

white breasts gleaming upon the dark wave. It was a proud moment for Joe as he slowly paddled back to our anchorage with our fowl beside him, for the geese were plump after a winter in the marshy paradise of the South.

Another hour slowly passed. No sign, no sound of game came out of the darkness. Down behind the veil of curtaining mist the canoe-shaped moon foundering slowly sank from sight. The solemn stars seemed to gaze far into the silent depths. The night wind came moaning over the waters, and as if some unseen presence was gathering her trailing garments, the obscuring fog rolled away.

Another large flock came sailing into view far beyond range, seemingly very near the over-arching blue. They looked no larger than English sparrows. We could only lie back and gaze longingly upon their retreating forms as the great wedge swept in over the mainland. Flock succeeded flock in quick succession. We could hear them settle noisily upon the flats, until we knew that hundreds of fowl were feeding upon the great sand bar.

The noise of their incoming was followed by an almost oppressive calm that was unbroken save when at long intervals the sharp challenge of a sentry rang out. Alert-pickets seem to be always on duty when the main body of geese are feeding.

A sudden flash, followed by a loud

report, told that hunters far up in the North Channel had poured a volley into an incoming flock. The air was filled with a clamor of wild sounds. Hundreds of geese took wing, and a panic seemed to banish all military régime. Up and down the bay, and over the sand dunes, disorganized bunches of fowl flew wildly to and fro like an army surprised at night, retreating in disorder.

We lay silent, watchful, ready, A sudden hiss of swift wings, a shadow athwart the stars, a flash—bang! and down fell two dusky forms, striking thud, thud, far away on the soft sand. Joe, with many expressions of delight, paddled into the shoal water, grounded the tiny craft, and hastened in search of the fallen game. He soon returned with two fine birds, and with a triumphant flourish laid them beside the others.

We slowly returned to our anchorage and waited satisfied, yet loth to leave without one more rally. It was now almost midnight. The tide came rushing in over the bars, covering them with deepening water. In silence we lifted our anchor and turned our skiff homeward,

Shoreward, with slow-dipping oars, we rowed with all the strange fascination of midnight beauty entreating us to linger, but we knew that when the tide rushed over the flats our sport for that night was ended, and in the quiet coves of Mira River the geese were safe from the loud-voiced breechloader.

A RACE WITH THE RIVER.

BY L. CAREW SHIRLEY.

“**B**USHA compliments, an please ef Cap'n wi ride ober to de Estate an kep him comp'ny dis arternoon; he feel kine a lonesome.”

I was lounging in a grass hammock, swung between two mango trees, switching predatory ticks off my trousers with a branch of pimento and trying to keep cool, when Bogle's black face and brimless hat came within my line of vision.

“All right, Bogle, much obliged to the Busha, I'm with him,” I answered, tumbling out of the hammock with alacrity. “What are the means of locomotion?”

“Sah?” (With a gaping stare.)

“How am I to go, on horseback or in buggy?”

“Oh! beg Cap'n pardon; I did'n jest onderstan; Busha tell me fe bring ober 'Sotis (Myosotis), sah, an say he 'vise you fe ride fast; de clouds is gedderin fe rain, and he tink mos likely you wi hab fe mek speed. I b'lieve him is right dis time too,” added the negro *sotto voce*, as he glanced keenly skyward, and then toward the sea, where a bank of innocent, fleecy-looking white clouds were rising. “Sotis kibbers (covers) de ground well, Cap'n, dat de reason mek Busha sen him, sah.”

“Why, the Busha must be trying to get up a scare. I'll drink all the rain he'll manufacture to-day,” I said laughing. “I wish a good smart shower

would come up though, and clear the air; it is hotter than Tophet round Port Antonia to-day."

"Guess Cap'n wi hab him wish dis time," grinned Bogle, "but I hope him wont feel 'blige fe drink all de rain dat g'wine come to-day. 'Merica man is bery smart fe true; but cep'n Massa God mek dem stomick little different fash'n from what I'se custom to set, de chance is like de water wi drink him."

"Oh come now, you impudent rascal," said I, "even if the rain *is* threatening, we've plenty of time to ride eight miles before it reaches us."

"Dunno, sah, rain mek up him mind berry quick roun dis way. Look ober dere Cap'n, John Crow hab on him cap."

I turned in the direction indicated, and true enough the summit of the big green hill was wreathed in a light gray mist. "Does that mean rain?" I asked.

"Guess so, sah; ef Cap'n don mind, I tink we better mek a start; carn tell fe sartin, ef it fallin hebby ober de mount'n, but better not trust sah, de ribber is de debbel when it come down. Busha charge me fe tell you to mek speed," added the negro, with a trace of anxiety in his voice.

"All right, Bogle, you bring round 'Sotis, while I pitch a few things into my grip, and we'll be off," I said, not wishing to worry the faithful fellow.

But while stowing away a few clean collars in my bag, I was mentally wondering what could have struck the Busha to send over Myosotis for me. He must have needed my society very badly indeed to concede so much for the pleasure. Myosotis was a Demerara mare with a long racing pedigree that dated, the Busha declared, back to the Godolphin Arabian.

She was to be entered in December to run for the Kingston three-year-old Stakes, and the Busha was as fidgety as a woman over her, never allowing any one but the little darkey who exercised her to cross the mare's patrician back. She was certainly deserving of his care, and as perfect a bit of horseflesh as ever gladdened the eye of a turfite; a blood bay, standing fifteen hands, with a skin like satin under which the muscles stood out like whipcord. A small, lean head, with large, intelligent eyes and delicate ears, nervously pricked forward, deep chest, slightly hollow back, wide haunches, handsome legs and round black pol-

ished hoofs set into fetlocks as slender as the wrists of a lady. The mare was a thing of beauty, and as I threw myself across her, I blessed the reasons which had resulted so felicitously for me.

Bogle was mounted on a tall, raw-boned black horse, which looked as if he might once have belonged to a good stock; but he had a vicious eye, and heels which I, felt convinced, would lash out on small provocation, so I gave him a wide berth.

"Dis Rosinante don look handsome like 'Sotis, Cap'n," said Bogle, noticing my slightly supercilious glance in his direction, "but I'se no 'fraid to follow you, sah. 'Sotis is a slap up mare fe true, wid a clean pedigree, but dis horse hab berry good breed'n, too, when you trace him blood, an I tell you, Cap'n, when it come down to *rale business*, him is good as de Buster any day." The Buster was his gun.

"That's high praise," I remarked. "And how is the Buster now-a-days, Bogle?"

"She tekin a res now, sah. Ebber sence we come down from John Crow, she hang fire, so I put her 'pon low diet. It don do fe to praise dat gun to she face, it mek her berry carcnetted; I ond'stan de critter, an when she act ignorant, I jes larn her manners. Ober in 'Shantee Country where she come from, de people is berry ignorant, I b'lieve, and de Buster she ketch on to dem low ways. She always come roun after I mek her hab a taste ob salt'ry confinement, sah; she hab sense 'nough, dat gun hab."

As we rode off, the Demerara mare took the lead, in a serious of graceful plunges and arrowy dashes from side to side, which would have been trying to an amateur horseman; but six months recent practice among the cow-boys on the Mexican plains had pretty well injured me to rough riding, and I kept a steady seat. I noticed that Bogle's eye was on me as usual, and have no doubt that he was proportionately impressed with this new demonstration of American brilliancy.

At the negro's suggestion we had taken the mountain road. This cut off two miles and would bring us out into the valley of the Rio Grande, along the narrow banks of which we would ride the remaining six miles, and cross to the Busha's Estate at the lower ford. The Rio Grande, I will explain, is the second

river of size in Jamaica, and one of the swiftest of those erratic streams that ripple and murmur within narrow limits one day, and the next, angry and swollen by rain-fed streams from the surrounding mountains, sweep down in terrific torrents, flooding the entire valley. When the river is low there are fordings where people pass and repass in perfect safety, but the erosion of the banks shows that not infrequently the wide, stony bed must be filled with a flood several fathoms deep, where ships might ride, if capable of standing against so powerful a current.

The rivers in Jamaica rise, or in native parlance, "come down," with fearful rapidity, and it is not unusual for travelers (when not washed away) to be detained for days, between two torrents on a strip of country which offers small means of shelter, and where lodging-houses are an unknown quantity.

I had noticed for some time that Bogle appeared to feel himself in a way responsible for my entertainment, and was putting forth efforts at conversation.

I must explain that before leaving the house he had modestly and confidently requested a "shot of grog," and on receiving it had declined my well-meant efforts at dilution, assuring me that he always took his liquor solid, to the truth of which I am able to testify, as before my admiring eyes he swallowed down two-thirds of a tumbler of raw Appleton rum, and before I could interfere, by removing the decanter, had repeated the dose, remarking in a general way that he had a leaning to Appleton rum. The potency of the drink was not long in making itself evident, and we had neither ridden fast nor far when Bogle waxed loquacious. The string of his tongue was loosed and if he did not actually speak plain it was not because he did not wrestle with the Queen's English. He ran the gamut of current topics; discussed the government, politics and religion hilariously; assured me with portentous gravity that I was "de only bockra that he had ever lubbed;" declared with fervid eloquence that Jamaica country would not "howld" him if I went away, and that he was "going to 'Merica island to learn how to ketch sperret. Lawd Gawd," he shouted, "ef I only can larn dat trade I ax nobuddy pardon. I'se de biggest Obiah man in de colony. I tell you, sah,

ef I larn fe ketch duppy I wi mek de debble sweat!"

His eloquence was affecting me so powerfully that I found it difficult to keep my seat; tears were rolling down my cheeks and an agonizing sensation in the region of the belt doubled me up. The mare evidently at a loss to understand my contortions, and impatient at her slow progress, commenced dancing on her hind legs, and plunging indignantly, which had the effect of bringing Bogle to his senses in a measure.

"De Busha mek a fool of dat mare," he growled, testily. "She hab no respect for nobuddy; quiet, you jadel!" he shouted. "I would ha' like fe larn you manners, same way I learn de Buster."

"I say, Bogle, suppose you go and duck your head in the river," I suggested. "I think very likely you have had a sunstroke."

The negro glanced suspiciously at me, but I was gazing innocently down the long perspective of arching forest trees; and sobered sufficiently to take the hint, he meekly did my bidding, returning with dripping wool, and a sheepishly apologetic air.

"Sun is berry hot fe true," he muttered, "an my kull is kine ob delicate; beg pard'n ef I been mekin too free, Cap'n, but de doctor he say, he tink some day I go off by de combustion. Donno jes what dat is 'zactly, but expect' et is de same kine of 'lectric car dat de Prophet 'Lisha mek him tower up a top in—you 'member, Cap'n?"

My biblical reminiscences were unfortunately of the vaguest, but seeing that Bogle depended on me for corroboration, I nodded gravely.

"I know Cap'n would ha 'member," he grinned triumphantly. "I always gerry (hear) dat 'Merica man was de debble fe de road; you bet now de Prophet had dat coach mek in New York City!"

I thought the time for freezing Bogle's eloquence had arrived, so regarding him severely, I gave him to understand that he had said enough. Whereupon he in turn regarded me with something so nearly approaching a leer that I was fain to retire within myself and meditate for the space of a minute. Then concluding that in some cases discretion may be the better part, I gave the mare her head and left him in the rear.

The sun had now clouded over, and

as we rode up the hillside, the air beneath the heavily-foliaged trees felt hot and oppressive. The ominous croak of tree toads sounded hoarsely through the silence, and flocks of swifts, sure heralds of a storm, went circling across the sky.

Now and again a moaning wind rushed through the forest and died away suddenly, leaving a threatening calm behind. Down towards the sea, where the fleecy white clouds had been, a bank of thunderous vapor was sailing towards the zenith, rapidly darkening the face of the sky. I could see that Bogle (now himself again) was keeping his weather eye open, but he vouchsafed no information, and waxed decidedly laconic when I tried to sound him.

"Think we're in for it, Bogle?" I interrogated.

"Dunno, sah."

"Looks as if we might expect a small deluge, eh?"

"Pity we don't hab a young ark, sah, it mebbe come in handy by'm bye."

"Oh! I say now, you are not going to scare up a tornado for my special benefit, are you?"

"H'm, 'member Cap'n is willin' fe drink all de rain dat g'win fall to-day." And here the fellow chuckled audibly.

We rode at a smart trot through the wood, and came out into the valley where the shallow waters of the Rio brawled noisily between its deep, rocky banks.

"Harmless little stream," I muttered *sotto voce*, but Bogle's ears were now preternaturally acute and he heard me.

"Berry harmless, Cap'n," he answered meekly. "Hope Cap'n won't nebbber hab reason to change him 'pinion, Push 'long! Push 'long, sah!" he added with a sudden change of tone, and digging his heels into the ribs of his Rosinante, broke into a sharp gallop.

We had covered four miles of the road when the near growl of thunder and smart patter of rain on the leaves above gave notice of coming revelations. We were still riding beneath a leafy canopy, for large forest trees bordered the river on either side. Bogle had been growing more and more taciturn, and the weird silence was becoming monotonous, when in the midst of our sharp gallop he drew rein so suddenly that the black horse was thrown on his haunches.

"What's the matter?" I sung out, pulling up short also, to the disgust of

the Demerara mare, who reared and pawed the air impatiently. A sibilant "S-h-h-h!" from the man checked me, and as I glanced around I saw that he was sitting as if carved in stone, his head turned toward the mountain.

His attitude was so strained that I saw directly something not included in the programme was forthcoming. "What's up?" I asked quietly, riding alongside.

The man turned his head, and I saw that his face was the color of ashes.

"Lawd Gawd!" he whispered. "I b'lieve de—Look out! Look out, sah!" he yelled, as the face of the black sky was rent by a sheet of fire, and with the crash of a thousand cannon the hurricane burst upon us. The rain as it hissed by lashed us like whips.

"Ride, Cap'n! Ride fo' you' life! De ribber comin down behind we, and de hurricane gwine trabel wid we; gib de mare her hed and ride." As he spoke a flash and crashing roar half stunned me, and right across the road a stalwart red-cedar fell, shivered to splinters by the force of the lightning.

The mare reared furiously, mad with terror, then gathering herself together, rose like a bird in the air, cleared the fallen giant at one bound and dashed like a thunderbolt along the level valley, as the hurricane bore down in its full fury, wrenching and twisting the huge gnarled branches of the trees and whirling them through the air. Then the volleying boom of giant trees, uprooted from their rocky foundations, sounded above the shriek of the wind.

But underlying all the fierce minstrelsy of the storm, with one deep throbbing chord sounded the roar of the river as it tore its way down the mountains, gathering impetus with every mile and carrying death and destruction with it.

"Ride, Cap'n, ride!" shouted Bogle as he thundered in the rear. "Gib de mare her hed, and race de ribber."

The advice was not needed. The mare's blood was up and nothing short of sudden death would have stopped her. With each deafening crash I could feel her bound beneath me, as if set in steel springs.

What a ride that was! The remembrance of it comes back over me while I write, and stirs my pulses like a draught of strong wine. We had covered six miles of the ground, and the fording

lay two miles below. But one short mile in the rear raced a solid wall of water a hundred feet high, with the trophies of twenty-five miles of devastated country. The hollow, vibrant roar shook the earth and filled the air with a sound indescribably awful, conveying, as nothing else could have done, the idea of blind elemental force. One mile in advance we rode, but the river was gaining, and that mighty booming roar seemed to throb with triumphant joy. I glanced behind, and the memory of that sight will last my lifetime. Within a hundred feet of the mare rose a lofty wall of yellow water, cradling and tossing upon its furious bosom the debris of both wild and cultivated country, great trees and boulders, negro huts and bullock carts, dead bodies and live fish that still strug-

gled and leaped high in the air. It gave me a delirium of terror, and with a yell I lashed the mare forward.

"Don' tek de ford too short, and howld 'Sotis well togedder," roared Bogle; but a long line of glorious ancestry was telling in the mare, and she left me little to do. We gained the ford and dashed into the bed of the river, just as Bogle with a wild war whoop bore down upon his gallant Rosinante. The shallow water flew from beneath the flying hoofs, and we had barely gained the opposite bank when that terrible wall swept down, flooding the land on either side. In one moment the water rose to our saddle girths, but we were safe, and, half swimming, half wading, amid the crashing thunder and driving rain, I went on my visit to the Busha.

A GYPSY RIVER SONG.

BY CHARLES GORDON ROGERS.



N O daughter of the world am I,
Where stunted freedom shivers.
But I was born beneath a sky
That arches sunny rivers;
Whose children, laughing ripples, run
To see who first shall kiss the sun.

My canvas is the blue, that spills
Dew-fragrance o'er my bowers;
My pegs are cast on distant hills,
And they are fresh wild flowers.
My lamps are stars, all hung about
Till Dawn, Sun's daughter, puts them out.

My cheeks are kissed by perfumed winds,
Whose breath is sweet and fragrant;
For, with a gypsy heart, my mind's
Inclined to lovers vagrant.
But lovers with strong limbs, and eyes
As clear and blue as summer skies.

But if a lover come my way,
True-hearted, brave and human,
He'll find, though Nature holdeth sway,
I've still the heart of woman;
And love as steady as the sky
Or this clear river running by.

