

**A SUMMER JAUNT:
BEING A RAMBLING
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

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A Summer Jaunt: Being a Rambling Autobiography by John Strange Winter

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JOHN STRANGE WINTER

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

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A SUMMER JAUNT

BEING

A RAMBLING AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

JOHN STRANGE WINTER 1850-1871

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"Bootles' Baby," "A Soldier's Children," "The Truth-Tellers," "My Geaf,"
"A Sea-Side Firt," "Everybody's Favourite," "The Price of a
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"The Sentimental Maria," Etc., Etc.



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A SUMMER JAUNT.

CHAPTER I.

FOUR OF US.

I WAS hard at work in my study one day when Nell came in. She looked at me with a dismayed face when she saw that I had laid down my pen.

"Oh, Jack," she said, "I thought that you were only smoking. I will come again another time."

She is very considerate, is Nell, much more so than most wives would be.

"It's all right, little woman," I cried; "I had really finished. What is it?"

"Had you really finished?"

"Yes; honour bright. I had just got to the end of my chapter."

She came back, and shut the door with a certain

solemnity which told me that she wanted something.

"I wanted to ask you, dear," she said sweetly, "whether you have made up your mind about our going away this year?"

With something of a start I came back from the thought of a particularly smart hussar, who had been having a good time in Scotland among the grouse and girls.

"Yes! About going away, Nell? No, I hadn't thought about it. What are your ideas on the subject?"

"My ideas?" said Nell, with a sigh. "Well, you see, it's so different, Jack, since we had a baby."

"You wanted a baby," I remarked.

"Oh, yes, dear," looking at me reproachfully; "of course I wanted a baby. Why, you weren't thinking that I was grudging Baby having come. Oh, no, Jack; why, she's the very light of my life! She's perfection—she's a darling! Oh, no, dear; but it does make a difference, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose it does, and will, make a difference."

"Well, when it is just a man and woman going away by themselves—why, that is one thing; but

when it comes to taking a dear darling baby and a Nanna away, too, it is quite another thing."

"I don't quite see," I remarked—I said it diffidently, because if there is one thing that my Nell is rather touchy about, it is the matter of that baby—that much longed-for and ardently-desired child of our affections—whom we called by eight names because we were afraid we should never have another, and asked all our dearest friends to be godfathers and godmothers to—"I don't quite see why we need take Baby at all. When we had Phyl and the twins with us, we left the twins at Wix very happily with Nanna, and we came back and found them in radiant health. She is really far more Nanna's baby than ours, you know, Nell," I added.

My wife looked at me with a reproach in her lovely eyes which seemed to smite me like a knife, or an east wind, or anything equally cutting and unpleasant.

"Well, Jack," she said, "I confess that you have taken my breath away."

"Why?" I asked, wilfully failing to take her meaning.

"Do you wish me seriously to understand, Jack,

that you would be content, willing, happy to leave *Baby* behind, *even* with Nanna?"

"I don't think that *Baby* would suffer," I replied.

"Suffer—what, with Nanna? Oh, no; but could you live without her for three months?"

"Are we going away for three months?" I asked.

"That is not an answer to my question. Could you live without *Baby* for three months?"

"Well, I might—if I had you," I replied. "I shouldn't like it, of course; but if it were for *Baby's* good, I would try."

I thought that that was really a stroke of diplomacy worthy of a better brain than that possessed by your humble servant. It had no effect upon Nell whatever.

"I don't believe," she said triumphantly, "that you could live for three weeks without *Baby*! Think what it would be like in the morning without *Baby* coming to pay us a little visit and tell us what kind of morning it is."

"But it is Nanna who tells us what kind of a morning it is."

"Oh, well, it is the same thing."

"I can live very well without Nanna," I replied. "I have a very deep and strong feeling of affection