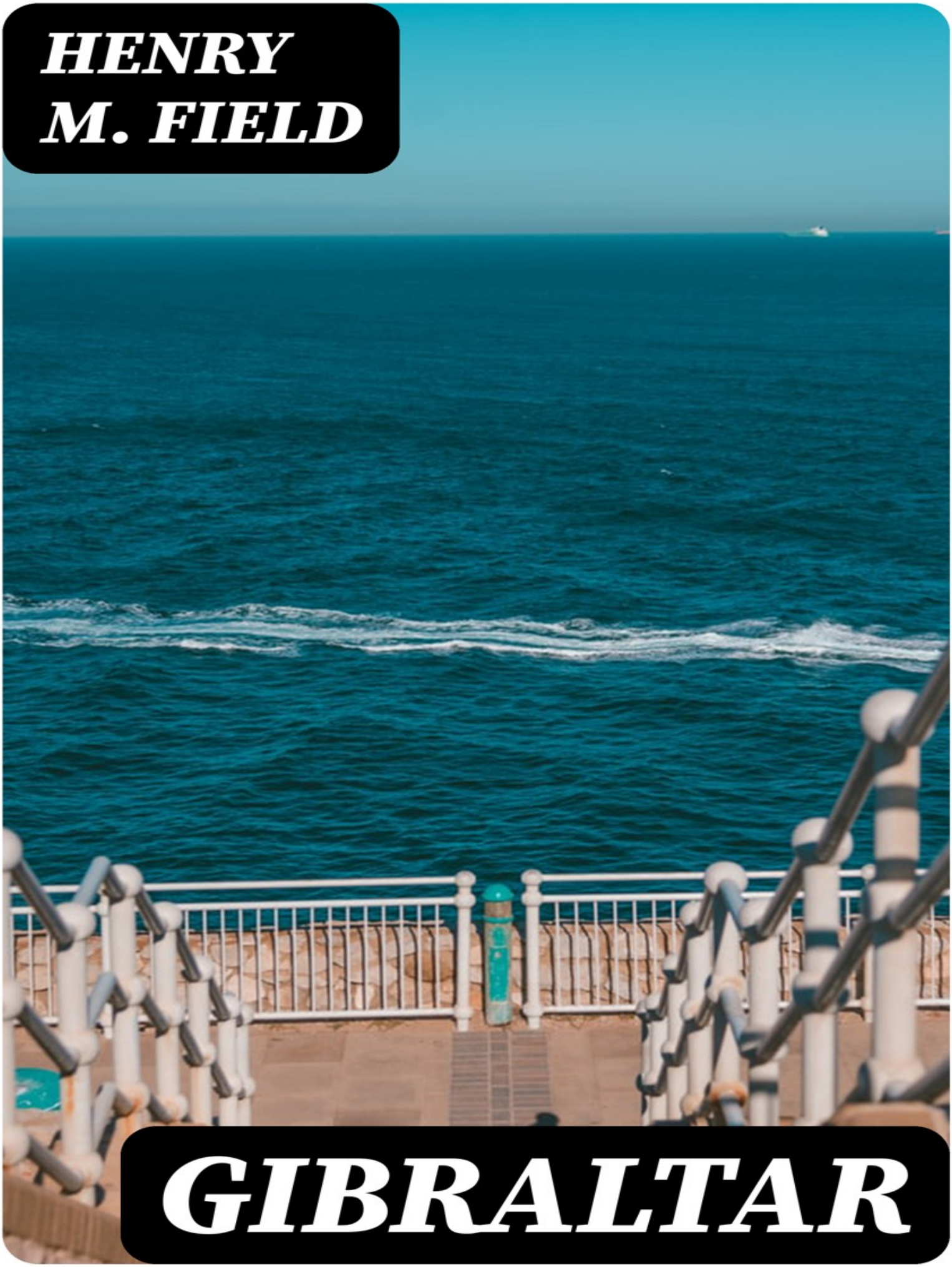
HENRY M. FIELD



GIBRALTAR

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Gibraltar

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PREFACE.

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The common tour in Spain does not include Gibraltar. Indeed it is not a part of Spain, for, though connected with the Spanish Peninsula, it belongs to England; and to one who likes to preserve a unity in his memories of a country and people, this modern fortress, with its English garrison, is not "in color" with the old picturesque kingdom of the Goths and Moors. Nor is it on the great lines of travel. It is not touched by any railroad, and by steamers only at intervals of days, so that it has come to be known as a place which it is at once difficult to get to and to get away from. Hence easy-going travellers, who are content to take circular tickets and follow fixed routes, give Gibraltar the go-by, though by so doing they miss a place that is unique in the world—unique in position, in picturesqueness, and in history. That mighty Rock, "standing out of the water and in the water," (as on the day when the old world perished;) is one of the Pillars of Hercules, that once marked the very end of the world; and around its base ancient and modern history flow together, as the waters of the Atlantic mingle with those of the Mediterranean. Like Constantinople, it is throned on two seas and two continents. As Europe at its southeastern corner stands face to face with Asia; at its southwestern it is face to face with Africa: and these were the two points of the Moslem invasion. But here the natural course of history was reversed, as that invasion began in the West. Hundreds of years before the Turk crossed the Bosphorus, the Moor crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. His

coming was the signal of an endless war of races and religions, whose lurid flames lighted up the dark background of the stormy coast. The Rock, which was the "storm-centre" of all those clouds of war, is surely worth the attention of the passing traveller. That it has been so long neglected, is the sufficient reason for an attempt to make it better known.

CHAPTER I.
ENTERING THE STRAITS

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I heard the last gun of the Old Year fired from the top of the Rock, and the first gun of the New. It was the very last day of 1886 that we entered the Straits of Gibraltar. The sea was smooth, the sky was clear, and the atmosphere so warm and bright that it seemed as if winter had changed places with summer, and that in December we were breathing the air of June.

On a day like this, when the sea is calm and still, groups of travellers sit about on the deck, watching the shores on either hand. How near they come to each other, only nine miles dividing the most southern point of Europe from the most northern point of Africa! Perhaps they once came together, forming a mountain chain which separated the sea from the ocean. But since the barrier was burst, the waters have rushed through with resistless power. Looking over the side of the ship, we observe that the current is setting eastward, which would not excite surprise were it not that it never turns back. The Mediterranean is a tideless sea: it does not ebb and flow, but pours its mighty volume ceaselessly in the same direction. This, the geographers tell us, is a provision of nature to supply the waste caused by the greater evaporation at the eastern end of the Great Sea. But this satisfies us only in part, since while this current flows on the surface, there is another, though perhaps a feebler, current flowing in the opposite direction. Down hundreds or fathoms deep, a hidden Gulf Stream is pouring

back into the bosom of the ocean. This system of the ocean currents is one of the mysteries which we do not fully understand. It seems as if there were a spirit moving not only upon the waters, but in the waters; as if the great deep were a living organism, of which the ebb and flow were like the circulation of the blood in the human frame. Or shall we say that this upper current represents the Stream of Life, which might seem to be over-full were it not that far down in the depths the excess of Life is relieved by the black waters of Death that are flowing darkly beneath?

Turning from the sea to the shore, on our left is Tarifa, the most southern point of Spain and of Europe—a point far more picturesque than the low, wooded spit of land that forms the most southern point of Asia, which the "globe-trotter" rounds as he comes into the harbor of Singapore, for here the headland that juts into the sea is crowned by a Moorish castle, on the ramparts of which, in the good old times of the Barbary pirates, sentinels kept watch of ships that should attempt to pass the Straits from either direction: for incomers and outgoers alike had to lower their flags, and pay tribute to those who counted themselves the rightful lords of this whole watery realm. I wonder that the Free-Traders do not ring the changes on the fact that the very word *tariff* is derived from this ancient stronghold, at which the mariners of the Middle Ages paid "duties" to the robbers of the sea. If both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar were to-day, as they once were, under the control of the same Moslem power, we might have two castles—one in Europe and one in Africa—like the "Castles of Europe and Asia," that still guard the Dardanelles, at which all ships of commerce

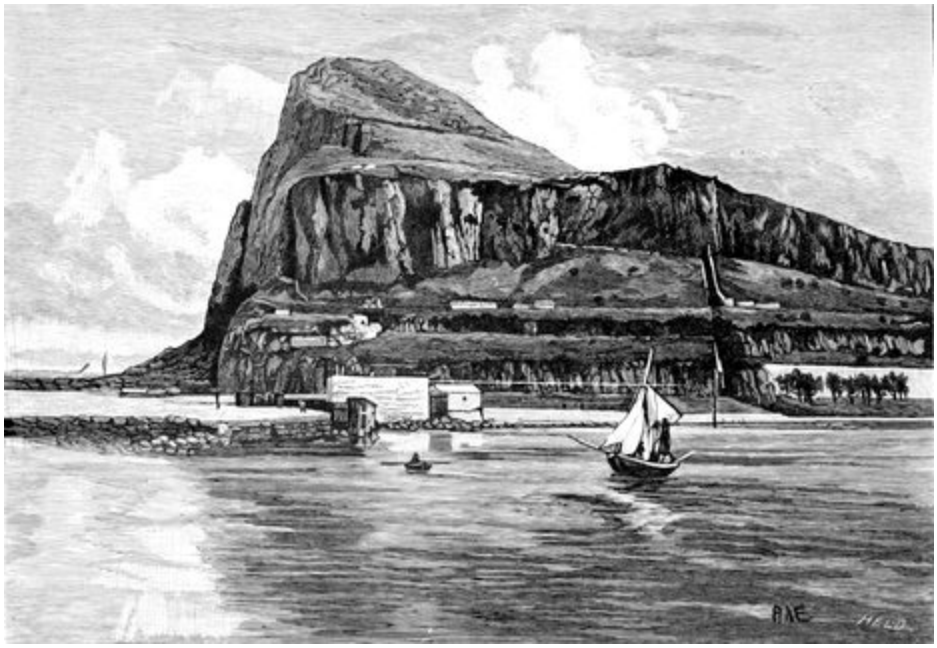
are required to stop and report before they can pass; while ships-of-war carrying too many guns, cannot pass at all without special permission from Constantinople.

But the days of the sea-robbers are ended, and the Mediterranean is free to all the commerce of the world. The Castle of Tarifa is still kept up, and makes a picturesque object on the Spanish coast, but no corsair watches the approach of the distant sail, and no gun checks her speed; every ship—English, French, or Spanish—passes unmolested on her way between these peaceful shores. Instead of the mutual hatred which once existed between the two sides of the Straits, they are in friendly intercourse, and to-day, under these smiling skies, Spain looks love to Barbary, and Barbary to Spain.

While thus turning our eyes landward and seaward, we have been rounding into a bay, and coming in sight of a mighty rock that looms up grandly before us. Although it was but the middle of the afternoon, the winter sun hung low, and striking across the bay outlined against the sky the figure of a lion couchant—a true British lion, not unlike those in Trafalgar Square in London, only that the bronze is changed to stone, and the figure carved out of a mountain! But the lion is there, with his kingly head turned toward Spain, as if in defiance of his former master, every feature bearing the character of leonine majesty and power. That is Gibraltar!

It is a common saying that "some men achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." The same may be said of places; but here is one to which both descriptions may be applied—that has had greatness

thrust upon it by nature, and has achieved it in history. There is not a more picturesque spot in Europe. The Rock is fourteen hundred feet high—more than three times as high as Edinburgh Castle, and not, like that, firm-set upon the solid ground, but rising out of the seas—and girdled with the strongest fortifications in the world. Such greatness has nature thrust upon Gibraltar. And few places have seen more history, as few have been fought over more times than this in the long wars of the Spaniard and the Moor; for here the Moor first set foot in Europe, and gave name to the place (Gibraltar being merely Gebel-el-Tarik, the mountain of Tarik, the Moorish invader), and here departed from it, after a conflict of nearly eight hundred years.



THE LION COUCHANT.

The steamer anchors in the bay, half a mile from shore, and a boat takes us off to the quay, where after being duly registered by the police, we are permitted to pass under the massive arches, and through the heavy gates of the double

line of fortifications, and enter Waterport Street, the one and almost only street of Gibraltar, where we find quarters in that most comfortable refuge of the traveller, the Royal Hotel, which, for the period of our stay, is to be our home.

When I stepped on shore I was among strangers: even the friend who had been my companion through Spain had remained in Cadiz, since in coming under the English flag I had no longer need of a Spanish interpreter, and I felt a little lonely; for inside these walls there was not a human being, man or woman, whom I had ever seen before. Yet one who has been knocked about the world as I have been, soon makes himself at home, and in an hour I had found, if not a familiar face, at least a familiar name, which gave me a right to claim acquaintance. Readers whose memories run back thirty years to the laying of the first Atlantic Cable in 1858, may recall the fact that the messages from Newfoundland were signed by an operator who bore the singular name of De Sauty, and when the pulse of the old sea-cord grew faint and fluttering, as if it were muttering incoherent phrases before it drew its last breath, we were accustomed to receive daily messages signed "All right: De Sauty!" which kept up our courage for a time, until we found that "All right" was "All wrong." The circumstance afforded much amusement at the time, and Dr. Holmes wrote one of his wittiest poems about it, in which the refrain of every verse was "All right: De Sauty!" Well, the message was true, at least in one sense, for De Sauty was all right, if the cable was not. The cable died, but the stout-hearted operator lived, and is at this moment the manager of the Eastern Telegraph Company in Gibraltar. This is one of those great

English companies, which have their centre in London, and whose "lines have" literally "gone out through all the earth." Its "home field" is the Mediterranean, from which it reaches out long arms down the Red Sea to India and Australia, and indeed to all the Eastern world. Its General Manager is Sir James Anderson, who commanded the Great Eastern when she laid the cable successfully in 1866. I had crossed the ocean with him in '67, and now, wishing to do me a good turn, he had insisted on my taking a letter to all their offices on both sides of the Mediterranean, to transmit my messages free! This was a pretty big license; his letter was almost like one of Paul's epistles "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, greeting." It contained a sort of general direction to make myself at home in all creation!

With such an introduction I felt at home in the telegraph office in Gibraltar, and especially when I could take by the hand our old friend De Sauty. He has a hearty grip, which speaks for the true Englishman that he is. If any of my countrymen had supposed that he died with the cable, I am happy to say that he not only "still lives," but is very much alive. He at once sent off to London a message to my friends in America—a good-bye for the old year, which brought me the next morning a greeting for the new.

From the telegraph office I took my way to that of the American Consul, who gave me a welcome such as I could find in no other house in Gibraltar, since his is the only American family! When I asked after my countrymen (who, as they are going up and down in the earth, and show themselves everywhere, I took for granted must be here), he answered that there was "not one!" He is not only the

official representative of our country, but he and his children the only Americans. This being so, it is a happy circumstance that the Great Republic is so well represented; for a better man than Horatio J. Sprague could not be found in the two hemispheres. He is the oldest Consul in the service, having been forty years at this post, where his father, who was appointed by General Jackson, was Consul before him. He received *his* appointment from President Polk. Through all these years he has maintained the honor of the American name, and to-day there is not within the walls of Gibraltar a man—soldier or civilian—who is more respected than this solitary representative of our country.

Some may think there is not much need of a Consul where there are no Americans, and yet nearly five hundred ships sailed from this port last year for America: pity that he should have to confess that very few bore the American flag! Thus the post is a responsible one, and at times involves duties the most delicate and difficult, as in the late war, when the Sumter was lying here, with three or four American ships off the harbor (for they were not permitted to remain in port but twenty-four hours) to prevent her escape. At that time the Consul was constantly on the watch, only to see the privateer get off at last by the transparent device of taking out her guns, and being sold to an English owner, who immediately hoisted the English flag, and put to sea in broad daylight in the face of our ships, and made her way to Liverpool, where she was fitted out as a blockade-runner!

Those were trying days for expatriated Americans. However, it was all made up when Peace came, and Peace

with Victory—with the Union restored and the country saved. Since then it has been the privilege of the Consul at Gibraltar to welcome many who took part in the great struggle, among them Generals Grant and Sherman and Admiral Farragut. Of course a soldier is always interested in a fortress, for it is in the line of his profession; and the greatest fortification in the world could but be regarded with a curious eye by old soldiers like those who had led our armies for four years; who had conducted great campaigns, with long marches and battles and sieges—battles among the bloodiest of modern times, and one siege (that of Richmond) which lasted as long as the famous siege of Gibraltar.

But perhaps no one felt a keener interest in what he saw here than the old sea-dog, who had bombarded the forts at the mouth of the Mississippi six days and nights; had broken the heavy iron boom stretched across the river; and run his ships past the forts under a tremendous fire; only to find still before him a fleet greater than his own, of twenty armed steamers, four ironclad rams, and a multitude of fire-rafts, all of which he attacked and destroyed, and captured New Orleans, an achievement in naval warfare as great as any ever wrought by Nelson. To Farragut Gibraltar was nothing more than a big ship, whose decks were ramparts. Pretty long decks they were, to be sure, but only furnishing so many more port-holes, and carrying so many more guns, and enabling its commander to fire a more tremendous broadside.

Talking over these things fired my patriotic breast till I began to feel as if I were in "mine ain countrie," and among

my American kinsmen. And as I walked from the Consul's back to the Royal Hotel, I did not feel quite so lonely in Gibraltar as I felt an hour before.

As the afternoon wore away, the Spaniards who had come in from the country to market, to buy or sell, began to disappear, and soon went hurrying out, while the belated townsmen came hurrying in. At half-past five the evening gun from the top of the Rock boomed over land and sea, and with a few minutes' grace for the last straggler, the gates of the double line of fortifications were closed for the night, and there was no more going out or coming in till morning. It gave me a little uncomfortable feeling to be thus imprisoned in a fortress, with no possibility of escape. The bustling streets soon subsided into quietness. At half-past nine another gun was the signal for the soldiers to return to their barracks; and soon the town was as tranquil as a New England village. As I stepped out upon the balcony, the stillness seemed almost unnatural. I heard no cry of "All's well" from the sentinel pacing the ramparts, as from sailors on the deck, nor the "Ave Maria santissima" of the Spanish watchman. Not even the howling of a dog broke the stillness of the night. The moon, but in her second quarter, did not shut out the light of stars, which were shining brightly on Rock and Bay. Even the heavy black guns looked peaceful in the soft and tender light. It was the last night of the year—and therefore a holy night, as it was to be marked by a Holy Nativity—the birth of a New Year, a "holy child," as it would come from the hands of God unstained by sin. A little before midnight I fell asleep, from which I started up at the sound of the morning gun. The Old Year was dead! He had been a