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THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE
RECKIN.

Sor,—In former times this was wan of the rigglar hinstitushens ov this plase, an zinse the time that I can raymimber, the old men wud zit down by the fier or a winter's ayvlin an tell auver ther tales ov the past days, an relate the storeys ov these an thicky vessel that was lost pon som rock ov this fatal coast in a time long a go by. There was som old noted reckers that mite be zed tu hev sarved ther prentis tu it, an tu hev vollyd it as a professun awl ther days, an as sune as a breeze wud spring up, owt they wud be, lukin vor flotsum an jetsum. Let me zay yer, Sor, that I doant beeleve a kwarter pairt ov the tales that hev a bin towld abowt the natives decoyin vessels ashore, be tyin lanterns tu hosses tayls, an zo awn. I was bawrn klose by the say, an hev bin mixed up way old reckers vor minny yurs, an I muss say honestly that I kant vend owt that iver there was inny sitch thing card awn. I hev a yerd, howiver, that thay wudden mind choppin off the hed of a hexize man if he hinterfeerd way ther smugglin bisens, an praps in the verry remote times, wen life wasen thort tu be verry sakred, wen kings wud git ther wives put tu deth vor marry anether, an wen a cardinal cude deesend tu hev a man beheded jist vor

spite, if he awed en a gridge, the pore hignorant vokes abowt yer, wen thare was a reck, praps wud luke moar arter the spoyl than thay wud tu save the saylors, an the old sayin yused tu be, "Ded men tell no tales."

Wen Passon Hawker was wanse tryin tu restoar hannimashun tu a pore fellah, as he was a rucky'd down an rubbin the man, his workman wisperd in his yer—

Save a seylor vrom the say,
An he'll become yer ennemy;

"An did yu iver, Peter," zed he, "bein a recker as yu told me vor minny yers, did you iver zee a pore fellah clamberin up the rock ware yu stude, an shuve him back intu the say agen tu be drowned?" "No, Sir," zed he, "I niver did, an I beeleeve if I had I shude a bin uncomforabel in my mind." Passon Hawker was tew kind a man tu be hinfluenced by inny sitch docterin as that, an had the pore seylor tuke intu his howse, wich is almost on the cliff, an nursed an tended the shiprecked marriner as if he had a bin his awn brither. The man was a Dane by birth, an was the soal survivor ov the brig Caledonia, ov 500 tons, belonging tu Arbroath, in Scotland. It will sarve my presant purpose tu say that the boddys ov awl the kru was recovered an berryd way graytest care in the churchyard, an the figgerhed ov the vessel was plased at the fute of the captain's grave. It is a carved image standin erect in the Scottish garb, an the last time I vissited the churchyard, a vu months ago, it was still standing, keepin ward, way drawn sord an shield in aythur hand. I hop som time tu rite a letter or tew moar abowt Mr. Hawker, wen I shall refer to his passhunate regard vor the seylors, wether alive or ded.

If a vessel was drauve ashore ov a Zinday durin prare time, zom wan wud go and tell the passon ov it, that the congregashun mite go an help save life ov kuse, an he wud kal owt the nuse, when the Church wud be quickly empty. I've yerd that wanse down to Poughill the nuse was learnt that thare was a vessel ashore, an the passon walked down tu the dore, avar he towld it, and then he hal'd owt "Christian brethren, thare's a vessel ashore down the cove, let's start far et," wen he fling'd off his gown, and shaw'd the tethers the way. Well now I like a man like that, hew will go and help others in the time ov trubble. Ive rayd ov zom that will put intolerabel burdens pon other vokes's shoulders but want titch it way wan ov thare awn vingers. I du like a passon that will help his

peepel in the things of this life, as well as laydin mun in the way tu a better world, 'tis a pore job drayvin mun. There was a passon zom yurs ago in North Devon that was hoffer fallin owt way the varmers, and wan aw mun yused tew go tew Church, an stay wile the passon was raydin hot he niver ruat, but wen he named his tex, this farmer wud take his hat an stump down dru the ile, an wud put his veet down like as if he wanted vor make a hole dru the stoans. Wan Zinday jist as he got tu the dore the passon zed, "My brethren, thet man's rume is hexcellent kompany." So he vownd out the passon wassen anoid way his layvin, an vrom thet time he stayd dru the hoal sarvise.

This is hot is cal'd an iron bownd doast. At inny rate 'tis a rock bownd wan, an a vessel comin neer in a 'Norwester; is purty well safe to go tu pieces, an

"Vrom Padstow poynt tu Lidy lite
Is a wattery grave by day or nite."

An zom thet hev bin drauve in yer hev bin torn tu bits, like laths and matchwood. There was a pilot boat in the autumn ov '59 recked under the Hartland cliff close by yer, were nobody cude git tu rinder inny help, and iverything was zo much nack'd abraud, that only thing that was identified was the cappens boot, way the vute in it. Minny a craft hath bin lost in tryin tu "weather" Harty Poynt, zom swamped an zom rind ashore, as tis neerly awlways ruff thare pon hot is nawd as Harty Raze, a line ov broken watter, hextendin vrom Harty Poynt towards the Lindy Iland. Yer was reck'd "Crewl" Copinger the Dane, that was the soal survivor of the ship's kru. He married Mis Hamlin, of Velly, Hartland, and yused to ty hur tu the bed and horsehip hur. He was wan of the moast notorious villans that was iver nawd in theyse pairts. He komd yer by the say an went by it, nobody nawd ware. His wife died in Barnstaple in 1834.

During the time ov my rayminberanc I only raycollect wan vessel coming ashore by mishap an gettin hoff agen, an that was wan that got in pon the zan, in the dimmet, an got off nex tide. Zom sed the sailers had fog on the brayn, or that their hies was a bit glassy, but ware twas so or no I doant naw. I think, Zur, ivery sailer hof to be a taytoteler, an I'm glad vur see that the Chansellor hof the hexchicker zeth the trade in drink is fallin hoff. I think its a gude sine. The coast is so surrounded way sharp rocks, that ten tu one if a ship gits in yer pon a vull say, or as the Frensh say *pleine mer*, he'll

niver git hoff agin, nor muve vrum the plase avaur he's tawrn tu peises. An then was the time vor reckers, vor if thare must be shipwrecks twas thort to be providenshal vor the plase wheariver a vessel got stranded, an in the old times wen thare was no koastgards abowt, the natives wud kar hoff hotiver thay cude lay hands upon. Barrels of licker was considerd as valuabel prises, as the small kegs or tubs that was yused was very handy tu git away, an a drop of licker was a fine lucksery in them times, and wen smuggling was in vogue, it wud hoften be washin ashore, vor in case thay cudden land thay wud zink it a lit way hoff an it wud hoften brayk away an wash in an it wud be a verry common thing vor men tu be drunk pon nayt brandy, an thort mort of it as 'twas the custom. A Cornish parrish clark wanse remark'd that 'twas strange, as thare was a prare vor awlmoast ivery thing helse, thare was none vor reck. I've yerd the storey a twold yurs ago that Grase Sandercock, hew I nawd verry well, was wan time down pon hur nees prayin vor zom tu kom ashore, an wen hur got up hur donkey was swimmin down the river that passed klose beehind hur howze, an hur hollow'd out, "Hallo, Sammy, how long hast thee bin a saylor?" Poor old Grase neerly kom'd tu pay hur life vor hur temerity in goin under cliff durin a storm. Wen thare is a grownd say on the tide rinth tremendousley, an betwayn the waves it will be cleer for a long spase, and then a wackin gurt wave will come an zwamp ivery thing avaur it. Dick, hur husband, an anether man was "tide bownd" wan zide of the baych at Welcombe Mowth, an thay zeed hur kom down the rawd avuver the cliff, an the wave tuke hur jist as hur got tu the bottom, an karry'd hur owt zom distanse, an then fortunately anether wave tuke hur an lifted hur rite in agen.

I beleeve zom wud frayqwint the cliffs moar vrom the love ov adventure than vrom hot thay wud gayn by it, an wen wanse inny boddy had got a taste vor it, 'tis like hoss rasin an gamblin, hard vor layve hoff.

In the olden days the vokes wud stick tu

"The gude old rule the simpel plan,
That thay shall take hew hev the power,
An thay shall keep hew can."

The rites ov the vender was generally respected wen innny wan had vownd innnything, an put it owt ov raych ov the tide, way his mark pon it twas sildom innny boddy wud titch it. There was a soart of honner amangst min, like thay zay thare is amang thieves.

Now-a-days thare issen neer zo much reck washed ashore, nor vessils lost as thare yused tu be. Yurs ago thare wud hofTEN nu deels washin in arter a long west wind vrom vessels lost in the way home vrom Amerricky. I've zeed minny covered wey barnacles 18 inches long, an the timber wud be like a honeycomb, and zom wud be quite fresh. Lately the koastguardsmen luke arter the cliffs, an hot is wuth zillin is saved an zwold by hockshon, an the vender is intitled tu wan third ov hot it maketh vor his trubbel. Peeses ov timber jist vit vor burn thay doant bother abowt, an tis verry rare that licker or tubs ov butter be a washed in now.

Tony Cliverden yused tu relate how his love ov reckin saved his life. 'Vor,' said he, 'I was in a quarey neer the cliff braykin stoans, wen a bird flied around an drapped a peese of wax candel jist ware I was workin. Ah, thort he, thare's reck abowt, an away he goes, but cudden vend innny tho he went a long way, an wen he return'd he vownd the zide ov the quarey tumbl'd in, an his tules berry'd deep in rubbish. Tony zed the bird must hev bin wise, and nawd his love ov reckin, vor kom an slock en away like thet.

Wen thare's a reck ashore, if the wind shude be blawin off or thare's no wind at al, lots ov it will wash away tu say an it will kom in agen perhaps miles away, and thet's the moast chance reckers hev got, as awl the attenshum ov the officers is directed tu the spot ware the reck is.

Durin the forty yers Mr. Hawker was vicar ov Merwenstow, he interred the bodys ov many saylors cast upon the strand, an he made it a rule tu give innny wan thet vownd a corpse five shillins owt ov his awn pocket.

Whoever traverses the stormy main,
The majesty of the Creator sees,
He proves all human wisdom to be vain,
God sends the tempest, and the gentle breeze.

One moment high upon the mountain top,
The next hurled down into the deep abyss,

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Vain is the help of man, he has no prop
On which to lean, no other help but this.

"God is our Refuge" in the storm of life,
His presence shall be with us all the way,
And guide us to the haven where's no strife.
Where sorrows end, and night is lost in day.

There, where wicked from their troubles cease,
The weary ones shall find eternal rest
No rude alarm, but endless joy and peace,
And sweet delight shall soothe each anxious breast.

Welcombe, April 16th, 1886.

ROGER GILES

