

TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

CHAPTER XIX

The Baron crosses the Thames without the assistance of a bridge, ship, boat, balloon, or even his own will: rouses himself after a long nap, and destroys a monster who lived upon the destruction of others.

My first visit to England was about the beginning of the present king's reign. I had occasion to go down to Wapping, to see some goods shipped, which I was sending to some friends at Hamburg; after that business was over, I took the Tower Wharf in my way back. Here I found the sun very powerful, and I was so much fatigued that I stepped into one of the cannon to compose me, where I fell fast asleep. This was about noon: it was the fourth of June; exactly at one o'clock these cannon were all discharged in memory of the day. They had been all charged that morning, and having no suspicion of my situation, I was shot over the houses on the opposite side of the river, into a farmer's yard, between Bermondsey and Deptford, where I fell upon a large hay-stack, without waking, and continued there in a sound sleep till hay became so extravagantly dear (which was about three months after), that the farmer found it his interest to send his whole stock to market: the stack I was reposing upon was the largest in the yard, containing above five hundred load; they began to cut that first. I woke with the voices of the people who had ascended the ladders to begin at the top, and got up, totally ignorant of my situation: in attempting to run away I fell upon the farmer to whom the hay belonged, and broke his neck, yet received no injury myself. I afterwards found, to my great consolation, that this fellow was a most detestable character, always keeping the produce of his grounds for extravagant markets.

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