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STVDII
SALAMANTINI

Anonymous

Mr Councillor Semitery's Hoff (1868)

[61]

I were fairly beaten with business, what with foils of spinners going to Liverpool runnin' up cotton, and foils of buyers offering no moore when yarn's at fifteen pence nur they did when it were nobbut fourteen, and biggest foils of all, B.O.E.'s, writen to th' pappers about it. I were fairly moythered, and if there's any man in the trade as'll stand up in the bar of the Brun Coo any Wensday neet, and lay his 'and on his art, and say as he hasner bin moythered too, I'll ston glasses round. I will for sure. Well, being fairly beaten, and it gettin' to th' back hend of the year, I detarmint to have a hoff. So I says to our Jim (he's my brother) "Jim, can I have a hoff for tuthree week, thinkst'ee." "Wur?" said he. "I meean can'st do bout me?" Jim laughed till tears rolled down his face, and then he said, "Do bout thee! Whoi, thou'rt like th' lad's charackter, folks are

The Salamanca Corpus: Mr Councillor Semitery's...(1868)

best bout thee.” Having made everything straight forrud and pleshunt at the mill in this way, I begun to think where shall I go to and who must I get to go with me. The first felly I though on were my old friend Porkampton. So the next market day I proposed as we should make up a party and have a hoff some wheres. “Come down to Dan’s,” says he, “and we’ll talk it over.” So down to Dan’s we went, and we had a rare good steek, and Porkampton stood a bottle of fizz, and then he said, “Tommy, if you’ll not say nothing to nobody, I’ll interaduce you to Dan hissels.” This unexpected honour fairly took my breath. I could do no more nur squeedge his ‘and and wipe away a tear. Porkampton left the room, and in a few minutes he came back again with Dan, and a finer specimen of a landlord I never see. He carried recommendation of th’ place all over him. Steeunks mun be rare and prime to work up such a corporation, and there’s plenty of bant i’ th’ liquor before you can get such a glowing-looking face. A stained window in a church, or a red end shirting were foils to it; and he were’nt proud, neither, wee’nt Dan. He shook me by th’ and; he did, for sure; and we were friends directly, and so I felt bound to pay him a compulment or two. “This here place,” says I, “must be th’ chepest managed of any eating ouse in Manchester.” Dan smiled, and said, “We are liberal, sir, but at the same time we have a hie to the main chance suttinly; but why?” “Why,” says I, “you’ve nobbut to lay th’ chops and steeunks on a counter of a ro, and put thee faze to ‘em and they’re cooked at onest and no koils.” Dan were delighted. “A pleasant gent is your friend,” says he to Porkampton.” “Aye,” say he, “he’s a witty chap, is Tommy; thou’rt th’ Manchester Dan, and he’s th’ Snigbruck Sherry-Dan.” Why he called me that I don’t know, for I’d liever anytime have brandy, and never made no account of sherry. Well, we got to talking of our hoff, and Dan agreed to go with us; and then came th’ qeshun of wheere to. We all agreed to put a place down on a piece of papper, and put them in an at and go by th’ majority. We did so, and when we pulled ‘em out, there were all three the same---“Blackpool”. Well, though we’d all put it down, when we come to talk it hover, none on us seemed to think as Blackpool would be much of a hoff. So we said, “try again,” and try we did, and all came out second time “Lytham.” But when we recollected as there were no coorsing on, we said we wouldn’t go to Lytham, and at we’d have

[62]

another turn. And try we did again, and that time it came out "Southport." Somehow we didn't seem to like Southport neither, but as not one of use could think of no other places, it seemed as if it must be Southport, and we sat there scratching our eds and looking very dull at th' idea of Southport, but not seein' how we were to get out of it, when a gentleman at th' next table broke in and said "Excuse me, but may I read you a hextrax." He were reading a book, and had been as silent as a shed of a Sunday, except he'd sniggered now and then, and I'd always thought he were a sniggerin' at the book he were readin', but I found out at after it were at my jokes. "It's the life of Dr Johnson," says he, "and he's talking about folk committing shuicide, and the old Doctor says, 'Then sir, let him go abroad to a distant country; let him go to some place where he is not known. Don't let him go to the devil, where he is known.' That may be a valuable hint to you, gentlemen." "But," says I, "we're not talking of shuicide, but a hoff." "Eh! Tommy!" says Porkampton, "Thou'rt not up to the mark, my lad. This gent means that it's a shame to limit brilliant habilities like thine to Lancashire, and that some other parts of England ought to have a fair turn." "You've hit my meaning exactly," said the stranger; and then he went on to tell us how a friend of his had a coaster steamer as would sail the next Saturday from Liverpool to th' Land's End, and how we might go by it and come whoam by London. This was just what we wanted, it was a hint worth a deal, and in five minutes we'd agreed to do it, and Porkampton left with the stranger to write and secure births for us. But it were a deal nearer deaths nor births at he secured. For when we got to Liverpool, you never see'd nought like th' river. Th' biggest ships at anchor danced like bits of cork on the water, and a blacksmith's bellies were nothing to the wind. When we got to our boat, she were only 80 horse power, and saw her popping up and down like midges over the Snig Bruck in a summer neet, we were all fairly frightened, at least I were for one, and I thought, if we go, we shall be bigger fools than we look, and that's none so easy. "Mun we start?" I said. "Mun we start?" cried Porkampton. "Why, what did we come for? I'd not give a button for a sail without a bit of a blow." I looked at Dan, and noticed as he were thinner than when we started, and a deal whiter, but Dan slapped his wescut and said,

The Salamanca Corpus: Mr Councillor Semitery's...(1868)

“Of course---sail, certainly; bit of a blow, of course; nothing like it,” and laughed as if he were going crazy. As I think I’ve as much pluck as most, and I wern’t going to be behind, I slapped my wescut too, and said, “Nothing like a blow; I’d as lieve sail upon the canal as not have a bit of a blow.” But it warnt the blow I was afeared on, it were th’ watter. Well, we started, and every inch we went, it grew worse and worse. Goin’ up Pendle’s nothing to the waves we went up, and th’ worst fall in cotton were a trifle to coming down at th’ other side. We could none of us stand, so we lay down, and pulled out our flasks, and had a good drain. This dis us a power of good. Porkampton began singing, and sung “Rule Brightanyer;” but when I looked at the waves, I could not help thinking as Brightanyer were not up to much in the ruling line just then. Then they made me give’em my electioneering speech; but I could hardly stand, and felt as if I’d a dozen shuttles weaving up and down inside of me, and before I’d done, happening to look at Dan, I shut up at onest. He were lying on his back, groaning wretchedly, and his face were as white as a bleached mull. “Why, Dan,” says I, “thou’s gone into the band.” Dan grunted, as much as to say, “What dost’ee mean?” “Why, I seeid thee face an hour ago were like a hinfantry sojer’s coat, and now its colour of the drummer’s jacket.” Porkampton laughed, but Dan were too far gone, and as for myself, I could have liever cried. Things grew worse and worse, until at last the Captain came and told us at he felt it his duty to state that we met go to the bottom any minute. Then I did break down. I sate me down on an amper, and I cried like a water-spout. It was not for myself; it were for Snigbruck. “There never were but two real gentlemen in Snigbruck,” I kep saying to myself, “And one on’em was burnt on Thursday, and the other’s bound to be drowned to-day. Poor Snigbruck! Poor Snigbruck!” While I were lamenting this way, I heard poor Dan mutter something aside of me, and I put my year to his mouth, and he said, “Has no one got a Kattychism?” Now, although I knew I were just as likely to find a honest buyer in Manchester as a Kattychism in my pocket, by force of habit, and to convince the poor fellow, I felt in them all, and said at last, “I have’nt; and I don’t think as anyone as ‘as would be at bother of finding it in this here hullabulloo.” Dan closed his eyes, and his head sunk forrud on his chest, and, as I could hear him muttering, still I kep my year close to him. He were still on Kattychism. “I wish I had a Kattychism; I’d like to run over it oncest more. M. or N....my godfathers and godmothers---oh, dear! oh,

The Salamanca Corpus: Mr Councillor Semitery's...(1868)

dear! If I could onyl get hold on a Kattychism!" I were fairly sorry for him, till I forgot myself and th' danger, which grew wusser and wusser every minute; and I whispers and says, "Dan, old chap, wouldn't an ymn do?" He opened one eye, a feint smile came over his pheesurs, and he said, "Dost thee know one, Tommy?" "I think I know t' Busy Bee," I answered; "will that do?" He rung my 'and for reply, and so I began reciting it to him; and we lay side by side there upon 't deck, me repeating in his year, over and over agen, "Birds in their little nests agree," and him squeedging my 'and and groaning fearful; and whenever I hushed for a moment, muttering again, "O dear! I do wish at I'd a Kattychism!"

I should fancy that we lay a thisuns for a matter of two hours, during which time I could see Porkampton knocking about like a good one, swearing at folks at got into the rode, getting swore at hissels by the sailors, and now and then lending a hand to keene the vessle from foundarrin. Onest or twice he came up to Dan and me and called us softies. But at length the orribul tempest fun him out. I saw him come up looking the colour of Chaney clay, and the sides of his nose twitching like, and he shuck my 'and and he says, "Tommy, the Captain says at he cannot save us---in a few moments we shall be at the bottom." I fairly groaned. The he turns to Dan and takes his 'and too, and said, "Good bye, old felly, we're going down." "Well," says Dan, "I shall offer no resistance...M or N in my baptism---no resistance." And I really believe at he would'nt have done, so what they'd done to him. Well, Porkampton sat down near us, and rested his elbows on his knees, and hid his face in his hands, and I erd him sobbin. But in a bit he lifted up his ed, dashed away his tears, and gave his knee a great slap, and cried---"After all, I'm not a darned Dissenter. No, thank God for that! So what I've bin, I never was a darned Dissenter!"

I'd never bin a Dissenter mysel---Semiterries wus always Church and State---but it didn't seem to cumfut me same road as it did him, for he jumped to his feet and cried, "We're not at bottom yet, and I think we'll make Holy Ed." "Holy Ed!" I said, "Ah! Porky, I sud'nt care what it wer---ed or tail---but I wish at I'd owt Holy about me. I do for sure. But if I land I'se be better, I will for sure.

Well, we did get outside Holy Ed arbor, and the capting brunt blew lights, and the life boat came out to us, and we wus all landed more dead nor alive. And the next thing

The Salamanca Corpus: Mr Councillor Semitery's...(1868)

I recollect were I wus sitting, wrapt up in blankets, before a blazin fire in the kitching of the Taffy's Harms; and there were Porkampton as jolly as a Scotch buyer when he's cancelled a bad order, and bawling out "Rule Brightanyer", and Dan supping Brandy hot and swearin at he'd never enjoyed a sale more in all his days. Well, th' Kattychism come into my ed, and I couldn't stand this, so I got up and I said, "I'm hoff to bed, and I've this yer to say by way of good night:---So who doesn't go to church to morrow, I shall."

And go to church I did, and ad a nice nap, ans we all got back to Manchester on Sunday evening, and this yer, Mr. Edhitter, were my hoff.