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The Last Entry

William Clark Russell



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Violet was Vanderholt's only daughter, and he loved her exceedingly. She was not beautiful, but she was fair to see, with a pretty figure, and an arch, gay smile. You saw the Dutch blood in her eyes, as you saw it in her father's, whose orbs of vision, indeed, were ridiculously small-scarcely visible in their bed of socket and lash. An English mother had come to Violet's help in this matter. Taking her from top to toe, with her surprising quantity of brown hair, soft complexion, good mouth, teeth, and figure, Violet Vanderholt was undoubtedly a fine girl. The room in which they were breakfasting was imposingly furnished. The pictures were many and fine. One in particular took the eye, and detained it. It was hung over the sideboard, which glittered with plate; it represented a schooner, bowed by a sudden blast, coming at you. The white brine, shredded by the shrieking stroke of the squall, hissed shrilly from the cut-water. The life and spirit of the reality was in that fine canvas. The sailors seemed to run as you watched, the gaffs to droop with the handling of their gear. She came rushing in a smother of spume right at you, and, before delight could arise, you had felt a pleasurable shock of surprise that was almost alarm. Such is the effect produced by Cooper's bull as, with bowed head and eyes of fire, and horns of death, it looks to be bounding with the velocity of a locomotive out of the frame. Mr. Vanderholt and his daughter conversed for some time on matters of no concern to us who are to follow their fortunes. Presently, after helping himself to his second bloater-for his wealth had neither lessened his appetite nor influenced his choice of dishes: he clung, with true Dutch courage, to solid sausage; he loved new bread, smoking hot; he was wedded to all the several kinds of cured fish, and often drank a pint of beer, instead of coffee or tea, at his morning meal-he took his second herring, and, whilst his gray beard wagged to the movement of his jaws, an expression of pensiveness entered his face as he fastened his gaze upon the picture of the rushing schooner.

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