

**MARTIN
RATTLER**

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Martin Rattler by R. M. Ballantyne

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R. M. BALLANTYNE

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MARTIN RATTLER

Robert Michael Ballantyne was born in Edinburgh in April 1825, spent some years in the Hudson's Bay Co., and died in Rome on 8 February 1894.

*William Nelson, the publisher, first suggested to Ballantyne that he should commence writing books. He wrote in all about eighty stories, the best known being *The Young Fur Traders*, *Ungava*, *The Coral Island*, *Fighting the Flames*, *Martin Rattler*, *The Dog Crusoe*, *Deep Down*, *The Gorilla Hunters*, *The Wild Man of the West*, and *the Golden Dream*.*

MARTIN RATTLER

by

R. M. BALLANTYNE

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PREFACE

MY DEAR YOUNG READERS, in presenting this book to you, I have only to repeat what I have said in the prefaces of my former works—namely, that all the important points and anecdotes are true; only the minor and unimportant ones being mingled with fiction. With this single remark, I commit my work to your hands, and wish you a pleasant ramble, in spirit, through the romantic forests of Brazil.

Yours affectionately

R. M. BALLANTYNE

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MARTIN RATTLER

CHAPTER I

The hero and his only relative

MMARTIN RATTLER was a very bad boy. At least his aunt, Mrs. Dorothy Grumbit, said so; and certainly she ought to have known, if anybody should, for Martin lived with her, and was, as she herself expressed it, "the bane of her existence, the very torment of her life." No doubt of it whatever, according to Aunt Dorothy Grumbit's showing, Martin Rattler was "a remarkably bad boy."

It is a curious fact, however, that although most of the people in the village of Ashford seemed to agree with Mrs. Grumbit in her opinion of Martin, there were very few of them who did not smile cheerfully on the child when they met him, and say, "Good-day, lad," as heartily as if they thought him the best boy in the place. No one seemed to bear Martin Rattler ill-will, notwithstanding his alleged badness. Men laughed when they said he was a bad boy, as if they did not quite believe their own assertion. The vicar, an