekfast! Ho,

ho! I am Th Toed, th hansum, th popuelar, th suksesful Toed!" He got so puft up with conseet that he maed up a song as he waukt in praez of himself, and sang it at th top of his vois, tho thaer wuz no wun to heer it but him. It wuz perhaps th moest conseeted song that eny animal ever compoezd.

'Th wurld has held graet Heeroes,  
As history-buiks hav shoed;  
But never a naem to go doun to faem  
Compaerd with that of Toed!  
'Th clever men at Oxford  
Noe all that thaer is to be noed.  
But thae nun of them noe wun haf as much  
As intelijent Mr. Toed!  
'Th animals sat in th Ark and cried,  
Thaer teers in torents floed.  
Hoo wuz it sed, "Thaer's land ahed?"  
Encurejing Mr. Toed!  
'Th army all salooted  
As thae marcht along th roed.  
Wuz it th King? Or Kichener?  
No. It wuz Mr. Toed.  
'Th Queen and her Laedys-in-waeting  
Sat at th windo and soed.  
She cried, "Luuk! hoo's that *hansum* man?"  
Thae anserd, "Mr. Toed."

Thaer wuz a graet deel mor of th saem sort, but too dredfully conseeted to be riten doun. Thees ar sum of th mielder vurses.

He sang as he waukt, and he waukt as he sang, and got mor inflaeted evry minit. But his pried wuz shortly to hav a seveer faul.

After sum miels of cuntry laens he reecht th hie roed, and as he turnd into it and glanst along its whiet length, he saw aproeching him a spek that turnd into a dot and then into a blob, and then into sumthing verry familyar; and a dubl noet of worning, oenly too wel noen, fel on his delighted eer.

'This is sumthing liek!' sed th exsited Toed. 'This is reeal lief agen, this is wunss mor th graet wurld from which I hav bin mist so long! I wil hael them, mi bruthers of th wheel, and pitch them a yarn, of th sort that has bin so suksesful hitherto; and thae wil giv me a lift, of corss, and then I wil tauk to them sum mor; and, perhaps, with luk, it mae eeven end in mi drieving up to Toed Haul in a mootor-car! That wil be wun in th ie for Bajer!'

He stept confidently out into th roed to

hael th moetor-car, which caem along at an eezy paess, sloeing doun as it neerd th laen; when sudenly he becaem verry pael, his hart turnd to wauter, his nees shuuk and yeelded under him, and he dubld up and colapst with a sikening paen in his intearior. And wel he miet, th unhappy animal; for th aproeching car wuz th verry wun he had stoelen out of th yard of th Red Lieon Hoetel on that faetal dae when all his trubls began! And th peopl in it wer th verry saem peopl he had sat and wocht at lunchon in th cofy-room!

He sank doun in a shaby, mizerabl heep in th roed, murmering to himself in his despaer, 'It's all up! It's all oever now! Chaens and poleesmen agen! Prizon agen! Dri bred and wauter agen! O, whot a fool I hav bin! Whot did I wont to go struting about th cuntry for, singing conseeted songs, and haeling peopl in braud dae on th hie roed, insted of hieding til nietfaul and sliping hoem qieetly bi bak waes! O haples Toed! O il-faeted animal!'

Th terribl moetor-car droo sloely neerer and neerer, til at last he hurd it stop just short

of him. Too jentlmen got out and waukt round th trembling heep of crumpld mizery lieing in th roed, and wun of them sed, 'O deer! this is verry sad! Heer is a puur oeld thing -- a wosherwuuman aparrently -- hoo has faented in th roed! Perhaps she is oevercum bi th heet, puur creecher; or posibly she has not had eny food to-dae. Let us lift her into th car and taek her to th neerest vilej, whaer doutles she has frends.'

Thae tenderly lifted Toed into th moetor-car and propt him up with soft cuushons, and proseeded on thaer wae.

When Toed hurd them tauk in so kiend and sympathetik a wae, and nue that he wuz not recogniezd, his curej began to review, and he caushusly oepend furst wun ie and then th uther.

'Luuk!' sed wun of th jentlmen, 'she is beter aulredy. Th fresh aer is doing her guud. How do U feel now, ma'am?'

'Thank U kiendly, Sur,' sed Toed in a feebl vois, 'I'm feeling a graet deel beter!' 'That's riet,' sed th jentlman. 'Now keep qiet stil, and, abuv all, doen't tri to tauk.'

‘I woen’t,’ sed Toed. ‘I wuz oenly thinking, if I miet sit on th frunt seet thaer, besied th driever, whaer I cuud get th fresh aer fuul in mi faess, I shuud soon be all riet agen.’

‘Whot a verry sensibl wuuman!’ sed th jentlman. ‘Of corss U shal.’ So thaer caerfully helpt Toed into th frunt seet besied th driever, and on thae went agen.

Toed wuz aulmoest himself agen bi now. He sat up, luukt about him, and tried to beet doun th tremors, th yurnings, th oeld craevings that roez up and beset him and tuuk pozeshon of him entierly.

‘It is faet!’ he sed to himself. ‘Whi striev? whi strugl?’ and he turnd to th driever at his sied.

‘Pleez, Sur,’ he sed, ‘I wish U wuud kiendly let me tri and drieve th car for a litl. I’v bin woching U caerfully, and it luuks so eezy and so interesting, and I shuud liek to be aebl to tel mi frends that wunss I had driven a moetor-car!’

Th driever laft at th propoezal, so hartily that th jentlman inqierd whot th mater wuz. When he hurd, he sed, to Toed’s deliet, ‘Braavo, ma’am! I liek yuur spirit.

Let her hav a tri, and luuk after her. She woen't do eny harm.'

Toed eegerly scrambl'd into th seet vaecaeted bi th driever, tuuk th steering-wheel in his hands, lisend with afekted huemility to th instrukshons given him, and set th car in moeshon, but verry sloeley and caerfuly at furst, for he wuz deturmind to be proodent.

Th jentlmen behiend clapt thaer hands and aplauded, and Toed hurd them saeing, 'How wel she duz it! Fansy a wosherwuuman drieving a car as wel as that, th furst tiem!'

Toed went a litl faster; then faster stil, and faster.

He hurd th jentlmen caul out worningly, 'Be caerful, wosherwuuman!' And this anoyd him, and he began to looz his hed.

Th driever tried to interfeer, but he pind him doun in his seet with wun elbo, and puut on fuul speed. Th rush of aer in his faess, th hum of th enjins, and th liet jump of th car beneeth him intoxicaeted his week braen.

'Wosherwuuman, indeed!' he shouted reklesly. 'Ho! ho! I am th Toed, th moetor-car snacher, th prizon-braeker, th Toed hoo aulwaes escaeps! Sit stil, and U

shal noe whot drieving reealy is, for U ar in th hands of th faemus, th skilful,  
th entierly feerles Toed!"

With a cri of horror th hoel party roez and flung themselvs on him. 'Seez  
him!' thae cried, 'seez th Toed, th wiked animal hoo stoel our moetor-car!  
Biend him, chaen him, drag him to th neerest poleess-staeshon! Doun with  
th desperet and daenjerus Toed!"

Alas! thae shuud hav thaut, thae aut to hav bin mor proudent, thae shuud  
hav rememberd to stop th moetor-car sumhow befor plaeing eny pranks of  
that sort. With a haf-turn of th wheel th Toed sent th car crashing thru th loe  
hej that ran along th roedsied. Wun miety bound, a vieolent shok, and th  
wheels of th car wer churning up th thik mud of a horss-pond.

Toed found himself flieing thru th aer with th strong upward rush and  
deliket curv of a swolo. He liekt th moeshon, and wuz just begining to  
wunder whether it wuud go on until he developt wings and turnd into a  
Toed-burd, when he landed on his bak with a thump, in th soft rich gras of a  
medo. Siting up, he cuud just see th moetor-car in

th pond, neerly submurjd; th jentlmen and th drievers, encumberd bi thaer long coets, wer floundering helplesly in th wauter.

He pikt himself up rapidly, and set off runing acros cuntry as hard as he cuud, scrambling thru hejes, jumping ditches, pounding acros feelds, til he wuz brethles and weery, and had to setl doun into an eezy wauk. When he had recuverd his breth sumwhot, and wuz aebly to think caamly, he began to gigl, and from gigling he tuuk to lafing, and he laft til he had to sit doun under a hej. 'Ho, ho!' he cried, in ekstasys of self-admeraeshon, 'Toed agen! Toed, as uezhual, cums out on th top! Hoo wuz it got them to giv him a lift? Hoo manejd to get on th frunt seet for th saek of fresh aer? Hoo perswaeded them into leting him see if he cuud drieve? Hoo landed them all in a horss-pond? Hoo escaept, flieing gaely and unscaethd thru th aer, leeveng th narro-miended, grujing, timid excurzhonists in th mud whaer thaer shuud rietly be? Whi, Toed, of corss; clever Toed, graet Toed, *guud* Toed!'

Then he burst into song agen, and chanted with uplifted vois –

‘Th moetor-car went Poop-poop-poop,  
As it raest along th roed.  
Hoo wuz it steerd it into a pond?  
Injeenius Mr. Toed!

O, how clever I am! How clever, how clever, how verry clev --- ’

A sliet noiz at a distanss behiend him maed him turn his hed and luuk. O  
horror! O mizery! O despaer!

About too feeds off, a shoefer in his lether gaeters and too larj ruural  
poleesmen wer vizibl, runing tords him as hard as thae cuud go!

Puur Toed sprang to his feet and pelted awae agen, his hart in his mouth.  
O, mi! he gaspt, as he panted along, ‘whot an *ass* I am! Whot a *conseeted*  
and heedles as! Swagering agen! Shouting and singing songs agen! Siting  
stil and gasing agen! O mi! O mi! O mi! ’

He glanst bak, and saw to his dismae that thae wer gaening on him. On he  
ran desperetly, but kept luuking bak, and saw that thae stil gaend stedily. He  
did his best, but he wuz a fat animal, and his legs wer short, and stil thae  
gaend. He cuud heer them cloess

behiend him now. Seesing to heed whaer he wuz going, he strugld on bliendly and wieldly, luuking bak oever his shoelder at th now triemfant enemy, when sudenly th urth faeld under his feet, he graspt at th aer, and, splash! he found himself hed oever eers in deep wauter, rapid wauter, wauter that bor him along with a forss he cuud not contend with; and he nue that in his bliend panik he had run straet into th river!

He roez to th surfis and tried to grasp th reeds and th rushes that groo along th wauter's ej cloess under th bank, but th streeem wuz so strong that it tor them out of his hands. 'O mi!' gaspt puur Toed, 'if ever I steel a moetor-car agen! If ever I sing another conseeted song' -- then doun he went, and caem up breathles and spluttering. Prezently he saw that he wuz aproeching a big dark hoel in th bank, just abuv his hed, and as th streeem bor him past he reecht up with a paw and caut hoeld of th ej and held on. Then sloely and with dificulty he droo himself up out of th wauter, til at last he wuz aebt to rest his elboes on th ej of th hoel. Thaer he remaend for sum minits,

pufing and panting, for he wuz qiet exausted.

As he sied and bloo and staerd befor him into th dark hoel, sum briet smaul thing shoen and twinkld in its depths, mooving tords him. As it aproecht, a faess groo up grajually around it, and it wuz a familyar faess!

Broun and smaul, with whiskers.

Graev and round, with neet eers and silky haer.

It wuz th Wauter Rat!

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## Chapter 11

### XI

### 'LIEK SUMER TEMPESTS CAEM HIS TEERS'

TH Rat puut out a neet litl broun paw, gript Toed furmly bi th scruf of th nek, and gaev a graet hoist and a puul; and th wauter-logd Toed caem up sloely but shuurly oever th ej of th hoel, til at last he stuuud saef and sound in th haul, streekt with mud and weed to be shuur, and with th wauter streeming off him, but hapy and hi-spirited as of oeld, now that he found himself wunss mor in th hous of a frend, and dojings and evaezhons wer oever, and he cuud lae asied a disgiez that wuz unwurthy of his pozishon and wonted such a lot of living up to.

'O, Raty!' he cried. 'I've bin thru such tiems sinss I saw U last, U can't think! Such trieals, such suferings, and all so noeblly born! Then such escaeps, such disgiez'

such subterfuejes, and all so cleverly pland and carryd out! Bin in prizon -- got out of it, of corss! Bin throen into a canal -- swam ashor! Stoel a horss -- soeld him for a larj sum of muny! Humbugd evrybody -- maed 'em all do exaktly whot I wonted! O, I *am* a smart Toed, and no mistaek! Whot do U think mi last exploit wuz? Just hoeld on til I tel U -- -- '

'Toed,' sed th Wauter Rat, graevly and furmly, 'U go off upstaers at wunss, and taek off that oeld coton rag that luuks as if it miet formerly hav belongd to sum wosherwuuman, and cleen yuurselv thuroely, and puut on sum of mi cloeths, and tri and cum doun luuking liek a jentlman if U *can*; for a mor shaby, bedragld, disreputabl-luuking objekt than U ar I never set ies on in mi hoel lief! Now, stop swagering and argueing, and be off! I'l hav sumthing to sae to U laeter!'

Toed wuz at furst incliend to stop and do sum tauking bak at him. He had had enuf of being orderd about when he wuz in prizon, and heer wuz th thing being begun all oever agen, aparrently; and bi a Rat, too! However, he caut siet of himself in th luuking-glas

oever th hat-stand, with th rusty blak bonet purcht raekishly oever wun ie, and he chaenjd his miend and went verry qikly and humbly upstaers to th Rat's dresing-room. Thaer he had a thuro wosh and brush-up, chaenjd his cloeths, and stuud for a long tiem befor th glas, contemplaeting himself with pried and plezher, and thinking whot ute<sup>r</sup> idiots all th peopl must hav bin to hav ever mistaeken him for wun moement for a wosherwuuman.

Bi th tiem he caem doun agen lunchon wuz on th taeb<sup>l</sup>, and verry glad Toed wuz to see it, for he had bin thru sum trieing expeeri'enses and had taeken much hard exersiez sinss th exselent brekfast provieder for him bi th jipsy. Whiel thae aet Toed toeld th Rat all his advenchers, dweling cheefly on his oen clevernes, and prezess of miend in emurjensys, and cuning in tiet plaeses; and rather maeking out that he had bin having a gae and hiely-culord expeeri'enss. But th mor he taukt and boested, th mor graev and sielent th Rat becaem.

When at last Toed had taukt himself to a standstil, thaer wuz sielenss for a whiel; and then th Rat sed, 'Now, Toedy, I doen't wont

to giv U paen, after all U've bin thru aulredy; but, seeriusly, doen't U see whot an awful ass U've bin maeking of yuurfself? On yuurf oen admishon U hav bin handcuft, imprizond, starvd, chaest, terrified out of yuurf lief, insulted, jeerd at, and ignominiusly flung into th wauter -- bi a wuuman, too! Whaer's th amuezment in that? Whaer duz th fun cum in? And all becauz U must needs go and steel a moetor-car. U noe that U've never had enything but trubl from moetor-cars from th moement U furst set ies on wun. But if U *wil* be mixt up with them -- as U jeneraly ar, fiev minits after U've started -- whi *steel* them? Be a cripl, if U think it's exsieting; be a bankrupt, for a chaenj, if U've set yuurf miend on it: but whi chooz to be a convikt? When ar U going to be sensibl, and think of yuurf frends, and tri and be a credit to them? Do U supoez it's eny plezher to me, for instanss, to heer animals saeing, as I go about, that I'm th chap that keeps cumpany with jael-burds?"

Now, it wuz a verry cumfurthering point in Toed's carrakter that he wuz a thuroely guud-harted animal and never miended being

jawd bi thoes hoo wer his reeal frends. And eeven when moest set upon a thing, he wuz aulwaes aebl to see th uther sied of th qeschon. So aultho, whiel th Rat wuz tauking so seeriusly, he kept saeing to himself muetinously, 'But it *wuz* fun, tho! Awful fun!' and maeking straenj suprest noizes insied him, k-i-k-k-k, and poop-p-p, and uther sounds rezembling stiefld snorts, or th oepening of soeda-wauter botls, yet when th Rat had qiet finisht, he heevd a deep sie and sed, verry niesly and humbly, 'Qiet riet, Raty! How *sound* U aulwaes ar! Yes, I've bin a conseeted oeld ass, I can qiet see that; but now I'm going to be a guud Toed, and not do it eny mor. As for moetor-cars, I've not bin at all so keen about them sinss mi last duking in that river of yuurs. Th fakt is, whiel I wuz hanging on to th ej of yuur hoel and geting mi breth, I had a suden iedeea -- a reealy brilyant iedeea -- conekted with moetor-boets -- thaer, thaer! doen't taek on so, oeld chap, and stamp, and upset things; it wuz oenly an iedeea, and we woen't tauk eny mor about it now. We'l hav our cofy, *and* a smoek, and a qieet chat, and then I'm going to

stroel qieetly doun to Toed Haul, and get into cloeths of mi oen, and set things going agen on th oeld liens. I've had enuf of advenchers. I shal leed a qieet, stedy, respektabl lief, potering about mi property, and improoving it, and doing a litl landscaep gardning at tiems. Thaer wil aulwaes be a bit of diner for mi frends when thae cum to see me; and I shal keep a poeny-shaez to jog about th cuntry in, just as I uezd to in th guud oeld daes, befor I got restles, and wonted to *do* things.'

'Stroel qieetly doun to Toed Haul?' cried th Rat, graetly exsited. 'Whot ar U tauking about? Do U meen to sae U havn't *hurd*?'

'Hurd whot?' sed Toed, turning rather pael. 'Go on, Raty! Qik! Doen't spaer me! Whot havn't I *hurd*?'

'Do U meen to tel me,' shouted th Rat, thumping with his litl fist upon th taeb'l, 'that U've *hurd* nuthing about th Stoets and Weezels?'

Whot, th Wield Wuuders?' cried Toed, trembling in evry lim. 'No, not a wurd! Whot hav thae bin doing?'

‘ -- And how thae'v bin and taeken Toed Haul?’ continued th Rat.

Toed leend his elboes on th taebel, and his chin on his paws; and a larj teer weld up in eech of his ies, oeverfloed and splasht on th taebel, plop! plop!

‘Go on, Raty,’ he murmerd prezently; ‘tel me all. Th wurst is oever. I am an animal agen. I can baer it.’

‘When U -- got -- into that -- that -- trubl of yuurs,’ sed th Rat, sloely and impresivly; ‘I meen, when U -- disapeerd from sosieety for a tiem, oever that misunderstanding about a -- a masheen, U noe -- ’

Toed meerly noded.

‘Wel, it wuz a guud deel taukt about doun heer, nacheraly,’ continued th Rat, ‘not oenly along th river-sied, but eeven in th Wield Wuud. Animals tuuk sieds, as aulwaes hapens. Th River-bankers stuk up for U, and sed U had bin infamously treeted, and thaer wuz no justis to be had in th land now-a-daes. But th Wield Wuud animals sed hard things, and survd U riet, and it wuz tiem this sort of thing wuz stopt. And thae got verry coky, and went about saeing U wer dun for this

tiem! U wuud never cum bak agen, never, never!"

Toed noded wunss mor, keeping sielenss.

'That's th sort of litl beests thae ar,' th Rat went on. 'But Moel and Bajer, thae stuk out, thru thik and thin, that U wuud cum bak agen soon, sumhow. Thae didn't noe exaktly how, but sumhow!'

Toed began to sit up in his chaer agen, and to smurk a litl.

'Thae argued from history,' continued th Rat. 'Thae sed that no criminal laws had ever bin noen to prevael agenst cheek and plauzibility such as yuurs, combiend with th power of a long purss. So thae araenjd to moov thaer things in to Toed Haul, and sleep thaer, and keep it aerd, and hav it all redy for U when U turnd up. Thae didn't ges whot wuz going to hapan, of corss; stil, thae had thaer suspishons of th Wield Wuud animals. Now I cum to th moest paenful and trajik part of mi story. Wun dark niet -- it wuz a *verry* dark niet, and bloeing hard, too, and raening simply cats and dogs -- a band of weezels, armd to th teeth, crept sielently up th carrej-driev to th frunt entrasss. Siemultaeniusly, a body of

desperet ferrets, advansing thru th kichen-garden, pozest themselvs of th bak-yard and ofises; whiel a cumpany of scurmishing stoets hoo stuk at nuthing ocueped th conservatory and th bilyard-room, and held th French windoes oepening on to th laun.

‘Th Moel and th Bajer wer siting bi th fier in th smoeking-room, teling storys and suspekting nuthing, for it wasn’t a niet for eny animals to be out in, when thoes bludthursty vilans broek doun th dors and rusht in upon them from evry sied. Thae maed th best fiet thae cuud, but whot wuz th guud? Thae wer unarmd, and taeken bi serpierz, and whot can too animals do agenst hundreds? Thae tuuk and beet them seveerly with stiks, thoes too puur faethful creechers, and turnd them out into th coeld and th wet, with meny insulting and uncauld-for remarks!’

Heer th unfeeling Toed broek into a sniger, and then puuld himself together and tried to luuk particuelarly solem.

‘And th Wield Wuuders hav bin living in Toed Haul ever sinss,’ continued th Rat; ‘and going on simply enyhow! Lieing in bed haf th dae, and brekfast at all ours, and th

plaess in such a mes (I'm toeld) it's not fit to be seen! Eeting yuur grub, and drinking yuur drink, and maeking bad joeks about U, and singing vulgar songs, about -- wel, about prizons and majistraets, and poleesmen; horrid pursonal songs, with no huemor in them. And thae'r teling th traeds-peopl and evrybody that thae've cum to stae for guud.'

'O, hav thae!' sed Toed geting up and seezing a stik. 'I'l joly soon see about that!'

'It's no guud, Toed!' cauld th Rat after him. 'U'd beter cum bak and sit doun; U'l oenly get into trubl.'

But th Toed wuz off, and thaer wuz no hoelding him. He marcht rapidly doun th roed, his stik oever his shoelder, fueming and mutering to himself in his angger, til he got neer his frunt gaet, when sudenly thaer popt up from behiend th paelings a long yelo ferret with a gun.

'Hoo cums thaer?' sed th ferret sharply.

'Stuf and nonsenss!' sed Toed, verry anggrily. 'Whot do U meen bi tauking liek that to me? Cum out of that at wunss, or I'l -- -- '

Th ferret sed never a wurd, but he braut

his gun up to his shoelder. Toed proodently dropt flat in th roed, and *Bang!* a buulet whisld oever his hed.

Th startld Toed scrambld to his feet and scamperd off doun th roed as hard as he cuud; and as he ran he hurd th ferret lafing and uther horrid thin litl lafs taeking it up and carrying on th sound.

He went bak, verry crestfaulen, and toeld th Wauter Rat.

'Whot did I tel U?' sed th Rat. 'It's no guud. Thae've got sentrys poested, and thae ar all armd. U must just waet.'

Stil, Toed wuz not incliend to giv in all at wunss. So he got out th boet, and set off roeing up th river to whaer th garden frunt of Toed Haul caem doun to th wautersied.

Arieving within siet of his oeld hoem, he rested on his ors and survaed th land caushusly. All seemd verry peesful and dezurted and qieet. He cuud see th hoel frunt of Toed Haul, gloeing in th eevning sunshien, th pijons setling bi toos and threes along th straat lien of th roof; th garden, a blaez of flowers; th creek that led up to th boet-hous, th litl wuuden brij

that crost it; all tranqil, uninhabited, aparrently waeting for his return. He wuud tri th boet-hous furst, he thaut. Verry waerily he padld up to th mouth of th creek, and wuz just pasing under th brij, when . . . *Crash!*

A graet stoen, dropt from abuv, smasht thru th botom of th boet. It fild and sank, and Toed found himself strugling in deep wauter. Luuking up, he saw too stoets leening oever th parrapet of th brij and woching him with graet glee. 'It wil be yuur hed next tiem, Toedy!' thae cauld out to him. Th indignant Toed swam to shor, whiel th stoets laft and laft, suporting eech uther, and laft agen, til thae neerly had too fits -- that is, wun fit eech, of corss.

Th Toed re-traest his weery wae on fuut, and relaeted his disapointing expeeri'enses to th Wauter Rat wunss mor.

'Wel, *whot* did I tel U?' sed th Rat verry crosly. 'And, now, luuk heer! See whot U've bin and dun! Lost me mi boet that I wuz so fond of, that's whot U've dun! And simply rooind that niess soot of cloeths that I

lent U! Reealy, Toed, of all th trieing animals -- I wunder U manej to keep  
eny frends at all!"

Th Toed saw at wunss how rongly and foolishly he had akted. He admited his errors and rong-hedednes and maed a fuul apolojo to Rat for loozing his boet and spoiling his cloeths. And he wound up bi saeing, with that frank self-serender which aulwaes disarmd his friend's critisizm and wun them bak to his sied, 'Raty! I see that I hav bin a hedstrong and a wilful Toed! Hensforth, beleev me, I wil be humbl and submisiv, and wil taek no akshon without yuur kiend adviess and fuul aprooval!'

'If that is reealy so,' sed th guud-naeched Rat, aulredy apeezd, 'then mi adviess to U is, considering th laetnes of th our, to sit doun and hav yuur super, which wil be on th taebl in a minit, and be verry paeshent. For I am convinst that we can do nuthing until we hav seen th Moel and th Bajer, and hurd thaer laetest nues, and held conferenss and taeken thaer adviess in this dificult mater.'

'O, aa, yes, of corss, th Moel and th Bajer,' sed Toed, lietly. 'Whot's becum

of them, th deer feloes? I had forgoten all about them.'

'Wel mae U ask!' sed th Rat reproechfuly. 'Whiel U wer rieding about th cuntry in expensiv moetor-cars, and galoping proudly on blud-horses, and brekfasting on th fat of th land, thoes too puur devoeted animals hav bin camping out in th oopen, in evry sort of wether, living verry ruf bi dae and lieing verry hard bi niet; woching oever yuur hous, patroeling yuur bounderys, keeping a constant ie on th stoets and th weezels, skeeming and planing and contrieving how to get yuur property bak for U. U doen't dezurv to hav such troo and loyal frends, Toed, U doen't, reealy. Sum dae, when it's too laet, U'l be sorry U didn't value them mor whiel U had them!'

'I'm an ungraetful beest, I noe,' sobd Toed, shedding biter teers. 'Let me go out and fiend them, out into th coeld, dark niet, and shaer thaer hardships, and tri and proov bi -- -- Hoeld on a bit! Shuurly I hurd th chink of dishes on a trae! Super's heer at last, hoorae! Cum on, Raty!'

Th Rat rememberd that puur Toed had

bin on prizon faer for a considerabl tiem, and that larj alowanses had thaerfor to be maed. He foloed him to th taebl acordingly, and hospitably encurejd him in his galant eforts to maek up for past prievaeshons.

Thae had just finisht thaer meel and rezoomd thaer armchaers, when thaer caem a hevy nok at th dor.

Toed wuz nurvus, but th Rat, noding misteeriусly at him, went straet up to th dor and oepend it, and in waukt Mr. Bajer.

He had all th apeeranss of wun hoo for sum niets had bin kept awae from hoem and all its litl cumforts and conveenyenses. His shoos wer cuverd with mud, and he wuz luuking verry ruf and touzld; but then he had never bin a verry smart man, th Bajer, at th best of tiems. He caem solemly up to Toed, shuuk him bi th paw, and sed, 'Welcum hoem, Toed! Alas! whot am I saeing? Hoem, indeed! This is a puur hoem-cuming. Unhappy Toed!' Then he turnd his bak on him, sat doun to th taebl, droo his chaer up, and helpt himself to a larj sliess of coeld pie.

Toed wuz qiet alarmd at this verry seerius and portenshus stiel of greeting; but th Rat

whisperd to him, 'Never miend; doen't taek eny noetis; and doen't sae enything to him just yet. He's aulwaes rather loe and despondent when he's wonting his vitls. In haf an our's tiem he'l be qiet a diferent animal.'

So thae waeted in sielenss, and prezently thaer caem anuther and a lieter nok. Th Rat, with a nod to Toed, went to th dor and usherd in th Moel, verry shaby and unwosht, with bits of hae and straw stiking in his fur.

'Hoorae! Heer's oeld Toed!' cried th Moel, his faess beeming. 'Fansy having U bak agen!' And he began to danss round him. 'We never dremt U wuud turn up so soon! Whi, U must hav manejd to escaep, U clever, injeenius, intelijent Toed!'

Th Rat, alarmd, puuld him bi th elbo; but it wuz too laet. Toed wuz pufing and sweling aulredy.

'Clever? O, no!' he sed. 'I'm not reealy clever, acording to mi frends. I've onely broeken out of th strongest prizon in Ingland, that's all! And capched a raelwae traen and escaeped on it, that's all! And disgiezd mieself and gon about th cuntry humbuging evry

body, that's all! O, no! I'm a stoopid ass, I am! I'l tel U wun or too of mi litl  
advenchers, Moel, and U shal juj for yuorself!

'Wel, wel,' sed th Moel, mooving tords th super-taebl; 'supoezing U tauk  
whiel I eet. Not a biet sinss brekfast! O mi! O mi!' And he sat doun and helpt  
himself liberally to coeld beef and pikls.

Toed stradld on th harth-rug, thrust his paw into his trouzer-poket and  
puuld out a handful of silver. 'Luuk at that!' he cried, displaeing it. 'That's  
not so bad, is it, for a fue minits' wurk? And how do U think I dun it, Moel?  
Horss-deeling! That's how I dun it!'

'Go on, Toed,' sed th Moel, imensly interested.

'Toed, do be qieet, pleez!' sed th Rat. 'And doen't U eg him on, Moel,  
when U noe whot he is; but pleez tel us as soon as posibl whot th pozishon  
is, and whot's best to be dun, now that Toed is bak at last.'

'Th pozishon's about as bad as it can be,' replied th Moel grumpily; 'and as  
for whot's to be dun, whi, blest if I noe! Th Bajer and I hav bin round and  
round th plaess, bi

niet and bi dae; aulwaes th saem thing. Sentrysts poested evrywhaer, guns poekt out at us, stoens throen at us; aulwaes an animal on th luuk-out, and when thae see us, mi! how thae do laf! That's whot annoys me moest!

'It's a verry dificult sichuaeshon,' sed th Rat, refleking deeply. 'But I think I see now, in th depths of mi miend, whot Toed reealy aut to do. I wil tel U. He aut to --- '

'No, he autn't!' shouted th Moel, with his mouth fuul. 'Nuthing of th sort! U doen't understand. Whot he aut to do is, he aut to --- '

'Wel, I shan't do it, enywae!' cried Toed, geting exsited. 'I'm not going to be orderd about bi U feloes! It's mi hous we'r tauking about, and I noe exaktly whot to do, and I'l tel U. I'm going to --- '

Bi this tiem thae wer all three tauking at wunss, at th top of thaer voisces, and th noiz wuz simply defening, when a thin, dri vois maed itself hurd, saeing, 'Be qieet at wunss, all of U!' and instantly evry wun wuz siilent.

It wuz th Bajer, hoo, having finisht his pie, had turnd round in his chaer and wuz luuking at them seveerly. When he saw that

he had secuerd thaer atenshon, and that thae wer evidently waeting for him to adres them, he turnd bak to th taebel agen and reecht out for th cheez. And so graet wuz th respekt comanded bi th solid qolitys of that admerabl animal, that not another wurd wuz uterd until he had qiet finisht his repast and brusht th crums from his nees. Th Toed fijeted a guud deel, but th Rat held him furmly doun.

When th Bajer had qiet dun, he got up from his seet and stuud befor th fierplaess, refleking deeply. At last he spoek.

'Toed!' he sed seveerly. 'U bad, trublsum litl animal! Arn't U ashaemd of yuурself? Whot do U think yuур faather, mi oeld frend, wuud hav sed if he had bin heer toniet, and had noen of all yuур goings on?'

Toed, hoo wuz on th soefa bi this tiem, with his legs up, roeld oever on his faess, shaeken bi sobs of contrishon.

'Thaer, thaer!' went on th Bajer, mor kiendly. 'Never miend. Stop crieing. We'r going to let biegons be biegons, and tri and turn oever a nue leef. But whot th Moel ses is qiet troo. Th stoets ar on gard, at evry

point, and thae maek th best sentinels in th wurld. It's qiet uesles to think of ataking th plaess. Thae'r too strong for us.'

'Then it's all oever,' sobd th Toed, crieing into th soefa cuushons. 'I shal go and enlist for a soeljer, and never see mi deer Toed Haul eny mor!'

'Cum, cheer up, Toedy!' sed th Bajer. 'Thaer ar mor waes of geting bak a plaess than taeking it bi storm. I havn't sed mi last wurd yet. Now I'm going to tel U a graet seecret.'

Toed sat up sloely and dried his ies. Seecrets had an imenss atrakshon for him, becauz he never cuud keep wun, and he enjoyd th sort of unhaloed thril he expeeri'ens when he went and toeld another animal, after having faethfully promist not to.

'Thaer -- is -- an -- underground -- pasej,' sed th Bajer, impresivly, 'that leeds from th river-bank, qiet neer heer, riet up into th midl of Toed Haul.'

'O, nonsenss! Bajer,' sed Toed, rather aerily. 'U'v bin lisening to sum of th yarns thae spin in th publik-houzes about heer. I noe evry inch of Toed Haul, insied

and out. Nuthing of th sort, I do ashuur U!"

'Mi yung frend,' sed th Bajer, with graet severrity, 'yuur faather, hoo wuz a wurthy animal -- a lot wurthyer than sum uthers I noe -- wuz a particuelar frend of mien, and toeld me a graet deel he wuudn't hav dremt of teling U. He discuverd that pasej -- he didn't maek it, of corss; that wuz dun hundreds of yeers befor he ever caem to liv thaer -- and he repaerd it and cleend it out, becauz he thaut it miet cum in uesful sum dae, in caess of trubl or daenjer; and he shoed it to me. "Doen't let mi sun noe about it," he sed. "He's a guud boy, but verry liet and volatil in carrakter, and simply cannot hoeld his tung. If he's ever in a reeal fix, and it wuud be of uess to him, U mae tel him about th seecret pasej; but not befor."

Th uther animals luukt hard at Toed to see how he wuud taek it. Toed wuz incliend to be sulky at furst; but he brietend up imeedi'etly, liek th guud felo he wuz.

'Wel, wel,' he sed; 'perhaps I am a bit of a tauker. A popuelar felo such as I am -- mi frends get round me -- we chaf, we sparkl, we

tel wity storys -- and sumhow mi tung gets waging. I hav th gift of conversaeshon. I've bin toeld I aut to hav a *salon*, whotever that mae be. Never miend. Go on, Bajer. How's this pasej of yuurs going to help us?"

'I've found out a thing or too laetly,' continued th Bajer. 'I got Oter to disgiez himself as a sweep and caul at th bak-dor with brushes oever his shoelder, asking for a job. Thaer's going to be a big banquet to-morro niet. It's somebody's burthdae -- th Cheef Weezel's, I beleev -- and all th weezels wil be gatherd together in th diening-haul, eeting and drinking and lafing and carrying on, suspekting nuthing. No guns, no sords, no stiks, no arms of eny sort whotever!"

'But th sentinels wil be poested as uezhual,' remarkt th Rat.

'Exakty,' sed th Bajer; 'that is mi point. Th weezels wil trust entierly to thaer exselent sentinels. And that is whaer th pasej cums in. That verry uesful tunel leeds riet up under th butler's pantry, next to th diening-haul!"

'Aahaa! that squeaky bord in th butler's pantry!' sed Toed. 'Now I understand it!"

‘We shal creep out qieetly into th butler's pantry -- ' cried th Moel.

‘ -- with our pistols and sords and stiks -- ' shouted th Rat.

‘ -- and rush in upon them,' sed th Bajer.

‘ -- and whak 'em, and whak 'em, and whak 'em!' cried th Toed in extasy, runing round and round th room, and jumping oever th chaers

‘Verry wel, then,' sed th Bajer, rezooming his uezhual dri maner, ‘our plan is setld, and thaer's nuthing mor for U to argue and sqobl about. So, as it's geting verry laet, all of U go riet off to bed at wunss. We wil maek all th nesesaery aranjenments in th corss of th morning to-morro.'

Toed, of corss, went off to bed duetyfuly with th rest -- he nue beter than to refuez -- tho he wuz feeling much too exsited to sleep. But he had had a long dae, with meny events crowded into it; and sheets and blankets wer verry frendly and cumforting things, after plaen straw, and not too much of it, spred on th stoen flor of a draafy sel; and his hed had not bin meny seconds on his pilo befor he wuz snoring hapily. Nacheraly, he dremt a guud deel; about roeds that ran awae from

him just when he wonted them, and canals that chaest him and caut him, and a barj that saeld into th banqueting-haul with his week's woshing, just as he wuz giving a diner-party; and he wuz aloen in th seecret pasej, puushing onwards, but it twisted and turnd round and shuuk itself, and sat up on its end; yet sumhow, at th last, he found himself bak in Toed Haul, saef and triumfant, with all his frends gatherd round about him, urnestly ashuuring him that he reealy wuz a clever Toed.

He slept til a laet our next morning, and bi th tiem he got doun he found that th uther animals had finisht thaer brekfast sum tiem befor. Th Moel had slipt off sumwhaer bi himself, without teling eny wun whaer he wuz going to. Th Bajer sat in th arm-chaer, reeding th paeper, and not consurning himself in th slietest about whot wuz going to hapen that verry eevning. Th Rat, on th uther hand, wuz runing round th room bizily, with his arms fuul of wepons of evry kiend, distribuetung them in foer litl heeps on th flor, and saeing exsitedly under his breth, as he ran, 'Heer's-a-sord-for-th-Rat, heer's-a-sord-for-th Moel, heer's-a-sord-for-th-Toed, heer's-a-

sord-for-th-Bajer! Heer's-a-pistol-for-th-Rat, heer's-a-pistol-for-th-Moel, heer's-a-pistol-for-th-Toed, heer's-a-pistol-for-th-Bajer!' And so on, in a reguelar, rithmikal wae, whiel th foer litl heeps grajually groo and groo.

'That's all verry wel, Rat,' sed th Bajer prezently, luuking at th bizy litl animal oever th ej of his nuespaeper; 'I'm not blaeming U. But just let us wunss get past th stoets, with thoes detestabl guns of thaers, and I ashuur U we shan't wont eny sords or pistols. We foer, with our stiks, wunss we'r insied th diening-haul, whi, we shal cleer th flor of all th lot of them in fiev minits. I'd hav dun th hoel thing bi mieself, oenly I didn't wont to depriev U feloes of th fun!'

'It's as wel to be on th saef sied,' sed th Rat reflektivly, polishing a pistol-barrel on his sleev and luuking along it.

Th Toed, having finisht his brekfast, pikt up a stout stik and swung it vigorously, belaeboring imajinaery animals. 'I'l lurn 'em to steel mi hous!' he cried. 'I'l lurn 'em, I'l lurn 'em!'

'Doen't sae "lurn 'em," Toed,' sed th Rat, graetly shokt. 'It's not guud Inglish.'

‘Whot ar U aulwaes naging at Toed for?’ inqierd th Bajer, rather peevishly.  
‘Whot’s th mater with his Inglish? It’s th saem whot I uez mieself, and if it’s  
guud enuf for me, it aut to be guud enuf for U!’

‘I’m verry sorry,’ sed th Rat humbly. ‘Oenly I *think* it aut to be “teech ‘em,”  
not “lurn ‘em.”’

‘But we doen’t *wont* to teech ‘em,’ replied th Bajer. ‘We wont to *lurn ‘em* --  
lurn ‘em, lurn ‘em! And whot’s mor, we’re going to *do* it, too!’

‘O, verry wel, hav it yuur oen wae,’ sed th Rat. He wuz geting rather  
muddled about it himself, and prezently he retierd into a corner, whaer he  
cuud be hurd mutering, ‘Lurn ‘em, teech ‘em, teech ‘em, lurn ‘em!’ til th Bajer  
toeld him rather sharply to leev off.

Prezently th Moel caem tumbling into th room, evidently verry pleezd with  
himself. ‘I’ve bin having such fun!’ he began at wunss; ‘I’ve bin geting a riez  
out of th stoets!’

‘I hoep U’ve bin verry caerful, Moel?’ sed th Rat ankshusly.

‘I shuud hoep so, too,’ sed th Moel confidently. ‘I got th iedeea when I  
went into th

kichen, to see about Toed's brekfast being kept hot for him. I found that oeld wosherwuuman-dres that he caem hoem in yesterdae, hanging on a towel-horss befor th fier. So I puut it on, and th bonet as wel, and th shaul, and off I went to Toed Haul, as boeld as U pleez. Th sentrys wer on th luuk-out, of corss, with thaer guns and thaer "Hoo cums thaer?" and all th rest of thaer nonsenss. "Guud morning, jentlmen!" ses I, verry respektful. "Wont eny woshing dun to-dae?"

'Thae luukt at me verry proud and stif and hauty, and sed, "Go awae, wosherwuuman! We doen't do eny woshing on duety." "Or eny uther tiem?" ses I. Ho, ho, ho! Wasn't I *funy*, Toed?"

'Puur, frivolus animal!' sed Toed, verry loftily. Th fakt is, he felt exseedingly jelus of Moel for whot he had just dun. It wuz exaktly whot he wuud hav liekt to hav dun himself, if oenly he had thaut of it furst, and hadn't gon and ooverslept himself.

'Sum of th stoets turnd qiet pink,' continued th Moel, 'and th Sarjent in charj, he sed to me, verry short, he sed, "Now run awae, mi guud wuuman, run awae! Doen't keep

mi men iedling and tauking on thaer poests." "Run awae?" ses I; "it woen't be me that'l be runing awae, in a verry short tiem from now!""

'O Moely, how cuud U?' sed th Rat, dismaed.

Th Bajer laed doun his paepur.

'I cuud see them priking up thaer eers and luuking at eech uther,' went on th Moel; `and th Sargent sed to them, "Never miend *her*; she duzn't noe whot she's tauking about."'

'''O! doen't I?''' sed I. '''Wel, let me tel U this. Mi dauter, she woshes for Mr. Bajer, and that'l sho U whether I noe whot I'm tauking about; and *U'l* noe prity soon, too! A hundred bludthursty bajers, armd with riefls, ar going to atak Toed Haul this verry niet, bi wae of th padok. Six boetloeds of Rats, with pistols and cutlasses, wil cum up th river and efekt a landing in th garden; whiel a pikt body of Toeds, noen as th Die-hards, or th Deth-or-Glory Toeds, wil storm th orchard and carry evrything befor them, yeling for venjenss. Thaer woen't be much left of U to wosh, bi th tiem thae've dun with U, unles U cleer out whiel U hav th chanss!" Then I ran awae,

and when I wuz out of siet I hid; and prezently I caem creeping bak along th dich and tuuk a peep at them thru th hej. Thae wer all as nurvus and flusterd as cuud be, runing all waes at wunss, and faulng oever eech uther, and evry wun giving orders to evrybody elss and not lisening; and th Sarjent kept sending off partys of stoets to distant parts of th grounds, and then sending uther feloes to fech 'em bak agen; and I hurd them saeing to eech uther, "That's just liek th weezels; thae'r to stop cumfortably in th banqeting-haul, and hav feesting and toests and songs and all sorts of fun, whiel we must stae on gard in th coeld and th dark, and in th end be cut to peeses bi bludthursty Bajers!""

'O, U sily ass, Moel!' cried Toed, 'U'v bin and spoilt evrything!'

'Moel,' sed th Bajer, in his dri, qieet wae, 'I perseev U hav mor senss in yuur litl fingger than sum uther animals hav in th hoel of thaer fat bodys. U hav manejd exselently, and I begin to hav graet hoeps of U. Guud Moel! Clever Moel!'

Th Toed wuz simply wield with jelusy,

mor espeshaly as he cuudn't maek out for th lief of him whot th Moel had dun that wuz so particuelarly clever; but, forchunetly for him, befor he cuud sho temper or expoez himself to th Bajer's sarcazm, th bel rang for lunchon.

It wuz a simpl but sustaening meel -- baecon and braud beens, and a macaroeny puuding; and when thaе had qiet dun, th Bajer setld himself into an arm-chaer, and sed, 'Wel, we've got our wurk cut out for us to-niet, and it wil probably be prity laet befor we'r qiet thru with it; so I'm just going to taek forty winks, whiel I can.' And he droo a hankerchif oever his faess and wuz soon snoring.

Th ankshus and laborius Rat at wunss rezoomd his preparaeshons, and started runing between his foer litl heeps, mutering, 'Heer's-a-belt-for-th-Rat, heer's-a-belt-for-th Moel, heer's-a-belt-for-th-Toed, heer's-a-belt-for-th-Bajer!' and so on, with evry fresh acootrement he produest, to which thaer seemd reealy no end; so th Moel droo his arm thru Toed's, led him out into th oepen aer, shuvd him into a wiker chaer, and maed him tel him all his advenchers from begining

to end, which Toed wuz oenly too wiling to do. Th Moel wuz a guud lisener, and Toed, with no wun to chek his staetments or to critisiez in an unfriendly spirit, rather let himself go. Indeed, much that he relaeted belongd mor properly to th category of whot-miet-hav-hapend-had-I-oenly-thaut-of-it-intiem-insted-of-ten-minits-afterwards. Thoes ar aulwaes th best and th raesyest advenchers; and whi shuud thae not be trooly ours, as much as th sumwhot inadeqet things that reealy cum off?

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## Chapter 12

### XII

### TH RETURN OF UELISYZ

WHEN it began to gro dark, th Rat, with an aer of exsietment and mistery, sumond them bak into th parlor, stuud eech of them up alongsied of his litl heep, and proseeded to dres them up for th cuming expedishon. He wuz verry urnest and thuroegoing about it, and th afaer tuuk qiet a long tiem. Furst, thaer wuz a belt to go round eech animal, and then a sord to be stuk into eech belt, and then a cutlas on th uther sied to balanss it. Then a paer of pistols, a poleesman's trunchen, several sets of handcufs, sum bandejes and stiking-plaster, and a flask and a sandwich-caess. Th Bajer laft guud-huemordly and sed, 'All riet, Raty! It amuezes U and it duzn't hurt me. I'm going to do all I've got to do with this heer stik.' But th Rat oenly sed, 'Pleez, Bajer.

U noe I shuudn't liek U to blaem me afterwards and sae I had forgoten  
*enythng!*"

When all wuz qiet redy, th Bajer tuuk a dark lantern in wun paw, graspt his  
graet stik with th uther, and sed, 'Now then, folo me! Moel furst, 'cuz I'm  
verry pleezd with him; Rat next; Toed last. And luuk heer, Toedy! Doen't U  
chater so much as uezhual, or U'l be sent bak, as shuur as faet!'

Th Toed wuz so ankshus not to be left out that he tuuk up th infeerior  
pozishon asiend to him without a murmer, and th animals set off. Th Bajer  
led them along bi th river for a litl wae, and then sudenly swung himself  
oever th ej into a hoel in th river-bank, a litl abuv th wauter. Th Moel and th  
Rat foloed sielently, swinging themselvs suksesfuly into th hoel as thae had  
seen th Bajer do; but when it caem to Toed's turn, of corss he manejd to slip  
and faul into th wauter with a loud splash and a squeel of alarm. He wuz  
hauld out bi his frends, rubd doun and rung out haestily, cumforted, and set  
on his legs; but th Bajer wuz seeriusly anggry, and toeld him that th

verry next tiem he maed a fool of himself he wuud moest surtenly be left behiend.

So at last thaer wer in th seecret pasej, and th cuting-out expidishon had reealy begun!

It wuz coeld, and dark, and damp, and loe, and narro, and puur Toed began to shiver, partly from dred of whot miet be befor him, partly becauz he wuz wet thru. Th lantern wuz far ahed, and he cuud not help laging behiend a litl in th darknes. Then he hurd th Rat caul out worningly, 'Cum on, Toed!' and a terror seezd him of being left behiend, aloen in th darknes, and he 'caem on' with such a rush that he upset th Rat into th Moel and th Moel into th Bajer, and for a moement all wuz confuezhon. Th Bajer thaut thaer wer being atakt from behiend, and, as thaer wuz no room to uez a stik or a cutlas, droo a pistol, and wuz on th point of puuting a buulet into Toed. When he found out whot had reealy hapend he wuz verrry anggry indeed, and sed, 'Now this tiem that tiersum Toed *shal* be left behiend!'

But Toed whimperd, and th uther too promist that thaer wuud be anserabl for

his guud conduit, and at last th Bajer wuz pasified, and th proseshon moovd on; oenly this tiem th Rat braut up th reer, with a furm grip on th shoelder of Toed.

So thae groept and shufl'd along, with thaer eers prikt up and thaer paws on thaer pistols, til at last th Bajer sed, 'We aut bi now to be prity neerly under th Haul.'

Then sudenly thae hurd, far awae as it miet be, and yet aparrently neerly oever thaer heds, a confuezd murmer of sound, as if peopl wer shouting and cheering and stamping on th flor and hamering on taebls. Th Toed's nurvus terrors all returnd, but th Bajer oenly remarkt plasidly, 'Thae *ar* going it, th Weezels!'

Th pasej now began to sloep upwards; thae groept onward a litl further, and then th noiz broek out agen, qiet distinkt this tiem, and verry cloess abuv them. 'Ooo-rae-ooraee-oo-rae-ooraee!' thae hurd, and th stamping of litl feet on th flor, and th clinking of glases as litl fists pounded on th taeb'l. 'Whot a tiem thae'r having!' sed th Bajer. 'Cum on!' Thae huryd along th pasej til it caem to a fuul stop, and thae found them

selvs standing under th trap-dor that led up into th butler's pantry.

Such a tremendous noiz wuz going on in th banqeting-haul that thaer wuz litl daenjer of thaer being oeverhurd. Th Bajer sed, 'Now, boys, all together!' and th foer of them puut thaer shoelders to th trap-dor and heevd it bak. Hoisting eech uther up, thae found themselvs standing in th pantry, with oenly a dor between them and th banqeting-haul, whaer thaer unconshus enemys wer carouzing.

Th noiz, as thae emurjd from th pasej, wuz simply defening. At last, as th cheering and hamering sloely subsieded, a vois cuud be maed out saeing, 'Wel, I do not propoez to detaen U much longer' -- (graet aplauz) -- 'but befor I rezoom mi seet' -- (renued cheering) -- 'I shuud liek to sae wun wurd about our kiend hoest, Mr. Toed. We all noe Toed!' -- (graet lafter) -- 'Guud Toed, *modest* Toed, *onest* Toed!' (shreeks of merriment).

'Oenly just let me get at him!' muterd Toed, griending his teeth.

'Hoeld hard a minit!' sed th Bajer,

restraening him with dificulty. 'Get redy, all of U!'

' -- Let me sing U a litl song,' went on th vois, 'which I hav compoezd on th subjekt of Toed' -- (prolongd aplauz).

Then th Cheef Weezel -- for it wuz he -- began in a hie, squeeky vois --

'Toed he went a-plezhering  
Gaely doun th street -- '

Th Bajer droo himself up, tuuk a furm grip of his stik with boeth paws, glanst round at his comrads, and cried --

'Th our is cum! Folo me!'

And flung th dor oopen wied.

Mi!

Whot a squeeling and a squeeking and a screeching fild th aer!

Wel miet th terrified weezels diev under th taebls and spring madly up at th windoes! Wel miet th ferrets rush wieldly for th fierplaess and get hoeplesly jamd in th chimny! Wel miet taebls and chaers be upset, and glas and chiena be sent crashing on th flor, in th panik of that terribl moement when th foer Heeroes stroed rathfully into th room! Th miety Bajer, his whiskers

brisling, his graet cujel whisling thru th aer; Moel, blak and grim, brandishing his stik and shouting his awful wor-cri, 'A Moel! A Moel!' Rat; desperet and deturmind, his belt buljing with wepons of evry aej and evry varieety; Toed, frenzyd with exsietment and injerd pried, swoelen to twiess his ordinaery siez, leeping into th aer and emitting Toed-whoops that child them to th marro! 'Toed he went a-plezhering!' he yeld. 'I'l plezher 'em!' and he went straat for th Cheef Weezel. Thae wer but foer in all, but to th panik-striken weezels th haul seemd fuul of monstrus animals, grae, blak, broun and yelo, whooping and flurishing enormus cujels; and thae broek and fled with sqeels of terror and dismae, this wae and that, thru th windoes, up th chimny, enywhaer to get out of reech of thoes terribl stiks.

Th afaer wuz soon oever. Up and doun, th hoel length of th haul, stroed th foer Frends, whaking with thaer stiks at evry hed that shoed itself; and in fiev minits th room wuz cleerd. Thru th broeken windoes th shreeks of terrified weezels escaeping acros th laun wer born faently

to thaer eers; on th flor lae prostraet sum duzen or so of th enemy, on hoom th Moel wuz bizily engaejd in fiting handcufs. Th Bajer, resting from his laebors, lent on his stik and wiept his onest brow.

'Moel,' he sed, 'U'r th best of feloes! Just cut along outsied and luuk after thoes stoet-sentrys of yuurs, and see whot thae'r doing. I've an iedeea that, thanks to U, we shan't hav much trubl from them to-niet!'

Th Moel vanisht promptly thru a windo; and th Bajer bad th uther too set a taeb'l on its legs agen, pik up nievs and forks and plaets and glases from th *debree* on th flor, and see if thae cuud fiend mateerials for a super. 'I wont sum grub, I do,' he sed, in that rather comon wae he had of speeking. 'Stur yuur stumps, Toed, and luuk lievly! We've got yuur hous bak for U, and U doen't ofer us so much as a sandwich.' Toed felt rather hurt that th Bajer didn't sae plezant things to him, as he had to th Moel, and tel him whot a fien felo he wuz, and how splendidly he had faut; for he wuz rather particuelarly pleezd with himself and th wae he had gon for th Cheef Weezel and sent

him flieing acros th taabl with wun blo of his stik. But he busld about, and so did th Rat, and soon thae found sum gwaava jely in a glas dish, and a coeld chiken, a tung that had hardly bin tucht, sum triefl, and qiet a lot of lobster salad; and in th pantry thae caem upon a basketful of French roels and eny qontity of cheez, buter, and selery. Thae wer just about to sit doun when th Moel clamberd in thru th windo, chukling, with an armful of riefls.

'It's all oever,' he reported. 'From whot I can maek out, as soon as th stoets, hoo wer verry nurvus and jumpy aulredy, hurd th shreeks and th yels and th upror insied th haul, sum of them throo doun thaer riefls and fled. Th uthers stuud fast for a bit, but when th weezels caem rushing out upon them thae thaut thae wer betraed; and th stoets grapld with th weezels, and th weezels faut to get awae, and thae resld and rigld and puncht eech uther, and roeld oever and oever, til moest of 'em roeld into th river! Thae've all disapeerd bi now, wun wae or another; and I've got thaer riefls. So that's all riet!'

'Exselent and dezurving animal!' sed th Bajer, his mouth ful of chiken and triefl. 'Now, thaer's just wun mor thing I wont U to do, Moel, befor U sit doun to yuur super along of us; and I wuudn't trubl U oenly I noe I can trust U to see a thing dun, and I wish I cuud sae th saem of evry wun I noe. I'd send Rat, if he wasn't a poeet. I wont U to taek thoes feloes on th flor thaer upstaers with U, and hav sum bedrooms cleend out and tiedyd up and maed reealy comfortabl. See that thae sweep *under* th beds, and puut cleen sheets and pilo-caeses on, and turn doun wun corner of th bed-cloeths, just as U noe it aut to be dun; and hav a can of hot wauter, and cleen towels, and fresh caeks of soep, puut in eech room. And then U can giv them a liking a-peess, if it's eny satisfakshon to U, and puut them out bi th bak-dor, and we shan't see eny mor of *them*, I fansy. And then cum along and hav sum of this coeld tung. It's furst raet. I'm verry pleezd with U, Moel!'

Th guudnaecherd Moel pikt up a stik, formd his prisoners up in a lien on th flor, gaev them th order 'Qik march!' and led

his sqod off to th uper flor. After a tiem, he apeerd agen, smieling, and sed that evry room wuz redy, and as cleen as a nue pin. 'And I didn't hav to lik them, eether,' he aded. 'I thaut, on th hoel, thae had had liking enuf for wun niet, and th weezels, when I puut th point to them, qiet agreed with me, and sed thae wuudn't think of trubling me. Thae wer verry penitent, and sed thae wer extreemly sorry for whot thae had dun. but it wuz all th fault of th Cheef Weezel and th stoets, and if ever thae cuud do enything for us at eny tiem to maek up, we had oenly got to menshon it. So I gaev them a roel a-peess, and let them out at th bak, and off thae ran, as hard as thae cuud!'

Then th Moel puuld his chaer up to th taebli, and picht into th coeld tung; and Toed, liek th jentlman he wuz, puut all his jelusy from him, and sed hartily, 'Thank U kiendly, deer Moel, for all yuor paens and trubl toniet, and espeshaly for yuor clevernes this morning!' Th Bajer wuz pleezd at that, and sed, 'Thaer spoek mi braev Toed!' So thae finisht thaer super in graet joy and contentment, and prezently retierd to rest

between cleen sheets, saef in Toed's ansestral hoem, wun bak bi machles valor, consumet stratejy, and a proper handling of stiks.

Th foloeing morning, Toed, hoo had oever slept himself as uezhual, caem doun to brekfast disgraesfuly laet, and found on th taebel a surten qontity of eg-shels, sum fragments of coeld and lethery toest, a cofy-pot three-forths empty, and reealy verry litl elss; which did not tend to improov his temper, considering that, after all, it wuz his oen hous. Thru th French windoes of th brekfast-room he cuud see th Moel and th Wauter Rat siting in wiker-chaers out on th laun, evidently teling eech uther storys; roring with lafter and kiking thaer short legs up in th aer. Th Bajer, hoo wuz in an arm-chaer and deep in th morning paeper, meerly luukt up and noded when Toed enterd th room. But Toed nue his man, so he sat doun and maed th best brekfast he cuud, meerly obzurving to himself that he wuud get sqaer with th uthers sooner or laeter. When he had neerly finisht, th Bajer luukt up and remarkt rather shortly: 'I'm sorry, Toed, but I'm afraed thaer's a hevy morning's wurk in frunt of U.

U see, we reealy aut to hav a Banquet at wunss, to selebraet this afaer. It's expekted of U -- in fakt, it's th rool.'

'O, all riet!' sed th Toed, redily. 'Enything to obliej. Tho whi on urth U shuud wont to hav a Banquet in th morning I cannot understand. But U noe I do not liv to pleez mieself, but meerly to fiend out whot mi frends wont, and then tri and araenj it for 'em, U deer oeld Bajer!'

'Doen't pretend to be stoopider than U reealy ar,' replied th Bajer, crosly; 'and doen't chukl and spluter in yuor cofy whiel U'r tauking; it's not maners. Whot I meen is, th Banquet wil be at niet, of corss, but th invitaeshons wil hav to be riten and got off at wunss, and U've got to riet 'em. Now, sit doun at that taebel -- thaer's staks of leter-paepers on it, with "Toed Haul" at th top in bloo and goeld -- and riet invitaeshons to all our frends, and if U stik to it we shal get them out befor lunchon. And *I'l* baer a hand, too; and taek mi shaer of th burden. *I'l* order th Banquet.'

'Whot!' cried Toed, dismaed. 'Me stop indors and riet a lot of rotens leters on

a joly morning liek this, when I wont to go around mi property, and set evrything and evrybody to riets, and swager about and enjoy mieself! Surtenly not! I'l be -- I'l see U --- Stop a minit, tho! Whi, of corss, deer Bajer! Whot is mi plezher or conveenyenss compaerd with that of uthers! U wish it dun, and it shal be dun. Go, Bajer, order th Banquet, order whot U liek; then join our yung frends outsied in thaer inosent murth, oblivious of me and mi caers and toils. I sacrificiess this faer morning on th aultar of duety and frendship!"

Th Bajer luukt at him verry suspishusly, but Toed's frank, oopen countenanss maed it dificult to sugjest eny unwurthy moetiv in this chaenj of atitued. He qited th room, accordingly, in th direkshon of th kichen, and as soon as th dor had cloezd behiend him, Toed huryd to th rieting-taebel. A fien iedeea had ocurd to him whiel he wuz tauking. He *wuud* riet th invitaeshons; and he *wuud* taek caer to menshon th leeding part he had taeken in th fiet, and how he had laed th Cheef Weezel flat; and he *wuud* hint at his advenchers, and whot a career of trieumf he had to

tel about; and on th fli-leef he wuud set out a sort of a proegram of entertaenment for th eevning -- sumthing liek this, as he skecht it out in his hed: -- SPEECH . . . BI TOED.

(Thaer wil be uther speeches bi TOED duuring th eevning.) ADRES . . .  
BI TOED

SINOPSIS -- Our Prizon Sistem -- th Wauterwaes of Oeld Ingland --  
Horss-deeling, and how to deel -- Property, its riets and its duetys -- Bak to  
th Land -- A Tipikal Inglish Sqier. SONG . . . BI TOED.

(*Compoezd bi himself.*) UTHER COMPOZISHONS . . . BI TOED  
wil be sung in th corss of th eevning bi th . . . COMPOEZER.

Th iedeea pleezd him mietly, and he wurkt verry hard and got all th leters  
finisht bi noon, at which our it wuz reported to him that thaer wuz a smaul  
and rather bedragld weezel at th dor, inqiering timidly whether he cuud be of  
eny survis to th jentlmen. Toed swagerd out and found it wuz wun of th  
prisoners of th preevius

eevning, verry respektful and ankshus to pleez. He pated him on th hed, shuvd th bundl of invitaeshons into his paw, and toeld him to cut along qik and deliver them as fast as he cuud, and if he liekt to cum bak agen in th eevning, perhaps thaer miet be a shiling for him, or, agen, perhaps thaer mietn't; and th puur weezel seemd reealy qiet graetful, and huryd off eegerly to do his mishon.

When th uther animals caem bak to lunchon, verry boisterus and breezy after a morning on th river, th Moel, hoos conshenss had bin priking him, luukt doutfuly at Toed, expektng to fiend him sulky or deprest. Insted, he wuz so upish and inflaeted that th Moel began to suspekt sumthing; whiel th Rat and th Bajer exchaenjd significant glances.

As soon as th meel wuz oever, Toed thrust his paws deep into his trouzer-pokets, remarkt cazuualy, 'Wel, luuk after yuurselvs, U feloes! Ask for enything U wont!' and wuz swagering off in th direkshon of th garden, whaer he wonted to think out an ieddea or too for his cuming speeches, when th Rat caut him bi th arm.

Toed rather suspekted whot he wuz after, and did his best to get awae; but when th Bajer tuuk him furmly bi th uther arm he began to see that th gaem wuz up. Th too animals condukted him between them into th smaul smoeking-room that oepend out of th entranss-haul, shut th dor, and puut him into a chaer. Then thaer boeth stuud in frunt of him, whiel Toed sat siilent and regarded them with much suspishon and il-huemon.

'Now, luuk heer, Toed,' sed th Rat. 'It's about this Banquet, and verry sorry I am to hav to speek to U liek this. But we wont U to understand cleerly, wunss and for all, that thaer ar going to be no speeches and no songs. Tri and grasp th fakt that on this ocaezhon we'r not argueing with U; we'r just teling U.'

Toed saw that he wuz trapt. Thae understuud him, thae saw thru him, thae had got ahed of him. His plezant dreem wuz shaterd.

'Maen't I sing them just wun *litl* song?' he pleaded pityusly.

'No, not *wun* litl song,' replied th Rat furmly, tho his hart bled as he noetist th

trembling lip of th puur disapointed Toed. 'It's no guud, Toedy; U noe wel that yuur songs ar all conseet and boesting and vanity; and yuur speeches ar all self-praez and -- and -- wel, and groess exajeraeshon and -- and -- -- '

'And gas,' puut in th Bajer, in his comon wae.

'It's for yuur oen guud, Toedy,' went on th Rat. 'U noe U *must* turn oever a nue leef sooner or laeter, and now seems a splendid tiem to begin; a sort of turning-point in yuur career. Pleez doen't think that saeing all this duzn't hurt me mor than it hurts U.'

Toed remaend a long whiel plunjd in thaut. At last he raezd his hed, and th traeses of strong emoeshon wer vizibl on his feechers. 'U hav conkerd, mi frends,' he sed in broeken aksents. 'It wuz, to be shuur, but a smaul thing that I askt -- meerly leev to blosom and expand for yet wun mor eevning, to let mieself go and heer th toomulchous aplauz that aulwaes seems to me -- sumhow -- to bring out mi best qolitys. However, U ar riet, I noe, and I am rong. Henss forth I wil be a verry diferen Toed. Mi frends, U shal never hav ocaezhon to blush

for me agen. But, O deer, O deer, this is a hard wurld!"

And, presing his hankerchif to his faess, he left th room, with faultering fuutsteps.

'Bajer,' sed th Rat, 'I feel liek a broot; I wunder whot *U* feel liek?'

'O, I noe, I noe,' sed th Bajer gloomily. 'But th thing had to be dun. This guud felo has got to liv heer, and hoeld his oen, and be respekted. Wuud *U* hav him a comon lafing-stok, mokt and jeerd at bi stoets and weezels?'

'Of corss not,' sed th Rat. 'And, tauking of weezels, it's luky we caem upon that litl weezel, just as he wuz seting out with Toed's invitaeshons. I suspekted sumthing from whot *U* toeld me, and had a luuk at wun or too; thae wer simply disgraesful. I confisaeted th lot, and th guud Moel is now siting in th bloo *boodwar*, filing up plaen, simpl invitaeshon cards!' \* \* \* \* \*

At last th our for th banquet began to draw neer, and Toed, hoo on leeving th uthers had retierd to his bedroom, wuz stil siting

thaer, melancoly and thautful. His brow resting on his paw, he ponderd long and deeply. Grajualy his countenanss cleerd, and he began to smiel long, slo smiels. Then he tuuk to gigling in a shi, self-conshus maner. At last he got up, lokt th dor, droo th curtens acros th windoes, colekted all th chaers in th room and araenjd them in a semysurkl, and tuuk up his pozishon in frunt of them, sweling vizibly. Then he bowd, cauft twiess, and, leting himself go, with uplifted vois he sang, to th enrapcherd audi'enss that his imajinaeshon so cheerly saw,

## TOED'S LAST LITL SONG!

Th Toed -- caem -- hoem!  
Thaer wuz panik in th parlors and boeling in th hauls,  
Thaer wuz crieing in th cow-sheds and shreeking in th stauls,  
When th Toed -- caem -- hoem!  
When th Toed -- caem -- hoem!  
Thaer wuz smashing in of windo and crashing in of dor,  
Thaer wuz chivying of weezels that faented on th flor,  
When th Toed -- caem -- hoem!

Bang! go th drums!

Th trumpeters ar tooting and th soeljers ar salooting,  
And th canon thaе ar shooting and th moetor-cars ar hooting,  
As th -- Heero -- cumс!

Shout -- Hoo-rae!

And let eech wun of th croud tri and shout it verry loud,  
In onor of an animal of hoom U'r justly proud,  
For it's Toed's -- graet -- dae!

He sang this verry loud, with graet unkshon and expreshon; and when he had dun, he sang it all oever agen.

Then he heevd a deep sie; a long, long, long sie.

Then he dipt his haerbrush in th wauter-jug, parted his haer in th midl, and plasterd it doun verry straet and sleek on eech sied of his faess; and, unloking th dor, went qieetly doun th staers to greet his gests, hoo he nue must be asembling in th drawing-room.

All th animals cheerd when he enterd, and crowded round to congrachulaet him and sae niess things about his curej, and his clevernes, and his fieting qolitys; but Toed

oenly smield faently, and murmerd, 'Not at all!' Or, sumtiems, for a chaenj, 'On th contraery!' Oter, hoo wuz standing on th harhrug, descriebing to an admiering surkl of frends exakly how he wuud hav manejd things had he bin thaer, caem forward with a shout, throo his arm round Toed's nek, and tried to taek him round th room in triemfal progres; but Toed, in a mield wae, wuz rather snuby to him, remarking jently, as he disengaejd himself, 'Bajer's wuz th mastermiend; th Moel and th Wauter Rat bor th brunt of th fieting; I meerly survd in th ranks and did litl or nuthing.' Th animals wer evidently puzld and taeken abak bi this unexpekted atitued of his; and Toed felt, as he moovd from wun gest to th uther, maeking his modest responses, that he wuz an objekt of absorbing interest to evry wun.

Th Bajer had orderd evrything of th best, and th banquet wuz a graet suksess. Thaer wuz much tauking and lafter and chaf amung th animals, but thru it all Toed, hoo of corss wuz in th chaer, luukt doun his noeze and murmerd plezant nuthings to th animals on eether sied of him. At intervals he

stoel a glanss at th Bajer and th Rat, and aulwaes when he luukt thae wer staering at eech uther with thaer mouths oopen; and this gaev him th graetest satisfakshon. Sum of th yungger and lievlyer animals, as th eevning wor on, got whispering to eech uther that things wer not so amuezing as thae uezd to be in th guud oeld daes; and thaer wer sum nokings on th taebl and cries of 'Toed! Speech! Speech from Toed! Song! Mr. Toed's song!' But Toed oenly shuuk his hed jently, raezd wun paw in mield proetest, and, bi presing delicasys on his gests, bi topikal smaul-tauk, and bi urname inqiryys after members of thaer familys not yet oeld enuf to apeer at soeshal funkshons, manejd to convae to them that this diner wuz being run on strikty convenshonal liens.

He wuz indeed an aulder Toed! \* \* \* \* \*

After this cliemax, th foer animals continued to leed thaer lievs, so roodly broeken in upon bi sivil wor, in graet joy and contentment, undisturb'd bi further riezings or invaezhons. Toed, after due consultaeshon with his frends, selekted a hansom goeld chaen and loket set with

purls, which he dispacht to th jaeler's dauter with a leter that eeven th Bajer admited to be modest, graetful, and apreeshiaetiv; and th enjin-driever, in his turn, wuz properly thankt and compensaeted for all his paens and trUBL.

Under seveer compulshon from th Bajer, eeven th barj-wuuman wuz, with sum trUBL, saut out and th value of her horss discreetly maed guud to her; tho Toed kikt terribly at this, hoelding himself to be an instrument of Faet, sent to punish fat wimen with motld arms hoo cuudn't tel a reeal jentlman when thae saw wun. Th amount involvd, it wuz troo, wuz not verry burdensem, th jipsy's valueaeshon being admited bi loekal asesors to be aproximetly corekt.

Sumtiems, in th corss of long sumer eevnings, th frends wuud taek a stroel together in th Wield Wuud, now suksesfuly taemd so far as thae wer consurnd; and it wuz pleezing to see how respektfuly thae wer greeted bi th inhabitants, and how th muther-weezels wuud bring thaer yung wuns to th mouths of thaer hoels, and sae, pointing, 'Luuk, baeby! Thaer goes th graet Mr. Toed!

And that's th galant Wauter Rat, a terribl fieter, wauking along o' him! And yonder cum斯 th faemus Mr. Moel, of hoom U so ofen hav hurd yuur faather tel! But when thaer infants wer frakshus and qiet beyond controel, thae wuud qieet them bi teling how, if thae didn't hush them and not fret them, th terribl grae Bajer wuud up and get them. This wuz a baess liebel on Bajer, hoo, tho he caerd litl about Sosieety, wuz rather fond of children; but it never faeld to hav its fuul efekt.