

them in the night-time ; for I did not know, you see, in what case we might find our *weasands* in the morning. But Bill had no fears of any kind, and was, beside, desirous to spend one last night with the gipsies ; and so he staid. The party had taken up their quarters in a waste house on the moor, with no other human dwelling within four miles of it. There was a low, stunted wood on the one side, master, and a rough, sweeping stream on the other. The night, too, was wild and boisterous ; and, what between suspicion and discomfort, I felt well-nigh as drearily as I did when lying among the dead men in Egypt. We were nobly treated, however, and the whiskey flowed like water. But we drank no more than was good for us. Indeed, Bill was never a great drinker ; and I kept on my guard, and refused the liquor on the plea of a bad head. I should have told you that there were but three of the Curlits — all of them raw-boned fellows, however, and all of them of such stamp that the three have since been hung. I saw they were sounding Bill ; but he seemed aware of them.

“ ‘Aye, aye,’ says he, ‘I have made something by my voyaging, lads, though, mayhap, not a great deal. What think you of that there now, for instance ?’ — drawing, as he spoke, a silver-mounted pistol out of each pocket. ‘These are pretty pops, and as good as they are pretty. The worst of them sends a bullet through an inch-board at twenty yards.’

“ ‘Are they loaded, Bill ?’ asked Tom Curlit.

“ ‘To be sure,’ said Bill, returning them again each to its own pouch. ‘What is the use of an empty pistol ?’

“ ‘Ah,’ replied Tom, ‘I smell a rat, Bill. You have given over making war on the king’s account, and have taken the road to make war on your own. Bold enough, to be sure.’