

A stack of several old, leather-bound books. The spines are visible, showing various colors like red, black, and brown. Some titles are partially legible, such as "HOLY BIBLE" on a red spine and "TYNDALE" on a black spine. The books are stacked horizontally, with their edges facing the viewer.

***BRET  
HARTE***

***CONDENSED  
NOVELS: NEW  
BURLESQUES***

**Bret Harte**

# **Condensed Novels: New Burlesques**

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# Table of Contents

RUPERT THE RESEMBLER

CHAPTER I

RUDOLPH OF TRULYRURALANIA

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MY HAIR CAUSES A LOT OF THINGS

CHAPTERS III TO XXII (Inclusive).

IN WHICH THINGS GET MIXED

CHAP XXIII AND SOME OTHER CHAPS

THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE

By A. CO--N D--LE

GOLLY AND THE CHRISTIAN,

THE MINX AND THE MANXMAN

By H-LL C--NE

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN LONGBOWE, YEOMAN BEING A  
MODERN-ANTIQUE REALISTIC ROMANCE (COMPILED FROM  
SEVERAL EMINENT SOURCES).

CHAPTERS I TO XX

DAN'L BOREM

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

STORIES THREE

I

FOR SIMLA REASONS

II.

A PRIVATE'S HONOR

III

JUNGLE FOLK

"ZUT-SKI"

THE PROBLEM OF A WICKED FEME SOLE

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

VIII

# **RUPERT THE RESEMBLER**

[Table of Contents](#)

**By A--TH--Y H-PE**

## **CHAPTER I**

[Table of Contents](#)

# **RUDOLPH OF TRULYRURALANIA**

[Table of Contents](#)

When I state that I was own brother to Lord Burleydon, had an income of two thousand a year, could speak all the polite languages fluently, was a powerful swordsman, a good shot, and could ride anything from an elephant to a clotheshorse, I really think I have said enough to satisfy any feminine novel-reader of Bayswater or South Kensington that I was a hero. My brother's wife, however, did not seem to incline to this belief.

"A more conceited, self-satisfied little cad I never met than you," she said. "Why don't you try to do something instead of sneering at others who do? You never take anything seriously—except yourself, which isn't worth it. You are proud of your red hair and peaked nose just because you fondly believe that you got them from the Prince of Trulyruralania, and are willing to think evil of your ancestress to satisfy your snobbish little soul. Let me

tell you, sir, that there was no more truth about that than there was in that silly talk of her partiality for her husband's red-haired gamekeeper in Scotland. Ah! that makes you start—don't it? But I have always observed that a mule is apt to remember only the horse side of his ancestry!"

Whenever my pretty sister-in-law talks in this way I always try to forget that she came of a family far inferior to our own, the Razorbills. Indeed, her people—of the Nonconformist stock—really had nothing but wealth and rectitude, and I think my brother Bob, in his genuine love for her, was willing to overlook the latter for the sake of the former.

My pretty sister-in-law's interest in my affairs always made me believe that she secretly worshiped me—although it was a fact, as will be seen in the progress of this story, that most women blushed on my addressing them. I used to say it "was the reflection of my red hair on a transparent complexion," which was rather neat—wasn't it? And subtle? But then, I was always saying such subtle things.

"My dear Rose," I said, laying down my egg spoon (the egg spoon really had nothing to do with this speech, but it imparted such a delightfully realistic flavor to the scene), "I'm not to blame if I resemble the S'helpburgs."

"It's your being so beastly proud of it that I object to!" she replied. "And for Heaven's sake, try to BE something, and not merely resemble things! The fact is you resemble too much—you're ALWAYS resembling. You resemble a man of fashion, and you're not; a wit, and you're not; a soldier, a sportsman, a hero—and you're none of 'em. Altogether, you're not in the least convincing. Now, listen! There's a good chance for you to go as our attache with Lord

Mumblepeg, the new Ambassador to Cochin China. In all the novels, you know, attaches are always the confidants of Grand Duchesses, and know more state secrets than their chiefs; in real life, I believe they are something like a city clerk with a leaning to private theatricals. Say you'll go! Do!"

"I'll take a few months' holiday first," I replied, "and then," I added in my gay, dashing way, "if the place is open—hang it if I don't go!"

"Good old bounder!" she said, "and don't think too much of that precious Prince Rupert. He was a bad lot."

She blushed again at me—as her husband entered.

"Take Rose's advice, Rupert, my boy," he said, "and go!"

And that is how I came to go to Trulyruralania. For I secretly resolved to take my holiday in traveling in that country and trying, as dear Lady Burleydon put it, really to be somebody, instead of resembling anybody in particular. A precious lot SHE knew about it!

## **CHAPTER II**

[Table of Contents](#)

## **IN WHICH MY HAIR CAUSES A LOT OF THINGS**

[Table of Contents](#)

You go to Trulyruralania from Charing Cross. In passing through Paris we picked up Mlle. Beljambe, who was going to Kohlslau, the capital of Trulyruralania, to marry the Grand Duke Michael, who, however, as I was informed, was in love with the Princess Flirtia. She blushed on seeing me—but, I was told afterwards, declined being introduced to me on any account. However, I thought nothing of this, and went on to Bock, the next station to Kohlslau. At the little inn in the forest I was informed I was just in time to see the coronation of the new king the next day. The landlady and her daughter were very communicative, and, after the fashion of the simple, guileless stage peasant, instantly informed me what everybody was doing, and at once explained the situation. She told me that the Grand Duke Michael—or Black Michael as he was called—himself aspired to the throne, as well as to the hand of the Princess Flirtia, but was hated by the populace, who preferred the young heir, Prince Rupert; because he had the hair and features of the dynasty of the S'helpburgs, "which," she added, "are singularly like your own."

"But is red hair so very peculiar here?" I asked.

"Among the Jews—yes, sire! I mean yes, SIR," she corrected herself. "You seldom see a red-headed Jew."

"The Jews!" I repeated in astonishment.

"Of course you know the S'helpburgs are descended directly from Solomon—and have indeed some of his matrimonial peculiarities," she said, blushing.

I was amazed—but recalled myself. "But why do they call the Duke of Kohlslau Black Michael?" I asked carelessly.

"Because he is nearly black, sir. You see, when the great Prince Rupert went abroad in the old time he visited



England, Scotland, and Africa. They say he married an African lady there—and that the Duke is really more in the direct line of succession than Prince Rupert."

But here the daughter showed me to my room. She blushed, of course, and apologized for not bringing a candle, as she thought my hair was sufficiently illuminating. "But," she added with another blush, "I do SO like it."

I replied by giving her something of no value—a Belgian nickel which wouldn't pass in Bock, as I had found to my cost. But my hair had evidently attracted attention from others, for on my return to the guest-room a stranger approached me, and in the purest and most precise German—the Court or 'Olland Hof speech—addressed me:

"Have you the red hair of the fair King or the hair of your father?"

Luckily I was able to reply with the same purity and precision: "I have both the hair of the fair King and my own. But I have not the hair of my father nor of Black Michael, nor of the innkeeper nor the innkeeper's wife. The red HEIR of the fair King would be a son."

Possibly this delicate mot on the approaching marriage of the King was lost in the translation, for the stranger strode abruptly away. I learned, however, that the King was actually then in Bock, at the castle a few miles distant, in the woods. I resolved to stroll thither.

It was a fine old mediaeval structure. But as the singular incidents I am about to relate combine the romantic and adventurous atmosphere of the middle ages with all the appliances of modern times, I may briefly state that the castle was lit by electricity, had fire-escapes on each of the

turrets, four lifts, and was fitted up by one of the best West End establishments. The sanitary arrangements were excellent, and the drainage of the most perfect order, as I had reason to know personally later. I was so affected by the peaceful solitude that I lay down under a tree and presently fell asleep. I was awakened by the sound of voices, and, looking up, beheld two men bending over me. One was a grizzled veteran, and the other a younger dandyfied man; both were dressed in shooting suits.

"Never saw such a resemblance before in all my life," said the elder man. "'Pon my soul! if the King hadn't got shaved yesterday because the Princess Flirtia said his beard tickled her, I'd swear it was he!"

I could not help thinking how lucky it was—for this narrative—that the King HAD shaved, otherwise my story would have degenerated into a mere Comedy of Errors. Opening my eyes, I said boldly:

"Now that you are satisfied who I resemble, gentlemen, perhaps you will tell me who you are?"

"Certainly," said the elder curtly. "I am Spitz—a simple colonel of his Majesty's, yet, nevertheless, the one man who runs this whole dynasty—and this young gentleman is Fritz, my lieutenant. And you are—?"

"My name is Razorbill—brother to Lord Burleydon," I replied calmly.

"Good heavens! another of the lot!" he muttered. Then, correcting himself, he said brusquely: "Any relation to that Englishwoman who was so sweet on the old Rupert centuries ago?"

Here, again, I suppose my sister-in-law would have had me knock down the foreign insulter of my English ancestress—but I colored to the roots of my hair, and even farther—with pleasure at this proof of my royal descent! And then a cheery voice was heard calling "Spitz!" and "Fritz!" through the woods.

"The King!" said Spitz to Fritz quickly. "He must not see him."

"Too late," said Fritz, as a young man bounded lightly out of the bushes.

I was thunderstruck! It was as if I had suddenly been confronted with a mirror—and beheld myself! Of course he was not quite so good-looking, or so tall, but he was still a colorable imitation! I was delighted.

Nevertheless, for a moment he did not seem to reciprocate my feeling. He stared at me, staggered back and passed his hand across his forehead. "Can it be," he muttered thickly, "that I've got 'em agin? Yet I only had—shingle glash!"

But Fritz quickly interposed.

"Your Majesty is all right—though," he added in a lower voice, "let this be a warning to you for to-morrow! This gentleman is Mr. Razorbill—you know the old story of the Razorbills?—Ha! ha!"

But the King did not laugh; he extended his hand and said gently, "You are welcome—my cousin!" Indeed, my sister-in-law would have probably said that—dissipated though he was—he was the only gentleman there.

"I have come to see the coronation, your Majesty," I said.