

THE STORY OF A STREET ARAB

[From the London Figaro.] I was a street Arab. So was my brother Bill. Father and mother used to drink and send us to beg or steal—it didn't matter much which, so that we brought something home. We were ragged and dirty, fierce, impudent and reckless. I was the worse of the two for I was the oldest and the strongest. All day, and almost all night too; I was in the street. To escape the "Bobby" I used to get a few boxes of lucifers and fuses, and about out "Here yer are, four for a penny." I sold very few of 'em. They only served as a blind to get ha' pence without giving a box. How I was knocked and kicked about, to be sure! In rain and snow, frost and sun, I was in the streets the rainer and frostier, the better for, though there were few people out then, I got more money out of pity; and could pry more from the stalls—they weren't watched so much. Some of the money I took home, but most of it I spent. Generally I got enough to eat, but sometimes I was almost starved. If I didn't get any money or wittels, I didn't go home to our one room in a crowded, dirty court, which we called our home. Not that I cared much for the thrashing I got, but I liked better to lie on door steps, or in entries, or anywhere, where I could skid the Bobby. It was an awfully jolly life for a time, and didn't I look down on the well dressed kids who were forced to keep themselves clean, and don't turn a catarine-wheel in the mud, or play for pitch and toss, heads or tails, with their money!

Sometimes lads would stop and talk to me, asking about my father and mother, and wanting to know why I didn't go to school. I didn't know what they meant by school, and chapel, and the Saviour, but I told 'em plenty of guff, and mostly got money out 'em. Tell 'em where we live?—not if I knowed it. It would have spoiled the little game, quite. No, they never got the truth of 'em, 'cept when I told 'em I was hungry.

At last I got nabbed. How was it? Why, I was taking a bit of candy from a stall at the corner o' a street, when round comes the Bobby and takes me off at once to quod. I was only a little 'un I was ever twelve, but I didn't know. Did I know what being good meant? I didn't. Did I know where I should go to if I told a lie? I didn't. The beaks shook their heads and talked together a bit. So I was sent to prison for a day, and to a reformatory for five years.

Well, they washed me first and put clean clothes on me. Wasn't I miserably for a time? If I could, I should ha' run away; but that wasn't possible, I was watched so. In a week or two I began to like it rather. At last, I liked the work they put me at, but I was longer before I liked the books. However, this came at last. Everybody was so kind to me, and did me what a man I should be if I only kept on, and was honest and industrious. So I learned carpentering, and a bit of gardening, and, at last, I was able to read and write, and sum a bit, and got a lot of good marks. And once I heard the master say to a gentleman who came to visit the place that I was one of the best boys in the school, though at first I had been one of the worse. This made me a bit proud, and I worked all the better for it.

Before my five years were out I was altogether changed, and wanted to get on in the world. I told the master, and he told the chaplain and the visiting justices, that I wished to go abroad and do something good for myself. I was only seventeen but that didn't matter. I could work well, and wasn't a bad scholar. Well, the end of it was that they promised to help me; and they did. The master and the chaplain were both very earnest in it, and helped me in many ways. I chose Africa to go to, because, I suppose, I had read a good deal about it, and thought I could do well there. Enough money was raised to get me a few clothes and to have a little to start with, and a place was found for me in a ship in which I could work out my passage.

I won't say anything about the voyage, though it was a new world to me and everything was wonderful; I wanted to get to land and to begin to work for myself. Still, I was just a little sorry when it was over; the sea was such a pleasure to me. The character I brought with me, and the good word of the captain soon got me a place with a farmer at Natal. Didn't I work, and didn't I save? Because I worked so well, put my whole soul into it, I soon became a favorite with the master, who used to ask me to spend an evening now and then at his house. His family was a large one, four sons and seven daughters, but Mary was the flower of the flock. I soon fell over head and ears in love with her, so here was another motive to save and get on. Of course I didn't say a word about my love, but kept my place, was silent, and determined to gain a position and win her. If you mean to do anything, keep it to yourself, and don't blab it on the house-tops.

For four years, with some help from my master, who always encouraged me, I was able to take a plantation next to his. So we became neighbors and friends. I wanted another year, and saw that everything was going on well, and then I spoke to Mary. She was willing, and so were they all, and, on the anniversary of the fifth year of my landing at Natal, I married Mary Bevan, and commenced house-keeping on my own account. She proved

a real blessing and a true help. Everything we undertook prospered. Why, she could do everything—from fine sewing to milking cows. Brothers and sisters were also kind, helpful, and we were as one family, working for one end—the happiness and prosperity of all. In another year, just before our first lad was born, I was able to buy the plantation, and so became my own landlord.

The sight of Mary's brothers often made me think of poor Bill. Father and mother had died while I was in the reformatory, but I could learn nothing of the lad whom I left in the streets. I told Mary all about it, and she, bless her heart! advised me to go to England to seek him out. I am sure she advised it because she saw I wanted to go and find the only relation I knew of the old country. I had now been away ten years, and although not quite thirty, had made a good fortune, married the best of women, had a happy family around me, troops of friends, and brother Bill might perhaps, be starving, or, what would be worse, working in a prison, for crimes which, if left like him, I too might have committed. So, with good wishes from all, with prayers for my success from Mary, I returned to England to find my brother. If he is alive, I know I shall find him; and whether he is good or bad, whether he is married or single, he shall go back with me to Africa, and we will make a new man of him. He is the younger of the two, and not too old to begin life again. I know I shall find him, and then there will, perhaps, be another chapter to add to this true story of a street Arab.

COMBAT IN MID-AIR.

Deadly struggle on a Tight Rope—one Combatant Hurled to the Ground and Instantly Killed.

Little did the tens of thousands of men, women and children who thronged the public-square of Agram, Croatia, on the 15th of August, anticipate that they were about to witness a spectacle such as has, perhaps, never been seen before—a moral struggle in mid-air. The occasion of the gathering was a performance on the tight-rope. The acrobats, Andreas Kolter and Francis Pergowitch, were to appear on the rope, which had been stretched from a window in the fifth story of the Court House, a distance of 250 feet. The acrobats were to meet midway, and then to pass each other.

When the clock struck twelve, the acrobats emerged from their respective windows, dressed in tights and without balance poles. Kolter walked rather cautiously, while Pergowitch came to meet him from the opposite direction, with a nervous, quick step. At last they met, and the suspense of the crowd underneath changed the next moment to a feeling of indescribable horror. Pergowitch suddenly uttered an angry exclamation, and dealt Kolter a terrible blow on the head. Kolter staggered and fell, but in so doing succeeded in clutching the rope with one hand, while with the other he grasp the left leg of his assailant. Pergowitch now fell likewise, but passed his right arm around the rope, so that he hung upon it in comparative security.

And now began a life and death struggle. Kolter, with his right hand, tried to drag Pergowitch from the rope, while Pergowitch kicked Kolter with his right foot, and with his left hand endeavored to loosen his antagonist's hold. No one was able to interfere, and the result, it was easy to foresee, must be the death of one or both acrobats. Many women fainted, while men wept like children. What added to the general despair was the appearance of Kolter's young wife at the open window, from which her husband a few moments ago had set out upon his fatal walk. Her piteous screams were heard above the din below, and her appeals to Pergowitch to spare her husband's life would have moved the heart of an Apache. The struggle in mid air lasted perhaps a minute, when Kolter suddenly uttered a last cry and lost his hold. He fell to the ground, striking it violently and expiring instantly. While the people gathered round the corpse of poor Kolter, his murderer on the tight rope managed to get on his feet again. With a diabolical expression on his face he uttered a yell of triumph.

The prefect of Police ordered Pergowitch to surrender. In case he should not do so within five minutes he would be shot down like a dog. Finally he raised himself to his feet and ran quickly to the court house window, where he surrendered, begging that he might be protected from violence. There was great danger of his being executed by the people, who loudly clamored that the murderer be given up to them; but the military by a bayonet charge cleared the public square. Pergowitch being asked what caused him to perpetrate this crime, said that there had been a grudge between him and Kolter ever since the latter had married young Rosita Serganoff, a Polish girl of rare beauty. Kolter, in a fit of jealousy, had told him he knew one of the other must die on this account. Andreas Kolter was the youngest member of the distinguished family of acrobats of that name.

This labor troubles in Charleston, S. C., have not been quieted, but the strikers are not succeeding. The Baltimore Sun gives notice that Maryland will spend no more money on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, and Congress will be asked for a subsidy.

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