

London : Yorkshire J.S. Publishing and Stationery Co. Limited.

Agents—Dean and Son, Ludgate Hill.



BARON MÜNCHAUSEN.

BARON MUNCHAUSEN.



IN the castle of Airreblast, near the town of Laybach, in Carniola, lived the famous Baron Munchausen, a nobleman whose hospitality was equal to his great riches. Though a man of great accomplishments and extensive learning, he was distinguished for the sober modesty and reserve of his manners, which led him to shun all ostentatious or unnecessary display. However, after cleaning and adjusting his spectacles (a habit of the old gentleman's when about to speak for any length of time) the Baron began as follows:—

Some years before my beard announced approaching manhood, or, in other words, when I was neither man nor boy, but between both, I expressed, in repeated conversations, a strong desire of seeing the world, from which I was discouraged by my parents, though my father had been no inconsiderable traveller himself, as will appear before I have reached the end of my singular, and, I may add, interesting adventures.

We sailed from Amsterdam on a voyage to the island of Ceylon, with despatches from their High Mightinesses the States of Holland. The only circumstance which happened on our voyage worth relating was the wonderful effects of a storm, which had torn up by the roots a great number of trees of enormous bulk and height in an island where we lay at anchor to take in wood and water; some of these trees weighed many tons, yet they were carried by the wind so amazingly high, that they appeared like the feathers of small birds floating in the air, for they were at least five miles above the earth: however, as soon as the storm subsided, they all fell perpendicularly into their respective places, and took root again, except the largest, which happened, when it was blown

into the air, to have a man and his wife, a very honest old couple, upon its branches gathering cucumbers (in this part of the globe that useful vegetable grows upon trees;) the weight of this couple, as the tree descended, overbalanced the trunk, and brought it down in a horizontal position; it fell upon the chief man of the island, and killed him on the spot; he had quitted his house in the storm, under an apprehension



of its falling upon him, and was returning through his own garden when this fortunate accident happened.—The word fortunate here requires some explanation.—The chief was a man of a very avaricious and oppressive disposition, and

though he had no family, the natives of the island were half-starved by his oppressive and infamous impositions.

In about six weeks we arrived at Ceylon, where we were received with great marks of friendship and true politeness. The following singular adventure may not prove unentertaining.

After we had resided at Ceylon about a fortnight, I accompanied one of the governor's brothers upon a shooting party. In our excursion he made a considerable progress through a thick wood when I was only at the entrance.

Near the banks of a large piece of water, which had engaged my attention, I thought I heard a rustling noise behind; on turning about I was almost petrified (as who would not?) at the sight of a lion, which was evidently approaching with an intention of satisfying his appetite with my poor carcass, and that without asking my consent. My piece was only charged with swan-shot, and I had no other about me: however, I immediately let fly, without waiting till he was within reach; and the report did nothing but enrage him, for he now quickened his pace, and seemed to approach me at full speed; I attempted to escape, but that only added (if an addition could be made) to my distress; for the moment I turned about I

found a large crocodile, with his mouth extended almost ready to receive me; I gave myself up as lost, for the lion was now on his hind-legs, just in the act of seizing me; I fell involuntarily to the ground with fear, and, as it afterwards appeared, he sprang over me. After waiting in this prostrate situation a few seconds, I heard a violent but unusual noise, different from any sound that had ever before assailed my ears. After listening for some time, I ventured to raise my head and look round, when, to my unspeakable joy, I perceived the lion had, by the eagerness with which he sprang at me, jumped forward as I fell, into the crocodile's mouth; the head of the one stuck in the throat of the other! and they were struggling to extricate themselves. I fortunately recollected my *couteau de chasse*, which was by my side; with this instrument I severed the lion's head at one blow, and the body fell at my feet! I then with the butt-end of my fowling-piece, rammed the head farther into the throat of the crocodile, and destroyed him by suffocation, for he could neither gorge nor eject it.

Soon after I had thus gained a complete victory over my two powerful adversaries, my companion arrived in search of me. After mutual congratulations, we measured the crocodile, which was just forty feet in length.

The lion's skin was properly preserved, with its hair on; after which it was made into tobacco-pouches, and presented by me upon our arrival in Holland to the burgomasters, who in return requested my acceptance of a thousand ducats.

The skin of the crocodile was stuffed in the usual manner, and makes a most capital article in the public museum at Amsterdam, where the exhibitor relates the whole story to each spectator, with such additions as he thinks proper. Some of his variations are rather extravagant! One of them is, that the lion jumped quite through the crocodile, and was making his escape at the back door, when, as soon as his head appeared, Monsieur the Great Baron (as he is pleased to call me) cut it off, and three feet of the crocodile's tail along with it; nay, so little attention has this fellow to the truth, that he sometimes adds,—As soon as the crocodile missed his tail, he turned about, snatched the *couteau de chasse* out of Monsieur's hand, and swallowed it with such eagerness, that it pierced his heart and killed him immediately!

One morning I saw through the windows of my bedroom, that a large pond, not far off, was covered with wild ducks. In an instant I took my gun from the corner, ran down stairs, and out of the house, in such a hurry, that I imprudently struck my face against the door-post. Fire flew out of my eyes, but it did not prevent my intention; I soon came within shot, when levelling my piece, I observed to my sorrow, that even the flint had sprung from the cock by the violence of the shock I had just received. There was no time to be lost. I presently remembered the effect it had upon my eyes, therefore opened the pan, levelled my piece against the wild fowls,



and my fist against one of my eyes. A hearty blow drew sparks again; the shot went off, and I killed fifty brace of ducks, twenty widgeons, and three couple of teals.

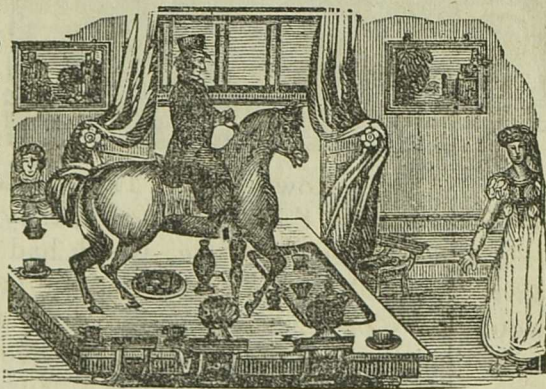
Chance and good luck often correct our

mistakes; of this I had a very singular instance soon after, when, in the depths of the forest, I had once the misfortune to meet a wild boar when unprepared for attack or defence. I retired behind an oak tree, just when the furious animal levelled a side-blow at me with such force, that his tusks pierced through the tree, by which means he could neither repeat the blow nor retire.—Ho! ho! thought I, I shall soon have you now, and immediately I laid hold of a stone, wherewith I hammered and bent his tusks in such a manner that he could not retreat by any means, and must wait my return from the next village, wither I went for ropes and a cart to secure him properly, and to carry him off safe and alive, in which I perfectly succeeded.

Daylight and powder were spent one day in a Polish forest. When I was going home, a terrible bear made up to me in great speed, with open mouth ready to fall upon me: all my pockets were searched in an instant for powder and ball, but in vain. I found nothing but two spare flints; one I flung

at random with all my might into the monster's jaws down his throat. It gave him such pain as to paralyse him on the spot. This enabled me to take aim steadily with the other, which flew in, met the first flint in the stomach, struck fire, and blew up the bear with a terrible explosion. Though I came safe off that time, yet I should not wish to try it again, or venture against bears with no other ammunition.

I always remember with pleasure and tenderness a superb Lithuanian horse, which no money could have bought. He became mine by an accident. I was at Count Przobosky's noble country-seat in Lithuania, and remained with the ladies at tea in the drawing-room. We suddenly heard a noise of distress. I hastened down stairs, and found the horse so unruly, that nobody durst approach or mount him: despondency was expressed in every countenance, when, in one leap, I was on his back, took him by surprise, and worked him quite into gentleness and obedience, with the best display of horsemanship I was master of. Fully to show this to the ladies, and save them unnecessary trouble, I forced him to leap in at one of the open windows of the tea room, walked round several times, pace, trot, and gallop, and at last made him mount the tea-table, there to repeat his lessons, in a pretty style of miniature, which was exceedingly pleasing to the ladies, for he performed them amazingly well, and did not break either cup or saucer. It placed me so high in their opinion, and so well in that of the noble lord, that with his usual politeness he begged I would



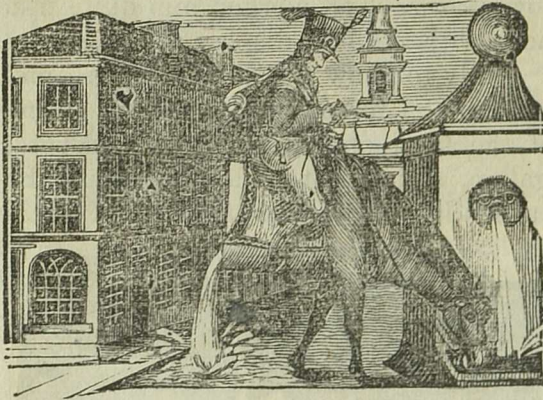
accept of this young horse, and ride him full career to conquest and honour in the campaign against the Turks, which was soon to be opened, under the command of Count Munich.

We took the field, among several other reasons, it seems, with an intention to retrieve the character of the Russian arms, which had been blemished a little by the Czar Peter's last

campaign on the Pruth; and this we fully accomplished by several very fatiguing and glorious campaigns under the command of that great general I mentioned before.

We had very hot work once in the van of the army when we drove the Turks into Oczakow. My spirited Lithuanian had almost brought me into a scrape.

His swiftness enabled me to be foremost in the pursuit; and, seeing the enemy fairly flying through the opposite gate, I thought it would be prudent to stop in the market-place, to order the men to rendezvous. I stopped, but judge of my astonishment, when in this market-place I saw not one of my hussars about me. I walked my panting Lithuanian to a spring in the market-place, and let him drink. He drank uncommonly, with an eagerness not to be satisfied, but natural enough; for when I looked round for my men, what should



I see? the hind part of of the poor creature's croup and legs were missing, as if he had been cut in two, and the water ran out as it came in, without refreshing or doing him any good! How it would have happened was quite a mystery to me, till I returned

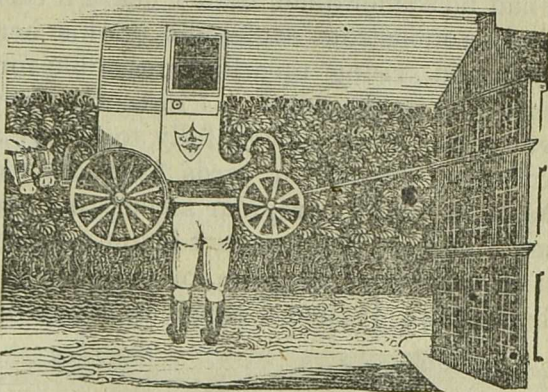
with him to the town-gate. There I saw, that, when rushing in pell-mell with the flying enemy, they had dropped the portcullis,* unperceived by me, which had totally cut of his hind part, that still lay quivering on the outside of the gate. It would have been an irreparable loss, had not our farrier contrived to bring both parts together while hot. He sewed them up with sprigs and young shoots of laurels that were at hand—the wound healed, and, what could not have happened but to so glorious a horse, the sprigs took root in his body, grew up, and formed a bower over me; so that afterwards I could go upon many other expeditions in the shade of my own horse's laurels.

* A heavy falling door, with sharp pikes at the bottom, let down to prevent the entrance of an enemy into a fortified town.

Peace being concluded with the Turks, when I left for St. Petersburg. At my return to this place I felt on the road greater inconveniences than those I had experienced on my setting out.

I travelled post, and finding myself in a narrow lane, bid the postillion give a signal with his horn, that other travellers might not meet us in the narrow passage. He blew with all his might, but his endeavours were in vain, he could not make the horn sound; which was unaccountable, and rather unfortunate, for soon after we found ourselves in the presence of another coach coming the other way. There was no proceeding; however, I got out of my carriage, and being pretty strong, placed it, wheels and all, upon my head; I then

jumped over a hedge about nine feet high (which, considering the weight of the coach, was rather difficult) into a field, and came out again by another jump into the road beyond the other carriage; I then went back for the horses, and placing one upon



my head, and the other under my left arm, by the same means brought them to my coach, put them to and proceeded to an inn at the end of our stage, where my postillion and I refreshed ourselves: he hung his horn on a peg near the kitchen fire; I sat on the other side.

Suddenly we heard a *Tereng! tereng! teng! teng!* We looked round, and now found the reason why the postillion had not been able to sound his horn; his tunes were frozen up in the horn, and came out now by thawing, plain enough, and much to the credit of the driver; so that the honest fellow entertained us for some time with a variety of tunes, without putting his mouth to the horn:—The King of Prussia's March—Over the hill and over the dale—with many other favourite tunes; at length the thawing entertainment concluded, as I shall this short account of my Russian travels

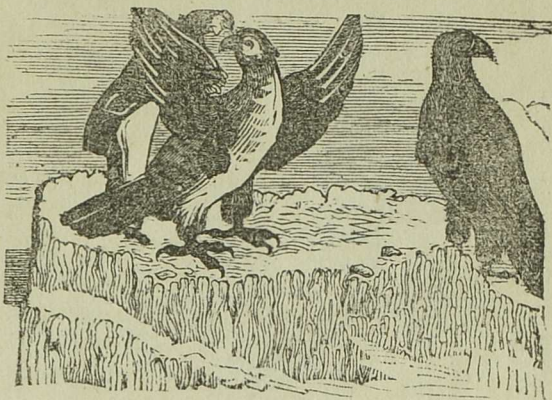
About the beginning of his present Majesty's reign, I had some business with a distant relation who then lived on the Isle of Thanet. I made it a practice during my residence there, the weather being fine to walk out every morning. After a few of these excursions, I observed an object upon a great eminence, about three miles distant; I extended my walk to it, and found the ruins of an ancient temple. Curiosity prompted me to sound a large chasm in order to ascertain its depth, as I entertained a suspicion that it might probably communicate with some unexplored subterranean cavern in the hill, but, having no line, I was at a loss how to proceed. After revolving the matter in my thoughts for some time, I resolved to drop a stone down, and listen to the echo; which I had no sooner done, than I heard a rustling below, and suddenly a monstrous eagle put up his head right opposite my face, and, rising up with irresistible force, carried me away seated on its shoulders. I instantly grasped it round the neck, which was large enough fully to fill my arms, its wings, when extended, being ten yards from one extremity to the other. As it rose with a regular ascent, my seat was perfectly easy, and I enjoyed the prospect below with inexpressible pleasure. It hovered over Margate for some time, and many shots were fired at it. It then directed its course to Dover cliff, where it



alighted, and I thought of dismounting, but was prevented by a sudden discharge of musketry from a party of marines that were exercising on the beach; the balls flew about my head, and rattled on the feathers of the eagle like hailstones;

yet I could not perceive it had received any injury. We again took our flight, which gave me an opportunity of seeing Gibraltar Rock—the Peak of Teneriffe, and many other places. At last we reached the great continent of America, and descended upon a very high mountain on Terra Firma;

and to my surprise another eagle of the same species joined us: it surveyed me with evident marks of displeasure, and came very near me. After gathering a good supply of food, I again took my seat, we arose majestically, directing our course northward, we crossed the gulf of Mexico, entered North America, and steered directly for the polar regions. Happily for me, however, I accidentally turned their heads towards



the south-east, and in a few hours I saw the Western Isles, and soon had the inexpressible pleasure of again seeing old England. After many hair breadth escapes, and seeing both the wonders of the Heavens—the Sea—and the Earth, I again safely reached my friends at home, to whom I related these adventures. Amazement stood on every countenance; their congratulations on my returning in safety were repeated with an unaffected degree of pleasure, and we passed the evening, as we are doing now, every person paying the highest compliments to my courage and veracity.

THE END.

WEBB, MILLINGTON, & Co.'s
PENNY

Pictorial Library.

1. Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.
2. Gulliver's Travels.
3. Little Jack and the Goat.
4. Children in the Wood.
5. Robin Hood and Little John.
6. Baron Munchausen.
7. Abon Hassan.
8. Goody Two Shoes.
9. Jack and the Bean Stalk.
10. Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor.
11. Life of Lord Nelson.
12. Anecdotes of Dogs.
13. Evening Diversions.

OTLEY :

Yorkshire J. S. Publishing and Stationery
Company Limited.

London Agents—DEAN & SON, Ludgate Hill.