

## **Werk**

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the canal, so as to make a passage of some miles broad from ocean to ocean, and made an island of South America. Several sail of trading vessels and men of war sailed through this new channel to the South Seas, China, &c. and saluted me with all their cannon as they passed.

I looked through my telescope at the moon, and perceived the philosophers there in great commotion : they could plainly discern the alteration on the surface of our globe, and thought themselves somehow interested in the enterprise of their fellow mortals in a neighbouring planet. They seemed to think it admirable, that such little beings as we men should attempt so magnificent a performance, that would be observable even in a separate world.

Thus having wedded the Atlantic Ocean to the South Sea, I returned to England, and found Wauwau precisely in the very spot whence she had set out, after having led us a chase all round the world.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

*The Baron goes to Petersburg, and converses with the Empress—Pursuades the Russians and Turks, to cease cutting one another's throats, and in concert cut a Canal across the Isthmus of Suez—The Baron discovers the Alexandrine Library, and meets with Hermes*

*Trismegistus—Beseiges Seringapatam, and challenges Tippoo Saib to single combat—They fight—The Baron receives some wounds on his face, but at length vanquishes the Tyrant—The Baron returns to Europe and raises the hull of the Royal George.*

SEIZED with a fury of canal cutting, I took it in my head to form an immediate communication between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea; and therefore set out for Petersburg.

The sanguinary ambition of the empress would not listen to my proposals, until I took a private opportunity, taking a cup of coffee with her majesty, to tell her, that I would absolutely sacrifice myself for the good of mankind; and if she would accede to my proposals, would on the completion of the canal, *ipso facto*, give her my hand in marriage!

My dear, dear Baron, said she, I accede to every thing you please; and agree to make peace with the Porte on the condition you mention: And, added she rising with all the majesty of the Czarina Empress of half the world,—be it known to all our subjects, that We ordain these conditions, for such is our royal will and pleasure.

I now proceeded to the Isthmus of Suez, at the head of a million of Russian pioneers,

and there united my forces with a million of Turks, armed with shovels and pick-axes. They did not come to cut each other's throats, but for their mutual interest, to facilitate commerce and civilization, and pour all the wealth of India, by a new channel, into Europe. My brave fellows, said I, consider the immense labour of the Chinese, to build their celebrated wall; think of what superior benefit to mankind is our present undertaking; persevere, and fortune will second your endeavours. Remember it is Munchausen who leads you on, and be convinced of success.

Saying these words, I drove my chariot with all my might in my former track, that vestige mentioned by Baron de Tott; and when I was advanced considerably, I felt my chariot sinking under me. I attempted to drive on, but the ground or rather immense vault, giving way, my chariot and all went down precipitately. Stunned by the fall, I was some moments before I could recollect myself; when at length to my amazement, I perceived myself fallen into the Alexandrine Library, overwhelmed in an ocean of books—thousands of volumes came tumbling on my head amidst the ruins of that part of the vault through which my chariot had de-

scended, and for a time buried my bulls and all beneath a heap of learning. However, I contrived to extricate myself, and advanced with awful admiration through the vast avenues of the library. I perceived on every side innumerable volumes and repositories of ancient learning, and all the science of the Antediluvian world. Here I met with Hermes Trismegistus, and a parcel of old philosophers debating upon the politics and learning of their days. I gave them inexpressible delight, in telling them, in a few words, all the discoveries of Newton, and a history of the world since their time. These gentry on the contrary told me a thousand stories of antiquity that some of our antiquarians would have given their very eyes to hear.

In short, I ordered the library to be preserved, and I intend making a present of it, as soon as it arrives in England to the Royal Society, together with Hermes Trismegistus, and half a dozen of old philosophers. I have got a beautiful cage made, in which I keep these extraordinary creatures, and feed them with bread and honey, as they seem to believe in a kind of doctrine and transmigration, and will not touch flesh. Hermes Trismegistus especially is a most antique-looking

being, with a beard half a yard long, covered with a robe of golden embroidery, and prates like a parrot. He will cut a very brilliant figure in the museum.

Having made a track with my chariot from sea to sea, I ordered my Turks and Russians to begin; and in a few hours I had the pleasure of seeing a fleet of British East Indiamen in full sail through the canal. The officers of this fleet was very polite, and paid me every applause and congratulation my exploits could merit. They told me of their affairs in India, and the ferocity of that dreadful warrior Tippo Saib; on which I resolved to go to India and encounter the tyrant. I travelled down the Red Sea to Madras, and at the head of a few Sepoys and Europeans pursued the flying army of Tip-poo to the gates of Seringopatam. I challenged him to mortal combat; and mounted on my steed rode up to the walls of the fortress amidst a storm of shells and cannon balls. As fast as the bombs and cannon balls came upon me, I caught them in my hands like so many pebbles, and, throwing them against the fortress, demolished the strongest ramparts of the place. I took my mark so direct that whenever I aimed a cannon ball or a shell at any person on the ramparts, I was sure to hit

him : and one time perceiving a tremendous piece of artillery pointed against me, and knowing the ball must be so great it would certainly stun me, I took a small cannon ball, and just as I perceived the engineer going to order them to fire, and opening his mouth to give the word of command, I took aim and drove my ball precisely down his throat.

Tippoo fearing that all would be lost, that a general and successful storm would ensue if I continued to batter the place, came forth on his elephant to fight me—I saluted him, and insisted he should fire first.

Tippoo, though a barbarian, was not deficient in politeness, and declined the compliment : upon which I took off my hat, and bowing, told him it was an advantage Munchausen should never be said to accept from so gallant a warrior ; on which Tippoo instantly discharged his carbine, the ball from which hitting my horse's ear, made him plunge with rage and indignation. In return, I discharged my pistol at Tippoo, and shot off his turban. He had a small field-piece mounted with him on his elephant, which he then discharged at me, and the grape shot coming in a shower, rattled in the laurels that covered and shaded me all over, and remained pendant like berries on the

branches. I then advancing, took the proboscis of his elephant, and turning it against the rider, struck him repeatedly with the extremity of it on either side of the head, until I at length dismounted him. Nothing could equal the rage of the barbarian finding himself thrown from his elephant. He rose in a fit of despair, and rushed against my steed and myself: but I scorned to fight him at so great a disadvantage on his side, and directly dismounted to fight him hand to hand. Never did I fight with any man who bore himself more nobly than this adversary; he parried my blows, and dealt home his own in return with astonishing precision. The first blow of his sabre I received upon the bridge of my nose: and, but for the bony firmness of that part of my face, it would have descended to my mouth. I still bear the mark upon my nose.

He next made a furious blow at my head, but I parrying, deadened the force of his sabre, so that I received but one scar upon my forehead; and at the same instant, by a blow of my sword, cut off his arm, and his hand and sabre fell to the earth: he tottered for some paces, and dropped at the foot of his elephant. That sagacious animal, seeing the danger of his master, endeavoured to protect him by

flourishing his proboscis around the head of the Sultan.

Fearless I advanced against the elephant, desirous to take alive the haughty Tippoo Saib ; but he drew a pistol, and discharged it full in my face as I rushed upon him, which did me no further harm than wound my cheek-bone, which disfigures me somewhat under my left eye. I could not withstand the rage and impulse of that moment, and with one blow of my sword separated his head from his body.

I returned over land from India to Europe with admirable velocity : so that the account of Tippoo's defeat by me has not as yet arrived by the ordinary passage, nor can you expect to hear of it for a considerable time. I simply relate the encounter as it happened between the Sultan and me : and if there be any one who doubts the truth of what I say he is an infidel, and I will fight him at any time and place, and with any weapon he pleases.

Hearing so many persons talk about raising the Royal George, I began to take pity on that fine old ruin of British plank, and determined to have her up. I was sensible of the failure of the various means hitherto employed for the purpose,

and therefore inclined to try a method different from any before attempted. I got an immense balloon, made of the toughest sail-cloth; and, having descended in my diving-bell, and properly secured the hull with enormous cables, I ascended to the surface, and fastened my cables to the balloon. Prodigious multitudes were assembled to behold the elevation of the Royal George; and as soon as I began to fill my balloon with inflammable air, the vessel evidently began to move: but when my balloon was completely filled, she carried up the Royal George with the greatest rapidity. The vessel appearing on the surface occasioned an universal shout of triumph from the millions assembled on the occasion. Still the balloon continued ascending, trailing the hull after her like a lantern at the tail of a kite, and in a few minutes appeared floating among the clouds.

It was then the opinion of many philosophers that it would be more difficult to get her down than it had been to draw her up. But I convinced them to the contrary, by taking my aim so exactly with a 12-pounder, that I brought her down in an instant.

I considered, that if I should break the balloon with a cannon-ball while she re-

mained with the vessel over the land, the fall would inevitably occasion the destruction of the hull; and which, in its fall, might crush some of the multitude: therefore I thought it safer to take my aim when the balloon was over the sea, and, pointing my 12-pounder, drove the ball right through the balloon: on which the inflammable air rushed out with great force, and the Royal George descended like a falling star into the very spot from whence she had been taken. There she still remains; and I have convinced all Europe of the possibility of taking her up.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*The Baron makes a speech to the National Assembly, and drives out all the members—Routs the fish-women and the National Guards—Pursues the whole rout into a church, where he defeats the National Assembly, &c. with Rousseau, Voltaire and Belzebub at their head, and liberates Marie Antoinette and the Royal Family.*

PASSING through Switzerland, on my return from India, I was informed that several of the German nobility had been deprived of the honours and immunities of their French estates. I heard of the sufferings of the amiable Marie Antoinette, and swore to avenge every look that had threatened her with insult. I went to the

cavern of these Anthropophagi, assembled to debate, and gracefully putting the hilt of my sword to my lips, I swear, cried I, by the sacred cross of my sword, that if you do not instantly reinstate your king and his nobility, and your injured queen, I will cut the one half of you to pieces.

On which the President, taking up a leaden inkstand, flung it at my head. I stooped to avoid the blow, and rushing to the tribunal, seized the Speaker, who was ulminating against the Aristocrats: and taking the creature by one leg, flung him at the President. I laid about me most nobly, drove them all out of the house, and locking the doors, put the key in my pocket.

I then went to the poor king, and making my obeisance to him—Sire, said I, your enemies have all fled; I alone am the National Assembly at present, and I shall register your edicts to recall the prince and the nobility; and in future, if your Majesty pleases, I will be your parliament and Council. He thanked me, and the amiable Marie Antoinette smiling gave me her hand to kiss.

At that moment I perceived a party of the National Assembly, who had rallied with the National Guards, and a vast procession of fish-women, advancing against me. I deposited their majesties in a place

of safety, and with my drawn sword advanced against my foes. Three hundred fish-women, with bushes dressed with ribbons in their hands, came hallowing and roaring against me like so many furies. I scorned to defile my sword with their blood, but seized the first that came up, and making her kneel down, knighted her with my sword which so terrified the rest, that they all set up a frightful yell, and ran away as fast as they could for fear of being aristocrated by knighthood.

As to the National Guards, and the rest of the Assembly, I soon put them to flight: and having made prisoners of some of them, compelled them to take down their national, and put the old royal cockade in its place.

I then pursued the enemy to the top of a hill, where a most noble edifice dazzled my sight: noble and sacred it was, but now converted to the vilest purposes, their monument de grands hommes, a Christian church that these Saracens had perverted into abomination. I burst open the doors, and entered sword in hand. Here I observed all the National Assembly marching round a great altar erected to Voltaire; there was his statue in triumph, and the fish-women with garlands decking it, and singing *Ca Ira!* I could

bear the sight no longer; but rushed up on these pagans, and sacrificed them by dozens on the spot. The members of the assembly, and the fish-women, continued to invoke their great Voltaire, and all their masters in this monument de grands hommes, imploring them to come down and succour them against the Aristocrats and the sword of Munchausen. Their cries were horrible, like the shrieks of witches and enchanters versed in magic and the black art; while the thunder growled, and storms shook the battlements, and Rousseau, Voltaire, and Belzebub appeared, three horrible spectres: one all meagre, mere skin and bone, and cadaverous, seemed death, that hideous skeleton: it was Voltaire, and in his hands were a lyre and a dagger.—On the other side was Rousseau, with a chalice of sweet poison in his hand; and between them was their father Belzebub!

I shuddered at the sight; and with all the enthusiasm of rage, horror, and piety, rushed in among them. I seized that cursed skeleton Voltaire, and soon compelled him to renounce all the errors he had advanced? and while he spoke the words, as if by magic charm, the whole assembly shrieked, and their pandemo-

nium began to tumble in hideous ruin on their head.

I returned in triumph to the palace, where the Queen rushed into my arms, weeping tenderly. Ah, thou flower of nobility, cried she, were all the nobles of France like thee, we should never have been brought to this!

I bade the lovely creature dry her eyes, and with the King and Dauphin ascend my carriage, and drive post to Mont-Medi, as not an instant was to be lost. They took my advice and drove away. I conveyed them within a few miles of Mont-Medi, when the King thanking me for my assistance, hoped I would not trouble myself any farther, as he was then, he presumed, out of danger: and the Queen also, with tears in her eyes, thanked me on her knees, and presented the Dauphin for my blessing. In short, I left the king eating a mutton-chop. I advised him not to delay, or he would certainly be taken; and setting spurs to my horse, wished them a good evening, and returned to England. If the King remained too long at table, and was taken, it was not my fault.—

THE END.

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