



Sir Gammer Vans

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English

Intermediate
3 min read

Last Sunday morning at six o'clock in the evening as I was sailing over the tops of the mountains in my little boat, I met two men on horseback riding on one mare: So I asked them, "Could they tell me whether the little old woman was dead yet who was hanged last Saturday week for drowning herself in a shower of feathers?" They said they could not positively inform me, but if I went to Sir Gammer Vans he could tell me all about it. "But how am I to know the house?" said I. "Ho, 't is easy enough," said they, "for 't is a brick house, built entirely of flints, standing alone by itself in the middle of sixty or seventy others just like it."

"Oh, nothing in the world is easier," said I.

"Nothing can be easier," said they: so I went on my way.

Now this Sir G. Vans was a giant, and a bottle-maker. And as all giants who are bottle-makers usually pop out of a little thumb-bottle from behind the door, so did Sir G. Vans.

"How d'ye do?" says he.

"Very well, I thank you," says I.

"Have some breakfast with me?"

“With all my heart,” says I.

So he gave me a slice of beer, and a cup of cold veal; and there was a little dog under the table that picked up all the crumbs.

“Hang him,” says I.

“No, don’t hang him,” says he; “for he killed a hare yesterday. And if you don’t believe me, I’ll show you the hare alive in a basket.”

So he took me into his garden to show me the curiosities. In one corner there was a fox hatching eagle’s eggs; in another there was an iron apple tree, entirely covered with pears and lead; in the third there was the hare which the dog killed yesterday alive in the basket; and in the fourth there were twenty-four hipper switches threshing tobacco, and at the sight of me they threshed so hard that they drove the plug through the wall, and through a little dog that was passing by on the other side. I, hearing the dog howl, jumped over the wall; and turned it as neatly inside out as possible, when it ran away as if it had not an hour to live. Then he took me into the park to show me his deer: and I remembered that I had a warrant in my pocket to shoot venison for his majesty’s dinner. So I set fire to my bow, poised my arrow, and shot amongst them. I broke seventeen ribs on one side, and twenty-one and a half on the other; but my arrow passed clean through without ever touching it, and the worst was I lost my arrow: however, I found it again in the hollow of a tree. I felt it; it felt clammy. I smelt it; it smelt honey. “Oh, ho,” said I, “here’s a bee’s nest,” when out sprang a covey of partridges. I shot at them; some say I killed eighteen; but I am sure I killed thirty-six, besides a dead salmon which was flying over the bridge, of which I made the best apple-pie I ever tasted.

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