

Due to the majority of illustration are in the French edition, I got all the images from that book. The contents of the story are from English edition. I putted scan of them below images.



Grauben était une charmante jeune fille blonde. (Page 13.)

— Il faut voir ce que cela produit. Axel, jette une phrase quelconque sur ce bout de papier; mais, au lieu de disposer les lettres à la suite les unes des autres, mets-les successivement par colonnes verticales, de manière à les grouper en nombre de cinq ou six. »

Je compris ce dont il s'agissait, et immédiatement j'écrivis de haut en bas :

J m n e G e
e e , t r n
t b m i a f
a i a t u
i e p e b

En voici le fac-simile exact. Je tiens à faire connaître ces signes bizarres, car ils amenèrent le professeur Lidenbrock et son neveu à entreprendre la plus étrange expédition du dix-neuvième siècle :

X. A. R. M. H.	þ. H. A. þ. N. Þ. T.	H. T. R. I. B. T.
h. v. t. h. h. y. f.	n. k. t. t. i. f.	k. i. t. b. h. r. t.
r. t. h. 1. y. k.	1. t. a. 1. t. t. h.	g. o. k. b. h. h. h.
þ. y. t. t. 1. t. i.	h. n. 1. t. t. r. t.	h. h. i. t. h. i.
ð. t. h. 1. 1. h.	. h. h. y. h. y.	i. t. 1. b. h.
r. r. b. h. y. i.	þ. t. h. t. t. h. t.	f. h. 1. h. t. h.
b. t. , i. 1. r.	t. h. t. i. b. k.	y. t. b. i. i. i.

Le professeur considéra pendant quelques instants cette série de caractères; puis il dit en relevant ses lunettes :

« C'est du runique; ces types sont absolument identiques à ceux du manuscrit de Snorre Turleson! Mais... qu'est-ce que cela peut signifier? »

Comme le runique me paraissait être une invention de savants pour mystifier le pauvre monde, je ne fus pas fâché de voir que mon oncle n'y comprenait rien. Du moins cela me sembla ainsi au mouvement de ses doigts qui commençaient à s'agiter terriblement.

« C'est pourtant du vieil islandais! » murmura-t-il entre ses dents.

Et le professeur Lidenbrock devait bien s'y connaître, car il passait pour être un véritable polyglotte. Non pas qu'il parlât couramment les deux mille langues et les quatre mille idiomes employés à la surface du globe, mais enfin il en savait sa bonne part.

Il allait donc, en présence de cette difficulté, se livrer à toute l'impétuosité de son caractère, et je prévoyais une scène violente, quand deux heures sonnèrent au petit cartel de la cheminée.

Aussitôt, la bonne Marthe ouvrit la porte du cabinet en disant :

« La soupe est servie.

— Au diable la soupe, s'écria mon oncle, et celle qui l'a faite, et ceux qui la mangeront! »

Marthe s'enfuit. Je volai sur ses pas, et, sans savoir comment, je me trouvai assis à ma place habituelle dans la salle à manger.

J'attendis quelques instants. Le professeur ne vint pas. C'était la première fois, à ma connaissance, qu'il manquait à la solennité du dîner. Et quel dîner, cependant! Une soupe au persil, une omelette au jambon relevée d'oseille à la moutarde, une longe de veau à la compote de prunes, et, pour dessert, des crevettes au sucre, le tout arrosé d'un joli vin de la Moselle.

A JOURNEY
TO THE
CENTRE OF THE EARTH,

FROM THE FRENCH OF

JULES VERNE,

AUTHOR OF "FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON," ETC.



WITH FIFTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS BY RIOU.

NEW YORK:
SCRIBNER ARMSTRONG AND CO.
—
1874.



THE CENTRAL SEA.



Je me penchai sur la carte. (Page 27.)

folie! Je réservai ma dialectique pour le moment opportun, et je m'occupai du repas.

Inutile de rapporter les imprécations de mon oncle devant la table desservie. Tout s'expliqua. La liberté fut rendue à la bonne Marthe. Elle courut au marché et fit si bien, qu'une heure après, ma faim était calmée, et je revenais au sentiment de la situation.

Pendant le repas, mon oncle fut presque gai; il lui échappait de ces plaisanteries de savant qui ne sont jamais bien dangereuses. Après le dessert, il me fit signe de le suivre dans son cabinet.

J'obéis. Il s'assit à un bout de sa table de travail, moi à l'autre.



Nous nous prêtons un mutuel secours à l'aide de nos bâtons. (Page 78.)

meurait pas dans un état permanent d'incandescence liquidité, c'était folie. Folie surtout de prétendre atteindre le centre du globe !

Je me rassurais donc sur l'issue de notre entreprise, tout en marchant à l'assaut du Snæfells.

La route devenait de plus en plus difficile ; le sol montait ; les éclats de roches s'ébranlaient, et il fallait la plus scrupuleuse attention pour éviter des chutes dangereuses.

Haus s'avancait tranquillement comme sur un terrain uni ; parfois il disparaissait derrière les grands blocs, et nous le perdions de vue momentanément ; alors un sifflement aigu, échappé de ses lèvres, indiquait la direction à suivre.



Je gagnai donc les bords de l'Elbe. (Page 32.)

« Oui ! il est parfaitement reconnu que la chaleur augmente environ d'un degré par soixante-dix pieds de profondeur au-dessous de la surface du globe ; or, en admettant cette proportionnalité constante, le rayon terrestre étant de quinze cents lieues, il existe au centre une température qui dépasse deux cent mille degrés. Les matières de l'intérieur de la terre se trouvent donc à l'état de gaz incandescent, car les métaux, l'or, le platine, les roches les plus dures, ne résistent pas à une pareille chaleur. J'ai donc le droit de demander s'il est possible de pénétrer dans un semblable milieu !

— Ainsi, Axel, c'est la chaleur qui t'embarrasse ?

— Sans doute. Si nous arrivions à une profondeur de dix lieues seulement,



Je trouvai mon oncle criant et s'agitant. (Page 34.)

« Graüben ! » lui criai-je de loin.

La jeune fille s'arrêta, un peu troublée, j'imagine, de s'entendre appeler ainsi sur une grande route. En dix pas je fus près d'elle.

« Axel ! fit-elle surprise. Ah ! tu es venu à ma rencontre ! C'est bien, cela, monsieur. »

Mais, me regardant, Graüben ne put se méprendre à mon air inquiet, bouleversé.

— Qu'as-tu donc ? dit-elle en me tendant la main.

— Ce que j'ai, Graüben ! » m'écriai-je.

En deux secondes et en trois phrases, ma jolie Virlandaise était au courant de



Marthe et la jeune fille nous adressèrent un dernier adieu. (Page 38.)

bais au fond d'insondables précipices avec cette vitesse croissante des corps abandonnés dans l'espace. Ma vie n'était plus qu'une chute interminable.

Je me réveillai à cinq heures, brisé de fatigue et d'émotion. Je descendis à la salle à manger. Mon oncle était à table. Il dévorait. Je le regardai avec un sentiment d'horreur. Mais Graüben était là. Je ne dis rien. Je ne pus manger.

A cinq heures et demie, un roulement se fit entendre dans la rue. Une large voiture arrivait pour nous conduire au chemin de fer d'Altona. Elle fut bientôt encombrée des colis de mon oncle.

« Et ta malle ? me dit-il.

— Elle est prête, répondis-je en défaillant.



Hans, personnage grave, flegmatique et silencieux. (Page 50.)

— Eteint?

— Oh! éteint depuis cinq cents ans.

— Eh bien! répondit mon oncle, qui se croisait frénétiquement les jambes pour ne pas sauter en l'air, j'ai envie de commencer mes études géologiques par ce Seffel... Fessel... comment dites-vous?

— Snæfels, » reprit l'excellent M. Fridriksson.

Cette partie de la conversation avait eu lieu en latin; j'avais tout compris, et je gardais à peine mon sérieux à voir mon oncle contenir sa satisfaction qui débordait de toutes parts; il essayait de prendre un petit air innocent qui ressemblait à la grimace d'un vieux diable.



Mon oncle ressemblait à un centaure à six pieds. (Page 62.)

« Un fameux homme! s'écria mon oncle; mais il ne s'attend guère au merveilleux rôle que l'avenir lui réserve de jouer.

— Il nous accompagne donc jusqu'au...

— Oui, Axel, jusqu'au centre de la terre. »

Quarante-huit heures restaient encore à passer; à mon grand regret, je dus les employer à nos préparatifs; toute notre intelligence fut employée à disposer chaque objet de la façon la plus avantageuse, les instruments d'un côté, les outils dans ce paquet, les vivres dans celui-là. En tout quatre groupes.

Les instruments comprenaient :

1^e Un thermomètre centigrade de Eigel, gradué jusqu'à cent-cinquante de-



Sa monture vint flairer la dernière ondulation des vagues. (Page 61.)

s'estompaient à l'horizon dans les brumes de l'est ; par moments, quelques plaques de neige, concentrant la lumière diffuse, resplendissaient sur le versant des cimes éloignées ; certains pics, plus hardiment dressés, trouaient les nuages gris et réapparaissaient au-dessus des vapeurs mouvantes, semblables à des éceneils émergés en plein ciel.

Souvent ces chaînes de rocs arides faisaient une pointe vers la mer et mouraient sur le pâturage ; mais il restait toujours une place suffisante pour passer. Nos chevaux, d'ailleurs, choisissaient d'instinct les endroits propices sans jamais ralentir leur marche. Mon oncle n'avait pas même la consolation d'exciter sa monture de la voix ou du fouet ; il ne lui était pas permis d'être impatient.



Un Mprax, répétait mon oncle. (Page 68.)

XIII

Il aurait dû faire nuit, mais sous le soixante-cinquième parallèle, la clarté nocturne des régions polaires ne devait pas m'étonner ; en Islande, pendant les mois de juin et juillet, le soleil ne se couche pas.

Néanmoins la température s'était abaissée. J'avais froid et surtout faim. Bienvenu fut le « boer » qui s'ouvrit hospitalièrement pour nous recevoir.

C'était la maison d'un paysan, mais, en fait d'hospitalité, elle valait celle d'un



Bientôt la trombe s'abatit sur la montagne. (Page 79.)

elfes ou des sylphées, imaginaires habitants de la mythologie scandinave. Je m'enivrais de la volupté des hauteurs, sans songer aux abîmes dans lesquels ma destinée allait me plonger avant peu. Mais je fus ramené au sentiment de la réalité par l'arrivée du professeur et de Hans, qui me rejoignirent au sommet du pie.

Mon oncle, se tournant vers l'ouest, m'indiqua de la main une légère vapeur, une brume, une apparence de terre qui dominait la ligne des flots.

« Le Groënland, dit-il.

— Le Groënland? m'écriai-je.

— Oui, nous n'en sommes pas à trente-cinq lieues, et pendant les dégels les



Nous descendions une sorte de vis tournante. (Page 110.)

saillie, les jambes pendantes, on causait en mangeant, et l'on se désaltérait au ruisseau.

Il va sans dire que, dans cette faille, le Hans-bach s'était fait cascade au détriment de son volume ; mais il suffisait et au delà à étancher notre soif; d'ailleurs, avec les déclivités moins accusées, il ne pouvait manquer de reprendre son cours paisible. En ce moment, il me rappelait mon digne oncle, ses impatiences et ses colères, tandis que, par les pentes adoucies, c'était le calme du chasseur islandais.

Le 6 et le 7 juillet, nous suivîmes les spirales de cette faille pénétrant encore de deux lieues dans l'écorce terrestre, ce qui faisait près de cinq lieues au-dessous



Le rêve d'Axel. (Page 154.)

— Aveugle !

— Non-seulement aveugle, mais l'organe de la vue lui manque absolument. »

Je regarde. Rien n'est plus vrai. Mais ce peut être un cas particulier. La ligne est donc amorcée de nouveau et rejetée à la mer. Cet océan, à coup sûr, est fort poissonneux, car, en deux heures, nous prenons une grande quantité de *Pterychitis*, ainsi que des poissons appartenant à une famille également éteinte, les *Dipterides*, mais dont mon oncle ne peut reconnaître le genre. Tous sont dépourvus de l'organe de la vue. Cette pêche inespérée renouvelle avantageusement nos provisions.



Regarde! me dit le professeur. (Page 83.)

dessina comme une vive arête et se mit à tourner insensiblement avec l'astre radieux. Mon oncle tournait avec elle.

A midi, dans sa période la plus courte, elle vint lécher doucement le bord de la cheminée centrale.

« C'est là ! s'écria le professeur, c'est là ! Au centre du globe ! » ajouta-t-il en danois.

Je regardai Hans.

« Forût ! » fit tranquillement le guide.

— En avant ! répondit mon oncle.

Il était une heure et treize minutes du soir.



Une vaste nappe d'eau s'écoulait devant mes yeux. (Page 128.)

— Et ma tête ?

— Ta tête, sauf quelques contusions, est parfaitement à sa place sur tes épaules.

— Eh bien, j'ai peur que mon cerveau ne soit dérangé.

— Dérangé ?

— Oui. Nous ne sommes pas revenus à la surface du globe ?

— Non, certes !

— Alors il faut que je sois fou, car j'aperçois la lumière du jour, j'entends le bruit du vent qui souffle et de la mer qui se brise !

— Ah ! n'est-ce que cela ?



Ce n'est qu'une forêt de champignons, dit-il. (Page 142.)

chargée d'humides émanations salines. Aussi n'eus-je point à me repentir d'avoir quitté ma grotte obscure. Mon oncle, déjà fait à ces merveilles, ne s'étonnait plus.

« Te sens-tu la force de te promener un peu ? me demanda-t-il.

— Oui, certes, répondis-je, et rien ne me sera plus agréable.

— Eh bien, prends mon bras, Axel, et suivons les sinuosités du rivage. »

J'acceptai avec empressement, et nous commençâmes à côtoyer cet océan nouveau. Sur la gauche, des rochers abrupts, grimpés les uns sur les autres, formaient un entassement titanique d'un prodigieux effet. Sur leurs flancs se déroulaient d'innombrables cascades, qui s'en allaient en nappes limpides et



Je me croisai les bras et j'attendis. (Page 52.)

exutoire ordinaire, on pouvait craindre que leur tension ne le fit éclater d'un instant à l'autre.

Je pouvais d'un geste desserrer cet étau de fer qui lui serrait le crâne, d'un mot seulement ! et je n'en fis rien.

Cependant j'avais bon cœur. Pourquoi restai-je muet en pareille circonstance ? Dans l'intérêt même de mon oncle.

« Non, non, répétai-je, non, je ne parlerai pas ! Il voudrait y aller, je le connais ; rien ne saurait l'arrêter. C'est une imagination volcanique, et, pour faire ce que d'autres géologues n'ont point fait, il risquerait sa vie. Je me tairai ; je garderai ce secret dont le hasard m'a rendu maître ! Le découvrir, ce serait tuer

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

BY

JULES VERNE
=



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— JULES VERNE —



VOYAGE
AU CENTRE DE LA TERRE

I

Le 24 mai 1863, un dimanche, mon oncle, le professeur Lidenbrock, revint précipitamment vers sa petite maison située au numéro 19 de Königstrasse, l'une des plus anciennes rues du vieux quartier de Hambourg.

La bonne Marthe dut se croire fort en retard, car le dîner commençait à peine à chanter sur le fourneau de la cuisine.

« Bon, me dis-je, s'il a faim, mon oncle, qui est le plus impatient des hommes, va pousser des cris de détresse.



Otto Lidenbrock était un homme grand, maigre. (Page 3.)

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Ce cabinet était un véritable musée. Tous les échantillons du règne minéral s'y trouvaient étiquetés avec l'ordre le plus parfait, suivant les trois grandes divisions des minéraux inflammables, métalliques et lithoïdes.

Comme je les connaissais, ces bibelots de la science minéralogique! Que de fois, au lieu de muser avec les garçons de mon âge, je m'étais plu à épousseter



These animals fought with fury.

VOYAGE AU CENTRE DE LA TERRE



IL DEMEURAIT DANS SA PETITE MAISON DU KÖNIGSTRASSE (Page 4).



Les cheveux de Hans sont hérissés d'aigrettes lumineuses. (Page 163.)

[Ici mes notes de voyage devinrent très-incomplètes. Je n'ai plus retrouvé que quelques observations fugitives, prises machinalement pour ainsi dire. Mais dans leur brièveté, dans leur obscurité même, elles sont empreintes de l'émotion qui me dominait, et mieux que ma mémoire elles donnent le sentiment de la situation.]

Dimanche 23 août. — Où sommes-nous? Emportés avec une incomparable rapidité.

La nuit a été épouvantable. L'orage ne se calme pas. Nous vivons dans un



La vicille serrante ressource dans sa cuisine en gémissant. (Page 16.)

la carbonisation, qui de ma naissance faisait peu à peu une négresse accomplie. De temps en temps, j'écoutais si quelque pas retentissait dans l'escalier. Mais non. Où pouvait être mon oncle en ce moment ? Je me le figurais courant sous les beaux arbres de la route d'Altona, gesticulant, tirant au mur avec sa canne, d'un bras violent battant les herbes, décapitant les chardons et troubant dans leur repos les cigognes solitaires.

Rentrerait-il triomphant ou découragé ? Qui aurait raison l'un de l'autre, du secret ou de lui ? Je m'interrogeais ainsi, et, machinalement, je pris entre mes doigts la feuille de papier sur laquelle s'allongeait l'incompréhensible série des lettres tracées par moi. Je me répétai :

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

CHAPTER I.

MY UNCLE MAKES A GREAT DISCOVERY.

LOOKING back to all that has occurred to me since that eventful day, I am scarcely able to believe in the reality of my adventures. They were truly so wonderful that even now I am bewildered when I think of them.

My uncle was a German, having married my mother's sister, an Englishwoman. Being very much attached to his fatherless nephew, he invited me to study under him in his home in the fatherland. This home was in a large town, and my uncle a Professor of philosophy, chemistry, geology, mineralogy, and many other ologies.

One day, after passing some hours in the laboratory—my uncle being absent at the time—I suddenly felt the necessity of renovating the tissues—*i. e.*, I was hungry, and was about to rouse up our old French cook, when my uncle, Professor Von Hardwigg, suddenly opened the street door, and came rushing up stairs.

Now Professor Hardwigg, my worthy uncle, is by no means a bad sort of man; he is, however, choleric and

original. To bear with him means to obey; and scarcely had his heavy feet resounded within our joint domicile than he shouted for me to attend upon him.

"Harry—Harry—Harry—"

I hastened to obey, but before I could reach his room, jumping three steps at a time, he was stamping his right foot upon the landing.

"Harry!" he cried, in a frantic tone, "are you coming up?"

Now to tell the truth, at that moment I was far more interested in the question as to what was to constitute our dinner than in any problem of science; to me soup was more interesting than soda, an omelette more tempting than arithmetic, and an artichoke of ten times more value than any amount of asbestos.

But my uncle was not a man to be kept waiting; so adjourning therefore all minor questions, I presented myself before him.

He was a very learned man. Now most persons in this category supply themselves with information, as peddlers do with goods, for the benefit of others, and lay up stores in order to diffuse them abroad for the benefit of society in general. Not so my excellent uncle, Professor Hardwigg; he studied, he consumed the midnight oil, he pored over heavy tomes, and digested huge quartos and folios in order to keep the knowledge acquired to himself.

There was a reason, and it may be regarded as a good one, why my uncle objected to display his learning more than was absolutely necessary; he stammered; and when intent upon explaining the phenomena of the heavens, was apt to find himself at fault, and allude in such a vague way to sun, moon, and stars, that few were able to comprehend his meaning. To tell the honest truth, when the right word would not come, it was generally replaced by a very powerful adjective.

In connection with the sciences there are many almost unpronounceable names—names very much resembling those of Welsh villages; and my uncle being very fond of using them, his habit of stammering was not thereby improved. In fact, there were periods in his discourse when he would finally give up and swallow his discomfiture—in a glass of water.

As I said, my uncle, Professor Hardwigg, was a very learned man ; and I now add a most kind relative. I was bound to him by the double ties of affection and interest. I took deep interest in all his doings, and hoped some day to be almost as learned myself. It was a rare thing for me to be absent from his lectures. Like him, I preferred mineralogy to all the other sciences. My anxiety was to gain *real knowledge of the earth*. Geology and mineralogy were to us the sole objects of life, and in connection with these studies many a fair specimen of stone, chalk, or metal did we break with our hammers.

Steel rods, loadstone, glass pipes, and bottles of various acids were oftener before us than our meals. My uncle Hardwigg was once known to classify six hundred different geological specimens by their weight, hardness, fusibility, sound, taste, and smell.

He corresponded with all the great, learned, and scientific men of the age. I was, therefore, in constant communication with, at all events the letters of, Sir Humphrey Davy, Captain Franklin, and other great men.

But before I state the subject on which my uncle wished to confer with me, I must say a word about his personal appearance. Alas ! my readers will see a very different portrait of him at a future time, after he has gone through the fearful adventures yet to be related.

My uncle was fifty years old ; tall, thin, and wiry. Large spectacles hid, to a certain extent, his vast, round and goggle eyes, while his nose was irreverently compared

to a thin file. So much indeed did it resemble that useful article, that a compass was said in his presence to have made considerable N* deviation.

The truth being told, however, the only article really attracted to my uncle's nose was tobacco.

Another peculiarity of his was, that he always stepped a yard at a time, clenched his fists as if he were going to hit you, and was, when in one of his peculiar humors, very far from a peasant companion.

It is further necessary to observe, that he lived in a very nice house, in that very nice street, the Königstrasse at Hamburg. Though lying in the centre of a town, it was perfectly rural in its aspect—half wood, half bricks, with old-fashioned gables—one of the few old houses spared by the great fire of 1842.

When I say a nice house, I mean a handsome house—old, tottering, and not exactly comfortable to English notions: a house a little off the perpendicular and inclined to fall into the neighboring canal; exactly the house for a wandering artist to depict; all the more that you could scarcely see it for ivy and a magnificent old tree which grew over the door.

My uncle was rich; his house was his own property, while he had a considerable private income. To my notion the best part of his possessions was his god-daughter, Gretchen. And the old cook, the young lady, the Professor and I were the sole inhabitants.

I loved mineralogy, I loved geology. To me there was nothing like pebbles—and if my uncle had been in a little less of a fury, we should have been the happiest of families. To prove the excellent Hardwigg's impatience, I solemnly declare that when the flowers in the drawing-room pots began to grow, he rose every morning at four o'clock to make them grow quicker by pulling the leaves!

* (?) Nasal.

Having described my uncle, I will now give an account of our interview.

He received me in his study; a perfect museum, containing every natural curiosity that can well be imagined—minerals, however, predominating. Every one was familiar to me, having been catalogued by my own hand. My uncle, apparently oblivious of the fact that he had summoned me to his presence, was absorbed in a book. He was particularly fond of early editions, tall copies, and unique works.

"Wonderful!" he cried, tapping his forehead. "Wonderful—wonderful!"

It was one of those yellow-leaved volumes now rarely found on stalls, and to me it appeared to possess but little value. My uncle, however, was in raptures.

He admired its binding, the clearness of its characters, the ease with which it opened in his hand, and repeated aloud, half-a-dozen times, that it was very, very old.

To my fancy he was making a great fuss about nothing, but it was not my province to say so. On the contrary, I professed considerable interest in the subject, and asked him what it was about.

"It is the *Heims-Kringla* of Snorre Tarleson," he said, "the celebrated Icelandic author of the twelfth century—it is a true and correct account of the Norwegian princes who reigned in Iceland."

My next question related to the language in which it was written. I hoped at all events it was translated into German. My uncle was indignant at the very thought, and declared he wouldn't give a penny for a translation. His delight was to have found the original work in the Icelandic tongue, which he declared to be one of the most magnificent and yet simple idioms in the world—while at the same time its grammatical combinations were the most varied known to students.

"About as easy as German?" was my insidious remark.
My uncle shrugged his shoulders.

"The letters at all events," I said, "are rather difficult of comprehension."

"It is a Runic manuscript, the language of the original population of Iceland, invented by Odin himself," cried my uncle, angry at my ignorance.

I was about to venture upon some misplaced joke on the subject, when a small scrap of parchment fell out of the leaves. Like a hungry man snatching at a morsel of bread the Professor seized it. It was about five inches by three and was scrawled over in the most extraordinary fashion.

The lines on page 12 are an exact fac-simile of what was written on the venerable piece of parchment—and have wonderful importance, as they induced my uncle to undertake the most wonderful series of adventures which ever fell to the lot of human beings.

My uncle looked keenly at the document for some moments and then declared that it was Runic. The letters were similar to those in the book, but then what did they mean? This was exactly what I wanted to know.

Now as I had a strong conviction that the Runic alphabet and dialect were simply an invention to mystify poor human nature, I was delighted to find that my uncle knew as much about the matter as I did—which was nothing. At all events, the tremulous motion of his fingers made me think so.

"And yet," he muttered to himself, "it is old Icelandic, I am sure of it."

And my uncle ought to have known, for he was a perfect polyglot dictionary in himself. He did not pretend, like a certain learned pundit, to speak the two thousand languages and four thousand idioms made use of in different parts of the globe, but he did know all the more important ones.

It is a matter of great doubt to me now, to what violent measures my uncle's impetuosity might have led him, had not the clock struck two, and our old French cook called out to let us know that dinner was on the table.

"Bother the dinner!" cried my uncle.

But as I was hungry, I sallied forth to the dining-room, where I took up my usual quarters. Out of politeness I waited three minutes, but no sign of my uncle, the Professor. I was surprised. He was not usually so blind to the pleasure of a good dinner. It was the acme of German luxury—parsley soup, a ham omelette with sorrel trimmings, an oyster of veal stewed with prunes, delicious fruit, and sparkling Moselle. For the sake of poring over this musty old piece of parchment, my uncle forbore to share our meal. To satisfy my conscience, I ate for both.

The old cook and housekeeper was nearly out of her mind. After taking so much trouble, to find her master not appear at dinner was to her a sad disappointment—which, as she occasionally watched the havoc I was making on the viands, became also alarm. If my uncle were to come to table after all?

Suddenly, just as I had consumed the last apple and drank the last glass of wine, a terrible voice was heard at no great distance. It was my uncle roaring for me to come to him. I made very nearly one leap of it—so loud, so fierce was his tone.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS PARCHMENT.

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1111111111 1111111111 1111111111

"I DECLARE," cried my uncle, striking the table fiercely with his fist, "I declare to you it is Runic—and contains some wonderful secret, which I must get at, at any price."

I was about to reply when he stopped me.

"Sit down," he said, quite fiercely, "and write to my dictation."

I obeyed.

"I will substitute," he said, "a letter of our alphabet for that of the Runic: we will then see what that will produce. Now, begin and make no mistakes."

The dictation commenced with the following incomprehensible result:—

m.rnals	esruel	seccJde
sgfasmf	unteief	niedrke
kt,samm	strateS	Saodrrn
eminael	nuaect	rrilSa
Atvaar	.nacrc	icaabs
codrmi	ceutul	frantu
dt,iac	oseibo	KediilI

Scarcely giving me time to finish, my uncle snatched the document from my hands and examined it with the most rapt and deep attention.

"I should like to know what it means," he said, after a long period.

I certainly could not tell him, nor did he expect me to—his conversation being uniformly answered by himself.

"I declare it puts me in mind of a cryptograph," he cried, "unless, indeed, the letters have been written without any real meaning; and yet why take so much trouble? Who knows but I may be on the verge of some great discovery?"

My candid opinion was that it was all rubbish! But this opinion I kept carefully to myself, as my uncle's choler was not pleasant to bear. All this time he was comparing the book with the parchment.

"The manuscript volume and the smaller document are written in different hands," he said, "the cryptograph is of much later date than the book; there is an undoubted proof of the correctness of my surmise. [An irrefragable proof I took it to be.] The first letter is a double M, which was only added to the Icelandic language in the twelfth century—this makes the parchment two hundred years posterior to the volume."

The circumstances appeared very probable and very logical, but it was all surmise to me.

"To me it appears probable that this sentence was written by some owner of the book. Now who was the owner, is the next important question. Perhaps by great good luck it may be written somewhere in the volume."

With these words Professor Hardwigg took off his spectacles, and, taking a powerful magnifying glass, examined the book carefully.

On the fly leaf was what appeared to be a blot of ink,

I*

but on examination proved to be a line of writing almost effaced by time. This was what he sought; and, after some considerable time, he made out these letters:

1111 11111111

"Arne Saknussemm!" he cried in a joyous and triumphant tone, "that is not only an Icelandic name, but of a learned professor of the sixteenth century, a celebrated alchemist."

I bowed as a sign of respect.

"These alchemists," he continued, "Avicena, Bacon, Lully, Paracelsus, were the true, the only learned men of the day. They made surprising discoveries. May not this Saknussemm, nephew mine, have hidden on this bit of parchment some astounding invention? I believe the cryptograph to have a profound meaning—which I must make out."

My uncle walked about the room in a state of excitement almost impossible to describe.

"It may be so, sir," I timidly observed, "but why conceal it from posterity, if it be a useful, a worthy discovery?"

"Why—how should I know? Did not Galileo make a secret of his discoveries in connection with Saturn? But we shall see. Until I discover the meaning of this sentence I will neither eat nor sleep."

"My dear uncle——" I began.

"Nor you neither," he added.

It was lucky I had taken double allowance that day.

"In the first place," he continued, "there must be a clue to the meaning. If we could find that, the rest would be easy enough."

I began seriously to reflect. The prospect of going

without food and sleep was not a promising one, so I determined to do my best to solve the mystery. My uncle, meanwhile, went on with his soliloquy.

"The way to discover it is easy enough. In this document there are one hundred and thirty-two letters, giving seventy-nine consonants to fifty-three vowels. This is about the proportion found in most southern languages, the idioms of the north being much more rich in consonants. We may confidently predict, therefore, that we have to deal with a southern dialect."

Nothing could be more logical.

"Now," said Professor Hardwigg, "to trace the particular language."

"As Shakspeare says, 'that is the question,'" was my rather satirical reply.

"This man Saknussemm," he continued, "was a very learned man: now as he did not write in the language of his birth-place, he probably, like most learned men of the sixteenth century, wrote in Latin. If, however, I prove wrong in this guess, we must try Spanish, French, Italian, Greek, and even Hebrew. My own opinion, though, is decidedly in favor of Latin."

This proposition startled me. Latin was my favorite study, and it seemed sacrilege to believe this gibberish to belong to the country of Virgil.

"Barbarous Latin, in all probability," continued my uncle, "but still Latin."

"Very probably," I replied, not to contradict him.

"Let us see into the matter," continued my uncle; "here you see we have a series of one hundred and thirty-two letters, apparently thrown pell-mell upon paper, without method or organization. There are words which are composed wholly of consonants, such as *w.rnlls*, others which are nearly all vowels, the fifth, for instance, which is *unteif*, and one of the last *oscibe*. This appears an

extraordinary combination. Probably we shall find that the phrase is arranged according to some mathematical plan. No doubt a certain sentence has been written out and then jumbled up—some plan to which some figure is the clue. Now, Harry, to show your English wit—what is that figure?"

I could give him no hint. My thoughts were indeed far away. While he was speaking I had caught sight of the portrait of my cousin Gretchen, and was wondering when she would return.

We were affianced, and loved one another very sincerely. But my uncle, who never thought even of such sublunary matters, knew nothing of this. Without noticing my abstraction, the Professor began reading the puzzling cryptograph all sorts of ways, according to some theory of his own. Presently, rousing my wandering attention, he dictated one precious attempt to me.

I mildly handed it over to him. It read as follows:—

mmessunkaSenrAicefdoKsegnittamurtn
ecertserrette,rotainvsadua,ednecessedsadne
lacartniiiluJairatracSarbmutabiledmek
meretarcisiluccoIsleffenSnI.

I could scarcely keep from laughing, while my uncle, on the contrary, got in a towering passion, struck the table with his fist, darted out of the room, out of the house, and then taking to his heels was presently lost to sight.

CHAPTER III.

AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY.

"WHAT is the matter?" cried the cook, entering the room; "when will master have his dinner?"

"Never."

"And, his supper?"

"I don't know. He says he will eat no more, neither shall I. My uncle has determined to fast and make me fast until he makes out this abominable inscription," I replied.

"You will be starved to death," she said.

I was very much of the same opinion, but not liking to say so, sent her away, and began some of my usual work of classification. But boy as I made myself, nothing could keep me from thinking alternately of the stupid manuscript and of the pretty Gretchen.

Several times I thought of going out, but my uncle would have been angry at my absence. At the end of an hour, my allotted task was done. How to pass the time? I began by lighting my pipe. Like all other students, I delighted in tobacco; and, seating myself in the great arm-chair, I began to think.

Where was my uncle? I could easily imagine him tearing along some solitary road, gesticulating, talking to himself, cutting the air with his cane, and still thinking of the absurd bit of hieroglyphics. Would he hit upon some clue? Would he come home in better humor? While these thoughts were passing through my brain, I mechanically took up the execrable puzzle and tried every imaginable way of grouping the letters. I put them together by twos, by threes, fours, and fives—in vain.

Nothing intelligible came out, except that the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth made ice in English; the eighty-fourth, eighty-fifth and eighty-sixth, the word *sir*; then at last I seemed to find the Latin words *rota*, *mutabile*, *ira*, *nec*, *aura*.

"Ha! there seems to be some truth in my uncle's notion," thought I.

Then again I seemed to find the word *Iaco*, which means sacred wood. Then in the third line I appeared to make out *tabeled*, a perfect Hebrew word, and at the last the syllables *mère*, *are*, *mer*, which were French.

It was enough to drive one mad. Four different idioms in this absurd phrase. What connection could there be between ice, sir, anger, cruel, sacred wood, changing, mother, are and sea? The first and the last might, in a sentence connected with Iceland, mean sea of ice. But what of the rest of this monstrous cryptograph?

I was, in fact, fighting against an insurmountable difficulty; my brain was almost on fire; my eyes were strained with staring at the parchment; the whole absurd collection of letters appeared to dance before my vision in a number of black little groups. My mind was possessed with temporary hallucination—I was stifling. I wanted air. Mechanically I fanned myself with the document, of which now I saw the back and then the front.

Imagine my surprise when glancing at the back of the wearisome puzzle, the ink having gone through, I clearly made out Latin words, and among others *craterem* and *terrestre*.

I had discovered the secret!

It came upon me like a flash of lightning. I had got the clue. All you had to do to understand the document was to read it backwards. All the ingenious ideas of the Professor were realized; he had dictated it rightly to me; by a mere accident I had discovered what he so much desired.

My delight, my emotion may be imagined, my eyes were dazzled and I trembled so that at first I could make nothing of it. One look, however, would tell me all I wished to know.

"Let me read," I said to myself, after drawing a long breath.

I spread it before me on the table, I passed my finger over each letter, I spelt it through; in my excitement I read it out.

What horror and stupefaction took possession of my soul. I was like a man who had received a knock-down blow. Was it possible that I really read the terrible secret, and it had really been accomplished! A man had dared to do—what?

No living being should ever know.

"Never!" cried I, jumping up; "Never shall my uncle be made aware of the dread secret. He would be quite capable of undertaking the terrible journey. Nothing would check him, nothing stop him. Worse, he would compel me to accompany him, and we should be lost forever. But no; such folly and madness cannot be allowed."

I was almost beside myself with rage and fury.

"My worthy uncle is already nearly mad," I cried aloud. "This would finish him. By some accident he may make the discovery; in which case, we are both lost. Perish the fearful secret—let the flames forever bury it in oblivion."

I snatched up book and parchment, and was about to cast them into the fire, when the door opened and my uncle entered.

I had scarcely time to put down the wretched documents before my uncle was by my side. He was profoundly absorbed. His thoughts were evidently bent on the terrible parchment. Some new combination had probably struck him while taking his walk.

He seated himself in his arm-chair, and with a pen began to make an algebraical calculation. I watched him with anxious eyes. My flesh crawled as it became probable that he would discover the secret.

His combinations I knew now were useless, I having discovered the one only clue. For three mortal hours he continued without speaking a word, without raising his head, scratching, re-writing, calculating over and over again. I knew that in time he must hit upon the right phrase. The letters of every alphabet have only a certain number of combinations. But then years might elapse before he would arrive at the correct solution.

Still time went on ; night came, the sounds in the streets ceased—and still my uncle went on, not even answering our worthy cook when she called us to supper.

I did not dare to leave him, so waved her away, and at last fell asleep on the sofa.

When I awoke my uncle was still at work. His red eyes, his pallid countenance, his matted hair, his feverish hands, his hectically flushed cheeks, showed how terrible had been his struggle with the impossible, and what fearful fatigue he had undergone during that long-sleepless night. It made me quite ill to look at him. Though he was rather severe with me, I loved him, and my heart ached at his sufferings. He was so overcome by one idea that he could not even get in a passion ! All his energies were focussed on one point. And I knew that by speaking one little word all this suffering would cease. I could not speak it.

My heart was, nevertheless, inclining towards him. Why, then, did I remain silent ? In the interest of my uncle himself.

"Nothing shall make me speak," I muttered. "He will want to follow in the footsteps of the other ! I know him well. His imagination is a perfect volcano, and to

make discoveries in the interests of geology he would, sacrifice his life. I will therefore be silent and strictly keep the secret I have discovered. To reveal it would be suicidal. He would not only rush, himself, to destruction, but drag me with him."

I crossed my arms, looked another way and smoked—resolved never to speak.

When our cook wanted to go out to market, or on any other errand, she found the front door locked and the key taken away. Was this done purposely or not? Surely Professor Hardwigg did not intend the old woman and myself to become martyrs to his obstinate will. Were we to be starved to death? A frightful recollection came to my mind. Once we had fed on bits and scraps for a week while he sorted some curiosities. It gave me the cramp even to think of it!

I wanted my breakfast, and I saw no way of getting it. Still my resolution held good. I would starve rather than yield. But the cook began to take me seriously to task. What was to be done? She could not go out; and I dared not.

My uncle continued counting and writing; his imagination seemed to have translated him to the skies. He neither thought of eating nor drinking. In this way twelve o'clock came round. I was hungry, and there was nothing in the house. The cook had eaten the last bit of bread. This could not go on. It did, however, until two, when my sensations were terrible. After all, I began to think the document very absurd. Perhaps it might only be a gigantic hoax. Besides, some means would surely be found to keep my uncle back from attempting any such absurd expedition. On the other hand, if he did attempt anything so Quixotic, I should not be compelled to accompany him. Another line of reasoning partially decided me. Very likely he would make the discovery him-

self when I should have suffered starvation for nothing. Under the influence of hunger this reasoning appeared admirable. I determined to tell all.

The question now arose as to how it was to be done. I was still dwelling on the thought, when he rose and put on his hat.

What! go out and lock us in? Never!

"Uncle," I began.

He did not appear even to hear me.

"Professor Hardwigg," I cried.

"What," he retorted, "did you speak?"

"How about the key?"

"What key—the key of the door?"

"No—of these horrible hieroglyphics?"

He looked at me from under his spectacles, and started at the odd expression of my face. Rushing forward, he clutched me by the arm and keenly examined my countenance. His very look was an interrogation.

I simply nodded.

With an incredulous shrug of the shoulders, he turned upon his heel. Undoubtedly he thought I had gone mad.

"I have made a very important discovery."

His eyes flashed with excitement. His hand was lifted in a menacing attitude. For a moment neither of us spoke. It is hard to say which was most excited.

"You don't mean to say that you have any idea of the meaning of the scrawl?"

"I do," was my desperate reply. "Look at the sentence as dictated by you."

"Well, but it means nothing," was the angry answer.

"Nothing if you read from left to right, but mark, if from right to left——"

"Backwards!" cried my uncle, in wild amazement. "Oh most cunning Saknussemm; and I to be such a blockhead!"

He snatched up the document, gazed at it with haggard eye, and read it out as I had done.

It read as follows:—

*In Snaefells yoculis craterem hem delebat
Umbra Scartaris Julii intra calendas descende.
Audas viator, et terrestre centrum attinges,
Kod feci. Arne Saknussemm.*

Which dog-Latin being translated, reads as follows:—

"Descend into the crater of Yocul of Snaefells, which the shade of Scartaris caresses, before the kalends of July, audacious traveller, and you will reach the centre of the earth. I did it. ARNE SAKNUSSEMM."

My uncle leaped three feet from the ground with joy. He looked radiant and handsome. He rushed about the room wild with delight and satisfaction. He knocked over tables and chairs. He threw his books about until at last, utterly exhausted, he fell into his arm-chair.

"What's o'clock?" he asked.

"About three."

"My dinner does not seem to have done me much good," he observed, "Let me have something to eat. We can then start at once. Get my portmanteau ready."

"What for?"

"And your own," he continued. "We start at once."

My horror may be conceived. I resolved however to show no fear. Scientific reasons were the only ones likely to influence my uncle. Now, there were many against this terrible journey. The very idea of going down to the centre of the earth was simply absurd. I determined therefore to argue the point after dinner.

My uncle's rage was now directed against the cook for having no dinner ready. My explanation however satisfied him, and giving her the key she soon contrived to get sufficient to satisfy our voracious appetites.

During the repast my uncle was rather gay than other-

wise. He made some of those peculiar jokes which belong exclusively to the learned. As soon however as dessert was over, he called me to his study. We each took a chair on opposite sides of the table.

"Henry," he said, in a soft and winning voice; "I have always believed you ingenuous, and you have rendered me a service never to be forgotten. Without you, this great, this wondrous discovery would never have been made. It is my duty, therefore, to insist on your sharing the glory."

"He is in a good humor," thought I; "I'll soon let him know my opinion of glory."

"In the first place," he continued, "you must keep the whole affair a profound secret. There is no more envious race of men than scientific discoverers. Many would start on the same journey. At all events, we will be the first in the field."

"I doubt your having many competitors," was my reply.

"A man of real scientific acquirements would be delighted at the chance. We should find a perfect stream of pilgrims on the traces of Arne Saknussemm, if this document were once made public.

"But my dear sir, is not this paper very likely to be a hoax?" I urged.

"The book in which we find it is sufficient proof of its authenticity," he replied.

"I thoroughly allow that the celebrated Professor wrote the lines, but only, I believe, as a kind of mystification," was my answer.

Scarcely were the words out of my mouth, when I was sorry I had uttered them. My uncle looked at me with a dark and gloomy scowl, and I began to be alarmed for the results of our conversation. His mood soon changed, however, and a smile took the place of a frown.

"We shall see," he remarked, with decisive emphasis.

"But see, what is all this about Yocul, and Snæffels,

and this Scartaris? I have never heard anything about them."

"The very point to which I am coming. I lately received from my friend, Augustus Peterman, of Leipzig, a map. Take down the third atlas from the second shelf, series Z, plate 4.

I rose, went to the shelf, and presently returned with the volume indicated.

"This," said my uncle, "is one of the best maps of Iceland. I believe it will settle all your doubts, difficulties and objections."

With a grim hope to the contrary, I stooped over the map.