Title: Hurricane Hurry

Author: William Henry Giles Kingston
Illustrator: Charles J. De Lacy

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W.H.G. Kingston

"Hurricane Hurry"

Chapter One.

My birth, parentage, and education.—Make the acquaintance of Tom Rockets.—Sent to sea on board the Folkstone cutter, Anno 1764.—Numerous voyages.—My friends and I appear on the quarter-deck of the Torbay, 74.—Join the Falcon.—My only duel.—Adventures in the West Indies.—The Carib war.—Boat capsized.—Fate of her crew.—Appointed to the Wolf.

On the north-east side of the street, about midway between the fish and flesh markets in the seaport town of Falmouth, and at about the silent and solemn hour of thirty-six minutes past one by my father's watch, on the morning of the 28th day of December, of the year of grace 1752, His Gracious Majesty George the Second being King of Great Britain and Ireland, (it is necessary in important matters to be particular). I was introduced with the usual forms and ceremonies into the ancient family of the Hurrys, as the undoubted child of my father Richard and my mother Joan, the ninth, and as it subsequently proved, the last of their promising offspring. On the 29th day of the January following, the Reverend Edward Walmsley, rector of the parish, baptised me by the names of Hurricane, with the addition of Tempest, which were selected by my parents, after numberless consultations, in compliment to my maternal grand-uncle, Sir Hurricane Tempest, Alderman of Bristol, though it did not appear from his remark when informed of the occurrence that it was likely to benefit in the remotest manner from the delicate attention which had been paid him.

My early days were not remarkable, I got through the complaints incident to childhood in a manner satisfactory to my mother and the doctor, while my elder brothers and sisters took very good care that I should not be spoilt by over-indulgence. My brothers, as they advanced towards manhood, were sent into various professions, and as none of them had chosen the sea, it was decided, without my opinion being asked, that I should be made an offering to Neptune.

That I might be prepared for my future calling, I was sent to reside with my brother-in-law Jack Hayfield, in the neighbourhood of Bideford, North Devon, to allow me the vast benefit of attending the school of worthy Jeremiah Sinclair, kept over the marketplace in that far-famed maritime town. I still love the recollection of the old place, with its steep streets, its broad quays, and its bridge of many arches; to my mind a more picturesque bridge does not exist in all the world, nor, when the tide is in, a prettier river. On the bosom of that river I gained my first practical experience of affairs nautical, and many a trip I made down to Appledore with my schoolfellow Ned Treggellis, in a boat which, had not a special providence watched over us, would speedily have consigned us to the muddy bottom of the stream. An oar served us as a rudder, another as a mast, with a piece of sacking as a sail spread on a condemned boat-hook, while one of us was constantly employed in baling out the water which came in through leaks unnumbered—a state of affairs we had learned to consider normal to our craft.

From Sinclair's school, in order to receive the finishing-touches to my education, I was removed to old Allen's well-known Mathematical Academy in Cold Harbour.

It is just possible that I might have reaped some amount of benefit from the mental provender served out in those nurseries of genius, but unfortunately for me Jack's appreciation of the advantages of knowledge was such that he considered the time squandered devoted to its acquisition. Frequently, therefore, when I was supposed by my good sister Mary, his wife, to be on my way to school, I had been waylaid by him, and was employed with another boy in setting springles, marking woodcocks, or in some other equally intellectual pastime. Whatever I may now think about the matter, I was then convinced that Brother Jack was one of the kindest and best fellows in the world; and when I fell asleep in my chair during the evening, my somnolency was attributed to the assiduity with which I had applied to my studies during the day. I have since then had not a little reason to regret honest Jack's ignorance and my own folly in listening to his persuasions.

My frequent companion on the occasions I have spoken of was Tommy Rockets, the son of a poor widow who lived near Jack's house. He was somewhat younger than myself and small for his age, but a sharp, intelligent little fellow, though amusingly ignorant of affairs in general. His chief employment was acting the part of a scarecrow by frightening birds from the cornfields, and running on errands into Bideford for any of the neighbours, by which means he enabled his mother to eke out her scanty pittance. I used to share with him my school pasty, and now and then I saved a piece of bread and cheese, or I would bring him a cake or a roll from Bideford. He never failed to carry a portion to his mother, sharp-set as he always was himself. The poor fellow soon conceived a strong affection for me; and when I was going off to sea he cried bitterly at the thoughts of parting from me. I also had a regard for him, and, forgetting how small and young he was, I took it into my head that I would carry him with me. We were sitting on a grassy bank under a tree, with a series of undulating hills and the blue ocean beyond, when I broached the subject.

"Would'st like to come to sea with me, Tom?" said I broadly.

"What, to them furrin parts across the water?" he asked, pointing seaward with his chin. "No; I'd bee afeared, Master Hurricane, I would. What makes you go now?"

"To fight the Frenchmen, of course," I replied. "It's peace just now, they say, though I thought we were always at war with the French; but it won't last long, that's one comfort."

"Well, now, I'd rather stay at home with mother than go and fight the furriners—that I would," said Tommy, with much simplicity.

"Oh, you've no spirit, boy!" I replied, with a look of contempt. "Wouldn't you like, now, to be sailing round the world with Commodore Byron, who'll fill his ships with rubies, and pearls, and gold, and precious stones, and all sorts of things. Why, Tommy, you would come back with more riches in your waistcoat-pocket than you ever thought to possess in your life."

Tommy's eyes sparkled as I spoke. "What, enough to make my mother a lady!" he exclaimed. "Well, then, Master Hurricane, if so be you can take me to them parts, when I'm big enough I'll go with ye."

"Well, we'll see about it," said I, with a patronising air; "but it is not all gold-picking, remember. There's plenty of fighting and prize-taking besides. You've heard speak of Admiral Hawke?"

"No," said Tommy, "I ne'er did."

"I'd have given my right hand to have been with him when he beat the French in Quiberon Bay. That was a glorious day for old England, let me tell you." I was able to expatiate on the subject, as the last time I was at home my father read me a full account of the battle which took place in 1759, the year preceding the death of his Majesty George the Second, and about five years before the time of which I am now speaking. It was the most memorable action of my early days. The French fleet was commanded by Monsieur de Conflans, whom a short time before a violent gale had compelled to take shelter in Brest harbour, while the English had anchored in Torbay. The two fleets were about equal. After cruising for some time the enemy again took shelter in Quiberon Bay, on the coast of Bretagne, in France, where they were pursued by the English. A strong gale had sprung up and a heavy sea was running, but, undaunted, the brave Hawke stood on. The Frenchmen hoped to lead his fleet to destruction among the rocks and shoals of that dangerous coast. Unwilling to fight, yet too late to escape, the French admiral, when he saw the English approach, was compelled to make sail. Hawke pursued them and ordered his pilots to lay him alongside the Soleil Royal, which bore the flag of the French admiral. The Thesée, a seventy-four-gun ship, ran between them, and a heavy sea entering her ports, she foundered. The Superbe, another Frenchman, shared the same fate. Several other French ships struck their colours; many were driven on shore, among which was the flag-ship, which was set on fire and destroyed. A great number of the French were killed, but the English lost only one lieutenant and thirty-nine men killed, and about two hundred wounded. But I must not stop to describe the gallant actions which occurred during my boyhood. Lord Anson, one of the most experienced of navigators, died two years only before I went to sea. Captain Byron sailed that same memorable year, when my country first had the benefit of my services, on his voyage of discovery into the pacific, and returned in 1766. Captains Wallis and Carteret sailed on exploring voyages at the same time. I happened to have heard of Mr Cook, but it was not till many years after this that he became known to fame as one of the most talented and scientific of English navigators; indeed, he did not return from his great voyage till eleven years after this. He lost his life in his last voyage in 1779.

A number of gallant actions were fought at the end of the war, sufficient to fire the ardour of any youth of spirit to whom they were recounted. Captain Hood's capture of the Warwick, a sixty-gun ship, which had been taken from the English, was one of the most celebrated. At this time, however, she carried but thirty-six guns, with 300 men, including a company of soldiers. Captain Hood attacked her in the Minerva frigate of thirty-two guns and 220 men, and after an hour's fight, with a heavy sea running, both ships having lost their masts, he captured her and took her to Spithead. A still more remarkable action was that of the Bellona and Brilliant, Captains Faulkner and Loggie, and a French ship of the line and two heavy frigates, which resulted in the capture of the first and the flight of the latter. There were also numerous actions fought between packets and privateers, and other small craft, with the enemy, which seldom failed to add to the honour and glory of our country. Though ignorant of other lore, I greedily devoured all the accounts I could find of these events, and having once made up my mind that the sea was to be my profession, I resolved, when opportunities should occur, to imitate them to the best of my power.

But to return to my friend Tommy. Just before I sailed I went to pay his mother a visit. I found the widow sitting, as was her wont, knitting at her window, waiting for her son's return. I went not empty-handed, for besides my pasty, which I had saved, I had bought a loaf and a lump of cheese and a bundle of lollipops at Bideford. First presenting her with these treasures and emptying my pockets of the very small amount of cash they contained, I opened the business I had at heart. Poor Mrs Rockets burst into tears when I asked her to let her Tommy go to sea with me.

“Oh, Master Hurricane!” said she, “I feel all your kindness to a poor creature like me and my boy, and I would not deny you anything, but, oh, sir, he is my only child, my only comfort in life, and I cannot part with him!”

All the arguments I could use and the brilliant hopes I held out were of no avail for a long time, till at last, with a sad voice, she consented, when he grew bigger, should he then show a strong wish to go to sea, to allow him to accompany me.

I met Tommy on my way home and told him that he must make haste and grow big that he might go to sea and fill his pockets with pearls and diamonds for his widowed mother. In many a dream which I had thus conjured up, both by day and night, did the poor lad indulge as he was scaring off the crows in the fields or lying on his humble pallet in his thatched-roof hut near Bideford.

It was at Whitsuntide of the year 1764, I then numbering eleven summers, that I was placed on the books of the Folkstone cutter, commanded by a particular friend of my father’s, Lieutenant Clover; the amount of learning I possessed on quitting school just enabling me to read a chapter in the Bible to my old blind grandmother (on my mother’s side), who lived with us, and to tell my father how many times a coachwheel of any diameter would turn round in going to Penryn. Having received my father’s and mother’s blessing and a sea-chest, which contained a somewhat scanty supply of clothes, a concise epitome of navigation, an English dictionary, and my grandmother’s Bible—the only gift of value the kind old lady had it in her power to bestow—I was launched forth into the wide world to take my chance with the bustling, hard-hearted crowd which fills it. I was speedily removed from the cutter into his Majesty’s packet the Duncannon, Captain Charles Edwards, in which vessel I crossed the Atlantic for the first time; and after visiting Madeira and several of the West India Islands I returned to Falmouth on the eve of Christmas, 1767. I next joined the Duke of York, Captain Dickenson, in which vessel I made no less than sixteen voyages to Lisbon. As, however, I had grown very weary of the packet service, I was not sorry to be paid off and to return once more home, if not with a fuller purse, at all events, a better sailor than when I left it. I was not long allowed to enjoy the luxury of idleness before my father got me appointed to the Torbay, seventy-four, commanded by Captain Walls, who was considered one of the smartest officers in the service, and I was taught to expect a very different sort of life to that which I had been accustomed to in the slow-going packet service. There were several youngsters from the neighbourhood of Falmouth, who had never before been to sea, who were appointed to the same ship. One of them, my old messmate poor Dick Martingall, used to speak of the unsophisticated joy with which his old mother, in her happy simplicity, announced to him the fact of his appointment. She came to his bedside long before the usual hour of rising and awoke him.

“Richard, my dear son, Richard!” she said; “get up, thou art made for ever!”

“What am I made, mother?” he asked with astonishment, rubbing his eyes, which were still full of sleep.

“Oh, my boy, my dear boy!” replied the good lady, her countenance beaming with satisfaction, “thou art made a midshipman!”

Alas! little did his poor old mother dream of the sea of troubles into which her darling boy was about to be launched, what hardships and difficulties he was doomed to encounter, “the snubs that patient raids from their superiors take,” or she would not have congratulated herself on the event, or supposed that by his being made a midshipman he was made for ever. Yet in his case it was so far true, poor fellow, that he was never made anything else, as he was carried out of the world by fever before he had gained a higher step in rank.

The tailors in Falmouth and its neighbourhood who were employed in fitting us out were delightfully innocent of all notion of what a midshipman’s uniform should really be, and each one seemed to fancy that he was at liberty to give full scope to the exuberance of his taste. Their models might have been taken from the days of Benbow, or rather, perhaps, from the costumes of those groups who go about disguised at Christmas-time enacting plays in the halls of the gentry and nobility, and are called by us west-country folks “geese-dancers.” As we met on board the cutter which was to carry us to Plymouth we were not, I will allow, altogether satisfied with our personal appearance, and still less so when we stepped on the quarter-deck of the seventy-four, commanded by one of the proudest, most punctilious men in the service, surrounded by a body of well-dressed, dashing-looking officers.

Tom Peard first advanced, as chief and oldest of our gang, with a bob-wig on his head surmounted by a high hat bound by narrow gold lace, white lapels to his coat, a white waistcoat, and light-blue inexpressibles with midshipman’s buttons. By his side hung a large brass-mounted hanger, while his legs were encased in a huge pair of waterproof boots. I followed next, habited in a coat all sides radius, as old Allen would have said, the skirt actually sweeping the deck, and so wide that it would button down to the very bottom. My white cuffs reached half way up the arm to the elbow; my waistcoat, which was of the same snowy hue, reached to my knees, but was fortunately concealed from sight by the ample folds of my coat, as were also my smallclothes. I had on white thread stockings, high shoes and buckles, and a plain cocked hat—a prodigiously long silver-handled sword completing my costume.

Dick Martingall’s and Tom Paynter’s dresses wore not much less out of order, giving them more the appearance of gentlemen of the highway than of naval officers of respectability. One had a large brass-mounted sword once belonging to his great-grandfather, a trooper in the army of the Prince of Orange; the other, a green-handled hanger, which had done service with Sir Cloudesley Shovel.

Often have I seen a set of geese-dancers compelled to make a hurried flight before the hot poker of some irate housekeeper disturbed in her culinary operations, and much in the same way did we four aspirants for naval honours beat a precipitate retreat from the deck of the Torbay as, with a stamp of his foot, our future captain ordered us to be gone and instantly to get cut down and reduced into ordinary proportions by the Plymouth tailors.

As may be supposed, the operation was almost beyond the skill of even the most experienced master of the shears, and we were all of us compelled, much to our dismay, to furnish ourselves for the most part with new suits. On our

return on board, however, we were complimented on our appearance; and as our tailor agreed to receive payment from our first instalment of prize-money, we were perfectly content with the arrangement.

After spending a few months in channel cruising—the Torbay being ordered to lay as guard-ship at Plymouth—such a life not suiting my fancy, I quitted her and joined his Majesty's sloop of war Falcon, captain Cuthbert Baines, fitting out for the West India station.

As in those days I kept no regular journal, I have only a few scattered notes written in an old log-book to guide me in my account of the events of that period of my career. A few are still vivid in my memory as when they first occurred, but many have escaped me altogether, or appear like the fleeting phantoms of a dream of which it is impossible to describe the details. I must therefore be allowed to pass rapidly over that early portion of my naval life and go on to the time when I had passed my examination for a lieutenant's commission and trod the quarter-deck as a master's mate.

On the Falcon's leaving Portsmouth we touched at Falmouth or our way down channel, when I had the opportunity of taking leave of my family—with some of them, alas! it was an eternal farewell. This is one of the seaman's severest trials; he knows from sad experience that of the many smiling faces he sees collected round the domestic hearth some will too surely be missing on his return, wanderers, like himself, far, far away, or gone to their final resting-place.

We made a stay of a few days at Madeira, and without any occurrence worthy of note reached English Harbour, Antigua, October 21st, 1771, where we found lying several ships of war under the flag of Rear-Admiral Mann.

I have not hitherto mentioned the names of my messmates. Among others, there were William Wilkins, John Motto, Israel Pellew (see note), and Alexander Dick. We were a jovial set and generally pulled well together; but on one occasion the apple of discord was thrown in among us, and Alexander Dick, the surgeon's mate, and I fell to loggerheads in consequence of some reflections I thoughtlessly cast on the land of his nativity—to the effect, as far as my recollection serves me, that nothing better was to be found there as food for the people than sheeps' heads and boiled bagpipes; to which he retorted by asserting that we west-country folks were little better than heathens and had no more manners than blackamoors. As neither of us would retract what we had said, it was decided that our dispute could alone be settled by mortal combat. Pistols, we were aware, were the most gentlemanly weapons to be employed on such occasions; but we found that it would be impossible to obtain them in a hurry without to a certainty betraying our intentions. It was therefore settled by our seconds and ourselves that we should decide the knotty question with our hangers as soon as we could manage to get on shore after reaching port. All four of us therefore, having got leave the morning after our arrival, left the ship soon after daybreak in a shore-boat and pulled off to a retired part of the harbour. Here we landed, and telling our black boatmen to wait our return, we walked away arm-in-arm to a spot where we thought no one would observe us. Having thrown off our coats and tucked up our shirt-sleeves, the word was given, and, drawing our hangers, we advanced towards each other with furious passes, as if nothing but the death of one of us could satisfy the rancour of our enmity, and yet at that very moment I believe neither of us recollected the origin of our quarrel. Dick first gave me a cut on the shoulder, which so excited my fury that I was not long in returning the compliment by bestowing a slash across his arm, which made him wince not a little, but before I could follow it up he had recovered his guard. In a moment I was at him again, and as we were neither of us great masters of the noble art of self-defence, we kept hewing and slashing away at each other in a most unscientific manner for several minutes, till we were both of us covered with gashes from head to foot, and the blood was flowing copiously down into our very shoes. At last, from very weariness and loss of blood, we dropped the points of our swords as if by mutual consent. Our seconds now stepped forward.

"Hurry, my good fellow," said my second, "one thing I see clearly. This matter cannot be settled satisfactorily with cold steel—it's too much like the custom of piccarooners. We must wait till we can get hold of pistols, and arrange the affair in a gentlemanly way. That's my opinion, and I daresay you and Mr Dick will agree with me." In honest truth, both my antagonist and I were in such a condition that we were perfectly ready to agree to any arrangement which would prevent the necessity of continuing the painful operation we had both been inflicting on each other. All four of us therefore sat down on the sands, and Dick, pulling out some lint and bandages from his pockets, our seconds, under his directions, bound up our wounds. When this at length was done we found it, however, impossible to get on our coats again. We were therefore obliged to carry them over our shoulders as we walked to the boats. When the Negro boatmen saw our pale faces and halting gait, as with difficulty we stepped into the boat, they grinned from ear to ear, full well guessing what had occurred, and doubtlessly thinking, as will, I suspect, my readers, that we were very great fools for our pains. Ay, truly we were far worse than fools, for in obedience to the customs of sinful men we had been disobeying the laws of God, and committing a very great crime as well as a very great folly, but we did not think so then, nor did I till very many years afterwards.

Our intentions had not been kept so secret but that they had become known on board, and, our appearance on our return fully corroborating the truth of the reports which had been going about, we were put under arrest by Captain Baines, who then sent for us, to know the cause of our quarrel. We explained it as well as we could; but, as may be supposed, we neither of us had a very good case to make out. "Well, gentlemen," said our commander, "this is a point I do not wish to decide myself, but I shall leave it to the arbitration of the gun-room officers, and to their decision you must bow." The next day, therefore, the gun-room officers held a court, and, feeling very stiff and very sore, and looking, I doubt not, very foolish—though we did our best to appear like heroes—we stood before them. Having both of us pleaded our cause, it was decided that we had no business to use the language we had employed, and that we were both in the wrong. We were in consequence ordered to shake hands, and be friends, or else to look out for squalls. Had we possessed more sense, this we might have done before we had cut each other half to pieces, not to speak of spoiling a shirt and a pair of breeches apiece. Thus ended the first and only duel in which I was ever engaged, and Dick and I from that time forward became very good friends.

About this time, some serious disputes having arisen with the Caribs of Saint Vincent, who had become very troublesome to the settlers, the British Government formed the design of removing them altogether from the island

and of placing them on some part of the mainland, where they might enjoy their own manner of life without interfering with civilised people. To effect this object an expedition was sent to the island under the command of Major-General Dalrymple, consisting of two regiments from America and various bodies of troops collected from the other islands and from on board all his Majesty's ships of war on the station. At this distance of time of course I cannot pretend to be able to give any minute description of the details of the affair. I know that there were some gentlemen who acted as commissioners who went on shore to try and arrange matters with the Caribs; but the savages, after agreeing to terms, not showing any intention to abide by them, the troops were ordered to land. It was very easy to give the order, but not so easy to execute it, for at the time there happened to be an unusually heavy surf breaking on the shore. It would have been wiser in my humble opinion to have waited till the surf had gone down, or to have selected some other spot for disembarkation to that fixed on; but, strange to say, the authorities did not happen to ask my opinion, simply, I suppose, because I was a midshipman, and the landing commenced. The boats, pulled by the seamen and crowded with soldiers, made for the shore. Some reached it in safety by taking the proper moment to dash through the surf, but others were not so fortunate. One boat from our ship had put off; the men in high spirits at the thought of a brush with the Niggers, as they called the unfortunate Caribs. I was watching them from the deck as they approached the shore, when a heavy roller went tumbling in after them. The men saw it coming and pulled for their lives, but it was too quick for them, and catching the boat turned her over as if she had been a mere cockleshell. In an instant some thirty poor fellows were struggling in the surf. Many sunk at once, others made way for the shore, but they had a remorseless enemy on the watch for them, and several, with a shriek of agony which reached almost to the ears of those on board the Falcon, were drawn under by those monsters of the deep, the voracious sharks. Others, when nearly touching the sand, were washed out again by the reflux of another roller following up the first. It was doubly sad, because before it was possible to send any help to them their fate was sealed. Several other boats met with a like accident, and before the troops were all landed a large number both of seamen and soldiers were lost. The survivors formed on the beach and then advanced rapidly into the country, where the Caribs were drawn up in strong force to receive them.

The enemy, having the advantage of a knowledge of the country, chose their own ground for encountering our troops, and, truth to say, generally had the best of it. I do not wish to enlarge on the subject. I know that we gained very little honour and glory, but, after losing a considerable number of men, some from the bullets of the enemy and others from sunstrokes, the troops were ordered to embark again. Afterwards we heard that the Caribs were allowed to remain in possession of their rights. I suspect, however, that they did not retain them for any long period after this time.

I remember nothing of any particular importance happening to me till August, 1772, when we were lying in English Harbour, Antigua, in company with his Majesty's ships Chatham, Sea-horse, and Active. I have good reason to remember the harbour well. It is small, but very pretty. The inner part is encircled by hills of various shapes and sizes, the outer is formed by a rocky ridge, with a fort on it guarding the narrow entrance. The capital, Saint Johns, is at the other side of the island, so that we were not able to get there as often as we wished. With little or no warning one of the most terrific hurricanes I ever encountered came down upon us, and before we could get our topmasts housed our masts went by the board, and at the same instant breaking from our anchors we were all driven on shore together. It was a case in which seamanship was of no avail, for before we could make any preparations to avert the evil the catastrophe had occurred. The same blast levelled with the ground all the stores and houses in the dockyard, as also the Naval Hospital and all the dwelling-houses and other buildings which it encountered in its course. Before we could attempt to heave the ships off we were obliged to clear them of everything, down to the very kelson, and even then we could not move them till we applied the most powerful purchases which could be invented. The Falcon had received so much injury that we were compelled to heave her down to repair her before she was fit for sea. While this operation was going forward I had the misfortune to break my right knee-pan, and for very long it was doubtful whether I should ever again have the free use of my leg. For sixteen weeks I remained in hospital, but at length, to my great satisfaction, was pronounced fit for duty.

I was now no longer a mere youngster, and had seen already a considerable amount of service. Early in 1773 I was appointed acting-lieutenant of the Falcon by Vice-Admiral Parry, who had superseded Admiral Mann. I now assumed the lieutenant's uniform and walked the deck with no little amount of pride, hoping to be confirmed in my rank when at the expiration of her time on the station my ship should return to England. The change from a midshipman's berth to the gun-room was very considerable, and as I shone away in what the Orlopians term white boot-tops, I was looked upon by them, with no little amount of envy. I was doomed, however, in this respect to suffer disappointment. In August, 1774, the Falcon returned home, the captain, the lieutenant of marines, another midshipman, and myself, being the only officers on board who had left England in her—the rest having died or changed into other ships. I must mention the kindness I ever received from Captain Baines while I remained with him. After I left the Falcon I served in the Folkstone cutter stationed at Bideford, and then joined the Wolf sloop of war, Captain Hayward. In the space of a few months I attended the funerals of his wife, his child, and lastly of himself. On quitting the Wolf I began what I may look upon as a new era in my life, and it is therefore a fitting period to commence a fresh chapter.

Note. Afterwards Sir Israel Pellew, the brother of the famous Lord Exmouth.

Chapter Two.

Commencement of the American War of Independence.—Appointed to the Orpheus frigate.—Causes of the war.—Sail in company with the Chatham for Halifax, Nova Scotia.—Stormy passage in mid-winter.—Lose sight of Chatham.—Lose masts.—The captain keeps at it.—Rig jury-masts.—A succession of gales.—Get in at last.—Our captain gains great credit.

I had enjoyed the *otium cum dignitate* of a midshipman's life on shore scarcely more than six weeks when, in September, 1775, the shrill bugle-blast of war sounded the knell of the piping tunes of peace; and I received the very

satisfactory intelligence that I was rated as master's mate on board the Orpheus frigate, of fifty-two guns, Captain Hudson, then fitting for sea with all possible despatch at Plymouth, and destined for the North American station. I had hoped to have been confirmed in my rank as a lieutenant; but, disappointed in this, I was too glad under present circumstances to get afloat on any terms.

The peace which had now lasted for nearly ten years was thus abruptly terminated by the outbreak into open rebellion of the North American colonies, which led on to their Declaration of Independence. I was never anything of a politician, and I must confess that at that period of my existence I troubled myself very little about the rights of the case, though even then I had a lurking idea that the colonists were not quite the ragamuffins some people would have had us suppose. They had no fancy, it appeared, to pay taxes without having a voice as to the employment of their money or interest in the objects on which it was expended. The British Government and the upper classes generally at home had always treated the inhabitants of the colonies as if they considered them an inferior race, and almost beyond the pale of civilisation. This conduct had naturally caused much discontent and ill feeling, and made the colonists more ready to resent and oppose any attempt to curtail their rights and privileges. What was called the Stamp Act met with the first organised opposition. The Government offices were in many places pulled down, while the Governor of New York and other promoters of the Act were burnt in effigy. Many influential colonists then bound themselves to make use of no articles on which duties had been levied; while the people of Boston, proceeding a step farther, rather than pay the duty imposed by the British Government, threw into the sea the cargoes of several ships sent there by the East India Company laden with tea. This proceeding of the inhabitants of Boston induced the British Government to send General Gage, with an army, to take up his quarters there, with the intention of coercing them.

The belief that arbitrary Government was about to be established throughout the colonies made the people in every direction rise in arms. A rebel force, consisting of several thousand men, began to collect in the neighbourhood of the above-mentioned city. Petition after petition and remonstrance after remonstrance had been sent over to England in vain. The great Lord Chatham and the famous Mr Edmund Burke had pleaded the cause of the patriots with all the mighty eloquence they possessed; but without altering the resolution of the King or the Government. The celebrated Dr Franklin, already well known in England and America as a philosopher as well as a statesman, had come over to England to plead the cause of his countrymen, but had returned hopeless of effecting his object. What treatment, after this, could the colonists expect, if they yielded to the dictates of the mother-country?

The crisis at length arrived. There was at Concord, near Boston, a large magazine of military stores. General Gage sent a force to destroy it. The patriots collected in considerable numbers to oppose the British troops, and drove them back, with a heavy loss, into the city. This engagement, though little more than a skirmish, was called the Battle of Lexington. If its results were to be taken into consideration, few battles have been of more importance. Brethren had shed each other's blood. Both parties were exasperated beyond control. The patriots felt their power; the royalists burned to wipe out the disgrace their arms had received. General Gage now regularly fortified Boston, which was in its turn besieged by the rebels. The whole continent was up in arms. Another successful enterprise had been undertaken by a leader of irregulars, who had seized the Ports of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, which gave the patriots the command of Lake George and the head of Lake Champlain, always recognised as the keys of Canada.

The patriots had by this time formed a regular Government. Each of the colonies had sent delegates to a general assembly held at Philadelphia, to which the name of the Congress was given. The Congress had authorised the formation of an army and had appointed as Commander-in-chief a gentleman of Virginia of good repute, Colonel George Washington. He was well known as a bold leader in frontier warfare against the Indians, and had also seen service against the French; besides this, he was a man of the highest moral qualities, which had gained him the respect of his fellow-colonists.

The event which had induced the Government to despatch my ship and others so hurriedly to the North American station was the battle of Bunker's Hill, the news of which had just been received. The engagement itself would not have been of much consequence had it not proved that the rebels were resolved to fight it out to the last. The Americans, besieging Boston, had fortified a height above the city called Bunker's Hill. General Gage resolved to dislodge them and to endeavour to raise the siege. Our troops, after much hard fighting and considerable loss, claimed the victory, having driven the enemy from the heights; but the Americans quickly rallied, and, many reinforcements coming up, the city was more closely invested than ever.

I frequently heard the subject of the rebellion discussed by my friends during my stay at home, and I cannot say that generally their sympathies were in favour of the colonists. A few took the view of the case entertained by Lord Chatham, Mr Burke, and a small band of enlightened men in advance of their age; but they mostly sided with the King and the Tories, and considered that the presumption of the colonists must be put down with a high hand. They little knew of what stuff the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers—the sturdy Puritans, the dashing Cavaliers, the prim Quakers, and of many other classes whom persecution, poverty, or their crimes, had driven from Europe—were made, as I had full many opportunities afterwards of discovering. A just and judicious policy which at once would have granted all the rights the colonists demanded would have preserved the dignity of the mother-country and saved oceans of bloodshed; but it was ordained otherwise. The falsehood of traitors had taught our too credulous King to disbelieve in the loyalty as well as the courage of his trans-Atlantic subjects; and his ministers, in spite of all the warnings and the earnest entreaties of the colonists, persisted in forcing on them their obnoxious measures. I must again repeat, that at the time I allude to I did not see things in the serious light in which I have described them. It would never do if midshipmen were to turn politicians; still, I could not help hearing what others said on the subject, and I had plenty of time to think of what I had heard. The general cry was—"Crush the audacious rascals! Put down the traitorous villains with a strong hand! What, venture to disobey the authority of their lawful master and sovereign, King George? They will soon learn reason at the point of the sword!" Such were the sentiments shared by most on board, as well as throughout the army and fleet.

Had it not been for this outbreak of war, I had proposed volunteering to sail with Captain Cook, who had just then returned from his famous voyage in the Resolution with Captain Furneaux, who commanded the Adventure; and it was reported that he was about to start on another and still more important expedition, which he actually did on the

following year.

During my stay on shore I had gone over to see my sister Mary and my brother-in-law, Jack Hayfield. Jack was the same good-natured, thoughtless creature as before, and had done as little to better himself as he had to improve me. I made inquiries for Tommy Rockets, whom I found was still at home, so I set out to see him and his mother, not forgetting what I knew would prove a welcome present to the poor woman. I found her looking more careworn and poverty-stricken than ever. She did not know me when I entered her cottage, for I was much grown and thoroughly sun-burnt.

“Well, dame,” said I, “how goes the world with you?” She looked at me hard, surprised that a stranger should make such an inquiry; then, suddenly recognising me, she sprang up, and in her joy was about, I believe, to kiss me as she would have done Tommy, when, recollecting herself, she took my hand, which I put out, and pressed it warmly. After I had told her somewhat of my adventures I asked her whether she would allow Tommy to accompany me the next time I went to sea. The poor woman turned pale at the question, but at last gasped out—

“If the lad wishes it, if it’s for his good, I dare not say him nay—but, oh, Master Hurricane, you’ll look after him—you’ll befriend him—you’ll protect him—he’s my only child, and he’s very simple and ignorant of the world’s ways.” I promised her that I would do my best for him, though I warned her he must trust to his own good conduct; and soon after Tommy came in. I saw at a glance that he had the stuff in him to make a sailor. He had grown into a stout, broad-shouldered lad, though still rather short, with fists big enough to fell an ox, a round, bullet head covered with curly hair, and a thoroughly honest, good-natured countenance, not wanting in intelligence, though a snubby nose, small eyes, and thickish lips formed his features. He had a strong struggle in his bosom, I saw, before he could make up his mind to tell his mother that he would accept my offer; but he could do little for their mutual support while he remained on shore, and I left him attempting to comfort her by telling her of the wealth with which he would ere long return to her.

As soon as I got my appointment I sent directions to Tom to join me at Plymouth, with a small sum to fit him out, being very certain that he would at once be taken on board. I had a wide round of farewell visits to pay to numerous friends who had been kind to me during my stay on shore. They all wished me plenty of prize-money and rapid promotion, but I cannot say that I had much expectation of getting either. I was much concerned at this time at observing the state of my father’s spirits. His worldly affairs were, I suspected, not flourishing, though, as he did not speak to me about them, I could not venture to make any inquiries of him on the subject. I could only cherish the hope that if I did realise a sailor’s dream and make any prize-money I might be able to render him some assistance. My poor mother’s health also was failing, weakened, as it long ago had been, by cares and responsibilities of her numerous family. With a heart therefore more full of misgivings than usual, I bade them and those of my brothers and sisters who remained at home farewell, and, with a chest rather more amply supplied with necessaries than when I first went to sea, I set off for my ship then lying at Hamoze, and joined her on the 15th of October, 1775. I was, as I fully expected, successful in getting Tommy Rockets rated as a landsman on board, and though, poor fellow, he at first looked very much like a fish out of water, and a very odd fish too, I saw that it would not be long before he would be perfectly at home on his new element.

As soon as he had been entered and had become one of the ship’s company, I told him to go aloft, to give him some experience before we got to sea. “What, to the top of them big sticks that grow out of the ship? They be plaguey high, Master Hurricane!” said he, looking up doubtingly, at the same time preparing to swarm up by the foremast itself. When he found that he might go up by the shrouds he seemed to think it a very easy matter, and before many days were over he could go aloft as quickly as any lad in the ship. I got an old seaman, Nol Grampus, who had sailed with me in two ships before, to look after him and to put him up to his duty, which, to do him justice, he was very anxious to learn. A little help of this sort to a lad when he first goes to sea is of great service to him in many ways; it gives him encouragement, it saves him from many a cuff and harsh word, and makes a seaman of him much sooner than he would otherwise become. On the 16th of the month we went into the Sound, where the remainder of the officers joined. By frequently sending press-gangs on shore we got together our ship’s company, but we had yet to learn the stuff they were made of. I was truly glad to find two or three old shipmates on board. One of them was Gerrard Delisle, my greatest friend. We had gone afloat at the same time and were exactly the same age and standing, though, I must confess, he was vastly my superior in education and ability. He had all the gallantry and impetuosity of an Irishman, with a warm heart full of generous feelings, and at the same time the polish of a man of the world, not always to be obtained in a cock-pit. Another friend of mine was Noel Kennedy, also a master’s mate. He was a Scotchman of good family, of which he was not a little proud. His pride in this respect was an amiable failing, if failing it was, for his great anxiety was to shed honour on his name. Among my other messmates were John Harris Nicholas, Richard Ragget, John Drew. A great pet of ours was little Harry Sumner—one of the smallest midshipmen who ever came to sea. Left an orphan, without a connexion bound to him by the ties of blood, the poor child had been sent afloat by his guardians as the simplest mode they could devise of disposing of him. The event was happy for him, for he soon found many more friends on board than he ever would on shore, and in a short time there was not a man of the ship’s company who would not have risked his life to shield him from injury. As I shall have to mention the officers and my other messmates in the course of my narrative I need not here describe them.

On the 30th, the moment we had cast off the lighters from alongside, we sailed for North America in company with the Chatham, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Shouldham, who was going out to take the chief command on that station. The wind continuing fair and the weather fine, we, on the following day, lost sight of the English shore, which many on board were destined never to see again—none of us, until months and months had passed by.

Things had begun to shake a little into their places and the officers and ship’s company to know something of each other by the time that we had got about three hundred leagues to the westward of Scilly. Instead, however, of keeping to the southward, where we might have found a continuance of fine weather, our captain, in his anxiety quickly to reach the scene of action, notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, ordered a northerly course to be steered. The consequence was that we had soon work to try the mettle of all hands. By noon on the 6th of November we fell in with a gale of wind which would as effectually have blown up the Houses of Parliament as would

Guido Faulks and his barrels of gunpowder, if it could have got under them. Sail was shortened and all was made snug aloft in time, hat below many an article took a voyage which terminated in total shipwreck to itself or neighbours.

“Here comes a combing sea in a vengeance!” exclaimed Delisle, seizing hold of little Harry to save him from being by chance washed away. We were standing aft on the quarter-deck. On came the watery mountain with its curling crest of snowy foam, and, striking the ship with terrific force and with a noise like thunder, broke over the starboard chesstree, deluging the decks forward and carrying away a fine cutter off the larboard skidds, with some of the rails and carlings of the head.

“Where are we going to, Mr Delisle?” exclaimed little Harry, as he clung to his arm with a look of very natural terror in his countenance.

“To Halifax, in Nova Scotia, I hope,” answered Gerrard, laughing. “Where else should you think?”

“I thought we might be going to the bottom,” answered the poor boy with perfect simplicity; “but I’m not afraid, you know.”

“No reason why you should be, Harry,” answered Delisle. “The old barkie will have to swim through many a worse sea than this, let me tell you—so remember, my boy, you are never in future to begin to be afraid till you see the rest of us turn pale.”

Little Harry promised obedience, and he had before long ample opportunities of proving his nerves. The seamen, as they hurried about the decks, shook the water in showers, like Newfoundland dogs from their shaggy coats; and in a short time we had things put as much to rights as circumstances would allow.

The gale continued all night, but ceased on the following evening without having committed further damage, and from that time till the morning of the tenth we had tolerably fine weather. It then fell a stark calm, but there was an ominous cold-grey silky look in the sky which I did not like. The captain was constantly on deck, anxiously scanning the horizon, and Jonathan Flood, our old master, kept his weather-eye open, as if apprehensive of evil.

“Vary fine weather this, Mr Hurry,” said Andrew Macallan, our surgeon’s mate, who had come to sea for the first time. “Just a wee bit more wind to waft us on our way to the scene of action, and we may well be content.”

“Wait a bit, doctor, and we shall have wind enough and to spare,” replied I.

It was not long before my words were verified—though just after that the appearance of coming bad weather wore off, and even the captain and master seemed to think that a moderate breeze was all we had to look for. We were lying with our topsails on the caps and courses hauled up, when, without a moment’s warning, a gust of wind with the force of a hurricane laid the ship on her beam-ends.

“Up with the helm!” shouted the captain, who had that instant come on deck. “Brace round the foreyards—trice up—brail up the after sails!”

The helm was put up, but before the canvas could be handed, with claps like thunder, the main-topmast-staysail and jib were blown from the bolt-ropes, the topsails and courses were flying in shreds from the yards, the topsail sheets, clew-lines and bunt-lines were carried away, as were also the main-clew garnets, bunt-lines and leech-lines, while a more tremendous sea than I had ever before beheld got up as if by magic.

The ship, however, happily answered her helm and flew before the gale, which at the same time kept freshening and shifting round to every point of the compass.

All we could now do was to scud, and that every instant, as the wind and sea increased, became more and more dangerous. To bring her to under present circumstances was impossible—indeed, deprived of all means of handing the sails, we were helpless; and by this time every one of them was flying aloft in tattered streamers, adding not a little to the impetuous rate at which the gale drove us onward.

The seas, each apparently overtopping the other, kept following up astern, and before long one broke aboard us, deluging the decks and sweeping everything before it.

“Hold on! hold on for your lives, my men!” shouted the captain as he saw it coming.

Few needed the warning. When for a short time all was again clear we looked round anxiously to ascertain that none of our shipmates had been carried overboard. By next to a miracle all were safe. The carpenter and his crew were called aft to secure the stern ports and to barricade the poop with all the planks and shores they could employ, but to little purpose. The huge dark-green seas, like vast mountains upheaved from their base by some Titan’s power, came following up after us, roaring and hissing and curling over as if in eager haste to overwhelm us, their crests one mass of boiling foam. As I stood aft I could not help admiring the bold sweep of the curve they made from our rudder-post upwards, as high it seemed as our mizen-top, the whole a bank of solid water, with weight and force enough in it to send to the bottom the stoutest line-of-battle-ship in the Navy. The taste we got occasionally of their crests, as they now and then caught us up, was quite enough to make me pray that we might not have the full flavour of their whole body.

No one on board had thought all this time of the Chatham, and when at length we did look out for her she was nowhere to be seen. It was probable that she was in as bad a plight as ourselves, so that neither of us could have rendered the other assistance. Hour after hour passed without any improvement in the weather. Every instant we expected something worse to befall us. To remain below was out of the question, as at any moment we might be

wanted. To keep the deck was scarcely possible, without the risk of being frozen to death or carried overboard. Matters were bad enough in the daytime, but when darkness came on and we went plunging away amid showers of snow and sleet and bitter frost, with the cold north-west wind howling after us, I thought of what the friends of some of our delicately-nurtured young gentlemen would say if they could see us, and, for my own part, often wished myself by the quiet fireside of the humblest cottage in old England. We did our best to look after little Harry Sumner, and got him stowed away carefully in his hammock, where we told him to lie still till he was wanted. There was no object in allowing him to remain on deck, where he could not be of use and was very likely to get injured.

“I’ll do as you tell me, Mr Hurry,” said he. “But I’m not afraid of the sea or the wind—if it were not for the bitter, bitter cold I would rather be on deck, I would indeed.”

“You’re a brave little fellow, Harry, but we must take care of you for some nobler work, and then I’ve no doubt you’ll give a good account of yourself,” said I. “So now go to sleep and try and get warm.”

Of my own immediate follower and protégé, Tom Rockets, I have said nothing since we came to sea. By the courage and activity he displayed on the present occasion he showed that he was made of the right stuff to form a first-rate seaman, and I had no reason to be ashamed of him.

The whole of that long, weary night did we run on, the gale rather increasing than falling, and when daylight broke over the waste of tumultuous waters the prospect seemed as unpromising as ever. Nothing could be done to get in any of our tattered canvas. The ship remained tight, and that was our chief comfort. At length, on the evening of the 11th, the wind began to drop a little. Everyone was on deck ready to take advantage of any opportunity which might occur for getting the ship into a better condition. Suddenly the wind shifted round to the north-east and dropped considerably. The hands were called aft. A fore-staysail was set on the mizen-mast—the helm was put down and the ship brought-to under it. The most necessary part of the rigging being also replaced, the ship’s company was divided into four watches, and all but the watch on deck were sent below to sleep. Never did weary seamen turn in with a greater good-will, or more require rest.

All hands had ample occupation the next day in unbending the remnants of our tattered canvas from the yards and in replacing it with a new suit of sails fore and aft, in reeving new running rigging, and in repairing the stern frame. All this was done with a tolerably fresh breeze blowing and a pretty heavy sea running, though moderate in comparison to what we had had and to what we were to encounter. This sort of weather continued till the 15th, during which interval we contrived to get things a little to rights. Gale number three now sprung up, and during the whole of it we lay under a balanced mizen. We did not escape, however, without damage, losing the bumkins and the remaining part of the carlings and rails of the head, and a part of the starboard quarter-gallery. The wind lulled again in the evening and continued moderate till the 19th, when it breezed up once more for the fourth time, and by the 21st we were in the centre of a perfect hurricane. Still nothing would induce our captain to run back or to endeavour to make his way across the Atlantic in a more southerly latitude. He had made up his mind that this northerly route was the right one to take, and he was not a man to be diverted from his purpose. The gale had been blowing for some hours, when at about one o’clock in the morning watch, the night being dark as Erebus, the ship pitching heavily into the seas and straining terrifically, Delisle and I were on deck together, endeavouring to pierce with our eyes the thick obscurity into which we were driving. It was much of a time for moralising, considering the showers of snow which ever and anon beat into our faces, the sheets of spray which came aboard and froze as it fell over us, and the biting wind which blew down our throats.

“No unapt picture this, of the life of many of us, Hurry,” said my companion. “Here have we been knocking about for some weeks very much the worse for wear—no nearer our voyage’s end, and utterly unable to say whither we are driving. I doubt much that we have seen the worst yet.” Scarcely had he spoken when a gust stronger than ever struck the ship. We felt her quiver and shake all over, and at the same instant there was a terrific crash forward. I hurried to see what had occurred. The foremast had been carried away about twenty feet above the forecastle, and lay over the lee fore-chains. The captain was on deck in a moment, and all hands were called to clear the wreck. In doing this the main-topmast-stay was cut, and thereby the main-topmast was carried away, severely wounding in its fall nine men. The poor fellows were borne below and placed under the surgeon’s care. The morning came and showed us our sad condition; but the gale had not yet sufficiently shorn us of our pride or tried to the full our captain’s perseverance, for soon after daybreak another gust struck us. I looked up to see what was next to happen. Before me stood our stout mainmast. Then, as if wrenched by a giant’s grasp, the shrouds and stays were torn away, and with a loud crash down it came by the board, crushing the booms, gallows, bits, gangway-rails, and the fore part of the quarter-deck, and staving in the long-boat and a large cutter so as to destroy them completely. The daylight enabled those on deck to stand from under in time to escape injury; but it was a work of time, danger, and difficulty to clear the ship of the wreck, for while we were engaged in it the sea was constantly breaking over us fore and aft, threatening every instant to engulph the ship. At the same time we were in momentary expectation of seeing the mizen-mast share the fate of the other masts. At length, having cleared the wreck, we hoisted a fore-topgallant-sail to the stump of the foremast, which we stayed up as well as we could, and were thereby able to keep the ship once more before the wind, though even then the heavy seas which followed us threatened every moment to break aboard. We were truly in a forlorn condition—with our fore and mainmasts gone, two suits of sails carried away with the exception of the sails on the mizen-mast, the remainder required for jury-sails whenever the weather would allow us to erect jury-masts—with numbers of the crew falling sick from exposure and excessive fatigue, and with a ship strained and battered in every direction. At length, the wind getting round to the westward, with unequivocal reluctance Captain Hudson resolved to bear up, to the very great satisfaction of everybody else on board. We were then four hundred and sixty leagues from the Lizard. For several days more the gale continued, and we were all in expectation of shortly reaching England and getting a thorough refit, when the weather suddenly became more moderate than heretofore. The opportunity was immediately taken of erecting jury-masts, and all hands were employed on this important work. To do this we had to use all the studden-sail-booms and spare spars on board. When completed and set up, they were pronounced to be equal if not superior to any ever before under similar circumstances fitted at sea. The captain looked at them with no little satisfaction, and complimenting the ship’s company on what had been done, called the officers aft, and informed them that he was resolved to attempt once

more to reach the coast of America. Had there been a war with France, we should have been eager to get to our station, but as we expected to have little enough to do in putting down the American rebellion, I cannot say that our captain's announcement was received with any great satisfaction. For several days we made tolerably fair progress, but on the 2nd of December a gale of wind sprang up, and carried away our jury-main-topmast and top-yard, and split the sail from clew to earing. During the whole of this month the weather continued as boisterous as at the commencement. Disaster followed disaster in quick succession. Among others, we lost four top-masts, six topsail-yards, one mainsail and one foresail, two topsails and one fore-topsail, besides which the cover of the arm-chest fell out of the mizen-top, and, striking the gunner, knocked out four of his teeth, broke his shoulder in two places, and cut his right eye in the most shocking manner. He was carried below in great agony, and his life was despaired of. I need not mention any more of the accidents we encountered. It may be supposed that by this time we were in a tolerably forlorn condition, with nearly every yard of our spare canvas expended, and with scarcely a spar remaining to replace our jury-masts, should they be carried away. Unpleasant, however, as was our position, I must say that we respected our captain for his perseverance, though it had become the pretty generally received opinion on board, both fore and aft, that we were destined never to reach our station. All sorts of stories were going the round of the decks. An old woman near Plymouth, Mother Adder-fang she was called, had been heard to declare, two nights before the ship went out of harbour, that not a stick of the Orpheus would ever boil a kettle on English ground. Another was said to have cursed the ship and all on board. Then we had a fine variety of Flying Dutchman's tales, till the men began to look upon the captain as a sort of Vanderdecken himself, and to fancy, I verily believe, that we were destined ourselves to box about till the day of judgment. Now of course a man of calm sense should be uninfluenced by these sort of tales—we should be well assured that God only knows the future, and that words of anger, uttered by a wicked, ignorant old woman, cannot possibly alter His determination; still, when a man is worn out with fatigue, hardship and hunger, when the gale howls fiercely, and the raging seas appear every instant ready to engulph the ship, he cannot help thinking of the words he has heard and the stories which have been told him, and looking forward with sad forebodings to the future.

In spite, however, of the raging storm, the battered condition of the ship, and the predictions of disaster, we jolly Orlopians resolved not to be baffled in keeping our Christmas dinner in the accustomed manner as far as circumstances would allow. Our means for so doing were certainly not very extensive, either with regard to our condiments or the utensils for serving them in. The greater part of our crockery had been broken in the previous gales, and all our luxuries had long been consumed. We managed, however, to exhibit a dish of boiled beef at one end of the table, and one of boiled pork at the other, and a tureen of peas-soup and a peas-pudding; while our second course was a plum-pudding of huge dimensions, and solid as a round-shot—the whole washed down with a bowl of punch. Our seats were secured to the deck, and the dishes were lashed to the table, while it required no small amount of ingenuity and rapidity to convey each mouthful from our plates to our mouths. Never did the good ship tumble and roll about more violently than she did on that 25th of December, while we young gentlemen were drinking "sweet-hearts and wives," and other appropriate toasts. Let my readers picture us to themselves, if they can, as we sat, each member of the mess holding on like grim death to either a dish, or bowl, or can, or mug, endeavouring, often in vain, to keep the contents from spilling, and then to carry a portion of them to his mouth, our voices now clattering away together, now one of us breaking forth into a song, and joined in chorus by the rest, the ship rolling and pitching, the bulkheads creaking and groaning, and the wind howling overhead. The contrast between the picture we presented and the dining-room of a comfortable, well-lighted country-house in England on the same day was not small.

Our condition was not improved when at length the year 1776 commenced. We had expended all our sails with the exception of those actually bent to the yards; of spars we had scarcely one remaining. In consequence also of the great expenditure of provisions and stores, the ship had become so light that she rolled excessively and with so quick and rapid a motion that some of the guns in the galley, drawing their ring-bolts from the side, broke loose, and before they could be secured committed much damage. Added to all this it was announced that our supply of water was very short, and we were put on an allowance of a pint for each person. On these occasions the captain and the smallest boy share alike. If any of us breakfasted or dined in the gun-room or cabin, we carried with us our allowance of water to help make the tea. We were still fully four hundred leagues from the coast, and to all appearances as little likely to make it as we had been a month back. The officers were unanimous in their opinion that we should bear up for the West Indies, but Captain Hudson still resolved to persevere and to endeavour to gain our intended port. Though I, like the rest, was heartily sick of the life we had been enduring, and longed as much as anybody to get into port, I could not help admiring the perseverance and determination of our captain. Grave and anxious as he could not help appearing at times, he did his utmost generally to assume a cheerful countenance, and by words of encouragement to keep up the spirits of the men. As, however, one after the other the people fell sick, and disaster upon disaster overtook us, I more than once, when I went into the cabin, found him sitting pale and silent at the table, with his head resting on his hand, evidently meditating on the responsibilities of his position.

Meantime the men forward were grumbling and evincing no slight mutinous disposition. "Here, old ship, do ye see, have we been boxing about for the best parts of two months, and for what we knows to the contrary, farther off from our port than ever we were," I heard one of the quartermasters, Jos Lizard, observing to a messmate, another old salt of the same kidney. Old Jos, as he was called, was somewhat of a sea lawyer in his way, though not the less superstitious on that account.

"Well, what's to be done, mate?" asked his chum, Ben Goff.

"Done!" exclaimed old Jos; "why, I axes, are we to go knocking our heads against Providence, so to speak, till we've no water and no grub, and then to rot away, as I've heard of a ship's company doing, and one left to tell about it!"

"No, old salt, I wouldn't for one wish to do that same; but how's it to be helped?" asked Goff.

"Helped!" said Lizard, with a look of scorn, "helped! why, let's go aft to the captain, and tell him our mind. Either we bears up for a port, or let the ship sink at once; it's only what we must come to at last. We'll get the rum casks on deck, and have a regular jollification of it first. Then no matter what turns up, we sha'n't know much about it."

I well knew the horrible folly seamen are capable of, so I thought it best to put a stopper at once on the precious notion old Jos had got into his head. I therefore presented myself suddenly before the two men. “You’re a couple of donkeys, to talk such nonsense as you’ve just been doing!” I exclaimed, in a contemptuous tone. “Do you think two ignorant old fellows like you know better than the captain what ought to be done? Let me hear no more about it. I am not going to report what I overheard, and if you catch any of the other men talking the game sort of stuff, just let them know what fools they are.” I felt that it would not do to reason with the men, but that I should have a better chance of putting them off this notion by making them feel ashamed of themselves, and this I think I succeeded in doing. I cannot say, however, that I felt very sanguine as to the termination of the voyage.

What the temper of the crew might at length have led to, I don’t know, but at last we got a slant of fair wind and moderate weather, and it was announced that we were within twelve leagues of Cape Sambro, near the entrance of the harbour of Halifax. As may be supposed, there was great rejoicing on board; all our troubles and misfortunes were forgotten, and we fully expected to be in harbour the next day. That night Delisle and I were on deck together. Kennedy also was there, and little Harry Sumner. Mr Gaston, the third lieutenant, had charge of the watch. We were congratulating ourselves on the turn which fortune had made in our favour, when Delisle called my attention to a thick gloom which was gathering over the land. We pointed it out to Mr Gaston, and asked him what it signified.

“That we are going to have another gale, which may drive us farther to the southward than we have hitherto been,” he replied.

Scarcely had he spoken than the first indications of the coming wind reached us—a rising sea and a driving shower of sleet—the helm was put up, and the ship kept before the wind, and then down came the gale upon us, and once more we were driving before it, surrounded by dense sheets of snow, which prevented us from seeing a yard beyond our bowsprit end. Away we went during the whole of the next day and night and the following day, driving madly before the gale. If the ship’s company had before this been full of forebodings of coming ill, it is not surprising that they should now have entirely abandoned all hope of ever again seeing land. On the 25th of January we were eighty leagues from the Cape, and more distressed than ever for masts, spars, sails, provisions, and water. So short, indeed, was our store of the latter necessary that we were now put on an allowance of half a pint a day; so severe also was the frost that we were compelled to throw hot water on the sails when they were furled before we could set them. The men more rapidly than before fell sick day after day, and completely lost their spirits, and it became the fashion when the watch turned out for them to inquire what fresh accident had occurred.

At length one night, as I lay sleeping in my hammock, I was awoke by a terrific noise. I found that the ship was on her beam-ends. There was a rushing of water, a crashing of timbers, a splitting of sails, the howling of wind, the cries and shrieks and stamping of men. I felt certain that the fatal and long-expected stroke had been given, and that I and all on board were about to be hurried into eternity. I have been since in many a hard-fought battle, I have seen death in every form, but I never felt its horrors so vividly as I did on that night. I remained in my hammock without attempting to dress, for I thought that I might as well drown as I was, and I had not the remotest expectation of being saved. Still the water did not reach me, and at length I heard Kennedy’s voice rousing up the idlers to go on deck, and help take the canvas off the ship.

“We’ve been in very great danger, and for some minutes I thought it was all over with us,” he observed: “we’ve brought her to, however, and she may ride out this gale as she has done many others.”

“I hope so,” said I, springing up and putting on my clothes, while Kennedy hurried on deck. I found that the chief noise had been caused by a number of shot boxes breaking loose from the mainmast, and as the ship heeled over, they came rushing under my hammock and crushing everything before them. I had no little difficulty in getting them secured. This appeared to be the last piece of malice those winter gales had to play us. The next day the weather moderated, and we were able to lay a course for Halifax. We could scarcely believe our senses as we found ourselves entering that magnificent harbour, after our protracted and disastrous voyage. We had been out ninety seven days, ten weeks of which time we had been under jury-masts. Our only squaresail was a spritsail at the main-yard to serve as a mainsail. The whole ship was covered with ice, and a most complete wreck she looked in every respect. We had the second lieutenant, gunner, and seventy-three men sick, twenty of whom were suffering from frost-bites. No wonder that such was our condition when we had encountered no less than forty-five heavy gales of wind, and it spoke well for the soundness of the hull of our ship that she had held together so perfectly. Our captain, officers, and ship’s company received the thanks of the commander-in-chief for their perseverance and resolution, and certainly no one deserved more credit than did our captain, for the determined way in which he held on and succeeded in bringing his ship into harbour.

The next Sunday we all repaired to church, to return public thanks to Almighty God for preserving us from the perils and hardships of the sea, to which we had been so long exposed. It was a solemn and touching occasion. Two and two, the captain at our head, and the officers following with the ship’s company, we all marched up together to the church. Thoughtless and careless about our spiritual being as we generally were, I believe very few among us did not feel our hearts swell with gratitude to the Great Being who had so mercifully watched over and preserved us from the dangers to which we had been exposed, when the minister gave forth the words of that beautiful hymn of thanksgiving,—“The sea roared, and the stormy wind lifted up the waves thereof. We were carried up as it were to heaven, and then down again to the deep; our soul melted within us because of trouble. Then cried we unto Thee, O Lord, and Thou didst deliver us out of our distress. Blessed be Thy name, who didst not despise the prayer of Thy servants, but didst hear our cry, and hast saved us. Thou didst send forth Thy commandment, and the windy storm ceased, and was turned into a calm.” The minister also gave us a sermon appropriate to the occasion, and most deeply attentive to it were the greater part of the ship’s company. There is as much religious feeling about seamen as in any class of men, though they are in general grossly ignorant of the doctrine of the Gospel. This is owing entirely to the wicked neglect of those of the upper classes who ought to have seen that they were properly instructed. I have, however, only to remark that it is the duty of the rising generation, not to sit idly down, and with upturned eyes to abuse their ancestors, but to arouse themselves, and by every means in their power to remedy the neglect of which they were guilty. The people seemed very soon to forget the hardships they had endured, and I fear

likewise that the recollection of the mercies vouchsafed to us speedily passed from our memories.

Chapter Three.

Halifax harbour.—Life in the backwoods.—Dangerous expedition through the ice.—Lord Shouldham's fleet with Lord Howe's army arrives.—Sail for Nantucket Roads.—Boston cannonaded.—Watering-party on shore.—Capture whaling sloop Ranger.—Cruise in her with Grampus and Tom Rockets.—Her skipper's trick defeated.—Reach Halifax.—Ordered on board Chatham.—Sail for New York.—General Washington holds possession of the city.

The harbour of Halifax is a very fine one. A thousand ships may anchor there in safety. It is our chief naval station in North America. The town, which is a handsome one, stands on a peninsula, and rises gradually from the water's edge, where there are numerous wharves, alongside which ships can lie to discharge their cargoes. We found in the harbour the Cerberus frigate, Captain Symonds, (see Note 1), hove down alongside the wharf, as also the Savage sloop of war, wearing Commodore Arbuthnot's broad pennant.

The inhabitants cordially welcomed our arrival, as they were in hourly expectation of an attack from a body of rebels who were said to be marching on the town, while the organised force existing for its defence was very small. At length an express arrived from the interior, stating that the enemy were at the distance of about twenty miles, at a small village of which they had taken possession. We were instantly ordered under arms to protect the dockyard, and fully expected to have warm work. The people who formed the rebel bands had been instigated to revolt by the revolutionists of the southern colonies, who had formed a plan at this time to invade Canada, which happily proved abortive. They themselves, as far as I could learn, had no real cause of complaint.

After we had waited for some time in expectation of an attack, notice was brought us that the rebels had plundered and burned the village where they had quartered themselves, and then retired. We were therefore able to employ all hands in refitting the ship, a work to us of the greatest importance. The cold, however, was so great that we suffered no little inconvenience from exposure to it. All the meat, I remember, which came on board, was frozen so hard that we were invariably obliged to cut it up into pieces with a cross-saw, to serve it out to the messes. Quantities of fish also of a peculiarly fine flavour were to be picked up daily, frozen to death, on the surface of the ice, thrown up by the united action of the tide and sea. As there were no masts and spars in the dockyard, we found that we should be obliged to send a party into the woods, fully ten miles from the town, to cut down trees suitable for the purpose. I was ordered to accompany the party appointed for this object. My friend Delisle was with me, and Tom Rockets went as my servant.

Having provided ourselves with blankets, provisions, cooking utensils, and other means of making ourselves comfortable, away we trudged over the snow, following our guide, John Nobs by name, who was to show us where we might find the sort of timber we required. It was the first time I had ever been in an American forest. The deep silence which reigned around, and the perfect solitude were very impressive. The tall leafless trees, springing up out of the sheet of snow which covered the whole face of nature, were the only objects to be seen.

We were merry enough as we tramped away in the keen, pure air over the crisp snow. As some thirty pair of feet, stepping out together, went crunch—crunch—crunch—the noise was so loud, that we were obliged to raise our voices to make ourselves heard. Delisle and I marched directly after our leader old Nobs, our men following, laughing, talking, and singing, as the mood seized them.

At length, having gone some way through the forest, Nobs began to look about him attentively. He was not a man of many words.

"That's 'um," said he, pointing with his chin to some tall, straight fir-trees, up to which he had led us. We saw also that a considerable number of the same description grew in the neighbourhood.

"I suppose, then, we may call a halt?" said I.

Nobs nodded. We had been told that he would show us how to build some huts for sheltering our party.

"Some on you with axes come along," said he, turning to the men, and away he trudged till we reached a clump of graceful, white-stemmed birch-trees. Scoring down the stems, he quickly ripped off huge sheets of bark, some five and six feet long, and two and three broad. The men followed his example, and we soon had as much as the whole party could carry.

"Stay, that won't do alone," observed Nobs; and he commenced cutting some thin poles, seven or eight feet long, from saplings growing in the neighbourhood. With these we returned to the spot we had fixed on for an encampment. Scarcely uttering a word, having got some men to assist him, he erected a framework of a cone-shape, with about eight of the poles, fastening the upper ends together with a piece of rope. He then covered the framework with sheets of bark, leaving a doorway and a small space open at the top.

"There you have an Indian wigwam," said he.

From the pattern he had thus formed, the men very soon erected wigwams enough to shelter the whole party. He then collected some dried wood, of which there was an abundance about, and lighted a fire in the middle of his hut. The hole left at the top of it allowed the smoke to escape. The snow, which had first been cleared away in the interior, was piled-up round the hut outside, and the ground was then beaten hard. He showed us how to make our couches of dried leaves; and at night, wrapped in our blankets lying round the fire, we found that we could sleep most luxuriously.

Having thus speedily made all these necessary arrangements, we set to work to select the trees fit for our purpose. As soon as we had fixed on them, Nobs threw off all his outer clothing, and with his gleaming axe began chopping away like a true backwoodsman at one of the largest of the trees. The carpenter's crew followed his example. The air was so calm that while the men were actively employed they felt not the slightest sensation of cold. The moment they ceased, however we made them put on their clothing.

Nobs was thoroughly versed in all the customs of backwoodsmen, so he was able to show us how to make ourselves comfortable, and I learned many lessons from him which I, on many subsequent occasions, found very useful. Among other things he showed us how to roast our meat by spitting bits of it on a long thin stick, which rested on two forked sticks stuck in the ground. Indeed, we enjoyed ourselves far more than we expected.

Tom Rockets and another lad slept in our wigwam, to assist in keeping up the fire. I lay awake for a short time, when my ears were saluted with the sound of a long, low howl. I presently heard Tom stir himself.

"Oh, Jim, sure them be the ghostesses we heard tell of," said he. "I hope they won't be coming this way now."

"I hopes not," replied his companion. "Them be dreadful things I do think, by the noise they makes."

Just then there was a louder howl than before.

"Oh, they be coming!" cried Tom. "I'll rouse up Mr Hurry. Maybe he'll know how to tackle 'em."

Highly diverted with the opinion my followers had formed of my prowess against not only mortal but spiritual enemies, I lay still, wishing to hear what he would next say. The hideous howl approached still nearer.

"I can't stand it!" he exclaimed. "Muster Hurry! Muster Hurry! there be ghostesses, or devils, or some such things abroad, a-playing of their pranks, and they be coming to eat us up, Muster Hurry, I be sure!"

I burst into a fit of laughter, so loud that it woke Delisle. It was responded to, it seemed, by so unearthly a cry from the depths of the forest, that even he for a moment was startled. Then there was the report of firearms, and looking out of our wigwam, I saw old Nobs standing in front of his, with a musket in his hand.

"I've druve the varmints away," he said, in his usual laconic style. "You may turn in, mister."

I took his advice, for it was very cold outside.

"The wolves will not probably disturb us again," said I, as I lay down.

"Wolves! be them wolves?" I heard Tom remark; but as I soon fell asleep, I do not know what more he said.

Towards the morning I was again awoke by loud shouts, and growls, and cries, and the sound of a tremendous tussle.

"I've caught ye, my bo!" I heard Tom exclaim. "If ye be a ghost or a devil, ye shall just show yourself to Muster Hurry, before I let ye go."

Starting up, I found the two lads struggling with some beast or other at the entrance to the wigwam. I soon discovered that they had got hold of a black bear, who had doubtless been attracted to our wigwam by a pot of sugar which had been left at the entrance, into which he was putting his paw when Rockets discovered him. The noise brought a number of the other men from the huts. They thought we were attacked by Indians or the rebels, I believe. The poor beast made a good fight of it; but before I could come to his rescue, he had been somewhat severely handled. We, however, easily secured him, and kept him prisoner till we settled what should be done with him. He was, we learned from old Nobs, of a species not at all ferocious, and very easily tamed. We therefore determined, instead of killing him in order to turn him into ham, to carry him on board as a pet. He very soon became reconciled to his lot, and at once ate willingly from our hands any mess we offered, particularly if sweetened with sugar. Rockets considered him as his own prize, and took him under his especial care. The men gave him the name of Sugar-lips, and as Tom stood his sponsor he was known on board as Tommy Sugar-lips.

However, I must not spend more time on my shore adventures, as I have matter of so much greater interest to describe. In about five days we had cut down and trimmed a sufficient number of trees for our purpose. The greatest labour was to drag them over the snow to the harbour; but at length that was accomplished, and we returned once more on board.

Shortly after this the frost set in harder than ever, but in consequence of the rapidity of the tides the ice, though fully four feet thick, did not form a consistent body in the harbour. In some places it was hard, but the chief quantity round the ship was like a mass of wet snow, too soft and too rotten to walk on, and yet too thick to allow a boat of any size to be impelled through it. Thus all communication with the town was suddenly cut off. At this time we had a gang of men on the opposite shore, fitting the rigging at a spot where they could procure no provisions. They were getting very hard up for food, when Captain Hudson sent for me.

"Mr Hurry," said he, "I wish to send some provisions to the people on shore. It will be a service of difficulty, and perhaps danger, but I can entrust it confidently to you; you must take a couple of hands and a light boat, and you may be able to force her either over or through the ice."

"Ay, ay, sir," I answered; "I'll do it if it is to be done." And away I went to make my preparations without loss of time. I always felt an inclination to volunteer for any work to be done, and never thought of throwing difficulties in the way of the performance of any thing that was proposed. I chose Nol Grampus, the old quarter-master, and Tom Rockets as my companions in the enterprise. The dinghy, a small boat we carried astern, was the best suited to my purpose. Having laden her with provisions, we shoved off from the ship among the floating ice. Our progress was very slow,

sometimes we worked our way among the sheet ice, then we came to a hard slab on to which we jumped and hauled the boat over it. “Take care, sir,” said Grampus, as we were crossing a slab, “this is treacherous stuff we are on.” Just as he spoke I felt my feet sinking into the slush, and had I not had firm hold of the gunwale, I might have gone through altogether. As I sprang into the boat I could not help shuddering at the thought of sinking into the cold deadly mass which surrounded us without the possibility of making an effort for life; too dense to enable one to swim, and yet too liquid to bear the weight of a person, it was as sure to destroy one as the treacherous quicksand or the furious maelstrom. Near us was another boat with an old man and a boy, likewise endeavouring to cross the harbour. We saw that they were exerting all their energies, but were not making better progress than we were. After some time the tide made down stronger, and on taking our bearings I found that the ice was setting us fast down the harbour and out to sea. My men needed no encouragement to exert themselves to the utmost, for the peril we were in was very apparent. Captain Hudson observed it also, and made the signal for us to return to the ship, but it was even more difficult to go back than to go forward. In attempting to obey the order I found that we were carried more into the strength of the current. I therefore kept on towards the wharf, where some hundreds of people were collected, rather anxious spectators of our adventure. Captain Symonds, of the Cerberus, and the master-attendant of the dockyard were looking on, and they also hailed to me to return to the ship. Sometimes we appeared to be making no progress whatever, and I felt the probability of our being carried out to sea—then again we advanced, though slowly, towards the shore. The old man and his boy were less able to contend with the difficulties which surrounded them. The old man had hurt himself, I fancy, and by degrees relaxed in his efforts—the poor little fellow was still putting forth all his strength to urge their boat forward, but it was too evidently likely to prove unavailing.

At last they slowly drifted past us, and though at so short a distance that I could clearly see the expression of their countenances we could render them no possible assistance. I shall not quickly forget the poor old man’s look of despair and grief—more perhaps for the coming fate of his boy than for himself. The poor lad had not yet given up all hopes of escape. Now he would sit down and wring his hands, and then he would start up, and, seizing an oar, try once more to shove the boat ahead. We had little time, however, for contemplating their fate, for there was still a great probability that we might have to share it. We were yet drifting seaward, and for hours together our utmost exertions only enabled us to hold our own. I can easily fancy the interest we excited on shore, yet nothing could be thought of to help us. We could hear the cry of horror and commiseration which rose from the crowd as the boat with our companions in misfortune drifted past the spot whence there was any hope of escape, and the old man and lad sat down and gave themselves up to despair. The intense cold would, I guessed, soon deprive them of all sensation and further power of exertion. Night was coming on, and we lost sight of them in the gloom. We had now been six hours in our perilous position, without time even to take a particle of nourishment. We were making for the Cerberus as the nearest point where we could receive assistance.

“We shall reach her, sir!” exclaimed Grampus at length, with a cheerful tone. “See, they are ready to heave us a line if we could but get a few fathoms nearer.” Encouraged by this, we exerted ourselves still more than ever, and at length a man from the jibboom end of the Cerberus hove a lead which happily reached our boat. We seized it eagerly, and making the line fast, we were hauled alongside the wharf. As soon as we landed and had received the congratulations of the spectators of our adventure, we were carried off, half-starved and frozen, by the master-attendant, Mr Prowse, to his house; where we were most hospitably entertained. I found in him an old shipmate, as he had been master of the Torbay when I belonged to her. I spent upwards of two days at his house, and received the greatest of kindness from him. While on shore I met another old friend, Captain Lee, of the Harriet Packet, with whom I almost lived during his stay at Halifax. As may be supposed, I found his comfortable cabin a far more agreeable place of abode than a midshipman’s berth with the rough and scanty fare with which we were provided. I was anxious to ascertain the fate of the old man and his son whom we had seen carried out to sea by the ice. Sad to relate, they had been picked up two days afterwards at the mouth of the harbour, frozen to death. They must have died, I suspect, soon after we lost sight of them, for the cold was so intense that it could not long have been resisted. We had, indeed, cause to be thankful to providence that their fate was not ours. It is but one of the many instances in which I have been mercifully preserved, while those by my side have been cut off. For what end has this been done? I wish that I could say that I have properly employed the longer term of life thus vouchsafed to me. There had been at Halifax all the winter a very limited supply of provisions. At length a fleet appeared off the harbour’s mouth, which proved to be that under the command of Admiral Lord Shouldham, with the army of General Howe on board, (see Note 2), who had been compelled by the American revolutionists, under General Washington, to evacuate Boston, after having been besieged in it for fully ten months. It will be remembered that we parted from the Chatham, Admiral Shouldham’s flag-ship, in a gale in the early part of our voyage. She went through as much bad weather, and experienced almost as many disasters as we had suffered, though at length she reached Boston, where Lord Shouldham succeeded Admiral Graves as Commander-in-Chief. Our disasters throughout the whole of that sad contest with the American States arose from the foolish contempt with which the British generals and their officers treated the provincial troops. While General Howe was waiting for reinforcements from England, General Washington was collecting an army and disciplining his troops. Before, therefore, the expected reinforcements could arrive, General Howe, to his great surprise, found himself outnumbered, and the city commanded from some hills which overlook it, called Dorchester Heights. He found that he must either dislodge the enemy from these heights or evacuate Boston. A heavy gale of wind prevented the adoption of the former alternative till the rebels were too strongly entrenched to allow the attempt to be made with any prospect of success. A hurried retreat was therefore resolved on, and not only the troops, but those of the inhabitants who had sided with the British, were compelled to embark on board the men-of-war and transports, vast quantities of military stores and property of all sorts being either destroyed or left behind, to fall into the hands of the enemy. This fleet had arrived ill provided with provisions to feed so many mouths, and from there being, as I have said, but a scanty supply of food in Halifax already, it was considered necessary to put the army and navy on half allowance—an arrangement to which, though very disagreeable, we were compelled to submit with the best grace we could muster. From the time of our arrival till the 4th of May we were busily occupied in fitting the ship for sea, and not an hour was lost after that was accomplished, in getting under weigh, when we stood to the southward. We were not sorry to have the chance of seeing some active service. On the 8th we spoke HMS Merlin, with two transports bound for Halifax, on the 12th the Milford and Lively, on a cruise. On the same day we anchored in Nantucket Roads, Boston, where we found lying the Renown, wearing the broad pennant of Commodore Banks, which we saluted with thirteen guns. A constant cannonade was

kept up on the squadron by the rebels who now held Boston and the surrounding heights, but without doing us much mischief. We returned the fire occasionally with probably about the same result. After their late successes the American patriots had become very bold, and no longer held the British in any respect. Some parts of the coast of the harbour were left unprotected by the enemy. One night I was sent on shore in command of a watering-party, with strict orders to keep a watchful guard against surprise. To do this I considered it necessary to take possession of a house near the spot where we were filling the casks. As the house was deserted I carried off a table and six chairs which I found in it, with which to furnish the midshipman's berth—ours having been knocked to pieces on the voyage to Halifax.

By the rules of war I had a right to take the property, I believe, but it seems hard that the owners, who were probably not belligerents, should be deprived of it. On the following day, the 15th, we sailed on a cruise in search of any of the enemy's merchantmen or privateers, of which they had begun to fit out a good many. The crews ran a great risk of being treated as pirates, but as the rebels had already threatened to retaliate, should the usual customs of regular warfare be departed from, it was judged prudent to behave towards those who fell into our hands as if they were regular prisoners of war.

We had begun to grumble much at our ill-luck in not falling in with prize. "Ye'll na take anything which will put siller into any of our pockets this cruise, ma laddies," said Andrew Macallan, the Scotch surgeon's mate, who was much addicted to the prophesying of ill-luck.

We Orlopians were collected in the midshipman's berth towards the termination of a not over-luxurious dinner. "I should think not," responded Kennedy. "What can we expect to get out of these beggarly provincials? It's not likely they'll have any craft afloat which will be worth capture."

"How do you know that?" exclaimed Frank Mercer, one of our mates, with a deep crimson flush on his brow. "Now, from what I have heard, I believe the patriots have a number of fine merchantmen sailing out of their ports, and have already fitted out several privateers."

"From which of your friends on shore did you hear that?" asked Kennedy, with a look of contempt.

"From common report," replied Mercer. He was known to have several relations and friends in America who had sided with the rebels, and though this made him look on them with a favourable eye, he had too loyal a spirit to allow him to contemplate for a moment the desertion of his colours. Still his heart often yearned towards those engaged in what then appeared so unequal a struggle on shore, and he could scarcely help expressing satisfaction at any success they met with. Poor Mercer had to endure a great deal of irony and abuse on the subject, but while he defended the rebels, and asserted their right to take up arms in the defence of their liberties, he acknowledged that his own duty was to remain loyal to his sovereign. The dispute was waxing warm, when little Harry Sumner, who had been on deck, came below, and announced that there was a suspicious sail away to the north-east, and that we were in chase of her. I was on deck in a minute, and found everything being set alow and aloft in chase of the stranger. After watching her for some time from aloft, where I had gone with my spy-glass, I saw that we were gaining on her rapidly, though she had also made all sail. This convinced us that she was a craft belonging to the enemy. She was sloop-rigged, but seemed to be a vessel of some size. After a chase of four hours we got her within range of our guns, when a shot from one of our bow-chasers, falling close alongside, convinced her that she had no chance of escape, and that her wisest policy was to heave-to without more ado. This she at once did, and I was sent on board to take possession. She proved to be the Ranger, from Nantucket harbour, bound on a whaling voyage, her crew consisting of a master, mate, boy, and ten men. Her master, Mr Jotham Scuttle, was very indignant at being captured, and good reason he had to be so, for half the vessel was his own, and thus in a moment he was deprived of all his worldly wealth. He was as unlike a seaman in appearance as could well be imagined; with his broad-brimmed hat, knee-breeches, buckles to his high shoes, and long waistcoat, but he was not the less active for all that. Leaving Grampus, who had accompanied me, with two hands in charge of the sloop, I returned with the prisoners to the frigate. The mate and men were instantly pressed, without the question being asked whether they would wish to join, and Captain Hudson ordered me to go back to the sloop, giving me leave to carry Tom Rockets, in addition to the men already on board, and to make the best of my way to Halifax. "Stay," said he, "take the master and boy with you, Mr Hurry; we shall not know what to do with them on board—and see that he plays you no trick." I laughed at the idea of having anything to dread from the demure Mr Scuttle, and, putting up a few necessaries, I tumbled into the boat which was to take me on board my new command. I thought I caught a twinkle in friend Jotham's eyes when he found that he was to be sent back to his own vessel—but this was probably fancy. He sat looking very sad and downcast as we pulled on board the sloop. The crew of the boat which had brought me gave me three cheers, and Delisle, who had come in her, wished me a prosperous voyage to Halifax, from which I was about two hundred leagues distant. The frigate then hauled her wind, and I made sail to the northward. Of course I felt very grand in my new command, like Sancho Panza in his island, though it was not to last very long at the utmost; and it was not impossible that I might be summarily dispossessed of it at any moment; however, I did not trouble myself about such thoughts just then. Having taken possession of the master's cabin, and allowed him to occupy his mate's, I called my ship's company together, and, having divided them into two watches, told them I expected they would do their duty and behave themselves. Nol Grampus had charge of one watch with one of the seamen and Mr Scuttle under him, and I took the other with the other seaman, Tom Rockets and the boy. Tom had not got over his innocent country look, though he was sharp enough in reality, and did his duty as a seaman very fairly. Old Grampus, who had taken a fancy to him, was always teaching him something or other likely to prove useful. "Now, Tom, you may be no wiser nor a young gull as has never learned to fly," I heard the old man say; "but listen, my boy, if you follows my advice you'll soon be able to spread your wings and skim over the water just for all the world like one on them big albatrosses one meets with off the Cape of Good Hope, you've heard speak of." Tom had not heard of such a place, so Grampus told him all about it, and a great deal more besides. In that way my young follower picked up his sea lore. The contrast between the two was perfect. Tom's young, smooth, innocent face, and round boyish figure, and the thorough old sea-dog look of Grampus, with his grizzly bushy hair and whiskers, his long cue, his deeply-furrowed, or I may say rather bumped and knobbed and bronzed countenance, and his spare, sinewy form, having not a particle of flesh with which he could dispense.

As Mr Jotham Scuttle's eye fell on Tom he took him at once for a simple lad, who could readily believe anything he had to say, and he formed his plans accordingly. I got on very well with my scanty crew, for as there were winches and tackles of all sorts on board, I managed to work the vessel easily enough. We had an abundance of provisions, so that, contrasted especially with the fare to which I had for many months past been accustomed, we lived luxuriously.

The second day I invited Mr Scuttle to dine with me. The commencement of the entertainment was not very lively, for though he did not play a bad knife and fork, he uttered no sound except an occasional deep sigh from beneath the very lowest button of his waistcoat. At last, after leaning his head on his hand for some time, he looked up.

"It is very hard to be borne, mister," he exclaimed with vehemence. "Here was I, with a fine craft I could almost call my own, and with every chance of providing for my family, and now I'm worse than a beggar—a prisoner, and forced to go I don't know where."

"You shouldn't have broken the blockade, and your friends shouldn't have rebelled and broken the laws," said I.

"Laws!" he exclaimed with disdain, "they were bad laws, and it went against the grain of every honest man to observe them."

"I don't know anything about that," I replied; "in my profession all we have to do is to obey without asking questions, and I just fancy that your people will very soon have to do the same, whether they like it or not."

"Will they, forsooth?" he exclaimed, striking his fist on the table. "The time has passed for that. I'll tell you what, sir, they'll fight it out till every drop of honest blood is spilt in the country. It was the supercilious, boasting airs of your lords and aristocrats who came out among the military looking down upon all the first gentlemen in the land as provincials and colonists, as they called them in contempt, which was the real cause of the revolt. They made enemies wherever they went, with their follies and pride and haughty words. They and their government at home seemed to forget that we were Britons like themselves, with British hearts, ay, and with truer loyalty than they had for the king and the old country. What would you say, sir, if you were insulted as we have been?"

"I certainly do not like being bullied by anyone," said I.

"No more do we colonists, sir," answered the poor skipper. "My father, sir, came over from the old country; misfortunes compelled him to quit it, but he loved it as much as ever, and brought up me, his son, to love it also; and so I should to this day, had I, and those who had made America their own, been fairly treated—not looked upon as children to be played with, or slaves to be bullied and despised. Now, sir," he continued, standing up and placing one hand on the table, while he extended the other, "I tell you that there are not bitterer enemies to the old country than your government have made me and many like me."

"I am very sorry for you," I said, seeing the justice of his remarks, "but you see I cannot help it, so just sit down and mix yourself another tumbler of grog; we can but make the best of circumstances."

"I don't want your pity, or that of any of the enemies of America," he answered proudly. Then he seemed to soften, and he continued in a more subdued tone, "But you, young gentleman, seem inclined to treat me as a man should a man, and not as some of your officers have treated us provincials, so I am thankful, and if the day should come when I can return your kindness I shall be glad to do so."

"I only hope that I may not be in your place as a prisoner," said I.

"To be honest with you," he replied, "if I only had the chance of taking the sloop from you, I should be right not to let it pass by, though I have no great hope that it will be offered me."

"No, I should think not," I answered, laughing. I have often since thought of the foolish, domineering way in which England and Englishmen treat their brethren who turn colonists, and shall not be surprised if she loses one colony after another as she was now doing her American settlements. The skipper was soon pacified, and we became very good friends. We were still talking away over our glass of grog, when Nol Grampus put his head in at the cabin-door.

"I don't quite like the look of the weather, Mr Hurry," said he. "I think it's going to breeze up a bit, and the sooner we shorten sail the better."

I jumped up and went on deck, when I saw that he was right. We accordingly at once made all snug. Thick clouds were banking up from the westward and southward, which soon rushing on like a vast army sweeping over a devoted country, deluged us with rain, bringing a heavy breeze, which kicked up no small amount of sea. The wind keeping to the southward of west we could lay our course, so on we went pitching and tumbling before it in no very pleasant manner for several days.

Fortunately the Ranger was well found in every respect, and, proving a very good sea-boat, showed that the men of Nantucket knew what was the best economy in the end. She was newly painted, and had sixteen ports, so that at a distance she had a somewhat formidable appearance; but as they had no guns to them, though she could grin, she could not even bark, much less bite. If, therefore, we fell in with an enemy I saw that, should we not be able to escape by flight, we should in all probability be captured. I had observed that my friend the skipper had been in better spirits than at first. He spoke frankly to me, as he did to the crew, and seemed to be on good terms with everybody. He was evidently a clever man—full of resources of all sorts—above his station I should say. He had been brought up as a farmer, and had never been afloat till within the last six or seven years. He was now no contemptible sailor. His next move would probably be to some totally different sphere, where he would take a step higher in the social scale. Such is the career of many a New Englander.

I had turned into my berth, after keeping the morning watch some days after this, when, as I awoke, I saw Tom Rockets moving about in the cabin.

“What do you want, Tom?” I asked.

“Hist, sir,” he whispered, “I’ve just a word to speak to you.”

“Out with it then, my man,” I said.

“It’s just about that strange skipper, sir.”

“Well, go on.”

“He’s been talking to me, and asking if I wouldn’t like to go and settle in a land of liberty, and make my fortune, and no longer be subject to be starved and flogged and ill-treated on board of a man-of-war?”

“And what did you say, Tom?” I asked.

“I told him just simply like that I belonged to you, that I would follow wheresoever you went, and that if you thought fit to go and settle in his country, I’d have no objection to go too.”

“That was right, Tom. If he speaks to you again, give him the same sort of answer. Don’t let him suppose you are offended. Has he spoken with either of the other men?”

“With all except Grampus; but I don’t think he has made much way with them. The old man, I fancy, sir, guesses what he’s after, and has his eye on him,” answered Tom.

“All right, then, my lad. Keep your eyes about you, and let me know any thing you observe, but don’t allow the skipper to find out that we suspect him.”

Tom promised to follow my directions, and I sent him on deck while I turned out and dressed. I treated Mr Scuttle just as if he were not plotting against me, for forewarned, I felt myself fore-armed, and had no fear that he could do me any harm.

That day the wind fell considerably and we again had fair weather. The next morning, while I was at breakfast, old Nol hailed down the sky-light—

“Would you just come on deck for a moment, sir?” said he.

“What is it?” I asked.

“There’s a sail away to the south-west, and I don’t quite like the looks of her,” answered the old man.

I jumped on deck in a moment. I was not long in making out a brig under all sail holding the same course we were on. As I took the glass from my eye I found Scuttle standing by my side.

“What do you think of her?” I asked.

“Maybe she’s a whaler, or maybe a sealer, or a merchantman from one of the provincial ports, or maybe a transport with British red-coats aboard; but, Mr Hurry, it requires a man with a longer sight than I’ve got to tell just now what she is,” said the skipper, in the long drawling tone of a New Englander.

I thought that there was something ironical in his tone as he spoke, and that he more than probably knew perfectly well all about the stranger.

“Whatever she may be,” I answered, “I’ll show her my heels. Make all sail, Grampus.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” he replied; and in a short time, the skipper pulling and hauling with as good a will as the rest, we had every stitch of canvas packed on the sloop which she could carry. I fancied, however, that the skipper gave a knowing look at me as he went forward, as much as to say, “You may make all the sail you like, but it won’t do.” At all events, I soon found that the Ranger, though a very good sea boat, was a tub in regard to sailing, under-rigged especially, as she was, for greater convenience in handling.

The stranger was walking up to us fast. As the morning sun fell on her sails they appeared to me very white, and to have a wide spread, and I began to hope that she might prove an English man-of-war brig. Another two hours, however, banished any such hopes, and I was convinced, on looking at Jotham Scuttle’s countenance, that she was likely to prove his friend, but my enemy.

“What do you think of her now, Mr Scuttle?” I asked.

“She’s a brig,” he answered innocently.

“Anyone can see that with half an eye,” said I; “but what is she? Where does she hail from?”

“Well, then, maybe she hails from a provincial port,” he answered slowly. “I should not be very much surprised, too, if she carries guns.”

“A rebel privateer or pirate, in fact,” said I.

“An American privateer, if you please, sir, I have no doubt she is,” he replied; “in two or three hours, I guess, you will find it safer to call her so, at all events.”

“Well, well, we will see about that,” I remarked, laughing at his coolness, though I began to entertain no slight apprehension that I was about to lose my prize and to become a prisoner into the bargain.

“They’ve got their new-fangled flag a-flying from their peak, sir,” said Grampus, stepping up.

On looking through my glass I made out the star-and-stripe covered ensign, just then begun to be carried by provincial vessels, flying out proudly from her gaff end; while several ports at her side left me no longer in doubt that she was an enemy most devoutly to be wished away. Do everything I could, however, to increase the speed of the Ranger, she rapidly came up with us. Still it was not in my nature to give in while a chance remained of escape. Some man-of-war might heave in sight, or some other craft the privateer might think more worthy of chasing; or we might keep ahead till darkness came to my help. The chances were, however, very small in my favour, and Mr Scuttle could not help showing his satisfaction at the prospect of the probable change in our fortunes. I went aloft and swept the horizon with my glass in every direction, but not a sail appeared in sight. The breeze held steady, and indeed seemed rather inclined to increase than fall. My heart sank lower than it had ever done before. In another hour my people and I would be prisoners, and Mr Jotham Scuttle would be offering me his commiseration. He was speaking to my two men; doubtless telling them they had nothing to fear. I felt a very strong inclination at the moment to pitch him overboard; I wanted some one on whom to vent my vexation. Poor man! however, there was in reality much to admire in him. In another half hour the game would be up. Suddenly a bright idea occurred to me. I had often seen a poor silly creature followed by a troop of urchins hallooing at his heels and mocking him with their thoughtless jests, when he would turn round with clenched fists and grinning lips, and they would take to an ignominious flight. I would try the effect of a similar trick. Descending on deck, I ordered Grampus to get lines fastened to all the ports, so that they might be lifted at once. As soon as the arrangement was made I put the sloop about, and at the same moment, suddenly lifting all our ports—of which, as I have said, we had eight on a side—under all sail, I stood boldly down towards the enemy. Still she stood on, and my heart began to quake for the success of my manoeuvre.

“It can’t be helped, sir, I fear,” said Grampus. “We are in for it.”

“No, no,” I exclaimed, with a shout of joy. “It’s all right. Hurrah, my lads!” The brig had taken in her studden-sails and was standing away from us, close-hauled on a wind. I was so eagerly watching her that I did not see what had become of friend Scuttle. I was aroused by a cry from Tom Rockets.

“Just you come down, master!” he exclaimed.

I looked up and caught sight of the skipper and his boy going aloft with knives in their hands. Their intention was obvious. It was to cut the halliards, and by letting the sails come down by the run, call the attention of the brig to our true condition, and thus bring her back to our capture. Tom had got hold of the boy’s leg, and I thought would have jerked him overboard. Grampus in a moment was after the master, and before he had reached the cross-trees had hold of him, and, wrenching the knife from his hand, had hove it overboard. Whatever were the thoughts and intentions of my two other men, they did not show any inclination to side with the skipper. He began to show fight and to kick and struggle not a little, but Grampus had held on with his teeth in too many a gale while close-reefing top-sails, not to be able to gain the mastery. With threats and very significant signs that he would heave him overboard, he at length forced him down on deck.

“Now,” said I, “Mr Scuttle, I should be justified in pistolling you on the spot for the pretty trick you purposed playing me. But I will not injure you. You gave me warning, I remember, what you would do, so, as I believe you to be a man of honour, pass me your word that you will attempt no further treachery and I will not injure you. Otherwise, for my own safety, I must clap you in limbo, and shoot you the moment I find you again at any such game.”

“It’s very, very hard,” he answered, folding his arms on his bosom and looking wistfully at the brig, which still held her course away from us, “to have thought that I should get back my vessel and see my family again in a few days perhaps, and now to have all my hopes rudely swept away from me! It’s hard—very, very hard!”

I really pitied the poor man and would on no account have injured him, could I have avoided it.

“Well, Mr Hurry, luck’s against me,” he said at length. “In all things regarding the navigation of the vessel, I’ll obey you faithfully till we reach Halifax. Then you have nothing more to fear from me.”

I was sure that I could trust him. “Then,” said I, “go about your duty, and I will take no notice of what has passed.”

Grampus, Tom, and I cheered lustily as we saw the brig continuing to stand away from us, and the men joined us, though I suspect the fellows did not care much about the matter. It was getting towards evening. I longed for darkness, for I never felt so anxious in my life. I was afraid every moment that the people of the brig might gain courage and turn round upon us. If so, we should be worse off than ever, as we should not have a chance of escaping. Friend Scuttle eyed the brig as anxiously as I did, though with very different wishes. Still we held on, looking, I doubt not, very fierce, and the privateer’s men must have been no less anxious to get away from us than we were from them. At length evening approached, and never did I see the sun set with so much satisfaction. Gradually the shades of night crept over the ocean, and I drew a long breath as the brig was lost to our sight in the thickening gloom. As soon as I was certain that we could not possibly be seen, I ordered the sloop to be kept away, and once more made all sail to the northward, altering my course a few points from that I had been steering when first seen by the brig, lest she should by any chance be looking after us in the morning. Probably the privateer’s men were congratulating themselves at thus easily escaping from us. As I gave vent to my feelings in a hearty cheer the poor skipper exhibited his in a deep groan, and then, having assisted in making sail, turned in to try and forget his sorrows in sleep. The weather continued fine till the 7th of the month, when I made the land about five leagues to the westward of Halifax harbour. Soon after this the wind fell and we had a stark calm. By Mr Scuttle’s advice I fitted a

couple of fishing-lines, and in the course of an hour, with those two lines alone, caught one hundred and twenty-four very fine cod. They proved a welcome addition to our usual salt-meat fare. Those we could not eat fresh we split open and dried in the sun, and they thus served us for food for several days.

“What do you think of the weather now, Grampus?” said I, after we had been fishing for some time.

“I don’t like its looks at all, sir,” he replied. “This is a ticklish coast at all times, and one never knows what’s coming.”

“If you had asked me, I could have told you that we are going to have wind, and fully enough of it,” observed Mr Scuttle.

He had got into a mighty free-and-easy style of talking of late. He was perfectly right, though in addition to the wind, which sprung up immediately afterwards, we got a thick fog, which totally obscured the land. I steered a course, however, which I hoped would carry us to the harbour’s mouth. We ran on for some time and then hove-to, that we might sound. We had still plenty of water, so I stood on again. At last the fog lifted a little, when to my very great disgust I found that we had run three leagues past the mouth of the harbour. We endeavoured to tack back, but before morning a heavy gale of wind sprung up directly off shore. It was impossible to beat up against it, so I stood to the eastward all that day and night, under a try-sail and storm-jib. During this time the gale showed no signs of abating. It was a good trial to our tempers, at all events. Grampus vowed that there was some old witch in Halifax who must have taken a spite to us and was resolved to keep us out of the harbour as long as she could. He was devising all sorts of plans for exorcising her, but none seemed likely to prove satisfactory. In the morning, the weather moderating a little, I stood to the westward under close-reefed mainsail and double-reefed foresail, and by the evening reached at length the mouth of the harbour. “There’s many a slip between the cup and the lip.” We were congratulating ourselves on getting all snug at night, when once more the wind breezed up with a thickish fog, and as we were then in only forty fathoms of water I was obliged again to run to sea. The bad weather kept me, as well as all the people, on deck, for not knowing what might occur no one could venture to go below. Some time before daylight I once more hauled my wind and beat up towards the land. By the evening of the 10th we were again in with Jabucta Head. We then got soundings on a reef of rocks in eight fathoms water, but so worn out was I and everybody on board that I ordered the anchor to be let go, that we might turn in and get some rest. I fully expected to lose my anchor and cable, but when I came to weigh at daylight the next morning I was fortunate enough to save them both. I now fully expected to get safe into harbour, but as I was standing up Major’s Reach I saw a Falmouth packet coming down. The temptation of speaking her and sending a message home was too great to be resisted, so I stood over towards her. As the sloop was going about she missed stays near a dangerous reef, and to prevent her driving on the rocks it was necessary to be quick in wearing. In doing this the boom came over with the whole main-sheet eased off, and carried it away in six different places. This accident compelled me to run from the narrow channel and lost me the opportunity of speaking the packet. Once more making sail, and the wind favouring me, I got as high as George’s Island, when a sudden squall split my mainsail. This compelled me to bring up. Manning a boat, I pulled up to Halifax to look out for the prize agent, into whose hands I was to deliver the sloop.

I parted on the best of terms with Mr Jotham Scuttle. He hoped to find some friends in Halifax who would advance him money to enable him to buy back the Ranger.

“If ever you come to Nantucket,” said he, “ask for me, and if I’m on shore there’s no one will give you a more hearty welcome.”

I promised that I would not forget his kind invitation, and, after a hearty shaking of hands, I saw no more of him.

I found the whole town in a state of great commotion, as the immense fleet there collected, of men-of-war and transports, with a large army on board, were on the point of sailing, it was said, on an expedition which would effectually crush the rebels and bring the American provinces once more into complete subjection. That I might not be left behind I immediately reported myself to my Lord Shouldham. His lordship ordered me at once to come on board the Chatham, with my people. I very speedily returned to the Ranger and again got back to the Chatham. I was, however, rather ashamed of my outfit, as it was not very appropriate to the atmosphere of a flag-ship, consisting, as it did, of one old uniform suit, four shirts, and a very few etceteras.

The fleet, I found, was bound for the projected attack on New York. It consisted of his Majesty’s ships Chatham, Rear-Admiral Shouldham, of the White—she had on board General Lord Percy, General Pigot, and other officers of rank—the Centurion, the Greyhound, which had on board General Sir William Howe, the Commander-in-Chief, and brother to Admiral Lord Howe, the Rose, Senegal, and Merlin, sloops of war, and nearly two hundred sail of transports.

Two hours after I got on board the whole fleet of men-of-war and transports made sail for their destination. It was understood that we were to be joined at New York by Admiral Lord Howe, who was on his way out from England. He was to take command of the fleet, while his brother, the general, had command of the army. The two together were to act as commissioners to treat with the rebels, and, by showing them the overpowering force marshalled against them, to endeavour to bring them to terms. Although the rebels had been for so long able successfully to set the king’s forces at defiance, there were a considerable number of people throughout the country who still remained loyal to their sovereign, known generally under the designation of Tories, and it was supposed that they would materially aid both in putting down the rebellion and in winning back the inhabitants to their allegiance. The rebel army, under the immediate command of General Washington, held New York and Long Island opposite to it, as well as the adjacent country. I believe I knew the particulars I speak of at the time: if not I learnt them soon afterwards.

Note 1. Father of the late Admiral Sir William Symonds, and of the late Admiral Thomas Symonds.

Note 2. General Howe was the brother of Admiral Lord Howe.

Chapter Four.

The fleet at sea.—Troops landed.—All hope of peace abandoned.—Spies executed.—Boats sent to watch fire-ships.—Rejoin Orpheus.—Land masters of merchantmen.—Fall in with rebel regiment.—Attack fort on Sullivan's Island.—Heavy loss.—Witness attack on Brooklyn.—Dreadful slaughter.—Run past batteries in East River.—Trying time.—Death of an old friend.—Ships cannonaded.

Far as the eye could reach the white sails of the men-of-war and transports dotted the blue waters of the Atlantic, as with a light though favourable breeze the fleet steered a course for New York. We might have been excused, as we scanned with pride the vast armament—the ships, their crews, and the troops in prime order and amply supplied with all the munitions of war, under the command of the most experienced leaders England could send forth—if we believed firmly that victory was destined to sit proudly on our standards. Here and there a man-of-war might be seen in the far distance, like a sheep-dog on the heels of the flock, firing a gun now, on this side now on that, to hint to any laggers along the transports to make more sail, but generally the fleet kept well together. On the 13th the Greyhound, with General Howe on board, parted company, to hasten on, it was supposed, to make arrangements with Governor Tryon and other royalists in the neighbourhood of New York about the landing the troops, and did not return to the fleet. It was not till the 2nd, after a prosperous voyage, that we reached Sandy Hook, at the mouth of Baritan Day, to the southward of the narrow entrance of New York harbour, where we found at anchor his Majesty's ship Phoenix and several sail of merchantmen. At noon on the 4th the signal was given for the whole fleet to weigh. It was a beautiful sight. The sky was blue, the sun bright, and the water calm and clear. To the southward, across the yellow glittering shore of Sandy Hook, arose the bold highlands of Neversink; on the larboard bow was Staten Island, with green fields, feathery woods, and sloping hills, sprinkled with numerous country houses and villas, built mostly by the old Dutch settlers, peeping from among the trees. Ahead were the Narrows—such is the appropriate name given to the channel leading to New York—while more to the right stretched away, till lost in distance to the north-east, the low sandy coast of Long Island, with a fringe of dark forest appearing on the summit of its centre ridge like the bristles on the back of a wild boar. The Chatham was the first ship to make sail, and the master received orders to steer through the rest of the fleet. It was truly a fine sight, as the admiral and the generals, with their brilliant staffs in rich uniforms, and the officers of the ships stood crowding on the decks, with bands playing joyous and inspiriting tunes while we sailed onward, the crews and troops on board that numerous squadron cheering lustily, their hearts beating with martial ardour under the belief that we were advancing to the immediate attack and certain conquest of New York. All necessary preparations were made on our passage up for landing, but as we approached the entrance of the harbour some change seemed to be contemplated in the arrangements, and at sunset, instead of entering the Narrows, the signal was made for the fleet to anchor in Gravesend Day at the south-west end of Long Island. I was anxious to fall in with the Orpheus, once more to get on board her, for with my scanty stock of clothing I was far from comfortable in the flag-ship. She was, however, away on a cruise and might not possibly return for some time. However, I thereby saw and heard more of the general proceedings than I should otherwise have done. We learned soon afterwards that on this very day, the 4th of July, 1776, thirteen British colonies in America had declared themselves free and independent States, abjuring all allegiance to the British Crown, and renouncing all political connexion with the mother country. This declaration was issued by the celebrated Congress, organised by Dr Franklin and other provincial leaders, consisting of representatives from the above-mentioned States who assembled at Philadelphia. The resolution was passed on the 2nd, but it was not till the day I speak of, the 4th, that the document entitled the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Congress and published to the people. It was the fatal blow which severed for ever that vast territory from Great Britain. The reasons for our anchoring and the troops not being landed were known only to the commanders-in-chief.

At daylight on the 5th the signal was made for the whole fleet to weigh. At this time, it must be understood, the rebels held the shore of Long Island on our starboard hand in considerable force, and there were bodies of them on Staten Island on the larboard hand, which forms the southern side of the harbour. It was a fine sight to see the fleet, the Phoenix, Rose, and Senegal leading, standing for the channel of the Narrows; but our hopes of entering into action were again disappointed in consequence of the wind falling away and compelling us to anchor. At four o'clock in the afternoon, however, once more the signal was made to weigh, the flat-bottomed boats destined to land the troops were manned, and in the same order as before we proceeded onwards. The moment we entered the Narrows the rebels opened fire on us from field-pieces and small arms, but without doing us much injury, but very few men on board any of the ships being killed. By seven o'clock we had dropped anchor close in with the north shore of Staten Island, and were actively engaged in landing the troops. So rapid and unexpected had been our movements at the last that a body of the enemy, to the number of nearly three hundred men, were unable to escape and were taken prisoners by the first division of Grenadiers who landed. The army at once encamped, and it was difficult to say what great movement would next take place. We found ourselves, however, at once engaged in active warfare on a small scale, for the enemy were by no means idle and the troops had frequent skirmishes with them. The navy also had work enough to do, and of a very harassing nature. Frequently I had to spend the whole of the night in a guard-boat keeping watch on the movements of the enemy, especially looking out for the approach of fire-ships, which, it was reported, they were about to send down in the hopes of destroying the fleet. In the day-time we were employed in carrying about troops and throwing them on shore in different directions, to harass and distract the enemy, so that they might be less prepared when the real attack upon them was made. On the 12th of July the signal was made for the Phoenix, Rose, and Tryall to get under weigh, and the wind being favourable, they stood up boldly towards the mouth of the Hudson. It was an exploit of no slight danger and difficulty, and was watched by all on board the fleet with breathless interest. As they got within reach the batteries of Red Hook, Powles Hook, and the garrison of New York opened an incessant and heavy fire on them, which was warmly returned by the ships. General Washington and his army must have looked with no little vexation, if not dismay, on the success of the attempt, as it exposed the shores of the Hudson at unexpected points to our attacks, and Captain Wallace of the Rose was well known for the annoyance he had been causing the inhabitants of the New England coast since the commencement of the outbreak.

On the day of this occurrence a salute from each of the ships-of-war gave notice that Lord Viscount Howe had arrived. He superseded Lord Shouldham as commander-in-chief. He had come out from England expecting to join his

brother, the general, at Halifax, but finding that he had sailed from thence had followed him here. At first it was supposed that warlike operations would be pushed on with vigour, but soon it was reported that conciliatory measures were to be the order of the day, and the general and admiral lost no time in communicating with General Washington, Dr Franklin, and other leaders of the rebels, in the hopes of bringing them to terms.

Officers were sent with flags of truce, who were met by the Americans each time in a barge half-way between Governor's Island and Staten Island. Governor's Island is a small island in the centre of the channel between Brooklyn and New York. They were conducted with every mark of courtesy to the American generals, but the rebels had already committed themselves too far to allow them to accept of any terms the British Commissioners had it in their power to offer. The Declaration of Independence had for ever, indeed, cut the last link which bound the colonies to England, and though henceforward they might be reconciled, it was clear that it must be in the character of separate States. It was reported on board that the admiral had addressed a letter to General Washington as simply to George Washington, Esquire, and that the American commander-in-chief refused to receive it, on the ground that he was at the head of a regularly constituted army and could only receive communications under his proper title of general. Those who knew General Washington, as I afterwards had the means of doing, were aware that this was not owing to pride or ostentation, but from the importance in the critical position in which he was placed of keeping up his character and of asserting the legality of the cause in which he was engaged. Whatever might have been then said of that truly great man, ample justice will be done him in after ages, I am sure, among all ranks and classes of opinion. However, as I do not profess to write a history of the events of the war or of the public characters engaged in it, I will return to my own private journal.

The Americans had for some time past, as I have mentioned, been preparing fire-ships. This we knew from our spies. We had a number of them on shore, or rather, there were a number of royalists who, having no wish to join the rebellion, were ready by every means in their power to aid in putting it down. A considerable number of these had been removed by the rebel authorities, both from Long Island and the adjacent districts, into the interior. Many were imprisoned, and some few who had been discovered communicating with our party were executed as spies. Even among the very men who were about Washington himself some were found not true to him, and it was reported that plots had been laid, if not against his life, at all events against his liberty, so that it would not have surprised us had he been brought on board a prisoner. But to return to the subject of the fire-ships. On the night of the 10th of August I had been put in charge of one of the squadron of boats always held in readiness to repel any attack from those dangerous engines of warfare. It had just gone four-bells in the first watch, the night was cloudy though it was calm and sultry, when the Eagle, Captain Duncan, made the signal that the enemy's fire-ships were approaching. The officer in command of our boat squadron repeated the signal. "Give way, my lads, give way?" he shouted, and away we all pulled up the harbour. It was necessary to be silent and cautious in the extreme, however, as soon as we had quitted the fleet. We made the best of our way, for time might be of importance. The night was very dark, the water was smooth and the foam which bubbled up at our bows of the boats and fell in showers from the blades of our oars sparkled brilliantly, as if composed of grains of burnished gold.

Ahead of us lay the devoted city against which our arms were soon to be turned, and from whose neighbourhood we expected every instant to see the fire-ships issue forth. At length the order was passed from boat to boat that we should lay on our oars to await the expected event. Hour after hour, however, went by. Now there was an alarm that some dark bodies were seen moving down towards us, but no vessels made their appearance, and at last the near approach of dawn warned us that it was time to pull back to our ships to escape an attack by the enemy. We of course kept a look-out astern, to be certain that the fire-ships were not following us, and then lay on our oars again in the neighbourhood of the fleet. Either the alarm was a false one or the rebels, aware of our preparations, saw that it would be useless to send out the fire-ships.

This was the last night I was thus engaged, for on the 13th of August, to my very great satisfaction, my eyes fell on the Orpheus standing up the harbour and taking up her berth among the fleet. I did not, however, get my discharge from the Chatham till the following day, when, accompanied by old Grampus, Tom Rockets, and my two other men, I lost no time in pulling on board, after an absence of ten weeks. I was warmly greeted by my messmates, and we each had our adventures to recount. She had taken seven prizes, most of which she brought in with her. Poor Lee, the surgeon's second mate, was, they told me, at the point of death. His constitution was unfit to cope with the hard life to which he was exposed in the navy. He died soon afterwards, and on the morning of the 16th we carried him on shore on Staten Island, where he rests in an unknown grave in the land of the stranger.

The same day we sailed and steered a course for Cape May, with, the intention of proceeding up the Delaware river to Philadelphia. My account of the way in which I had frightened off the privateer highly delighted my shipmates, and Captain Hudson was pleased to approve of my conduct. We had on board forty masters of merchantmen which had been captured by the different ships-of-war. They were mostly very decent men, some of them not unlike my friend Mr Scuttle. We treated them with every kindness and attention in our power. On the 24th we arrived off Cape Henlopen, opposite Cape May, at the entrance of Delaware Bay. Here we hove-to, and Captain Hudson ordered me to go on shore with a flag of truce, to land the masters of the merchantmen.

As we neared the shore I observed a body of men drawn up as if prepared to receive me. They were military, but had it not been for fear of hurting the feelings of the people who were with me, I could have thrown myself back in the stern sheets and enjoyed a hearty fit of laughter. Not two were armed or dressed alike. Some had high-boots, others shoes, many had on moccasins, and not a few jack-boots; several had their legs encased in hay-bands; hats of all shapes and sizes graced their heads. Cocked hats and round hats and caps, and Spanish hats, and helmets even were not uncommon. Some wore breeches of truly Dutch build, others of as scanty dimensions as could cover them—some had trousers, and others scarcely any covering to that portion of their persons. Their coats were of every colour, shape, and size. Green and blue and brown and grey; some were of red, though not a little soiled, being evidently of ancient date, while there were long coats and great coats and short coats and spencers and cloaks; indeed, every species of covering invented to hide the nakedness of the human body. While the men themselves were tall and short and thin and stout and straight and crooked. No one had been refused admission into the corps. Their arms were as various in construction as their costumes. There were muskets and rifles and pikes and

matchlocks, and pistols which had been used at Culloden, and some even, I fancy, in the civil war of the Commonwealth, while a few even had contented themselves with pitchforks, scythes, and reaping-hooks. The officers were as independent as to uniformity as the men, and not less picturesque, though more comfortably dressed. Each man had exercised his own taste in his endeavour to give himself a military appearance, though I must say they had most lamentably failed in the result. I honestly confess, as I was speaking to them, that I was forcibly reminded of the appearance my old shipmates and I cut when we first presented ourselves on board the Torbay at the commencement of my naval career.

My orders were to land the prisoners and to return to the ship as soon as possible. I had therefore time only to exchange a few words with the officers, who were inclined to be very civil, and when the masters of the vessels told them how they had been treated on board the Orpheus they were still more disposed to be friendly. At that time the bitter feeling against Great Britain, which it must be owned she brought on herself by her injustice and dictatorial conduct, had not then been so universally stirred up.

“Now, my lads,” shouted the commander of the party as I was stepping into my boat, “that young officer is a good fellow so let us give him three cheers.”

“Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!” broke from the throats of all the regiment in good hearty style.

I turned round as I was shoving off and bowed and waved my hat, and I parted on the most amiable terms from those heroes, so like the ragged regiment headed by the redoubtable Sir John Falstaff.

We had great fun on board as I described them—Frank Mercer alone looked grave.

“Does it not strike you,” said he, “that the very fact of the want of uniformity in their outward man shows the unanimity of sentiment which pervades them and makes them flock round the standard of liberty to defend their rights as freemen, regardless of outward appearance? Those poor fellows, though doubtless very inferior to regular troops, would not shed their blood less willingly or behave less bravely in the face of an enemy.”

“Oh, you are a rebel, Mercer, you are a rebel!” we all shouted; “don’t talk treason here.”

“I only talk truth,” answered Mercer gravely.

Since then I have been much inclined to agree with him.

We had a speedy voyage back, without taking a prize, and reached New York harbour on the 27th of August. A considerable number of ships-of-war and transports had arrived during our absence, having on board large reinforcements. Among them were a large body of Hessian troops, who had been hired from the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel and the Duke of Brunswick, especially to put down the American rebellion. They were well disciplined, but fierce, ruthless troops, who murdered and plundered without hesitation whenever they had the opportunity, and were naturally dreaded and hated by the enemy. Besides the troops which had come from Europe, a large body of men had arrived from the South, under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, who, in conjunction with Sir Peter Parker, had retired from an unsuccessful attempt to capture Charleston, in South Carolina, which, after the evacuation of Boston, it was considered important to occupy. I afterwards served under Sir Peter Parker and heard all the particulars, some of which I now introduce to make my brief account of the contest more complete.

At the entrance of Charleston harbour, on the right hand, is Sullivan’s Island, about six miles below the city. To the east of Sullivan’s Island is Long Island, from which it is separated by a creek called the Breach. On the south-west point of Sullivan’s Island was a strong fort, though composed only of earth and palmetto wood. As palmetto wood is soft and does not splinter, it was especially suited for the purpose. The squadron, under Sir Peter Parker, consisted of the Bristol, Experiment, Active, Solebay, Actaeon, Syren, and other smaller craft. While Sir Henry Clinton landed his troops on Long Island Sir Peter undertook to attack the fort, which was commanded by Colonel Moultrie. General Lee, however, with a large force, had by rapid marches advanced to the protection of the city. The Thunder-bomb began the action, during which the Sphinx, Syren, and Actaeon ran foul of each other and got on shore. The two first hauled off, but the Actaeon remained, and was ultimately abandoned and burned. The fire was most tremendous and deadly on both sides, but the British suffered the most; indeed, seldom have ships been exposed to a more terrific battering, or stood it with greater heroism and perseverance. On board that small squadron there were no less than sixty-four men killed and one hundred and forty-three wounded. At one time on the deck of the Bristol Sir Peter himself, amidst the deadly shower, alone stood unhurt. Captain Morris, of the Actaeon, was killed, as was Lord Campbell, late governor of the province, serving as a volunteer on board. Captain Scott, of the Experiment, lost his arm. The Bristol was completely unrigged; her guns were dismounted and her top-masts shot away. In vain Sir Peter looked for the assistance he expected from Sir Henry. Each time the troops attempted to cross from Long Island they were foiled by the bold front presented by a body of Americans with artillery. At length, the carnage growing more appalling than ever, and their hope of success diminishing, Sir Peter ordered them to make their way out of action. This event took place on the 28th of June. Other unsuccessful attempts were made to capture the fort, and in a few days the troops were re-embarked and the squadron came northward. I did not hear that the Phoenix, Rose, and Tryall did much execution up the Hudson. They had some encounters with the enemy’s row-boats and exchanged shots occasionally with the troops on shore; while they had constantly to be on the watch at night to prevent the attack of fire-ships; but their chief object was evidently to survey the river, to enable the fleet to proceed upwards if necessary. As the river is very broad, in many places expanding into almost lakes, they were able to anchor at all times out of gun shot distance. Having accomplished their object, they left the river on the 18th, exchanging a brisk fire with the forts in their passage.

I must now give a sketch of one of the most sanguinary encounters it has ever been my lot to witness, and which, had we arrived a day later, I should have missed seeing.

People in England were apt to fancy that the rebels were officered by a set of planters or merchants, and to treat

them accordingly with superciliousness and contempt, instead of which, besides General Washington, there were many who had been engaged from their youth upward in border warfare, not only with Indians, but with the disciplined troops of France. Many had aided in the conquest of Canada, while others had served in the armies of England and other European powers, and had experience equal to those to whom they were opposed, wanting only titular or official rank; while all were better acquainted with the country and were animated with the warmest patriotism and belief in the justice of their cause. Their great deficiency was in the discipline of their men, who, though not wanting in bravery, had but little discretion and no experience in general, while the subaltern officers were destitute also of the same necessary qualities. Some of their regiments, however, had been brought into very fair discipline, and were well officered. The great fault of the British, I must remark, as I shall have frequently to do, was over-confidence and a contempt of the foe with whom they were contending. On the present occasion, however, no imputation of that sort could be cast on the British commanders. The main body of the Americans were entrenched in a strong position at Brooklyn, at the end of Long Island, directly opposite New York, from which it is divided by a strait about three quarters of a mile in width, called East River. Directly down the centre of the island is a ridge of rocky hills, covered with wood. Across these hills were three roads leading from the side of the island, opposite Staten Island, where our troops would naturally land. These three passes were held by different bodies of American troops. The whole American force was under the command of General Putnam, though it was said Washington himself frequently crossed from New York to aid in the defence of the position. Previous to the 27th a large portion of our army, including two brigades of Hessians, had crossed over from Staten Island, and, landing between Gravesend and Flatland, some of them encamped in that neighbourhood, while the Hessians pushed on to a place called Flatbush. On the evening of the 26th the whole army advanced, Sir Henry Clinton leading the light infantry, Lord Percy following with the grenadiers, flying artillery, and light dragoons, while Lord Cornwallis, accompanied by Lord Howe, brought up the rear-guard with the heavy ordnance. About two hours before daybreak they arrived at the neighbourhood of the hills, when they discovered that the pass to the east, called the Bedford Pass, was unoccupied. He at once led his division through it, and thus turned the left of the American position. In the meantime General Grant had advanced with another division from Gravesend past Gowanus Cowe, on the road by the Narrows towards the right of the American position. As soon as it was daylight he formed his troops directly opposite the enemy, where he waited to hear that Sir Henry had commenced the attack. General De Heister, who commanded the Hessians, had kept up a hot fire with his artillery on a redoubt in front of the lines from his camp at Flatbush, which he ultimately stormed, while Lord Cornwallis, advancing on the centre, was bravely opposed by Lord Stirling who had taken up arms on the side of the Americans. One of our ships was all the time discharging a heavy cannonade on the battery at Red Hook, near which we also were brought up to join in the action had it been necessary, and whence from the maintop, where I with others had gone, I had a tolerably perfect view of many of the proceedings. Hemmed in on all sides, as I have described, and pressed on by overwhelming numbers of disciplined troops, the Americans, after a desperate and brave resistance, at length gave way, and then commenced a most indiscriminate and dreadful slaughter. They were cut down and trampled on by the cavalry, bayoneted by the savage Hessians, and torn in pieces by the artillery. Some rallied for a time and defended themselves with their rifles, behind rocks and trees, and at length, by a desperate effort, cut their way through their foes to the lines. Lord Stirling, who had fought bravely throughout the day, surrendered himself as a prisoner to General De Heister, two hundred and fifty of the brave fellows he had led lying dead around him. General Sullivan and several other officers were taken, endeavouring to cover the retreat of their troops. The enemy in all lost in killed alone full fifteen hundred men besides others who were smothered in the mud as they were endeavouring to escape from the Hessian bayonets. These, with wounded and prisoners, made up their loss to nearly three thousand men out of scarcely more than five thousand engaged.

It is a dreadful sight to witness slaughter such as this was, when one’s blood is cold and one sits a mere spectator of the fight. I felt all the time more inclined to side with the poor Americans as they were flying from our victorious troops than to wish for the success of the latter. I heard a deep groan near me as I was seated in the maintop. I looked round. It was Frank Mercer. He was as pale as death. I thought he would have fallen on deck. At times he would shade his eyes with his hand, and then again he would gaze earnestly at the dreadful sight as if unable to resist its horrid fascination. Of course I have not described half the events of the day.

The Americans retreated within their lines and the British troops advanced close up to them. It was supposed that General Howe would give the order to storm the works. Had he done so at once they would certainly have been taken, and though with some considerable loss of life, it might have prevented much subsequent greater loss. However, it appeared that he had resolved to attack the lines by regular approaches. General Washington, seeing the inevitable result, made a masterly retreat with the whole garrison across the sound to New York during the night, favoured by calm weather and a thick fog. Notice was brought in the morning to General Howe of what had occurred, and when one of his aides-de-camp, who was sent to ascertain the fact, climbed over the crest of the works he found them of a truth deserted. The next day no less than thirteen hundred Americans were buried in one large pit, while many more had been lost in the creek and swamp near the lines.

It was the general opinion, both in the camp and fleet, that had the army at once been pushed forward, a speedy and happy conclusion would have been brought to the war. There were all sorts of reports current. Among them it was said that the city was about to be abandoned and burnt to the ground, to prevent our troops occupying it for the winter. This proceeding, however, the inhabitants strongly opposed, as all their property would thereby have been destroyed. I must not delay the progress of my narrative to mention the various reports of all sorts which were flying about.

On the 30th we again put to sea, Captain Hudson having under his command the Niger and Greyhound frigates. We cruised off Sandy Hook without meeting with any occurrence worth noting till the 3rd of September, when we returned to Sandy Hook. Here we received orders once more to proceed to sea, to look out for a fleet of transports, with a division of Hessians on board, daily expected from Europe, under convoy of the Repulse. We fortunately fell in with them on the following morning, and returned in their company to Gravesend Day.

On the 8th we moved up to Staten Island, and we began to hope that we at length might be engaged in some more

active service than we had hitherto seen.

“Have you heard the news?” exclaimed Delisle two days afterwards, as I came on deck for the first time that morning.

I inquired what it was.

“We are to move up at once opposite New York and to prepare the ship for running past the batteries up the East River.”

“Hurra! the hotter the better; anything better than stagnation!” I exclaimed.

“Mercer, have you made your will?” asked Kennedy, as the two met each other near us.

“Yes, Kennedy, I have,” answered Mercer gravely. “It may not be to-day or to-morrow that it will come into force, but it may before long, and I wish that those I may not help living may benefit by my death.”

Kennedy had nothing to reply to this; Mercer’s solemn manner silenced him.

“What does Mercer mean? Does he think he is going to be killed?” asked little Harry Sumner, who was standing by.

“It may be the lot of anyone of us, my boy,” said I. “Though I hope the enemy’s shot won’t find you out at all events.”

“I hope not indeed,” replied Harry. “I should like to go home and describe all the places I have seen and the things we have done.”

As I looked at our young pet I felt how hard a thing it was that so small a lad should be exposed to all the vicissitudes of warfare.

Macallan had overheard us. “It’s my opinion that Mercer has seen his wraith,” he remarked sententiously. “There’s a grave, dour look about his pale countenance which a man who is long for this world never wears.”

We all agreed that there was too much truth about the doctor’s observation, though we trusted he might be mistaken. I have heard many conversations of this sort, and many of my shipmates and others whom I have known have had presentiments of their approaching death. Some have been killed on the occasion they expected, while others who appeared equally certain of being summoned away have come out of action without scratch. Others, again, whom I have seen laughing and jesting as if they had a long lease of life before them, have, within a few hours perhaps, been stretched lifeless on the deck. I have come to the conclusion, therefore, that no one can tell when his last moment is to come, and that consequently it behoves us all to be prepared at all times for that unavoidable occurrence.

Among the ships lying near us was the Roebuck, of 44 guns, commanded by Captain Andrew Snape Hamond, (note 1), a very active and intelligent officer. I knew several of her officers. Among them was an old friend of mine, Hitchcock, belonging to Falmouth. I dined with him a day or two after this, and in return invited him to dine with me on board the Orpheus.

“I’ll come,” said he; “depend upon me, I’ll not let the rebels stop me.”

“I shall keep you to your promise,” I replied, as I was shoving off.

We had prepared the ship for action for some days by clearing away all bulkheads fore and aft, and sending everything not absolutely required below. Still several days passed by and nothing was done. It was understood that Lord Howe and Dr Franklin were negotiating at this time, as the result proved, without any effect. Lord Howe to the last was anxious to prevent more bloodshed, and hoped to bring the colonists to terms, but as they now considered themselves an independent people, and he had the authority to treat with them in that capacity, he was powerless.

At length, on the 21st of September, towards three o’clock in the afternoon, the admiral made the signal for us to weigh. Each man with alacrity hurried to his quarters. Never was sail more speedily got on the ship. The Phoenix, Roebuck, Carrisfort, and Rose were seen spreading their canvas at the same time to a very light air which blew from the westward. I must try and describe the scene of our operations. Before us lay a long, narrow strip of land called Manhattan Island, about thirteen miles long and from half a mile to two wide, on the south end of which stands the City of New York, while on the north end are some hills called the Harlem Heights. It is divided from the mainland on the north by a creek called the Harlem River, over which there is a bridge called King’s Bridge. The west of Manhattan Island is washed by the River Hudson, which separates it from the New Jersey shore, while part of the Sound, which is called the East River, runs round it on the south and east, dividing it from Long Island, till it is joined by the Harlem River on the north. The Harlem River forms a direct communication between the Hudson and East River. That part of it nearest the Hudson was called by the Dutch Spuyten Duyvel Creek, while the east end, where it joins East River, has the still less pleasant sounding name of Hell Gate. Near it was a strong battery. Nearly in the centre of East River, opposite the south point of New York, is Governor’s Island, which was strongly fortified. There were batteries along the whole line of the shore on Manhattan Island. Slowly and solemnly our squadron approached the shore. Perfect silence reigned throughout the ship. For some time not a shot was fired. Captain Hudson had been keeping a sharp look-out on the enemy’s batteries as we approached.

“Pass the word along the decks that every man and officer is to lie down at his quarters!” he exclaimed.

The judicious order was at once obeyed. The same precaution was not used by the other ships. At half-past three, when we were within pistol-shot of the city, the enemy opened their fire. We were so close and moved so slowly that scarcely a shot missed us, literally riddling the ship, as if we had been a butt put up to be fired at.

“How do you like this?” I asked of young Sumner, who was near me.

“Not at all just now,” he answered. “I only wish that the captain would let us get up and fire back on the enemy. I thought that was always done when people fight.”

“Sometimes one has to be battered at as well as to batter, as in the present instance,” I answered. “But depend on it, we shall be allowed to take our revenge before long.”

“Oh, I wish those dreadful cannon-balls would not come so close to one,” sung out poor Harry, half playfully, half in earnest, as a round shot came crashing through the bulwark close to where we lay, throwing the splinters about us, ploughing up the deck, and passing out at a port on the other side.

“I thought you were not going to be frightened, Harry, my boy,” said I.

“Nor should I, I tell you, if I could but be firing in return,” he answered. “Besides, it is the first time I was ever in action, and I have heard that the bravest men are apt to bob their heads on such occasions. Perhaps when I get accustomed to it I shall care as little as anyone for it.”

“I have no doubt you will, Harry,” I replied; and most truly the noble little fellow did not disappoint my expectations. With proud defiance the squadron continued its onward course, still desisting from firing, as if invulnerable to the showers of round shot and bullets which came whistling about them. The enemy were in general firing too high to do much injury except to our rigging; the splinters which flew from our topmasts and yards and came showering down every now and then on deck, and the strange festoons our rigging began to form, the ends of ropes hanging here and there, and the numerous holes exhibited in our sails showed the effect their unremitting fire had caused. Sometimes the wind was so light that we had little more than steerage way, when instantly guns were brought round to attack us. Still we had not performed half our distance. I must own that never, when in chase of an enemy, or when attacked by gun-boats, or when finding my ship set on shore by a strong current, have I more earnestly prayed than now for a breeze to carry us onward. Nothing so much damps the ardour of men as having to sit quiet and be fired at without having the power of returning the compliment. Few can stand it except Turks and Englishmen; Turks because they fancy it is their fate, Englishmen because they know it is their duty. As the shot came crashing among us and the blocks and splinters from the spars and other parts of the rigging came tumbling down on our heads, a growl might every now and then be heard from some of the seamen very like that given by a savage dog chained up as a stranger approaches his kennel and he finds after repeated trials that he has come to the length of his tether. I really felt it a relief when I had to move about the decks on any duty, as was the case occasionally when a slight shift of wind or an alteration in our course made it necessary to trim sails, though I was thus exposed to a much greater risk of losing the number of my mess. Not a man could show his head above the hammock nettings but he was sure to become the mark of a hundred riflemen who were poking out their weapons from the windows of the houses which looked so peaceably at us. As I went about the decks I amused myself by remarking the different expressions worn by the countenances of the men. With respect to the greater number it was that of calm indifference, as if not aware that they were running any unusual risk of their lives. Some seemed to see the danger, but to brave it; many were laughing and joking among themselves, while a few, and only a few, were evidently in no small terror of being hit. I passed near Tom Rockets. His countenance told me that I need have no fear of his doing me discredit. Old Grampus was near him, looking as calm as if he was sitting down to his dinner.

“I have been telling the youngster, sir,” said he, “that one of the first things a seaman has to learn is how to bear the hardships it may please Providence to send him, whether he has to be shot at, as he has now, or to suffer famine on a raft or desert island, or to have the sea breaking over him on a wreck or on the cold, slippery rocks. Maybe he’ll have to try them all before he settles down with a wooden leg, ashore in his own cottage, or bears up for Greenwich, as I hopes to do one day.”

Tom listened to this very gravely, but I suspect old Nol had been amusing himself somewhat at his expense. Hour after hour passed by, and the ship proudly held on her course round Manhattan Island till we reached the eastern side beyond the city, where, at a spot called Kip’s Bay, about two miles from it, the squadron at length, at about seven o’clock, dropped anchor in front of a long line of entrenchments which the enemy had thrown up.

Captain Hudson, having to communicate with Captain Hamond, sent me on board the Roebuck. Having delivered my message, I inquired for my friend Hitchcock.

“He is here,” said Collins, a midshipman I had addressed, lifting up an ensign which was spread near the mainmast.

There lay the poor fellow who was to have dined with me that day, so lately full of life and spirits, now stiff and stark. A rifle-bullet had passed through his heart. Several other men had been killed and wounded on board. Such is one of the chances of war. I returned sadly on board my own ship. In those days such an occurrence had but a very transitory effect.

As soon as the enemy found that we were to be stationary for a while, some guns were brought up, which began playing on us, and kept up a no very musical serenade during the night. The shots struck the ships occasionally; but the guns were very badly served, and did little or no execution. Their music did not prevent me sleeping soundly, and preparing to take my share in the hot work in which we were about to gage.

The next day we received orders to attack the batteries at Hell Gate. Lord Howe could not have been informed of the true nature of the place, or he would not have issued the order. The pilots, however, positively refused to take up the ships, asserting, and not without good grounds, that they would inevitably be lost. At all events, I believe that by their determination we escaped a severe chastisement from the enemy. We therefore, with the exception of a little cannonading, spent another quiet night with whole skins in Kip’s Bay.

Note 1. Afterwards Sir Andrew Hamond, Bart, and father of the late Admiral Sir Graham Hamond, Admiral of the Fleet, and grandfather of the present Captain Sir Andrew Hamond, Bart.—Editor.

Chapter Five.

A bright morning and a dark day.—Attack on New York.—Mercer shows his sympathy with the Americans.—The battle rages.—Field of battle.—Assist a wounded American.—Fired at by our friends.—Another trip on shore.—Fall into the hands of Hessian troops.—Rescued by General Pigot.—Sent with despatches to Lord Howe.—My boat's crew mutiny.—New York on fire.—Treatment of supposed incendiaries.—Remarks on the war.—The condemned spy.—Mercer pleads for him in vain.—His execution.

By early dawn on the morning of the 23rd of September, 1776, every one was astir. The sultry atmosphere alone, even under ordinary circumstances, would have made us glad to leave our berths. It had become known that a combined attack by the land and sea forces was to be made on the enemy. The mighty sun rose over Long Island in a blaze of glory, and shot upward into a cloudless sky as the anchor was lifted. Fold after fold of our white canvas was let fall, and the other ships of the squadron following our example, we once more moved onward along the shore of Manhattan Island.

The scene was one of great beauty. The rays of the bright luminary fell on the wood-crowned heights of Harlem on one side, and of Morrissania on the other side of the creek, throwing the promontories into bold relief, and the bays and inlets, with which the coast is indented, into deeper shade, while rich fields, and meadows and orchards, as they basked in the soft morning light, gave the whole landscape an appearance of calmness and peace, soon to be broken by the rude realities of fierce, unrelenting warfare.

As soon as we weighed anchor the troops of the enemy, who had been watching us under arms since dawn, began to march along the shore close to us, regardless of the danger they ran of destruction, for had we opened our broadsides, we might have played sad havoc among them. They were not quite so fantastically dressed as my friends at Cape Henlopen, but still there was a very great variety of costume, and a lamentable want of discipline among them. If the front rank did not advance fast enough, the rear would give them a shove or a kick to urge them on, all the time making significant and not very complimentary signs to us to come on shore and fight them, while they tried to express their supreme contempt for us by every means in their power, shouting out taunting words, and abusing us in no measured terms.

Our men had two days before stood the battering we got with comparative calmness, but the taunts and signs of the foe now enraged them beyond all endurance.

"Wait a bit, my lads, and then won't we give it you!" sung out Dick Trunnion, a sturdy topman, and many similar expressions were uttered by others.

"Oh, Muster Hurry, don't yer think the captain would let us go ashore, and give them chaps the drubbing they deserves?" asked Tom Rockets as I passed, doubling his fists while he spoke. "I'd like to give them a hiding."

"Never mind them, lads," said old Grampus, turning his back to the shore, and looking over his shoulder at the foe with a glance of supreme contempt. "They knows no better; and fancies because we don't hit we can't. Poor fellows! I pities them, that I do. They bees little better than savinges, only they wants the paint and feathers."

I felt very much as Nol said he did; but I suspect that his anger was rather more excited than he chose to confess. The truth was that these were mostly raw militia regiments, who had seen little or nothing of warfare, and from the previous occurrences of the war had been taught to look with contempt on British prowess. The regulars in most instances behaved admirably, and nothing could surpass the bravery of the officers of all ranks. This their greatest enemies could not deny; but the militia were of a very different stamp, and the men, unable to depend on each other or their officers, on several occasions fairly turned tail and ran away. I fancy that most of our opponents on the present occasion were of that class. We stood on till we reached a spot about fifty yards from the enemy's entrenchments, a little below Blackwell's Island, where the squadron dropped their anchors, and calmly furled sails. There we lay for some time without exchanging a shot, expecting, however, that some hot work was about to be commenced. The glasses of the officers were in the meantime constantly turned towards the small islets in the direction of Long Island. At length Captain Hudson uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"They come! they come!" he cried out, and as he spoke a flotilla of boats were seen emerging from among the tree-covered shores of Bushwick Creek. They formed the first division of flat-bottomed boats, having on board a force of 4500 men, under the immediate command of General Howe. Slowly and steadily they advanced, like some huge black monsters covering the blue surface of the tranquil and hitherto peaceful Sound. The drum now beat to quarters.

"Now my boys, if so be you want to punish them poor savinges as has been beguiling you, your time's soon coming," growled out old Nol, as the crew were hurrying with alacrity to their guns.

The only person whose countenance showed no satisfaction was Mercer. Pale as death, he stood at his post over his division of guns; but I saw that he would rather have died a hundred deaths than engage in the work he felt it was his duty to perform. From my heart I pitied him. There was but little time, however, for thinking of that or any other matter. On came the flotilla of boats. Not a shot had as yet disturbed the calm tranquillity of the scene. A thin, gauze-like mist was spread over the distant portions of the landscape. The hot sun struck down on our heads; the blue expanse of water glittered in his bright rays, and the sea-fowl skimmed over it, dipping their wings ever and anon, as if to refresh them in the liquid element. Everything still wore an aspect of perfect peace. The boats at last got within fifty yards of the ships. A signal flew out from the mast-head of the Phoenix—the knell of many a human being. It was

the signal to engage.

“Fire away, my lads,” was shouted along the decks. It was not necessary to repeat the order. Never did a crew work their guns with more alacrity. The shot rushed like a storm of gigantic hailstones among the ill-fated Americans, tearing up their entrenchments and scattering the earth and palisades far and wide. In a very short time the fortifications in which they had trusted were blown to atoms; still we fired on as fast as our guns could be loaded and run out. The enemy answered us from various points; but with little effect. In a few short moments, how changed was the scene from what it had lately been! Now from point to point, and through every sheltered nook and bay resounded the roar of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the shouts of the combatants, the shrieks and groans and agonising cries of the wounded, while above all hung a dark, funereal pall of smoke, ascending from the scene of strife, shutting it out as it were from the bright blue glorious firmament above, and, if it could be, from the all-searching eye of the Creator of men who were thus disfiguring His image by their furious passions, and dishonouring Him by the infraction of all the precepts of that mild, that beneficent religion, which He in His unsearchable love sent His only Son to teach them to obey.

But where am I driving to? I did not think thus at the time. No; my blood was up; my evil passions were aroused; and I was as eager as anyone to shed blood, and utterly careless of all the consequences to myself and others. Never have I witnessed a more tremendous fire than was kept up by our ships for fifty-nine minutes, during which time in the Orpheus alone we expended 5366 pounds of powder. I kept no note of the number of shot we fired away. The very first broadside made a considerable breach in the enemy’s works. At the end of the time I have mentioned the boats advanced, and the signal was made to cease firing. As they touched the beach the men sprang on shore, and, forming rapidly, gallantly rushed towards the entrenchments with fixed bayonets and loud cheers. The enemy scarcely waited to deliver their fire, but, throwing down their arms, fled on all sides in the utmost terror and confusion, earnestly petitioning for quarter. The red-coats leaped through the breaches made by our guns, and over the embankments, and were speedily in possession of the enemy’s works. As the smoke cleared away, the ground far and near appeared covered with the bodies of the slain and wounded, some with arms, others with legs, shot away, while parties of fugitives were seen flying in every direction, pursued by our men, especially by the Hessians, who seemed little disposed to give the quarter which was asked.

I was not only a spectator but a participator in what I have been describing. As soon as the ships ceased firing, our boats, of which I commanded one, were ordered to aid in towing the flat-bottomed boats on shore. As soon as the troops had landed, leaving Grampus in charge of my boat, I, with another midshipman and Tom Rockets and two other men, followed them into the entrenchments, and found myself shortly in the rear of a body of Hessians as they charged over the ground. A poor American was flying for his life, shrieking out for mercy. One of those savage mercenaries either did not or would not understand him, and before I could interpose had with a sweep of his sword severed his head from his body, then, in savage triumph worthy of a Red Indian, sticking it on a pole, carried it through the entrenchments, shouting out as if he had performed some noble act of heroism.

Meantime several of the ship’s boats were ordered to pull along-shore to annoy the enemy in their flight and to prevent them from rallying. My friend Hargrave and I, midshipmanlike and thoughtless of danger, set off in the direction the enemy had taken along the shore, picking up a number of articles which in their terror they had dropped or thrown away, such as rifles, pistols, swords, spy-glasses, and even watches, plate, and camp utensils of various sorts, which we knew would be most acceptable to our mess. We passed many of the slain, knocked over in their flight. As we ran thoughtlessly on, very little moved by these sights, to which even the youngsters were becoming familiar, I heard a deep groan. Looking round, I saw behind a bush a militiaman stretched on the ground with a bad wound in his side.

“Oh, kill me! kill me! put me out of my misery!” he exclaimed as soon as he saw me.

“No, I will not do that,” said I; “but I will try if I can relieve you.”

I had a flask of some rum and water in my pocket; I gave him some of it to drink. There was, fortunately, a stream near; I got some fresh water in a hat and washed his wound, and then bound it up with a piece of shirt which I took from a dead man near. The poor fellow seemed much revived and very grateful.

“There,” said I, “you will be able to get off and join your people at nightfall. It’s not my business to take you prisoner.”

“Thank you, stranger, thank you,” said he; “Amos Spinks will not forget your mercy and kindness.”

I could not stay with him longer, but, leaving him a piece of biscuit and a hat full of water, I ran on to join my companions, who, not seeing me, had gone forward. The American had no idea I was an officer, for I had on a white linen jacket which I wore at my quarters, and it was consequently thickly begrimed with powder and dirt. I caught sight of my party ahead, and ran on as fast as my legs could carry me, with the load of spoils I had collected, to overtake them. As I neared them, and was shouting to them to stop, I caught sight of one of our boats, with Mr Heron, our second lieutenant, in her, pulling along-shore after me. I saw that he was somewhat excited, and seemed urging on the men to pull with greater speed. Just as I got up to my party, to our no small astonishment, not to say dismay, he turned the bow of the boat towards us, and bang he let fly a shower of grape from a gun placed there right in among us, following up the unwelcome salute with a volley of small arms. We shouted at the top of our voices, and made signs that we were friends; but what with the smoke and his blindness, for he was near-sighted, and the noise of the firing and the shouts of his men, he neither made out who we were nor heard us, but continued peppering away as before.

“Run, my lads, run,” I sung out; “there’s no disgrace running from friends, but very unpleasant to be shot by them.”

My party required no second order, but away we all scampered as fast as we could go, scattering from each other to

distract our friends in their very unfriendly employment.

“Oh, Mr Hurry, I bees hit, I bees hit?” sung out Tom Rockets.

I expected to see him fall, but the shot only made him scamper on the faster. Our flight, of course, made Mr Heron fire at us more zealously, and we had to throw away all the things we had collected to escape with greater speed from his heroic fury. We took a course inland, and then turned back towards the place where we had landed. Happily we soon got among trees and rocks and broken walls, which much sheltered us, and Tom was the only man wounded. As soon as we got clear of the shot from the boat, I called a halt to examine his hurt. It was merely a slight flesh wound from a bullet in the leg, and a handkerchief bound round it enabled him to walk on. It was now time to return on board, so we made the best of our way to the boat, not without some considerable risk of being shot by our own sentries. On my stepping on deck I found several officers round the captain. Mr Heron was among them.

“The rascally rebels can’t stand us for a moment, sir,” he was saying. “A whole gang of them hove in sight as I was pulling along-shore—a hundred at least—and stood hallooing to me and daring me to come after them. I let fly among them, sent them scampering away like a flock of sheep, knocking over a good dozen or more, I should think. It was rare fun, sir.”

“Very good fun for you, Mr Heron,” said I, turning round; “but I beg to assure you, sir, that there were not a dozen of us altogether.”

“You! what do you mean?” he asked, with a look of surprise.

“Why, that I was one of the body of supposed rebels, and though we shouted to you and begged you not to fire, you banged at us so furiously that we had to throw away a whole heap of things we had collected, and to run for our lives.”

Captain Hudson and the other officers laughed not a little at this exploit of Mr Heron’s, for he was notorious for his boasting. He bore me a grudge about it ever after.

“Well, Mr Hurry,” said the captain good-naturedly, “you shall go on shore in the afternoon with Mr Heron, and try to recover some of your treasures.”

Away we went in the afternoon accordingly in high glee, Mr Heron expecting to pick up all sorts of things, and I hoping to recover those I had lost. We soon reached the field on which Mr Heron boasted to have gained his hard-won victory; but the swords and all the things of value were gone, picked up by the plundering-parties who invariably issue forth over the scene where the strife has been hottest, as birds of prey gather on the carcase just fallen in the desert. I looked about for the poor fellow I had assisted in the morning. He was gone. He had, I concluded, either been taken prisoner, or had managed to crawl off and rejoin his friends. We went on much farther than we had been in the morning, picking up some drums and a few similar bulky articles, which others had not thought worth collecting. We picked up in all nine drums, one of the largest of which I sent to my friend, Jack Bluet, who lived in a small house at Falmouth. It might have served him for a drawing-room table. I hope he has got it still. A little way beyond where I found the wounded man I came on the body of an officer. He lay on his back, shot through the heart, his hand grasping a very handsome fusee, and with a look of defiance still on his countenance. I suspect he had been bush-fighting in Indian fashion, in hopes of checking the advance of his enemies, in spite of the flight of his companions in arms. He was a fine young man, and from his style of dress and general appearance was evidently of respectable family. I stooped down, and, undoing the grasp with which the dead man’s fingers held the fusee, took possession of it and ran after my companions. Still, as I hurried on, the look worn by the features of the dead officer haunted me. I felt as if I had been depriving him of his property. I thought of his mother and sisters, or perhaps a young wife, who were doomed never to see him again, or of friends who might be expecting to meet him that very day, and for a moment all the dreadful results of warfare presented themselves before me more vividly than they had ever before done. The laughter and jokes of my companions, however, very quickly drove all such thoughts from my mind. We had been joined by an acquaintance of mine, Simeon, a midshipman of the Phoenix, who had with him the gunner and seven men. By some means or other I had been separated from Mr Heron and my boat’s crew—indeed, my lieutenant had no particular fancy for my society, so I joined company with Simeon, and together we rambled into the woods. We had not gone far when we caught sight of a fellow skulking among the trees. When he saw that he was observed he took to his heels, and this of course made us give chase. The woods rang with our shouts and cries, and we were not long before we came up with the man, who proved to be a rebel militiaman. He sang out most lustily for mercy, thinking that we were going to kill him, but we soon quieted his fears on that score by assuring him that he was not worth powder and shot. He seemed to be very grateful, and informed us that there had been a smart skirmish in the wood between his party and a body of Hessians, the latter of whom he believed were still in the neighbourhood of the wood. Of the truth of part of his story the dead bodies scattered here and there about were too true witnesses. Simeon and I, on this, called a halt and consulted together with the gunner whether we should go back or seek further adventures ahead.

“We have taken one prisoner, perhaps we may make some more and gain some little credit when we present ourselves with them in camp, so I vote that we go on,” said I; and my proposal was agreed to.

As we supposed that we might be in the face of an enemy we kept closer together than before, and moved on more cautiously. After advancing some way we heard voices in an orchard on the skirts of the wood, and, supposing the sounds to proceed from a party of the rebels, we presented our muskets and advanced towards the gate of the orchard, fully expecting to make more prisoners. Just, however, as we began to move on up started before us a body of two or three hundred Hessians, with glittering brass helmets on their heads, who, with fixed bayonets and loud cries, charged furiously at us. Had we attempted to move they would have shot us, so we stood our ground and sung out most lustily that we were friends. They did not understand us, and, charging on, would, I fully, expected, have bayoneted us on the spot. “Friends—friends! English—British officers!” I sung out at the top of my voice.

“Rebels, rebels!” was the only answer we got; and in another moment we were knocked over with the butt-ends of their muskets. We picked ourselves up as well as we could, and I pointed to my own and Simeon’s white cuffs and lapels, and told them that we belonged to the British fleet, but to no purpose; and what was my dismay when they showed us at a little distance an unfortunate rebel officer who lay on the ground with his leg shot off, and who was dressed in the same uniform which we wore. He told them as well as he could that he knew nothing of us, but they would not believe him, and, having talked together in their hideous lingo, once more knocked us over and began belabouring us with their muskets. I never met such savages, and I am not surprised that they were hated by the poor colonists. I am sure we bore them no love, especially just then. We sung out lustily for mercy, for to our horror we saw that they were about to finish us off by plunging their bayonets into us, when our cries brought up an officer on horseback, in whom, to my great satisfaction, I recognised General Pigot, the commander of the division to which they belonged. He knew me on board the Chatham, and was thus able to assure the Hessians who I was. They made all sorts of apologies, which afforded us a very small amount of satisfaction.

Thanking General Pigot for his timely rescue, we set off to return to our ships, heartily sick of our day’s adventures—hungry and battered, indeed, very much in need both of cook and doctor.

The next day we weighed and, parting from the Phoenix and the other ships with which we had been in company, ran up between Blackwell’s Island and the main. As we were running at the rate of some four or five knots an hour a shock was felt which made the ship shiver throughout her whole frame. The pilot turned pale, as if he expected to be shot on the spot. He had put us on a rock. Captain Hudson, cool as usual, issued his orders as if nothing particular was the matter, and we quickly swung off again and proceeded on our way till we brought up snugly in Turtle Cove. While the ship lay there I was sent, on the 25th, with dispatches to Lord Howe, then residing on Staten Island. My boat’s crew on this occasion consisted either of pressed men or of fellows whom I knew to be among the greatest blackguards in the ship. On the way down they showed signs of an unruly disposition by pulling slowly and not putting out their strength when I ordered them. Their conduct, however, did not trouble me, and I forgot all about it as I walked up to present my dispatches to his lordship. I have always entertained the greatest respect for Lord Howe. He was a good seaman—of bravery undoubted—cool and thoughtful in danger—generous and kind, and considerate for those under his command and careful for their interests. He was much abused by the royalists in America, as well as by many in the army and fleet, as also at home, because he did not seem anxious to push matters to extremes at once with the rebels and allow fire and sword to be carried throughout their territories. But he looked upon them as fellow-beings and fellow-subjects, and though misguided, he considered that they had too much reason for their rebellion to be treated with the severity others proposed. I have heard that after an action he would go below and visit each wounded man as he lay in his hammock, and stop and talk to him, and would send wine and poultry from his own stock to those whom the surgeon thought required it. Such are the deeds by which an officer can easily win the hearts of seamen. I had not to wait long before I was told to walk into his room, and I found myself in the presence of a dark and somewhat hard-featured man—with a figure, however, tall, well-proportioned, and dignified. Had I not known him by repute I should have been somewhat awe-struck, but as he spoke his countenance brightened up, and his kind look dissipated all feeling of fear.

“Sit down, youngster,” said he, “and let me hear your account of the action of the 23rd. As your ship was at hand I conclude you saw it.”

I gave him the best description in my power of what I had seen, taking care to make no reflections on the events of the day. He seemed much interested, and hastily writing a letter, as soon as it was copied, told me to return with it to Captain Hudson.

When I got back to my boat I had no little difficulty in collecting my men, and soon after I shoved off I found that they were one and all drunk. As long as they pulled on I said nothing, but in a short time they began to grumble at having come away without more liquor.

“What’s the odds?” said one. “The shortest way is to go back and get it.”

“My idea, Sam!” cried another. “If we once get aboard our chance is over.”

“About, shipmates,” exclaimed a third. “Never mind the youngster.”

“But you will have to mind me, my lads!” I exclaimed, springing up with my hanger in my hand. “You’ve made a mistake if you fancy that I allow tricks to be played with me.”

For a short time they were silent, and, hoping that I had cowed them by my promptitude, I again sat down in the stern-sheets. I kept my weapon in my right hand, however, for I was aware how completely I was in their power if they chose to proceed to extremities. I had come away without pistols, so that I had only my hanger to depend on, and they might, if they had acted together, have wrenched it from my grasp and, overpowering me, have hove me overboard. They would then have escaped without much difficulty to one of the nearest American posts and joined the rebels. While I was thinking over this very pleasant subject, and contemplating myself swimming for my life up East River, they again began to grumble.

“I’ll not pull another stroke!” cried one fellow with an oath.

“Nor I! Nor I!” exclaimed others.

Two, I remarked, did not speak; and addressing myself to them, I asked if they would join in so rascally and uncalled-for a mutiny.

It was now getting very dark, and I could scarcely see the features of the men, so as to be prepared for what they were about to do. The boat lay motionless on the water. If I hesitated I was lost.

“Take to your oars and give way, or I will cut you to pieces, you scoundrels!” I shouted, springing up and making a cut with my hanger at the hands of one of the most mutinous. “If you won’t use your bands, I’ll chop them off. Pull, I say!”

I should have been as good as my word had not the fellow taken to his oar, while my blade struck the gunwale of the boat, by which the point was broken. The mutineers now rose in a body and seemed about to make a rush on me. On this, I began slashing away to keep them at bay, cutting them over the hands and arms pretty severely.

The two men, one of whom pulled the stroke-oar and the one next him, now sang out that they would obey my orders.

“Then we’ll heave you all overboard together!” cried the most drunken of the mutineers.

“Will you, my man?” I exclaimed, making a cut at him with my hanger. “Then take that first!”

He stumbled and fell with his face aft, thereby saving his life, though I again broke the blade of my hanger almost up to the hilt. The other men, fancying he was killed, hung back, while I dragged his senseless body into the stern-sheets and stowed him away, for he was stunned with the effect of his fall and his drunkenness. The men forward sat sulkily down, perhaps they would not have remained quiet had they known I had broken my hanger. They refused however to pull, and one after the other dropped off into a drunken sleep. The two more steady ones did their best to pull on, and the tide fortunately favoured us, or I do not know where we should have got to. I have seldom been placed in a much more fearful position. Any moment the mutineers might wake up and, remembering the consequences their conduct was sure to bring on them, might again attempt to overpower me and carry off the boat to the enemy. I was weary and hungry, and in the darkness of night all sorts of dreadful thoughts occurred to me as I slowly floated over those perilous waters. I felt a strong inclination at times to run into New York to try and get aid; but I thought if I did the men would certainly escape and hide themselves before I could find any of the military authorities to afford me assistance. New York by this time was entirely in the hands of the British. On the day we landed at Kip’s Bay General Howe pushed forward part of his troops to encompass the city on the land side, when General Putnam, the American commander who held it, was compelled to make a precipitate retreat, being very nearly cut off before he joined Washington at King’s Bridge. Had not, indeed, the British delayed their advance to refresh themselves, they would in all probability have captured the whole division of the rebel army. A large number of the inhabitants remained in New York, those only who had taken a prominent part in the rebellion thinking it necessary to leave it. It was very doubtful, however, had I gone on shore, whether I should have fallen among friends or foes. I resolved, therefore, to make, the best of my way to the ship. I watched the lights glimmering in the houses, one after the other being put out as I pulled slowly by, and I could hear the constant call of the sentries as the officers went their rounds, while any moment I felt that my mutinous crew might come to their senses and make an end of me. I amused myself, however, by whistling and singing snatches of songs to make them suppose that I was perfectly indifferent to their threats, and at length, by half-past one in the morning, to my great relief I got alongside the ship. The mutineers only at that moment roused up, and very much astonished they were to find themselves clapped into irons as soon as they got on board. The next morning they each received nine dozen, with the exception of the two who had at once returned to their duty. I took care to get them ultimately rewarded.

The most disagreeable duty we had to perform while we lay in Turtle Bay was to row guard at night abreast of Hell Gate, the name, as I have before mentioned, given to the entrance of Harlem River. With the ebb-tide a terrific current sets out through the narrow channel, forming a whirlpool, on which is bestowed the pleasant-sounding title of the Devil’s Pot. On one side is his gridiron, and on the other his frying-pan, while another batch of rocks goes by the name of his “hen and chickens.” Now, although I cannot take upon myself to affirm that even on the darkest and most stormy night I ever beheld his Satanic majesty engaged in the exercise of his well-known culinary talents in frying soles or any other fish or fowl, or quadruped, or biped, yet I had the greatest dread of getting within the power of his voracious cauldron. I therefore always kept at a respectful distance from it. I advise all those who may have to visit the spot to follow my example. I, however, often heard afterwards some very strange tales narrated by the seamen who had been in the boats when thus employed and implicitly believed by their auditors. In truth, although the master spirit of evil may have no direct influence in the matter, a very large number of vessels and boats have been lost on the surrounding rocks.

The constant hard service in which we had been engaged since we left England had placed a large number of our men on the sick-list. During our stay in Turtle Bay we landed them at Blackwell’s Island, where they considerably recovered their strength. From the same place we abundantly supplied the ship with fresh meat and vegetables, luxuries to which we had long been strangers. On the 29th of September I had the middle watch. It had just gone six-bells, when, as I was casting my eyes towards the city, I saw a bright light suddenly dart up towards the sky. It was rapidly succeeded by other flashes till the whole firmament seemed to glow with a bright, ruddy light. “The city is on fire—the city is on fire!” was the general cry on board. There was a strong wind, and as the fire must have already made much progress, we had great fear that the whole city would be burned down. It was proposed at once to make a party to go and see what was the matter, and, a messmate taking my watch, I got leave to join it. Away we pulled as fast as we could, and after we had reached the shore we had no difficulty in finding our way to the scene of destruction. Everybody in the place had turned out of bed. Some were rushing about in despair at the loss of all their worldly property, not knowing where to go to find shelter—others were searching for friends or relatives, in doubt whether or no they had fallen victims to the flames—others were endeavouring to stay the progress of the fire. The most active in this work were the British troops. They had formed a close circle round the burning part of the city and were engaged in blowing-up and pulling down houses, deluging others with water, and cutting off the communication in every direction.

We were attracted by a dense crowd and loud cries in one direction. We ran to the spot, where we found a number of soldiers who appeared to be in a highly exasperated state. They had among them a dozen or more men whom they were dragging forward towards the flames. “Burn them in their own bonfire!” they were shouting out; “Burn them in their own bonfire—they were going to burn us out of our quarters!” We asked a civilian who stood at a house-door

looking on what had occurred.

“Why, the soldiers think they have got hold of the men who set the city on fire, and they are going to pay them off. Maybe they are the men who did it, or maybe they are rogues and vagabonds who were prowling about for plunder—so it matters little, I guess,” was the answer we received.

We left our philosophical friend smoking his pipe; he was evidently one of those who care little what becomes of the world provided they are comfortable. We followed the soldiers till we came to some scaffolding erected for building a house, several ropes were hanging about it. The humour seized the soldiers to hang up some of their prisoners, and in a trice four of the unhappy wretches were run up by the heels, while their heads hung downwards. In that position the infuriated soldiers dashed at them with the butt-ends of their muskets, and very soon put them out of their misery. Their companions in misfortune, if not in guilt, meantime were shrieking out for mercy and protesting their innocence, but in vain. The soldiers laughed and jeered at them, and hurrying them on up to a burning house, forced them into the flames at the points of their bayonets. As they rushed shrieking out covered with fire, they were driven back again till the devouring element grasped them at length in its deadly embrace. Then, with loud shouts of demoniacal satisfaction, the enraged soldiers rushed away to look for fresh victims. Miserable was the fate while they were in that humour, of those who fell into their hands. I never saw so dreadful a spectacle before, and hope never to see such a one again.

A short time afterwards General Howe had to send a flag of truce to General Washington respecting an exchange of prisoners, when he was said to have most solemnly denied having had anything to do with the burning of the city. The flames were happily stopped after about a fourth part of it had been burned to the ground. On the night of the 30th the rebels made an attack on Montizieur’s Island, but were repulsed with the loss of a major and several men who were taken prisoners.

On the 2nd of October Delisle and I, with Harry Sumner, having got leave to go on shore, agreed to walk out to visit the lines at King’s Bridge, where our army was intrenched in sight of that of the Americans. Just as we were setting off Mercer said he would come also. The day was lovely. The air was so bright and pure and exhilarating that it was a pleasure alone to breathe it—one of those days of autumn met with in the northern part of America which go by the name of the Indian summer. A thin gauze-like mist filled the atmosphere, giving a warm, almost tropical, look to the landscape; the water looked bluer, the fields greener, the sands yellower, and the rocks browner than I had ever seen them; while the tints of autumn, just showing themselves on the more exposed sides of the trees, gave the woods wonderfully rich and varied hues. We took a path through orchards and woods and across fields, meadows, and gardens, which bore evident and sad traces of the advance of hostile armies. Fences and embankments were levelled, cottages burnt, fruit-trees and fruit-bushes cut down or uprooted, gardens trampled over and destroyed, here and there a few fragrant flowers rearing their heads like guardian angels among the surrounding scene of havoc, alone showing that the spot might once have been some peaceful man’s earthly paradise.

We at length reached the British lines. They extended in one continuous encampment from Horen’s Hook on the Harlem River for about two miles directly across the island of Manhattan to the Hudson, both flanks being guarded by the men-of-war. Commanding the sea, as we did, it was impossible to hold a stronger position. On the other side of an open plain, well posted on a succession of rocky heights, appeared the rebel forces, the advanced sentries of the two armies being within hail of each other. On our left the enemy occupied a strong fortress called Fort Washington, which overlooked the Hudson, and two miles north of it was King’s Bridge, the only passage to the mainland across the inlet of the Hudson I have before mentioned, which joins it to the Harlem River, called by the Dutch Spyt den Duivel Creek, and which still retains its unpleasant-sounding name.

The object of our party seemed to be to get possession of Fort Washington, and so cut off the retreat of the enemy. It was said that General Howe ought to have sent a strong force up the Hudson and attacked Washington in the rear, while the rest of the army pressed him in front; but he did not make the attempt till it was too late, and a large portion of the American troops had crossed King’s Bridge and taken up a strong position among the hills in the interior. There was a good deal of severe fighting after this, and Fort Washington, which had been gallantly defended by a brave American officer, Colonel Magan, was captured by us, with its garrison of upwards of two thousand men.

We spent some time in the camp talking to various acquaintances among the soldier officers whom we met, and as we wandered on we came to a spot where a drum-head court-martial was sitting. They were trying a man who had been accused of being a spy, captured endeavouring to make his way out of the camp at night. He had just been pronounced guilty. He stood with his arms bound and soldiers holding him on either side. He was a fine tall young man with an intelligent countenance, and though dressed in the hunter’s garb of a backwoodsman, torn and travel-stained, and covered with dirt, while his appearance was as rough as he could make it, I thought as I looked at him that he was above the rank he had assumed. A few short moments only were allowed him from the time of his condemnation till his execution. His guilt was clear; he did not even attempt to defend himself. The president had just finished addressing him as we came up.

“If it is a crime to love one’s country better than anything else on earth, to exert every faculty of mind and body, to sacrifice one’s time and property, to risk liberty and life to serve her, then I am guilty—to love liberty and freedom of conscience, to hate tyranny and oppression, then I am indeed a criminal,” he answered in an unshaken voice. “You call me a spy and load me with opprobrium. It was necessary to gain information as to the movements of your mercenary army: twice have I obtained that information and carried it to our noble general. My only regret is that I have not succeeded a third time in so doing; but understand that though I have thus laboured to injure you secretly, I have ever fought openly against you on the field of battle, and on that account I might plead to die a soldier’s death, and not to be treated as a dog and hung. Yet it matters little. According to your laws my sentence is just. I seek not to appeal from it, and I die with the joyous certainty that the righteous cause for which I suffer will triumph at last, and that your proud legions will retire from this country defeated and disgraced.”

“Silence, young man?” exclaimed the president; “you departed from your allegiance to your lawful sovereign; you

acknowledge that you have taken up arms against his troops, and you are now found acting the despicable part of a spy. Your false reasoning cannot induce me to alter the sentence pronounced against you. You have but a few minutes in which to take your farewell of life."

No sooner did Mercer catch sight of the prisoner than he turned very pale, and as he laid his hand on my shoulder I felt that it trembled violently.

"What is the matter, Mercer?" I asked.

"That noble fellow who stands there is my schoolfellow, my old familiar friend!" he cried, scarcely aware of what he said; then, unable to restrain himself, he rushed forward and seized the prisoner's hand. "Sydney Markham!" he exclaimed, with deep earnestness, looking up into the face of the condemned man, who gazed at him with an expression of recognition and affection; "say that you are not guilty; that you have not been acting the part of a spy. You were ever the soul of honour; I will answer for you; they will not destroy you. If they give you time you can easily disprove the foul accusation brought against you. Say so, Sydney, speak! Tell them that you are not guilty. I will fly to the general—I will go on my knees before him, I will entreat for your life; I will offer mine instead of yours."

The unhappy young man shook his head, and with a faint smile answered, "Mercer, I cannot disprove the accusation brought against me. We may differ in our views, yet, believe me, I do not feel that I have swerved from the path of honour, and therefore, noble and high-minded as you ever were, I am still worthy to be called your friend. But we are wasting precious time; the minutes of my life are numbered, and I must prepare for death."

"Oh, no, no, no! I must strive to save you; I cannot bear to see you thus snatched away from life." Then he turned abruptly to the president of the court. "This man cannot be as guilty as you suppose, sir," he exclaimed, with a look of agony; "he would never have sought to injure the King's forces unfairly; let him live till I have seen Sir William Howe; he may order a reprieve till he has inquired more into the particulars of the case."

"You ask an impossibility, sir," answered the officer, who was of the Martinet school, as stern and unbending as one of his men's muskets; "he has been found guilty, and I have no power to reprieve him. We must put a stop to this system of sending spies into our camp. The higher his position and education the more deserving he is of punishment. Sergeant of the guard, carry out the sentence pronounced on the prisoner."

"You see it is useless, my friend," said the young man. "Come and assist me to meet death like a man."

"Oh, my friend, say rather like a Christian," cried Mercer, again taking his hand; and together they walked to a tree where a sergeant and some soldiers were arranging a block and rope. Mercer was allowed to continue by the side of his friend, and together they knelt down on the grass and prayed for mercy and forgiveness to Him who is the fountain of all mercy and swift to forgive. The chaplain of one of the regiments had been sent for. He came at length, and the prisoner accepted his ministrations alone, but soon again asked Mercer to join him.

In a short time, terribly short it appeared to me, the officer in charge of the party looked at his watch. The prisoner saw the movement; he started to his feet. "I am ready," he exclaimed, with a firm voice; "I willingly give my life for my country's freedom, well assured that ere long America will be free to advance onward in the fulfilment of the mighty destiny in store for her, and those who now seek to oppress her will have departed with defeat and disgrace from her shores."

Mercer entreated him, when he ceased speaking, to calm himself; he did so with wonderful self-command. Another quarter of an hour was allowed him, and at the end of it a signal was given, the rope was thrown over his neck, and he was run up to a high branch of the tree under which he had been standing. There was a loud cry, but it was uttered by Mercer; Delisle and I rushed forward—our messmate had fainted. We got him into a neighbouring hut, where an officer gave us every assistance in his power. Meantime the body of the spy had been removed. As soon as Mercer had recovered we led him as quickly at possible out of the camp in the direction of our ship, and got him without delay on board. He made no allusion on the way to what had occurred; nor did he indeed ever speak of it to me. I expected to find the next day that he was taken ill, but he still went about his duty as usual, though his nervous system had received a shock from which it was evident he would take long to recover. This was the last adventure I have noted during our stay at New York.

Chapter Six.

Once more at sea.—Drive a schooner on shore.—Blows up.—Mercer's death.—Capture a sloop.—Sent away in her.—A gale.—Engagement with privateer.—Beat her off.—Sent to New York as commodore of prizes.—Jovial life on shore.—Ill conducted expeditions.

We were once more at sea, and truly glad were all hands on board to find themselves in deep water again. The shore of Long Island, faint and low, was just discernible astern, while Sandy Hook and the highlands of Neversink arose in the distance over our starboard quarter. As I looked on the far-off shore I could not help thinking of the scenes of strife and destruction which, in all probability, were going on there, and feeling heartily glad that we were away from them for a time. We had quitted Turtle Bay on the 3rd and dropped down to Staten Island. On our passage down we ran on board a transport and carried away our larboard fore-chains, cathead, and small bower-anchor stock, not to speak of having so severely damaged the transport that she nearly sank. On the 12th of the month, having repaired damages, we put to sea with his. Majesty's ship Daphne in company. We were on our way to the mouth of the Delaware with the intention of capturing, burning, sinking, or otherwise destroying all vessels of every description belonging to the colonists which we could fall in with, an odd method, it would seem, of bringing them to reason and making them loyal subjects of his Majesty, though our proceedings did not strike me in that light just then. For a couple of days we had a fair wind, which carried us nearly up to our cruising ground. On the 14th Captain Hudson

made a signal to the Daphne to go in chase of a sail seen to the southward, and shortly afterwards another sail was seen standing towards us from the westward. We soon made her out to be a man-of-war, and on exchanging signals she proved to be the Kingfisher sloop-of-war. Within an hour after she joined us. As we continued our course to the southward the look-out at the mast-head hailed the deck. “A sail in the south-east,” said he.

“What is she like?” asked Captain Hudson.

“A suspicious-looking craft—a schooner, sir; a merchantman of some sort,” was the answer.

This announcement put us all on the alert, and as soon as every stitch of sail we could carry had been clapped on the ship several officers were seen going aloft with their spy-glasses slung by rope-yarns over their shoulders to have a look at the chase. I was among the number, so was Mercer. We soon afterwards made the land, which as we drew near we recognised as Cape May. We were rapidly over-hauling the chase, which was steering directly for the coast, and it was a question whether we should come up with her before she ran on shore or got under shelter among any rocks which might be there. There is nothing so exciting in a sea life as a chase; the discussion as to what the stranger may prove, friend or foe, with or without a cargo, armed, and likely to show fight, or helpless, worth having or valueless; and, more than all, whether or not one is likely to overtake her. There is only one thing beats it, and that is to be chased, and I cannot say that the sensations are so agreeable. We were most of us in high spirits at the thoughts of making a capture; the first, we hoped, of a number of prizes we should take during our cruise. The only person who did not take an interest in the affair was Mercer. He was grave and careworn as before; indeed, it struck me that his melancholy had increased lately. He was sitting close to me at the fore-top mast-head.

“Hurrah! we are overhauling her; we shall soon be up with her!” I exclaimed.

“Hurry,” said he, turning round suddenly, “I cannot bear this life. I wish to do my duty, to remain faithful to my allegiance, and yet, I care not who knows it, all my sympathies are with those England has made her foes. I have but one resource; I must quit the service. I would that I could reach some desert isle where I could hide my head far from the haunts of men. I would even welcome death as an alternative. Hurricane, do you know I have of late felt as if my days were already numbered, and that my stay on earth will be very short. Once the thought would have made me unhappy; now I contemplate it with satisfaction, even at moments as a welcome boon.”

I did my utmost to turn my friend’s mind from the gloomy contemplations which occupied it. I had conceived of late much greater regard for him than I had when we first met; there was much that was generous and romantic in his character which attracted me, besides which his courage and coolness in danger had often excited my admiration. I had been, as I have said, using all the arguments I could think of to turn his thoughts into another channel, when he replied—

“I know that I am wrong to give way to these feelings. My religion teaches me to trust in God’s good providence and to believe that all He orders is for the best. I spoke as I did from weakness and want of faith; still I tell you that I am certain before long I shall meet my death. I am endeavouring to prepare for that awful moment; but it is at times, notwithstanding what I have just said, very, very hard to contemplate.”

After speaking much in the same strain as before, I told him that I had known so many people oppressed with the same feeling that he suffered from, of approaching death, who had lived very many years afterwards, that I put not the slightest faith in such prognostications. “At the same time,” I continued, “many a man who expects to lose his life when going into battle does so; but then he would have been killed whether he expected it or not; so, my dear Mercer, I hope you will live to see peace restored, and to enjoy many happy days at home.”

Mercer shook his head, then took a long, eager look at the shore towards which we were approaching.

The Kingfisher had been somewhat more to the south than we were when we sighted the chase. At first she had evidently hoped to double Cape May and to run up the Delaware, but, that hope being cut off, her only mode of escape was to make directly for the land; and it now became evident to Mercer and me, as we sat on our lofty perch, that it was the intention of her crew to run her on shore. Our conversation was brought to a conclusion by our being obliged to descend to attend to our duties on deck.

The poor little schooner had but a small prospect of escape with two big ships in chase, but the man who commanded her was a gallant fellow, and it was evident would persevere while a chance of escape remained.

“Fire the foremost gun, Mr Willis, and bring that fellow to,” said Captain Hudson as we got her within range.

“Ay, ay, sir,” answered the first lieutenant, going forward to see the order executed.

Still the chase seemed to have no notion of giving in. Shot after shot was fired, none striking her, and soon the Kingfisher joined in the practice, with like effect.

“I believe the fellow will manage to run his craft on shore before he strikes,” observed the captain. “He has very likely a valuable cargo on board.”

“Powder or arms for the rebels probably, sir,” said Mr Heron. “We shall have to cut him out.”

“I expect so, and intend to give you charge of the expedition,” replied Captain Hudson. “I hope that you will give as good an account of the foe as you did at Kip’s Bay, Mr Heron.”

The second lieutenant made a face as if he did not like the subject.

We were now rapidly overhauling the chase. We had been standing in on a line a little to the north of her, to prevent her hauling across our bows and beating up to windward along-shore in shallow water, which it was just possible she

might attempt to do. Thus every chance of escape on that side was cut off from her. At length one of our shots struck her and carried away her main-topmast. Our crew gave a loud hurrah. It was replied to by her people in bravado. Several successive shots did further damage, yet still she would not give in. Her crew might have hoped to draw us on shore, but Captain Hudson was too wary to be thus taken in.

“Shorten sail, Mr Willis,” he shouted, “and make the signal to the ‘Kingfisher’ to do the same.”

Just as our canvas was reduced and the heads of the ships turned off shore, gracefully bowing to the sea which rolled in, there was a shout from those who were on the look-out on the chase. She had run on shore. As she struck the rocks both her masts went by the board. Captain Hudson on this ordered three boats from us to be manned and two from the Kingfisher, to go in and try to get her off, if not to destroy her, for which purpose we took the usual combustibles. Mr Heron went in one, and had charge of the expedition. Mercer went in another, and I had command of a third. The Kingfisher, at the same time, stood in as close as she could, and then furling sails was warped in with springs on her cables, to cover us in case we should be molested. The schooner had run in within a reef which protected her somewhat from the sea. As we drew near, I saw that her crew were still on board. My boat had taken the lead of the others.

“Give way, my lads, give way!” I shouted; “we shall have time to catch the fellows before they set their craft on fire.” I was not aware at the time that they were not likely to do that same thing. The sea was breaking over her forward, but without much violence. She lay at about seventy to a hundred yards from the shore. I steered for her quarter, and as I and my men sprung on board, her crew tumbled over the bows into their boat, and made good way towards the beach. So precipitate had been their retreat that they left behind them two poor fellows who had been wounded by our shot. As our boats came round the stern of the schooner, and saw the rebels escaping, the two belonging to the sloop-of-war pulled away in chase, while Mr Heron and Mercer jumped on board. The Kingfisher’s boats would have captured the rebels, but, just as they were about doing so, up started three or four hundred militiamen from behind some sand hills, while other bodies were seen rushing down from all directions towards us. They immediately opened so heavy a fire on the two boats that they were compelled to desist from the pursuit, and wisely beat a retreat to the schooner. The sloop-of-war on this fired on the people on shore. There were probably by this time a thousand or more possessed of every possible description of fire-arm. The Kingfisher dispersed those who had first shown themselves in an exposed situation, and knocked several of them over, but the rest kept up so very heavy a fire on us that we were glad to dive down below to get out of it. We at once found that it would be impossible to to get the schooner off, and we then set to work to examine her cargo. I had gone into the cabin, where I found the ship’s manifest. I took it up to read it, as I concluded it would give me the information we required. I saw that some dry goods had been shipped, and some saltpetre, and I had just read “*Three hundred and sixty barrels of gunpowder*”—an article very much in request among the rebels—when there was a cry raised of “Fire, fire, fire!” Mr Heron had made the same discovery by seeing some suspicious black grains falling out of a cask, and he had just before beat a retreat.

“To the boats, to the boats, for your lives, my men!” I shouted, springing on deck, followed by my men. We tumbled into our boats with no little speed, and seized our oars, to place as much distance as we could between ourselves and the threatened danger. As I was leaving the vessel, I saw Mercer, with some of his people, apparently endeavouring to lift the two poor wounded Americans into his boat. It was but a glance, for the hurry and confusion of that awful moment prevented me seeing more.

“Give way, give way for your lives!” I shouted. No sooner did our heads appear above the schooner’s bulwarks than the rebels redoubled their fire on us, but we cared not for them. We scarcely had got clear from the side of the ill-fated vessel, when a terrific, thundering, roaring noise assailed our ears; a vivid flash blinded us; a scorching heat almost consumed us; and as we bent our heads in mute dismay, nearer despair, after a few moments of awful silence, down came crashing about us burning fragments of timbers and planks and spars and sails, and, horror of horrors! pieces of what an instant before had been human forms, breathing with life and strength. The oars were knocked from the men’s hands—dashed to atoms. Several of the men were struck down, shrieking with agony from the dreadful wounds the heavy pieces of burning wood and the hot iron inflicted; the very air was darkened for some moments,—and it seemed that the horrible shower would never cease. Even the enemy were awe-struck at the catastrophe, and ceased firing, as did the sloop-of-war. Our boats’ crews took the opportunity to get out the spare oars, and to pull out to sea. As they did so they rose up and gave the enemy three cheers, which, as may be supposed, drew down on them hot fire in return. An important service had been accomplished in the destruction of the powder, but I was in no mood for cheering. Five boats had gone in, four only were coming out. The fifth floated, shattered and blackened, over the scene of destruction, but no one was in her. She was the boat commanded by Mercer. He and all his crew had been; swept to destruction. His anticipations of coming evil had indeed been speedily verified. Two short hours ago he and I were sitting side by side away from the crowded deck, talking of matters of deep importance, to fathom which I felt was far beyond my comprehension. Now, though scarce a remnant of his blackened form could be discovered, he, I trusted, was on his way to those realms inhabited by beings of bright intelligence, to whom all such mysteries are clear as noon-day. He died in full assurance of salvation through a merciful Saviour; his last act one of charity, of the noblest self-devotion.

“Which, then, is the happiest?”

“Not I, not I.”

I bent my head and thought of what I was, of what I might become, unless protected by the loving mercy of a higher power than that of man’s feeble will.

The next day we parted company from the Kingfisher, and went in quest of the Daphne, which joined us that evening, having missed the vessel of which she had gone in chase.

On the 20th we captured a small schooner from Philadelphia, bound to the West Indies, with flour and Indian corn, and, having taken out the crew: and the flour, we set her on fire, to the no small grief of her master and owner, who

stood looking at her as we left her blazing away and lighting up the darkness of a November night. On the 24th a suspicious sail hove in sight, which we made out to be an English brig, though she showed no colours; but, as she did her best to get away from us, we made chase after her. A shot brought her to, when we found that she was bound from the coast of Guinea, had a thousand pounds' worth of ivory on board, and had been taken by the Congress and Chance privateers Her captors looked very blue, but had to submit to their fate. Captain Hudson ordered Kennedy, with four hands, to take charge of her, and to carry her into New York.

"We shall meet there I hope soon, Hurry," said he, as he was shoving off to take possession of his new command. "If we can but contrive to spend some little time there, we'll manage to amuse ourselves now that the place is free from those dunder-headed rebels."

"I hope so too. It will not be my fault if I do not follow you soon," I replied, "only, I say, Kennedy, take care that the brig is not recaptured by any of those same dunder-headed rebels."

"No fear, no fear; I'll keep too bright a look-out for that," he answered, laughing.

He had a fair wind and every prospect of a quick run, so that I hoped to find him at New York when I got the chance of going there.

On the 30th we again parted from the Daphne, and soon after gave chase to a sleep, which, after firing a few shots, we brought to. I was at once sent on board to take possession. I found her armed with eight carriage four-pounders, fourteen swivels and four cohorns, and laden with rum, porter, flour and bread, and I dare say she would have proved as ugly a customer to any small craft she might have fallen in with as she would have been a welcome guest at the port to which she was bound. Grampus and Tom Rockets had accompanied me as part of my boat's crew. Scarcely had I got on board when another sail was seen from the mast-head of the Orpheus, so Captain Hudson ordered me to keep them and another man, and to send the prisoners on board with the rest of the crew, which done, I was to cruise about in the neighbourhood to wait his return. A midshipman's personal comfort is not much considered on such occasions, so that I was unable to get any clothes or even a change of linen before my ship was standing away with all sail set in chase of the stranger last seen. My prize, I found, was called the Colonel Parry.

"What do you think of our craft?" said I to Grampus, who had been running his eye over her, inside and out.

"Why, Mr Hurry, she's seen no little service in her time, I'm thinking; and if so be there comes a gale of wind, she'll require delicate handling, or she'll be apt to go t'other way to what the schooner we last took did. Now, to my mind, sir, the weather doesn't look at all pleasant like, and I shouldn't be surprised but what we get a pretty heavy gale of wind before nightfall."

"I think so too," said I. "There's one comfort, if we do not fan in with the 'Orpheus' again for a month to come, we've provisions enough on board—we shall not starve."

Old Nol's prognostications were fulfilled even sooner than we expected; a black, heavy bank of clouds came rolling up towards us; and as the frigate's top-gallant sails, shining with peculiar whiteness against the dark mass, sank beneath the horizon, we were pitching our bows into a heavy sea under a close-reefed mainsail and foresail. We had made ourselves as snug as we could, but not a moment too soon. Had there been a trysail on board I should have set it. Even with the sail she had on her the vessel strained very much, and sometimes I thought she would make a perfect dip of it and go down head foremost. However, I had done all I could do, and must await the result.

"What's the matter now?" said I to Grampus, who had gone below for a short time.

"Why, sir, the old tub is taking in water rather faster than we are likely to pump it out."

"We must try, however," I answered. "Man the pumps, and let's do our best."

So to work we set. The weather was cool, and we were wet with the sea and spray, but the exercise kept us from feeling cold. We soon found that we made no sensible impression on the water in the hold, but yet it was something to keep the vessel afloat. While so employed, a loud bang saluted our ears; a heavier blast than usual had split both the mainsail and foresail. The sails soon shivered to tatters. I could find none with which to replace them, and there we lay, almost water-logged, at the mercy of the winds and waves. A long November night, too, was coming on, and I felt the very great probability that we might never be blessed by the sight of another dawn. Grampus took it very coolly; he had been in many similar situations; but Tom Rockets was far from happy.

"Oh, Mr Hurry," said he, as the gale rose higher and the seas tossed us helplessly about, ever and anon deluging our decks, "what is to become of us, sir? What will poor mother do when she hears that you and I are gone to the bottom in this outlandish country, where they seem to have nothing to do but to fight and shoot and knock each other on the head?"

Poor Tom's notion of the country was very naturally formed from his own experience.

"I hope, Tom, things are not so bad as you fancy," said I. "We must pray to God, and trust in His mercy to save us. He has power to hold us up if He thinks fit; and I have no doubt, too, that your mother and mine are praying for us, and I feel sure that He will listen to their prayers, if He does not to those of such careless, thoughtless fellows as we are."

"That's truth, Mr Hurry," put in old Grampus; "there's nothing like having a good mother to pray for one, depend on't. While my old mother lived, I always felt as how there was one who loved me, who was asking more for me than I dared ask for myself; and now she's gone aloft, I don't think she has forgotten her son, though I doubt if she would know his figure-head if she was to see him."

“I cannot say exactly that. Grampus,” said I, “though it looks to me like true philosophy; but one thing I do know—and that the Bible tells us plainly—that, if we will but trust and believe on Him, we have an Advocate with the Father, ever pleading for us, bad as we may have been—He who came into the world to save us, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He knows how to plead for us better than any earthly parent, either alive or in heaven, for He so loved us that He took our nature upon Him, and He knows all things, and knows our weaknesses and temptations, and want of opportunities of gaining knowledge.”

“That’s true again, sir,” observed Grampus; “that’s what I calls right earnest religion—you’ll pardon me for saying it, but to my mind the parsons couldn’t give us better.”

I told Grampus I was glad of his good opinion, and we talked on for some time much in the same strain. I had gained more religious knowledge lately from poor Mercer, who, during the last weeks we had been together, had been very assiduous in impressing his own convictions on me. There are occasions like this which bring people of different ranks together, and which draw out the real feelings and thoughts of the heart, when all know that any moment may be their last; a slight increase of the gale, one heavier sea than usual, the starting of a plank may send them all to the bottom. The pride of the proudest is humbled, the fiercest man is made meek. Those who live on shore at ease, and are seldom or never exposed to danger or are in hazard of their lives, can scarcely understand these things; priding themselves on their education, rank or fortune, they look down on all beneath them as unworthy of their thoughts or care, and I verily believe that some of them fancy that a different Creator made them—that they were sent into the world for different objects, and that they will go to different heaven when they die—that is to say, if they ever think of dying, or ever trouble their heads about an hereafter. I have often wished to get those young gentlemen in just such a position as I was that night, and they could not fail to learn a lesson which they would remember to the end of their days.

In the morning watch the gale began to abate.

“Come,” said I, “let’s turn to and see if we cannot lessen the water in the hold.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” replied Grampus. “We’ve a chance now, I think.”

We therefore all set to work with a will—there is nothing like trying what can be done, however desperate affairs may seem—and before daylight we most certainly were gaining on the leaks. We now found a second jib in the sail-room, which we set as a trysail, though I had not much expectation of it standing, and by its means we hove the vessel to. This at once relieved her greatly, but, as day broke, the weather looked so unpromising that I had great fears we might very soon be in a worse position than before. Our comfort was, that we had now done all that men could do, so we went to breakfast with clear consciences on some of the good things left us by the former owners. We lighted a fire in the cabin, dried our clothes, warmed our bodies, and otherwise made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would admit. On deck the aspect of affairs was not so cheering. Nothing was to be seen but dark green seas crested with foam around us, and black lowering clouds overhead, while a cold whistling wind did its best to blow our teeth down our throats. The wind, as I expected, soon breezed up again, and continued blowing heavily the whole day. The water, however, did not further gain on us, so I had hopes that we might still weather it out. Night came back on us without our having seen a sail or experienced any change for the better, and the morning came, and the next day passed away exactly as had the first. We had bread enough to eat, and flour to make dumplings, but we had no suet to put with them, so that they came out of the pot as hard as round shots; and we had rum and porter in a superabundance to drink; it was important, however, to use it sparingly, especially the former; but we had very few other things which could be called luxuries; no bedding, no change of clothes, and but a scanty supply of fuel. I had to lie wrapped up in an old cloak and a piece of carpet while Tom Rockets washed out my shirt and stockings. Day after day passed away and there we lay, pitching our bows under, hove-to at the most boisterous season of the year off that inhospitable coast, earnestly wishing for the return of the Orpheus, with the prospect, in the meantime, of being recaptured by an enemy’s privateer, and the certainty of being taken should we make for any port but New York, which, as the wind then held, was a matter of impossibility. We did not, however, pipe our eyes about the matter but, following old Nol’s advice, made the best of it.

“Any sail in sight, Grampus?” I used to ask as I turned out in the morning.

“No, sir, only clouds and water; but better them than an enemy, you know, sir,” was his general reply.

Now and then a sail would appear in the horizon, but either we were not seen or they were peaceable merchantmen, anxious to make the best of their way to their destined port. At last one morning, after I had been keeping the middle watch, old Grampus’ voice roused me out of a sound sleep.

“Come on deck, Mr Hurry, sir, if you please! I don’t like the looks of her at all.”

In a moment my head was up the companion-hatch. The weather was worse than ever. A thick driving mist formed a dense veil on every side, but I could just discern through it the sails of a large schooner standing directly for us from the eastward.

“She is American, I suspect, Grampus,” said I.

“No doubt about it, sir,” he answered. “Our cruise is up, I’m afraid, and we may make ready for a spell on shore, and nothing to do.”

“We might beat her off, though,” I observed. “There is nothing like putting a bold face on the matter, and it would never do to yield without striking a blow.”

“Ay, sir, with all my heart,” said he cheerfully; “the guns are all loaded, and I made Tom and Bill get up some powder and shot in case they were wanted, before I called you, sir. You’ll excuse me, sir, I thought there was no harm.”

“All right, Grampus,” I answered, laughing at his having calculated on what I should certainly propose doing. Bill Nettle was a good man and true, so that I knew I could thoroughly depend on all my small crew, and, having made every preparation, we waited till the schooner got within range of our guns. We had not long to wait. The gale bore her quickly towards us, and I almost thought she intended to run us down. Were she to overpower us there was too much sea to allow her to send a boat on board to take possession. She got within range, still she did not fire.

“She is unarmed, I suspect,” said I.

“No, no, sir,” replied Grampus. “She is armed, depend on that. She is up to some trick or other.”

On she came, passing close to us. The American flag was flying from the peak. I could not make out the mystery. In another moment, however, it was explained. For an instant the fog lifted, and showed us a large ship under a press of sail, standing directly after her. We cheered at the sight, for we had no difficulty in recognising the Orpheus, and at the same moment we ran out and let fly every gun we could bring to bear at the rigging of the stranger. One shot, directed by chance, certainly not by skill, struck her main-topmast, and down it came tumbling on deck. We hastened to reload our guns as fast as we could. She gave us a broadside from her guns in return, but the shot were thrown away. She stood on, however, but we had not a little diminished her chance of escape. The Orpheus was soon up to us, passing within hail.

“Well done, Mr Hurry, well done!” shouted Captain Hudson. “We will send you help as soon as we can.”

His commendation was no little satisfaction to me. It was a fine sight to see the noble ship sweeping by, her white canvas looking whiter amid the dark clouds and the sheets of foam which surrounded her, as, pressed by the gale, she heeled over, till her lee guns dipped in the water as she plunged on through the heaving seas which she majestically cast aside in her course. I longed to be on board her, though I should have speedily changed from a commander into a midshipman. Away she went, her vast form growing each instant more indistinct, like one of the genii one reads about in tales of romance, till she disappeared altogether in the thick driving mist, and once more we were left alone, so that her very appearance seemed almost like a dream, and I began at last to question whether I really had seen her. We watched anxiously for her, trying to pierce through the gloomy atmosphere, but no sign of her could we discern, and night once again closed round us in our solitude. The weather did not improve, so we spent another day at pile driving, neither a pleasant nor a profitable occupation. The second morning after the event I have described was as dark and lowering as before, but, as I went on deck after breakfast, Grampus cheered me by saying that he thought it was going to mend a bit. We were looking to the south-east, when simultaneously all hands uttered a loud cheer. The clouds seemed to burst asunder, the mist lifted, the bright sun shone forth, and, surrounded by his glorious rays, beneath a canopy of blue sky, our noble ship appeared, standing towards us, with the schooner and a sloop in her wake. There was, however, still too much sea on for her to send a boat without some risk; indeed, before she could well have done so, another sail hove in sight, and she was away in chase.

On the 14th of the month we spoke his Majesty’s ship Mermaid, with a convoy from England to New York. On the 15th the Orpheus took a schooner from Martinique, with a cargo of claret, so that with another sloop she had taken she had now five prizes. It was not, however, till the 26th of the month that a boat boarded me from the ship, with written directions from Captain Hudson to take under my command all the prizes, and to proceed with them to New York. I, in return, sent for my bedding and chest, and a few other things from the purser, which I required, and as soon as I had got them I hoisted the signal to my squadron to make sail for the port of our destination. A midshipman had been put in charge of each of the prizes, and as soon as we had lost sight of the ship we ran close to each other to discuss the plans of amusement which each of us were already enjoying by anticipation. Delisle commanded one of the schooners, Ragget another, Nicholas had one sloop, and Drew the last capture. We were, as may be supposed, a very merry set. It did not occur to us that our enemy’s cruisers might pop down on us before we got into port, as does a cat among a party of mice at play. We were almost as helpless as mice in the paws of a cat, for so few men were sent away in each prize that we had scarcely strength to work them, much less to fight or make sail on an emergency. In this instance fortune favoured us. We made Sandy Hook on the 28th, and before evening were all safely moored alongside the wharf, among twenty-nine other vessels of various rigs captured by the Orpheus.

As several other ships of war had sent in prizes, we altogether formed a very jovial set of midshipmen. There were seven of us from the Orpheus alone, and, as I was senior officer, they were generally my guests. I had really a very elegant cabin, nicely fitted up with every convenience, and a comfortable stove, besides which I collected from the various prizes an ample stock of good things to supply the wants of the inner man. Never indeed had I enjoyed more perfect luxury, or greater rest and relaxation, without one anxious care, one unhappy moment to extract the sweets from my existence, free from all the rubs and kicks and snubs midshipmen seem the natural heirs to, so I smiled at fortune and defied its frowns.

I was for a short time, however, made to quake, for after the Orpheus had, during December, sent in several prizes, she arrived herself with two others, and some of my messmates had to return on board. But Captain Hudson, whose good opinion I had won, gave me directions, to my infinite contentment, to remain in charge of the prizes. I had also a sufficient number of companions to bear me company. Numberless were the pranks we Orlopians played. Some might now make me blush, though, generally, if not wise they were harmless. I remember that we did our skipper and the captain of the Daphne out of three cases of claret which they had marked for their own use. It happened that, as we were preparing to keep Christmas Day, some one bethought him of the three cases. They were sent for. One of them was broached at dinner-time, and found so excellent that we drank up the whole; but, as we were doing so, our consciences were alarmed, and we ordered the bottles and corks to be kept. The next day we employed ourselves in refilling them from the casks, and in carefully corking and sealing them. Some time afterwards I was dining with our captain, when one of the cases was produced. The opinion of the guests was asked. Some thought it excellent. Delisle, who was there, looked at me, but we kept our countenances. Our first lieutenant, who was considered a judge, pronounced it good, but he found very little difference between it and the wine in cask.

Among other things we came on some casks of limes—excellent things, be it known, in the composition of punch. The

said fruit we accordingly ate up or used for that purpose, and filling the casks with wet hay, some rotten limes, and the stuff they were packed in, returned them to the hold. On examination, the casks of limes were found to have been entirely spoilt. Such tricks are, however, I must own, not only unworthy of imitation, but scarcely fit to be recorded.

I must now give a glance at the position of the belligerent armies at this period. Washington, having crossed the Hudson into the Jerseys, had been compelled by the desertion of a considerable number of his troops, who had enlisted only for short periods, to retreat across the Delaware, while some of the most fertile tracts of the country fell into the hands of the Royalists. General Lee, an officer of considerable talent and daring, was surprised and captured by a body of British cavalry; while the other rebel generals found themselves, with diminished and disheartened forces, separated from each other, and without resources or means of recruiting; indeed, the revolutionary cause appeared to have arrived at its lowest ebb, and great hopes were entertained that a speedy conclusion would be made to the sanguinary contest. Perhaps the Americans were not so badly off as we supposed. That they were not asleep was proved by their gallant and well-conducted surprise and capture of Colonel Rahl and a thousand Hessian troops at Trenton on Christmas Day, an enterprise which inspirited the Americans, and was a severe loss to the Royalists. The Hessian commander was mortally wounded, and died the next day; and most of his men, being marched into the interior, settled in the country. Soon after this occurrence Washington was appointed military dictator, and through his consummate conduct the prospects of the rebels began to revive.

Of course the progress of the war was the constant subject of conversation while I was at New York, and I consequently heard a good deal about it. Before I end this chapter, I think it may prove interesting if I give a slight sketch of the warlike proceedings which had occurred up to this period on the Canadian frontier, as well as some of the proceedings of General Washington and his army.

Lakes Champlain and George, approaching as they do the upper waters of the Hudson, have always been considered the key to the northern provinces from Canada. Their possession has therefore been looked on as of the first importance; and Ticonderoga, the chief fort at the head of Lake Champlain, has been the scene of many bloody encounters. I heard a good deal about the matter afterwards from Edward Fleetwood Pelew, whose brother Israel was long a messmate of mine, and who was himself engaged in the affair I have to relate. General Gates commanded the American forces in the north, and he had strongly fortified Ticonderoga. Our army in Canada was at that time under the command of Sir Guy Carleton, a very brave and dashing officer. The success which Sir William Howe had met with on the seaboard inspired him with an ardent desire to signalise himself in the north; and he hoped to be able to expel the rebels from their posts on the lakes, and, by a triumphant march down the banks of the Hudson, to form a junction with the main body of the British army at New York. To effect this object he fitted out a fleet of small craft of every description on which he could lay his hands on Lake Champlain. It was placed under the command of Captain Pringle. The Americans got notice of what was going forward, and got a fleet together under the orders of General Arnold. Our fleet were ready by the first week in October, and made sail up the lake in search of the enemy. They cruised for some time, and were almost in despair of falling in with the American squadron, believing that it must have run for shelter to the extreme southern point of the lake, when, as with a fair wind they had already passed Valcour Island, they caught sight of the enemy drawn up across the channel between that island and the main. Our flotilla instantly hauled their wind, and stood in to attack the enemy. The Americans, to do them justice, behaved gallantly, and no man could have fought his vessels better than did Arnold; but our force was overpowering, and they got dreadfully cut up. Some Indians were landed on the island, who, getting on their flanks, galled them terribly with their rifles. Still they fought on till darkness came to their aid. Our larger vessels could not get into the channel, or they would have been completely cut up. At night the British squadron had to haul off; and, when morning dawned, it was found that Arnold, and such of his vessels as still kept afloat, had made his escape up the lake. Several of them were, however, overtaken and captured, while others were sunk or run on shore and burnt. Arnold with the remnant took shelter under Ticonderoga. This success was not followed up by Sir Guy, as he found that Ticonderoga was so strongly garrisoned that he could not hope to take it without considerable loss both of men and time, and he would afterwards have had to advance through a difficult country in the middle of winter with a vigilant enemy ever on the watch to harass him. He therefore returned with his army to Montreal.

General Washington, meantime, after he had retreated from New York with his shattered forces, endeavoured to hold the country to the westward on both sides of the Hudson. The greater part of his army occupied a rocky and mountainous district known by the name of the Highlands. There he carried on a sort of Fabian warfare, ever avoiding a regular engagement, always on the defensive, and retreating when pursued. So ill-formed and ill-disciplined were the American forces at this time that he had no other resource than to act as he did. His army was still further weakened by the loss of Fort Washington with a garrison of nearly three thousand men, which was gallantly taken, after a desperate defence, by Lords Percy and Cornwallis, and a body of Hessians under Colonel Rahl, of whom I have before spoken.

Altogether, it seems surprising that our generals should not have been able at this juncture to crush Washington, and put an end to the rebellion. A higher Power than either of the belligerents ruled otherwise.

Chapter Seven.

My command ends.—At sea on board the Orpheus.—On a lee-shore.—Saved.—Sent up Providence River.—Threatened by fire-ships.—Employment of spies.—The old spy and his nephew.—Attacked by fire-ships.—Execution of the spies.—Sail on a cruise with other frigates.—Prizes taken.—A privateer escapes us in a gale.—Chase vessels on shore.—Exposed to heavy fire.—Narrow escape.—My young messmate wounded.

“Well, skipper, I’m afraid our cruise is at an end,” said Delisle, coming into my cabin one morning as I sat discussing such a breakfast as rarely fell in those days to the share of a midshipman before my warm stove.

“Oh, bird of ill omen, why croak you forth such dire intelligence?” I asked, as he threw off his snow-covered coat, and prepared to join me in my meal with a look which made me fear there were not many more such in store for us.

“Because, by the pricking of my thumbs, something evil this way comes, in the shape of the ‘Orpheus,’ of which I caught a glimpse as I came along, standing into the harbour,” he replied, knocking the top off an egg.

We had been reading Shakespeare, and various other literary productions, and had become somewhat poetical in our style of conversation. My messmate’s information was but too true—that very afternoon we received orders to deliver up our prizes to the agents, and to rejoin our ship. With what sorrow of heart did I bid farewell to my neat cabin, my airy sleeping-place, my comfortable sofa, my warm stove, and all the other luxuries with which I had been surrounded; and with what thorough disgust and discontent did I take possession, after my long absence, of my berth on board the old Orpheus! Really, I had no right to complain, and I was truly glad to see many of my shipmates again.

The heavy islands of ice, which came floating down with each ebb, threatening to crush in the bows of the ship, compelled us to move down close to the fish-market, where we were sheltered from them.

On the 20th, having received on board a number of rebel prisoners, whom we were to take round to Rhode Island, we sailed in company with HMS Solebay, Daphne, and Harriet packet, but parted with them off Sandy Hook. Our passengers were in a very sad state of destitution and sickness. Fever soon broke out among them, and it spread rapidly among our crew.

We quickly were doomed also to experience another of the numerous ills which seamen are heirs to. This was a gale of wind which sprung up about midnight from the south-east, catching us most completely on a lee-shore. We had made but little offing, and every minute the wind increased, and we, I saw, were drifting closer and closer onto the coast of Long Island. Captain Hudson, Mr Willis, and Mr Flood, the master, were in earnest consultation.

“What will you give for our chance of saving the ship?” said Delisle to me as we stood holding on to the weather bulwarks, while the spray in dense masses was breaking over us—the ship heeling over till her lee-guns were buried in water with the heavy press of canvas it was necessary to carry to give us a hope of beating off.

“A midshipman’s half-pay for a week and a day, unless the wind shifts or moderates,” I answered. “I believe the old barkie was never in greater peril. If we save the people’s lives we shall be fortunate.”

“So the captain seems to think. I never saw him more anxious,” replied Delisle. “My idea is that we shall have to cut away the masts and anchor. My only consolation is that if we escape with our lives, it is the only part of the coast where we should not to a certainty be made prisoners of war.”

I agreed with Delisle. To anchor would be our only resource, but one on which I feared we could place very little reliance. The anchors might hold; but with the whole roll of the Atlantic tumbling in on us, and the terrific gale there was already blowing, and every instant increasing, I felt that there was small chance of their so doing. Dark and darker grew the night, higher and higher rose the sea, and fiercer and more furious blew the wind. Still the stout ship struggled bravely on; her lee-side pressed deep into the water, while torrents of foam broke over her weather-bow and deluged us fore and aft. It seemed doubtful indeed whether the masts would long stand the tremendous strain put upon them. High above the roaring of the tempest was occasionally heard the ominous voice of the man in the chains as he sung out the depth of water in which we floated, showing that we were slowly though surely shallowing it.

That dark and terrific night will not easily pass from my memory. Captain Hudson had ordered the cables to be ranged in readiness to anchor. The carpenter and his crew were sent for, and ordered to prepare for the last desperate expedient of cutting away the masts. Every now and then, as a bright flash of lightning darted from the sky, they might be seen with their gleaming axes uplifted, ready at a moment to execute the fatal order. Everybody was on deck, for our danger was apparent to all.

“What shall we have to do?” asked little Harry Sumner, as he stood shivering with the cold by my side.

“Obey orders and trust in Providence, my boy,” said I. “If the anchors don’t hold and the ship goes to pieces, we may have to swim for it, and then, Harry, keep an eye on me, and if I can lend you a helping hand, I will. I must not promise too much, for I may not be able to help myself.”

“Thank you, Hurry, thank you. Oh, I am sure you will do all you can for me,” said the boy gratefully.

The coolest man on board was the captain. He stood on the weather-side of the quarter-deck, one hand holding on by a stanchion, the other grasping his speaking-trumpet, his hair streaming from beneath his hat, and his coat-tails fluttering in the gale. I love to picture our brave commander as he appeared at that moment, when he knew the lives of hundreds depended on his calmness and decision.

“By the deep nine,” was heard from the man in the chains. Scarcely had the words been uttered, when down came the tempest on us with redoubled fury, and the wind and sea roared so loudly that it would scarcely have been possible to have heard his voice again. Suddenly there was a lull.

“By the mark eight,” was now heard with startling distinctness. A flash of lightning revealed the captain as he raised his speaking-trumpet to his mouth. We knew what was coming. At that very moment the sails gave a loud flap against the masts, the ship plunged violently, but rose on an even keel. The captain took the trumpet from his mouth. Suddenly the gale backed out of its former quarter, and shifted to the north-west. There was a shout of satisfaction; some few, perhaps, breathed a prayer of thankfulness for our preservation as we ran off from the dangerous coast.

On the 23rd we reached Rhode Island. The fever had spread so rapidly among our men that in a few days we sent no less than ninety of them to the hospital on shore, while we kept an equal number of sick on board. On the 27th the commodore sent us a hundred men from other ships, and ordered us to cruise for a month in Buzzard's Bay, between New Bedford Harbour and Martha's Vineyard. The latter quaint-named place is one of the many islands off that coast inside Nantucket Island. The extreme severity of the weather made our cruise thoroughly disagreeable, and much prevented the people from recovering their health; indeed, it considerably increased the number of our sick. In truth, it was very tantalising and provoking to be kept for nearly a week knocking about for no purpose scarcely ten leagues from our port without being allowed to enter it. At last the captain could stand it no longer, so we put back on the 3rd of March, and were forthwith sent up Providence River as an advanced ship. Here we had frequent skirmishes with the enemy, who took a sly pop at us whenever they could, but without doing us much damage. On the 10th of March we received orders to proceed to sea immediately. We sailed accordingly that night, and the next morning captured a sloop from Charleston, bound to Boston with dye and indigo. That night we anchored under Block Island, and for some days cruised about in the hopes of picking up some prizes, I conclude. I fancy that the commodore had received notice that some vessels with valuable cargoes might be expected in the neighbourhood about that time. We anchored in Martha's Vineyard on the 16th, where some of our youngsters expected to find grapes growing, and were much disappointed on discovering that none were to be found there, especially in March, and two days after we once more returned to Rhode Island without having made another capture. We were quickly sent off again, and, having bagged a prize, returned on the 3rd of April, when we were ordered up the river to relieve the Cerberus as the advance-ship off Providence, our station being between the Island of Prudence and the mainland. A glance at the map will show the number of islands in that fine estuary, which terminates in Providence Bay. On one of them, called the Island of Hope, near which the ship was generally at anchor, to vary the monotony of a sea life we employed ourselves in the cultivation of gardens. Our horticultural knowledge was not very extensive, but we managed during our stay to raise various crops of quick-growing esculents, and on our departure we disposed of our property to our respective brother-officers belonging to the ship which relieved us. Our life was, however, far from one of Arcadian simplicity, for we were constantly aroused by war's rude alarms, and had every night to row guard in three flat-bottomed boats ahead of the ship, to prevent a surprise. The enemy were ever on the alert, endeavouring to find some means of destroying us. This was but natural, as we were completely putting a stop to their commerce, on which their existence mainly depended. We had, however, a number of spies employed, who brought us information of all the plots formed against us. Some brought us information, influenced by a spirit of loyalty to the king, and a belief that they were serving a good cause; but others were mercenary wretches, who were willing to be employed by those who paid them the highest. The reports of these latter, though it was necessary to employ them, were always received with great caution by our captain. He could scarcely conceal the disgust he felt for them. One morning, about ten days after our arrival, as we were washing decks at sunrise, while I happened to be looking over the ship's side, I observed a small boat standing towards us from Prudence Island. As she drew near, I saw that there were two men in the boat. They were dressed as ordinary seamen. One was a young man of nineteen or twenty; the other was much older, with his hair already turning grey—a stout, strong-featured, healthy-looking man. The younger man was rather tall, and had a pleasant, honest face. When the sentry hailed them, they asked leave to come on board to see the captain. Captain Hudson was already up. I went to inform him of their arrival, and by his desire conducted them to him. Their manner was frank and open, and they seemed to have made a favourable impression on the captain. When they left the cabin he ordered them to be carefully provided and looked after. I afterwards had much conversation with them. The elder had been a soldier in his youth, and served the king in many parts of the world. They were both imbued with an almost romantic feeling of loyalty. "King George was always a good and kind master to me, and I'm not going to desert him when he most wants me because his ministers choose to do what some of the people of this country don't like," said the elder man. "I got a wound in his service in my thigh here, so I can't march and carry a musket as I did once, or I would have gone down and joined the royalists at New York, but there are other ways of serving his Majesty, though they are somewhat risky, I own; but what of that? every man should be ready to die in a good cause. It's very bad, though, all this fighting and bloodshed among folks of the same race and kindred, and now, if they'd followed my advice, I don't think it would ever have come about. As I used to say to my nephew, Amos Weeks here, 'Amos,' said I, 'wait a bit and don't be in a hurry. Write and petition against the taxes as much as you like. Taxes must be laid on, and somebody must pay them, and if we don't like them we must petition, as I say; but anything beyond that will be rank treason and rebellion, and that's wicked and abominable. Suppose this country was to become free and independent as they talk of, what would the people do? Either they must make General Washington a king, or they will soon quarrel among themselves and cut their own throats.'" The old soldier spoke so earnestly, and there seemed to be so much good sense in what he said, that I put it down. He certainly proved himself a very good advocate of the king's cause. From him we learned that the enemy were about to make a grand attack on us with their fire-ships, and in the hurry and confusion which would necessarily ensue they hoped to enable three of their frigates, which had long been waiting an opportunity, to run past us and to get to sea. That night we were doubly on our guard, though we could scarcely increase the precautions we had already taken. It was very dark, with a strongish breeze blowing down the river. There had been almost a gale in the day, with a heavy rain, which would have afforded the enemy a greater chance of success had we not been on the watch for them. Mr Gaston, our third lieutenant, Delisle, and I had charge of the three boats. Our ears were more likely to serve us than our eyes, considering the thick darkness with which we were surrounded. My boat was the headmost—that is, farther up the river than the rest. Grampus was with me. "Hist, sir, didn't you hear the chirp of a block?" said he in a whisper. "The lubbers should have taken care to use more grease if they wanted to surprise us." I fancied I had heard the same sound. We listened breathlessly while the crew lay on their oars. It came from up the river, directly ahead of us. "Ah! there it is again," said I. For some time we waited without moving, all hands peering into the darkness. At length I thought I discerned one spot darker than the surrounding atmosphere. I gazed at it earnestly. Gradually the spot increased in density till it resolved itself into the hull of a vessel, with canvas set, standing directly down towards us. There could be no doubt that her intention must be to run aboard the Orpheus, and that she must be a fire-ship. "Give way, my lads," I whispered, steering directly for her bows. The instant we reached them we threw on board the grapnels we had prepared for that purpose, and began to tow her away across the stream. As we did so a fire of musketry was opened on us from her deck, which wounded one of our men. We had no time to reply to it, nor was it repeated, the crew of the fire-ship having taken to their boat. The sound and flash of the fire-arms brought the other boats to our assistance, and they began to pepper away at the retreating boat as she was disappearing in the gloom. In less than a minute she was no longer to be seen. For another instant there was a perfect silence, then suddenly a

bright light shot up from the hold of the fire-ship, flames burst forth from her ports and from every quarter, and climbed up her rigging, while fire-balls and all sorts of missiles of destruction leaped forth in every direction, a bright glare extending far and wide over the broad stream showing us our own ship on one side, with her spars and rigging in bold relief, traced against the dark sky; and on the other, towards Providence, it shone on the white sails of three or four large ships and several smaller ones, which we concluded were fire-ships. We fully expected an abundance of hot work. Notwithstanding the great risk we ran of destruction, we towed lustily away till we had got the fire-ship well out into the stream, so that there was no longer any risk of her drifting down on the Orpheus; while fortunately, as we had a long painter, we escaped without injury. We knew that before she reached the other ships she would have burnt out, so we cast off and prepared to grapple with any more of the same ugly customers which might be sent against us. The Orpheus had, in the mean t ime, sent all her boats to our assistance, and together we waited in expectation of the attack; but hour after hour passed away, and when the morning dawned our mysterious and phantom-like enemies had, like the ghosts of romance, disappeared from the landscape. The adventure of the night would have seemed like a dream, had it not been for our wounded comrade and the charred bits of wood which lay scattered about the boat. This night's work I describe as a specimen of what frequently occurred during our stay in the river. The following night I was sent on shore to land our two spies, that they might learn what were the next movements proposed by the enemy.

"Good-bye, Mr Meeks, good-bye," said I, as I landed the old soldier; "it is hazardous work you are on, so be cautious."

"I know that, sir," said he, "I know that; but the man who would serve his country must be ready to risk life and property, and all he holds dear."

I have sometimes, long, long since then, thought, if people were but as ready to devote themselves to the service of their Creator as they are body, mind, soul, and strength, for the purpose of carrying out some worldly objects, how much better would it be for their spiritual good, for their eternal welfare!

For several nights after this the enemy were very quiet; no attempt was made with their fire-ships, nor were we aware that their boats ever came near us. We therefore began to suspect that they meditated an attack of greater magnitude than heretofore. We therefore looked somewhat anxiously for the information which we hoped our spies would be able to supply. Nothing was done, however, till the evening of the 20th, when Captain Hudson sent for me. "Mr Hurry," said he, "Lieutenant Douglas of the 'Chatham' has received orders to go on shore at midnight to bring off our spies, the two Meekses. You are to accompany him. It is a delicate service, and I must caution you to be careful that none of your men do anything to give the alarm. I send you on the expedition as I know that I can trust to your discretion."

I thanked him for the good opinion he was so often pleased to express of me, and went below to prepare for what was before me. I took Grampus and Tom with me, and a picked boat's crew, and at the hour arranged shoved off from the ship's side. Mr Douglas had come on board in the afternoon. He had to communicate with a person on shore, while I had to look-out for the spies. It was a darkish night, but there was very little wind, so that it was necessary to muffle our oars in order that our approach might not be perceived. As we pulled over the still waters, in which here and there the reflection of a star might be seen, as it peeped out between the clouds, we could just distinguish the fringe-like tops of the trees which surrounded the sheltered nook towards which we were steering. All was still as death as we approached the shore. We ran into the nook and landed. Two men were left in charge of the boat, and while Mr Douglas proceeded to the place where he was to meet the person he had appointed to see, I led the men through the wood to a spot where two roads met, and where the Meekses had arranged to be in waiting. I whistled twice very low as agreed on, but no one answered. Telling Grampus to wait, I walked along the road in the hopes of meeting our friends; but seeing no one, I returned to await their coming. It occurred to me, that as strangers might be passing it would be unwise to expose my men to view; so I posted them behind a thicket, and sat down where I was myself concealed, and could at the same time command a view along the roads as far as the light would allow. I had remained there fully half an hour, when I heard footsteps approaching at a rapid rate. The person stopped where the road branched off, as if in uncertainty which to take. I was about to rush forward with my men to seize him, when I recognised Mr Douglas. "We shall have to retreat to the boats, I fear," said he; "some one has given information that we are here, and the neighbourhood is alarmed; but we must wait till the last moment for the poor fellows we were sent to bring off."

Ten minutes, or rather more, elapsed when we heard footsteps advancing along one of the roads. They came at a leisurely pace, as if the people were in no hurry. I gave the signal. It was answered by the persons approaching. "All's right," I observed to Mr Douglas; but almost as I spoke, the dark figures of a body of men could be distinguished in the gloom, turning a corner of the other road. Seeing this, Mr Douglas had no resource but to give the order to our party to retreat, for it was very evident that the enemy far outnumbered us. As we did so, I called to the spies to hasten forward, for I knew that we could no longer remain concealed. Hearing my voice, the two men ran on; but at the same time our foes advanced at a double quick step along the road. I saw that not a moment was to be lost if we would save the lives of old Meeks and his nephew; so, calling on Grampus and Tom, I made a dash forward in the hopes of checking the enemy till we could meet them. Unfortunately the rebels were too quick in their movements for us, and before we could reach the fork of the road they had already gained the same place, and effectually prevented us from saving our friends whom we had too much reason to apprehend had fallen into their hands, unless they had been able to save themselves by flying in an opposite direction. From what I had seen of the old soldier, I feared he was not likely to run even on an occasion like the present. Mr Douglas now hailed me to return, and of course I did so as fast as I could, as I should inevitably have been made a prisoner. As it was we had enough to do to keep our enemies at bay, and had not the darkness prevented them from learning the smallness of our numbers, they might easily have surrounded us. Though they pressed us hard we kept as close together as the nature of the ground would allow, and every now and then, led on by Mr Douglas, we uttered loud cries and shouts, as if we were going to make a rush on them. The stems of the trees also assisted to protect us from the fire which they opened on us, so that not a man was hit. We were not sorry, however, to reach our boats, when we jumped in with no little haste, for the Americans were close upon us. They were almost seizing the bows of the boat before we had time to get out the oars and shove into the stream. One, indeed, had seized the painter, but Tom Rockets dealt him such a

blow with his cutlass that he was glad to let go. The enemy now rushed down in numbers to the shore, and began firing away at us as fast as they could load. Fortunately in the darkness our boat offered no very certain mark; but the shot came flying about us, spluttering into the water like a shower of hail. Now and then, *thud*—that peculiar sound—gave notice that a bullet had struck the boat, but not a man was hit. As soon as we had got a little way off, we pulled up the stream, and then steered for the ship so as to mislead the enemy as to the course we had taken. Long after they must have lost sight of us the flash of their muskets showed that they were still peppering away in the direction in which they supposed we had gone.

We reached the ship without further adventure. Captain Hudson was very sorry to find that we had come off without the spies; but he at once saw that this was owing to no fault of ours.

The next morning, as the first lieutenant, as usual, was sweeping the shore with his glass, an exclamation of horror he uttered made me point mine in the same direction. There, directly abreast of the ship, hung suspended on the branches of a tree scathed by lightning two human forms—one was stout and short, the other tall and slight. There was too much reason to believe that they were the bodies of our unfortunate spies. No one was near them. Solitary they swung on the river shore, a warning to others who might be inclined to follow their example—a sad result of the ruthless necessity of war. They probably had been seized and executed directly after they were captured. We could not blame the Americans. Our generals had frequently been compelled to do the same with their spies whom they had taken, but even this did not put a stop to the system. The sad spectacle I have described saluted our eyes whenever we turned towards the shore; and I, for one, was very sorry for the fate of Meeks and his nephew; but I must confess that we were becoming so accustomed to the sights and horrors of warfare that such sensations lasted but a short time.

I forgot to mention that one of the pieces of information Meeks brought us was that our messmate Kennedy, who had charge of one of the prizes taken off Cape May, had been taken by the rebels, and was now a prisoner of war in their hands. It was with no slight satisfaction that we saw the Greyhound come up to relieve us on the 30th of May, when we made over to our brother-officers belonging to her the full right to all the productions of the gardens we had so assiduously cultivated on the Island of Hope. On the 1st of June we ran down the river and anchored off Newport, and on the 3rd sailed on a cruise towards the Bay of Fundy, in company with the Amazon and Juno frigates. The officers and ships' companies of the three ships had previously agreed to share the prize-money which might be made on the cruise.

I should be almost afraid of wearying my readers, were I to give a minute account of all the captures we effected and the adventures we met with, but still I do not like altogether to pass them by. Our main object, however, was to intercept the American Commodore Manley, but as he had a force much superior to ours, it was absolutely necessary for us to keep together, or we might have found ourselves very much the worse for the encounter. Had it not been for this, we should have taken many more prizes than we did; indeed, we were compelled to allow numbers of considerable value to pass by without going in chase. On the 26th we took a sloop from Philadelphia bound for Boston with rice. On the 26th we re-took a brig from Oporto, bound to London, which had been captured by a rebel privateer off Scilly. We sent her to New York, but we never heard anything more of her, so that she must either have foundered or have been taken by the enemy. In the latter case the prize-master and crew must have joined them. On the 11th we took a vessel laden with lumber, which we burnt, and on the 14th a sloop with wood, which we gave up to the owners, as they were royalists; and on the 16th we took a brig with fish and lumber from Boston to the West Indies. At length, on the 23rd at daybreak, a flush-deck ship was seen becalmed within two miles of us. We made out that she was pierced for twenty guns, and from her appearance we had no doubt that she was a rebel privateer. The boats were ordered out immediately, but before they were in the water a breeze sprang up, and setting every stitch of canvas she could carry, away she went before the wind. We at the same time made sail in chase with our consorts, which were a little astern of us, and of course we had every hopes of making an important capture. By this time the rebel government had given letters of marque, not only to Americans, but to the inhabitants of various other countries, who, under their flag, had become very troublesome to our trade, and it had become necessary to endeavour to put a stop to the system.

The privateer soon showed us that she had a remarkably fast pair of heels, and it became doubtful, after a couple of hours' chase, whether we had gained much, if anything on her. Sometimes the wind increased, and then our greater size and wider spread of canvas gave us the advantage, so that our hopes of capturing her rose and fell somewhat as did the breeze.

We had the whole of the day before us, and a day it was of no little excitement. We kept the lead, our consorts following, one on either quarter, to be ready to cut her off, should the breeze shift, and place her to windward. Hour after hour passed, and still we were no nearer to her.

"What chance have we of getting hold of her?" said I to Grampus, who was standing with me forward, keeping a look-out on her.

"Why, sir, do ye see a stern chase is a long chase, as every one knows, but a flaw of wind or a bit of a calm, or somewhat of that sort, may throw her into our power, so that from all I've seen, and you know that's not a little, Mr Hurry, I says never give up a-following an enemy as long as you can keep eyes on her. When once you loses sight of her, why, then its all guess-work, and a chance that you ever claps eyes on her again."

I ever after remembered Grampus's observations both when chasing and being chased, and frequently experienced their practical wisdom. Everything was done to increase the speed of the ships, the sails were drenched with water, so that not a whistle full could escape through them, and the hammocks were slung, and shot placed in them, but all was apparently at first to little purpose.

"The rogues are laughing at us," said Delisle, as he and I paced the deck together, "I wish we could get a calm, and have a chance of boarding them with the boats. They would give us some warm work though, I suspect."

“I should hope so,” said I. “I have always preferred the excitement of downright fighting to the sort of work we have lately had off Providence.”

“I should think so, indeed!” said he. “I have often thought that if I were made a prisoner, I should die of ennui. How people can exist shut up within the walls of a dungeon has always puzzled me.”

We afterwards had good reason to remember this conversation, and he, poor fellow, sadly to his cost. While we had been speaking, dark clouds had been gathering in the north-west. They now began to form a thick and heavy bank, which rose gradually higher and higher in the sky. There was little doubt that they indicated the approach of a strong wind, but whether or not it would aid us in capturing the chase was a question.

“We shall have something to try our sticks soon, Mr Willis,” said the captain to the first lieutenant; “but we must carry on as long as they will stand, rather than let that fellow escape. So fast a craft as he is will commit no little damage to our trade, if allowed to continue at large.”

“No fear, sir. It is not likely that a rascally rebel will be able ultimately to escape from three of his Majesty’s ships,” answered Mr Willis, who held the Americans in supreme contempt.

“I do not know that,” observed the captain, who had a very different feeling for the foe. “They have shown in many ways that they are not to be despised, and several of their vessels have contrived to give us the go-by.”

“Ay, yes, to be sure; but then they were probably not worth catching,” said Mr Willis, not liking to acknowledge that the enemy had anything to boast of. According to him, every battle they had fought had been lost by them, and the time of their entire destruction was fast approaching. The squall which had for some time been brewing in the westward, now made its advent known by curling up the waves, topping them with foam and swelling out our sails to the utmost from the bolt-ropes. The chase kicked up her heels a little as it caught her up, and then went staggering away before it faster than ever. After her, however, flew our two consorts and, ourselves, and still we felt sure that we should capture her. The sea rose higher and the wind increased, which was all in our favour, and after some time, there could be no doubt that we were gaining on her, but night was now approaching, and the darkness would give her a far better chance than before of escaping.

“Do you think, Mr Willis, we should have a chance of winging her, if we were to send a shot after her?” said the captain to the first lieutenant, as they stood together, watching the chase attentively.

“Certainly I think so!” replied Mr Willis; “at all events, I’ll try, and I won’t fail to do my best.”

One of the bow-chasers was forthwith run out and pointed by Mr Willis himself. For a minute or more he looked along the gun at the chase. At last he fired. The white splinters were seen to fly from her quarter. The result of his first attempt encouraged him to make a second. The gun was again loaded, but when he fired no apparent effect followed. A third time he fired, but if the shot struck, no damage was to be perceived. It was now rapidly growing dark, and Mr Willis was becoming impatient, for uncomfortable doubts began to rise in his mind as to the possibility of the cruiser of the much-despised enemy escaping after all from us. Grampus was standing near him. “Here, my man,” said he, “you have the credit of being one of best shots in the ship—try what you can do in clipping one of that fellow’s wings.”

The old seaman looked gratified at the compliment, and prepared himself to obey. First, however, he cast a hurried glance to windward not altogether devoid of anxiety. I looked in the same direction. There, gathering thickly and close overhead, was the black mass of clouds which had long been driving towards us, the seas looking white and more broken in the increasing gloom. I thought he was about to speak, but turning to the gun he stooped down, before it and applied the match. Scarcely had he fired when its report was echoed by a discharge from the artillery of the clouds, the wind roared in the rigging, the studding sails, which had not been taken in, were blown away like light fleeces from a sheep’s back and carried far-off before the gale. The fore-topgallant sail and fore-topsail sheets were carried away; the ship flew up into the wind, taking the wheel out of the hands of the men, while she almost broached to, creating a scene of confusion which did not often occur on board; over she heeled to the blast; sheets were let fly; the spray in showers broke over her; the voices of Captain Hudson and Mr Willis were heard above the uproar caused by the dashing of the sea, the rattling of blocks, and the howling and whistling of the wind, with the other accompaniments of a sudden squall. When order was somewhat restored, sail decreased, and the ship put on her former course, we once more looked out for the chase. Not a trace of her was to be seen. The dim outline of our two consorts could be perceived on either quarter. They apparently had been thrown into as much confusion as we had from the squall, but were once more with diminished canvas standing in the same direction as before.

“Oh, we shall soon be up with her again,” said Mr Willis, who had gone forward to look-out himself for the chase. “She doubtless lost some of her spars, if not her masts altogether, in the squall.”

“Not so sure of that,” I heard old Grampus mutter as he passed me. “I saw her all a-taunto, running away from us in fine style when we were first caught. She’s given us the go-by, or I’m no seaman.”

All night we ran on, looking out for the chase, and when daylight broke and a hundred eager eyes were glancing round the horizon she was nowhere to be seen. To pursue her farther would have been vain, besides leading us too far from our cruising-ground and risking the main object we had in view.

Returning to our station on the 28th we took two vessels laden with wood, which we gave up as before. On the 4th of July we saw a brig in a calm, about four miles from us. The signal was made for all the boats of the squadron, manned and armed, to be ready to attack her. Lieutenant Moss, of the Juno, had the command of the expedition. Making sure of an easy victory, away we pulled towards the stranger over the smooth shining ocean.

The brig we saw, as we drew near, was heavily armed; her colours were flying, and she seemed prepared not to

strike without a blow. As soon as we drew within range of her guns she opened her fire on us. This, of course, only expedited our movements, and we dashed on towards her as fast as the oars could send the boats through the water. The brig's crew founded their hopes of escape probably on the chance of a breeze springing up, of which there were already some signs, while our aim was to get on board before the wind filled her sails. The rebels fought with desperation, and never relaxed their fire till we were alongside. Two or three of our men had been struck. One lost the side of his face by a round-shot which shaved him more cleanly than he would have wished, and spoilt his beauty for life. With loud shouts and cries our men leaped on board, and in two minutes the brig was ours. She mounted ten carriage guns and twelve swivels, was laden with rum and sugar, and was bound for Boston.

On the 5th we ran a brig on shore after a chase of some hours. From her size and pertinacity in endeavouring to escape, we from the first suspected that her cargo was of value. No sooner had she struck than the squadron hove-to and the boats were ordered to pull in to re-take her. I on this occasion remained on board. We were expecting to see the boats haul off the vessel, when, just as they drew near, a large body of troops were perceived hurrying down to the shore. The soldiers at once began firing away at the advancing boats, but notwithstanding they pulled alongside, drove the crew below, and took possession. We saw them make a gallant effort to tow off the vessel, but in three or four minutes, so heavy became the fire, they were compelled to relinquish the attempt. When they reached the ship we found that three men had been wounded, but happily none were killed.

"A tremendous loss we have had!" exclaimed Mr Heron, who commanded the expedition, with a look of disgust. "She is worth twenty thousand pounds at least, if not much more. It is not every day the rebels have a vessel like her to give us."

"We must keep a sharp look-out after her, and if she gets off, try to get hold of her another day," said Mr Willis.

In the evening we were directed to stand close in shore to cannonade and endeavour to destroy her, but scarcely had we opened our fire when a gale of wind sprung up, and we were compelled for our own safety to run to sea. We, however, did not yet give up all hopes of capturing her. A few days afterwards, indeed, she fell into our hands, but we were not a little disappointed to find that the rebels had in the meantime removed the greater portion of her cargo.

Nothing for some days occurred to break the monotony of our existence except innumerable unsuccessful chases which sorely tried our first lieutenant's temper, and the capture of a prodigious quantity of fish. So abundant was the supply that it was the business of the mate of the dog-watch to see that what were not eaten were thrown overboard every night, to prevent the people from keeping them too long. At length I was engaged in an expedition with more serious results than had for some time occurred.

On the 14th we rounded the end of that narrow neck of land known by the name of Cape Cod, and which, circling round like an arm with its elbow bent, forms a wide and extensive bay. We stood along the eastern shore, eagerly looking into every nook and inlet in which a craft could take shelter. As we got abreast of Cape Cod Harbour we saw three vessels at anchor there—a brig, a schooner, and a sloop. Mr Willis reported them to the captain.

"We'll stand in and overhaul them, then," was the reply, and the ship's course was altered accordingly.

No sooner were we perceived by the three vessels than they slipped their cables and made sail in the hopes of escaping. They steered across to the western shore, either on the chance of finding shelter in some creek, or being able to beat out of the bay, and thus get to windward of us.

"We shall bag the fellows this time at all events," said Mr Heron, rubbing his hands as we were fast over-hauling the chases.

They did not, however, give in, trusting to a flaw of wind or something else turning up in their favour. The Amazon and Juno, however, by standing more to the northward soon cut off all chance of escape. They were running for the harbour of Truro, but before they could get there we drove them all three on shore at some distance from each other. A loud shout from our crews proclaimed the result of the chase. The boatswain's shrill whistle sounding along the decks was followed by the order for all the boats to be manned and armed and sent in to get off the vessels. I had charge of a cutter with Grampus and Tom, and little Harry Sumner accompanied me. Our first aim was the brig. We pulled towards her in good order as fast as we well could. It was not till we were close alongside that the enemy showed themselves to defend her. We took no notice of them, though they opened a warmish fire of musketry on us, but, boarding together, got out hawsers, and while some of the boats went ahead to tow her out the crews of the others remained on the deck and kept the enemy at bay. Thus in a few minutes we got her triumphantly afloat, and while she was being towed out from the shore I was sent in my boat to set fire to the sloop which lay nearly a mile from the other vessels. I thought that as the attention of the enemy was engaged with the brig the work would be easy, and pulled boldly towards her. We had got within musket range when up started three fellows from behind the bulwarks and let fly at us. Their aim was good, for each of their shots struck the boat, though happily no one was hit. This salute, however, did not stop our progress.

"Give way, my lads, give way!" I shouted. "We will soon punish them for their audacity."

They fired several times after this, but without doing us any damage. I was surprised at their boldness in still remaining on board, but on our firing the swivel we had in our bows, accompanied by a round of musketry, they quickly jumped out of sight. As, however, we were close alongside, and just about to hook on to her chains, the mystery was solved by the unwelcome apparition of two or three hundred men, with levelled fire-arms, who appeared mounting a line of sand-banks close to the water, and behind which they had till now remained concealed. The first discharge with which they saluted us knocked over two of my men, and the next wounded two more. In addition to the musketry two pieces of cannon were brought to bear on us, which, unfortunately for us, were very well served. Seeing this, and believing that I and all my people must be killed if we attempted to escape, I turned the boat's head round and sang out for quarter, and all the disagreeables of a long imprisonment rose up before me. So exasperated,

however, were the people on shore that they paid no attention to my request. Sumner had a white handkerchief, and, tying it to a stretcher, waved it above our heads. It was, however, all in vain. The enemy seemed resolved on our destruction.

“Harry, my boy,” said I, “there is no help for it. If I am hit, do your best to carry the boat out. Now give way, my lads! If we can but hold on a little we shall soon be clear.”

Even the wounded men pulled away with all their might except one who was too much hurt to handle an oar. I took his place and put Harry at the helm. The shot fell thick as hail around us, the enemy shouting and shrieking at us like demons. Still we held on. Now another of my men was hit. Suddenly I saw little Harry turn pale. He sat upright as before, but his compressed lips and an uneasy look about the eyes made me fear he was hit.

“Are you hurt, Sumner?” I asked.

“I think so,” he answered; “but never mind, it is nothing, I am sure.”

I was sure that he was hurt, however, very much, and this made me feel more savage against our enemies than anything that had occurred for a long time, but there was no time to stop and examine his wound. I had scarcely a man now left unhurt—most of them seriously so. Two poor fellows let the oars drop from their hands, and sank down in the bottom of the boat. Tom was one of them. Grampus, indeed, was the only man unhurt. He seemed to bear a charmed life, for he had run in his time more risks than any of us without receiving a wound. I was in despair, for I every instant expected to feel a bullet enter my body, and that after all we should fall into the hands of the enemy. The boat, too, was almost knocked to pieces, and it seemed a wonder that she could still swim. The wind, fortunately, was blowing strong off the land.

“We must try and get the foresail hoisted, Grampus,” said I. “If we can, we may do yet.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” he answered, stepping forward over the prostrate bodies of our shipmates to execute the order.

Assisted by two of the men the least hurt, we got the mast stepped.

“Now up with the sail, my men!” I sang out.

At length it was hoisted, though the moment the enemy saw what we were about they seemed to redouble their efforts to destroy us. I breathed more freely as I got the sheet aft, and saw the canvas swelling with the breeze; but even then I knew that a shot might carry away our mast or halliards, or, indeed, send us all to the bottom. Just as I had got all to rights, and was ready to take the helm, poor little Harry, overcome with pain and the loss of blood, sank down by my side. I placed him carefully in the stern-sheets, and Tom Rockets, though badly wounded himself, crawled aft and endeavoured to examine his wound and to staunch the blood which flowed copiously from his side. The bullets began now to fall less thickly about us than before—a sign that we were increasing our distance from the shore. Had the enemy possessed a boat they might have taken us without difficulty, but, fortunately, they had none. Indeed, I have no doubt that their aim was to destroy us completely, as a punishment on us for our attempt to burn their vessel. In spite of the shots which still fell around us, we kept steadily on our course, while occasionally I turned an uneasy glance over my shoulder to see how far we had got from the enemy. At length scarcely a shot reached us; a gentle thud every now and then showing us that those which did so had almost lost their power. I was able now to pay more attention to my young companion. I asked him how he did.

“I am afraid that I am more hurt than I at first fancied,” he replied. “If I die, you will write to my mother, and tell her all about me, will you, Hurry?”

“Oh, don’t talk of dying, my good boy,” I answered, though I felt a choking sensation in my throat as I spoke. “We shall soon be on board, and then you will be properly cared for, and will feel more easy.”

“Oh, I do not complain,” said he, “still, I have an idea that I am mortally wounded. Perhaps it is only fancy, you know, and I am not afraid.”

“That’s right, be a brave boy, and keep up your spirits. You’ve many more years to live, and will be an admiral one of these days, I hope,” said I, though my hopes were far less sanguine than my words. “See, scarcely any of the shots reach us; we shall soon be out of the enemy’s fire.”

He looked up in my face and smiled. One of the wounded men groaned. Harry heard the poor fellow. A look of intense pain passed over his countenance.

“Oh, I wish that we could get to the doctor! Let him look to that poor man before me; I am sure he wants him most. Who is it?”

I told him, “Tom Ogle.”

“Ah, Tom Ogle,” said he. “Don’t give way, my man. We were doing our duty, and there’s One aloft who’ll not forget us if we trust in Him.”

“Bless you for those words, Mr Sumner,” Tom Ogle gasped out between the paroxysms of his pain; “they do a poor fellow’s heart good.”

All this time we were running off the land, with a strong fair breeze, every moment the enemy’s shot falling farther and farther astern. My great fear now was that some of my men would bleed to death before they could receive surgical help. However, they had bound up each other’s wounds in the best way they could. From the enemy we at all events were safe. I did my utmost to keep up the spirits of my men. I was thereby performing, I knew, half the

doctor's work. I had been eagerly looking out in the offing for our squadron. To my intense satisfaction I now made out a sail standing towards us from the northward. I pointed her out to Grampus.

"She's the 'Orpheus,' sir. I knows the look of them taw'sels too well to be deceived," he answered, after watching her for a few moments.

"You're right, Grampus. It's her without doubt," said I. "Hurrah, my lads! We'll soon be snug on board the old barkie."

We neared the ship rapidly. Many eager faces were looking out at us as we got alongside. Poor little Harry Sumner first claimed my attention. I stooped down to lift him up, that he might be handed on deck. His cheeks were blanched, his eyes were closed.

"Oh, dear, oh dear! is the child dead?" exclaimed old Grampus, as he took him from me.

"I fear so," I answered with a sad heart. "Let the doctor look to him at once."

One after the other the wounded men were handed up.

"This is sad work, Mr Hurry," said Captain Hudson, as I went to report myself on the quarter-deck. I told him how it happened.

"We must send in again, though, and punish the rascals," said he.

Notice was forthwith given that another attempt was to be made to get off the brig. Plenty of volunteers came forward; indeed, they are never wanting when any hazardous work is in hand. The way we had been treated had excited great indignation against the enemy among our people. Job Samson, our old boatswain, volunteered to head the expedition. He had an idea that what others failed to do he could always find out some mode of accomplishing, and, to do him justice, he was ever ready to attempt to carry out his plans in spite of every risk, though he did not invariably succeed. He soon had his expedition ready. We heartily wished him success as he pulled in towards the shore. The Amazon had in the meantime come up, and as she was in-shore of us and drew less water, she was ordered to stand in and cover the attack. We eagerly, with our glasses, watched the proceedings. We could see the enemy, in great numbers, mustering on shore. Probably they did not expect that the Amazon's guns were going to take part in the fray. She stood in as close as she could venture, and then opened her fire: but the enemy, nothing daunted, returned it manfully from an earth battery, which had been thrown up near the brig. In the meantime, in the face of this fire, old Samson advanced boldly to the attack; but round-shot and musket-balls are stubborn things to contend against, and the boatswain seeing, however easy it might be theoretically to capture the brig, that practically, if he attempted it, he should lose the boat with himself and every man in her, very wisely resolved to return on board, and wait for another opportunity of signalising himself. We afterwards found that, in this instance, the grapes really were sour, as the sloop and schooner had taken in the most valuable part of the brig's cargo, and that she had remaining on board only ninety tons of salt. We made several attempts during the afternoon to cut out these vessels, but so well guarded were they from the shore by riflemen and flying artillery, that after all our exertions we were compelled to abandon the attempt. Happily, however, no one was hit except those who had been wounded in my boat. In the evening, before turning in, I went round to see how the poor fellows were getting on. They all received me cheerfully.

"We're better off, sir, than if we had been boxed up in a Yankee prison, even though as how we've got some eyelet holes through us, d'ye see?" said Bob Nodder, who was the most severely wounded of any of the party. He observed that I was grieved to see the sufferings they were enduring.

"It could not be helped, Mr Hurry. You did your best for us, and if you had not kept cool, sir, we might every one of us have been riddled with rifle-bullets."

I felt still greater pain when I went to the side of little Harry Sumner's cot. He was in the officers' sick-bay, and the doctor had done his best to make him comfortable. He was slumbering, so I did not speak. I stood for some minutes watching his youthful countenance. It was almost feminine in its beauty—so clear, so fair, so free from the effects of the evil passions which distort and disfigure so often the features of those of older years. His long light-brown hair had fallen off his clear broad forehead, and his lips were parted, and moved slightly, as if he were speaking to himself. A sickly gleam of light from the ship's lanthorn, which hung from a beam above, fell on his countenance, and gave it a hue so pallid that I thought the shades of death were fast gathering over him. My heart sank within me. Were his anticipations, then, of evil so soon to be realised? Of evil? Would it, indeed, be an evil to him, poor child, to be removed from all the temptations to vice, from the scenes of violence and wrong with which he was surrounded? I felt it would not, and still I could not bear the thought of losing him; and there was another, far, far away, who would mourn him still more—his mother. Who would have the courage to tell her that she would see her boy no more? I trusted that I might not have the painful task to perform. I prayed earnestly, for his widowed mother's sake, that he might recover; that he might go through his fiery trials in the world unscathed; that he might withstand the world, the flesh, and the devil, and, through the merits of our Master, attain eternal happiness in the end. The surgeon entered the sick-bay. I signed to him that the boy was sleeping.

"What do you think of his case, doctor?" said I with an anxious face. "Will he recover?"

"If fever does not set in he'll do," answered the medico. "McCallum will keep a constant watch on him during the night. He'll call me if any change takes place. Ye need not fash yourself, Hurry; the boy is in no danger, I tell you."

These words consoled me. Still I was not perfectly satisfied. The heart of a sailor, far removed as he is from the social influences of the shore, looks out for something on which to set its more tender affections.

I felt for that lone boy as if he had been a young brother or sister. My feelings were, I dare say, shared by many of my

messmates. We most of us, if not cast originally in the same mould, had by circumstances become shaped very much alike as to the inner man; the same prejudices, the same affections, the same passions, the same ideas of honour, and I will say the same tender feelings and generous impulses, were shared by most of us alike. But I was speaking of Harry Sumner. Several times during my watch below I turned out to see how he was getting on. McCallum reported favourably of him; so, tolerably contented, I went back to my hammock and slept soundly.

Chapter Eight.

Orpheus in Cape Cod harbour.—Sent on shore with flag of truce.—Polite reception.—Camp attacked.—A magistrate offers himself as a hostage.—Our captain's magnanimity.—My dying messmate.—At sea.—Thirty rebel vessels captured.—Doubt whether this will induce the colonists to return to their allegiance.

Varied are the changes of a seaman's life—I found them so, at all events. An episode in my history was about to occur, of which I little dreamed.

After the brush I have described with the enemy's batteries, the squadron came to all anchor. On the evening, however, of the 15th of June, the Orpheus was ordered to get under weigh, and proceed to Cape Cod harbour.

When the sun arose in the morning, the inhabitants of the town, to their no small dismay, found us anchored within gun-shot of their houses. I was just dressed when Captain Hudson sent for me.

"Mr Hurry," said he, "you are to go on shore with a flag of truce. Inquire for the mayor or chief magistrate, or authorities of some sort. Tell them that we are in want of water and refreshments of various sorts, that we are perfectly ready to pay for everything we have, and then politely inform them that we are resolved, at all events, to have what we require; and that if they decline supplying us, or in any way molest us, we will knock their town about their ears and take what we want by force."

I signified that I clearly understood my orders, and, quaffing a cup of a villainous compound called tea, and putting a piece of biscuit into my pocket, I tumbled hurriedly into my boat and shoved off. It took me about twenty minutes to reach the landing-place before the town, whence the boat had been observed approaching, and the very people I was in search of were ready to receive me. The principal magistrate was a very dignified old gentleman, with silver buckles on his shoes, velvet small-clothes, a three-cornered hat on his head, and a silver-mounted sword by his side. I did not expect to encounter such a personage in so out-of-the-way and rough-and-ready sort of a place.

"May I ask, sir, to what cause we are indebted for the honour of a visit from the King of England's ships?" said he, bowing low.

I thought that there was more of mock humility than of respect in his manner, though. I delivered the message the captain had given me.

"Certainly, sir, certainly," replied my friend, smiling: "the arguments you use are incontrovertible under our present circumstances. I doubt not that they will make all the inhabitants of this place true and faithful servants of King George."

I was rather amused than offended with his manner, and was pleased that I had to deal with a gentleman instead of a lout.

"Do not let us weigh the force of the arguments, sir," I replied. "I shall be perfectly satisfied if I have your word that you will not allow any attempt to be made to molest our watering party, and will collect for us any provisions we require."

I gave him a list the purser had supplied me with.

"All your demands shall be complied with. You have my word for it, sir," said he, bowing as before.

This matter being settled, I pulled back to the ship. The watering place was some little way from the town. The signal was made for the boats to take the watering party on shore. It was considered necessary at the same time, as a precautionary measure, to send a strong body of men on shore to protect the others, and, accordingly, a hundred marines and two hundred seamen from the three ships were told off for that purpose. We certainly had rather a warlike than a peaceable aspect as the squadron of boats made for the shore.

We were met, as we landed, by our friend the mayor with a flag of truce. He came to inquire why we approached in so warlike a guise. Mr Willis, who commanded the party, replied that, while we did not wish to injure others, we always liked to be in a position to take care of ourselves. Satisfied with this answer the mayor took his departure. A wood was before us. A succession of sandy hummocks were between it and the shore. Among them we made our bivouac. The spring from which we were to fill our casks was on the borders of the wood.

According to rule, as we were in an enemy's country, we placed the usual lines of sentries, while the seamen, as rapidly as they could, filled the casks and rolled them down to the boats. At night we were compelled to knock off work, so we lighted our camp-fires and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow. Delisle, Drew, Nicholas and some midshipmen of the other ships were seated with me on the ground, in the neighbourhood of a fire, more that we might have its light than its warmth, and superintend the cooking of some steaks which we had resolved to have for supper. Tom Rockets was acting under our orders, and boiling the kettle to brew some punch. We were a very jolly party. Several of us had not met since we used to assemble on board my prize at New York in the winter, and we had had a good deal of knocking about since then. Many a tale was told, and many a jovial song

and not a few sentimental ditties were sung, echoed by the seamen who sat grouped about. Thus hour after hour passed by, and we felt no inclination to lie down. I dare say we looked very picturesque as the light of the fires fell on us: the seamen scattered about in every easy attitude; the piled arms of the marines; the men themselves so different to the sailors; the bayonets of the sentries in the distance; the yellow sand-hills; the sea, calm and solemn, flashing every now and then with phosphorescent light; and then overhead the dark mysterious vault of heaven, studded with stars innumerable, all speaking of the might, the majesty, the power unbounded of the Creator. One by one my messmates dropped off to sleep. I lay on my back for some time contemplating the magnificent spectacle. I had often gazed on the stars before. I had taken the altitudes of many; I had measured the distance of one from the other; I had steered my course by them over the ocean; but then I had looked on them only as useful appendages to our globe. Now, as I gazed, they seemed to float—beauteous globes in the pure ether, altogether independent of the puny world we call our own. How far more pure and brilliant did they appear than in the misty clime of old England! I began to envy the Americans the advantage they possess over us.

My meditations were rudely and suddenly interrupted by the sharp rattle of musketry, and a quick succession of reports in return. Every man in an instant was on his feet. All flew to their arms and hurried to the front. The rattle of musketry increased, and the bullets came flying about our ears, while our advanced sentries retreated rapidly in on the main body—I might have said they ran as fast as their heels could carry them—shouting out that the enemy in strong force were pressing hard upon us. Mr Willis formed the marines in the centre, with the blue-jackets as flanking parties in readiness to receive the enemy. We had not long to wait before their dark forms in dense masses could be seen climbing over the sand-hills, threatening not only our front, but both our flanks.

“We are outmatched: I suspect we have been outwitted by the rascals,” said Delisle, who stood near me; “I’ll never trust these rebels again.”

“I cannot make it out,” I answered; “I thought we could have placed perfect confidence in the word of that old gentleman I met in the morning.”

We had, however, no time to discuss the matter; for every moment the fire grew heavier, and we saw that we were far outnumbered by the enemy. Now, under other circumstances, this might have been a matter of little moment, for, had we advanced, we might have gained an easy victory; but we at present had nothing to gain by fighting, and should we have found ourselves caught in a trap, and been compelled to lay down our arms, we knew that our loss would be very seriously felt by the remainder of our ships’ companies. We therefore, by as heavy fire as we could maintain, kept the enemy at bay, and retreated in good order to our boats, vowing vengeance against them for the treachery of which we supposed they had been guilty. Strange as it may seem, very few of our men were hurt, and none were killed. The rebels, as is generally the case with unpractised troops, had fired high, so that most of their shot had gone over our heads. We embarked with all our casks, and quickly got on board our ships, expecting next morning to have the satisfaction of battering away at the town till not a brick should stand to afford shelter to the treacherous inhabitants.

My first inquiry on getting on board was for Harry Sumner. He had been going on well, but had frequently asked to see me. Thinking he might be awake, I went to the side of his cot. He, however, was sleeping. He looked very pale and thin. A few hours of suffering had altered him much. I was going away when I heard him whisper my own name. “See, mother dear, be kind to him; and you, Julia, will love him, for he was kind to brother Harry. You’ll not turn him away when I am gone—gone on a long, long voyage, you know. You’ll love him for my sake, both of you. He’ll talk to you sometimes about Harry. There, there, mother dear, don’t weep; we’ll meet again, you know;—yes, yes, after my long voyage. Don’t cry, Julia dear, don’t now—don’t?”

Thus he went on. I felt ready to cry myself, I know. I had not heard him speak of his little sister—I could easily guess the reason—he would run the risk of having her name profaned by careless lips. At length he was silent. I slipped away. Poor little fellow! in spite of what the doctor said, I guessed that he at all events thought himself dying. I trusted that he might be mistaken. With a heavy heart, though, I left him and turned into my hammock, where in a very few minutes I was sound asleep.

The word had already been passed along the decks to prepare for action, and we fully expected that in a few minutes the fun would begin, when a boat was seen coming off from the shore with a flag of truce. It seemed a matter of doubt whether it should be received after the way we had been treated by the rebels; but Captain Hudson resolved that he would hear what they had to say for themselves before he proceeded to extremities. The old gentleman with whom I had spoken the day before, and several substantial-looking personages were in the boat. They evidently felt themselves in no trifling difficulty, and saw that it would require the management of the most important people in the place to save the town. Captain Hudson at first, wishing to give them a fright, refused to listen to any of their explanations.

“A truce had been agreed on, and while we were acting with perfect good faith and peaceableness, your people most unjustifiably attempted to destroy us. I give you half an hour to remove the women and children, and then expect the consequences of your treachery,” said he, drawing his sword-belt tighter round his waist, and turning on his heel with a look of scorn.

“Hear me, sir,” said the old gentleman, stepping forward. “We had, on my honour, nothing whatever to do with the outrage of which you complain. The people who attacked you were those whose vessels you have so wantonly destroyed. They came to revenge themselves. When they found that we had pledged ourselves to preserve the peace they returned quietly homewards. If you wish to complete the watering of your ships we will in no way molest you, and we will supply you with all the provisions you require.”

“So you said before,” replied Captain Hudson. “How can I depend on the fulfilment of your agreement?”

“I for one, and I dare say others will be ready to remain in your hands as hostages till our agreement is fulfilled,”

answered the old gentleman.

Captain Hudson, who was generous as he was brave, would not listen to this proposal; but, stretching out his hand, he answered frankly, “No, no, sir; I will not put you or your friends to this inconvenience. I fully trust to your word. Go on shore, and keep your combatively-inclined countrymen from attacking us, unless they want to have your town burnt, and by the evening we shall probably have relieved you of our company.”

I never saw people’s faces brighten up more rapidly than did those of our rebel visitors when they heard these words. It was like the clearing away of a thunder-cloud from the sky in summer. They were ready to promise all sorts of things, and to supply us with all we desired; and, to do them justice, they amply fulfilled their word. We completed our water, got an abundant supply of fresh provisions, and sailed again that evening on our cruise.

On the 21st of July we took a schooner from Bilboa to Boston with cordage and canvas, and on the 22nd re-took a brig from Quebec to London in ballast; on which day the Amazon parted company and sailed with the prizes for New York.

On the 24th we took a schooner from Boston to the West Indies with fish and lumber; on the 25th a brig from Martinique with rum and molasses; on the 26th a schooner from Boston to the West Indies with lumber, and on the same day chased a large ship close into Boston light-house; but she effected her escape into the harbour.

On the 31st the Amazon rejoined us, and informed us that she had on her passage recaptured a large ship from Jamaica to London with rum and sugar, which had been made prize of by the rebels, and that she had sent her into Halifax.

On the 1st of August, at sunrise, a schooner was reported in sight. We accordingly made sail in chase; but she seemed in no ways inclined to be captured, and, setting every stitch of canvas she could carry, she began to walk through the water at a great rate. We soon saw that we should have to put our best leg foremost to come up with her. This to the utmost of our power we did.

I have already described many chases, so I will not enter into particulars. Hour after hour passed, and we seemed to be no nearer to her; still we had not lost ground, and, from her pertinacity in endeavouring to get away from us, we of course fancied that she was the more worth having. The longest day must have an end, and so had this. At its termination, when night was coming on, we were very little nearer the chase than at daybreak. Still we hoped that a shift of wind might enable us to get up with her, or that a calm might come on and allow us to reach her with our boats. But neither one thing nor the other occurred. Night came down upon us, and not the sharpest pair of eyes on board could pierce through the dark mantle which shrouded her. Some thought they saw her stealing off in one direction; others declared they saw her steering an opposite course. The result was that when morning broke, our expected prize had escaped us, and we were compelled to stand back and rejoin our consorts, like a dog with his tail between his legs. We had hopes, however, of being able in some degree to indemnify ourselves for our loss, when, on the 2nd of August, about two hours before daylight, the shadowy outline of a ship was seen dead to leeward between us and the land, the wind being somewhere from the south-west. Now she was there, ghostlike and indistinct, a spirit gliding over the face of the waters; now as I looked she had disappeared and I could scarcely believe that I had seen her.

“Can you make her out?” said I to Grampus, who was a quarter-master in my watch. The old man hollowed his hands round his eyes and took a long steady gaze into the darkness ahead.

“I did see her just a few minutes afor’ you spoke to me, sir, but smash my timbers if I sees her now!” he exclaimed, suiting the action to the word. “Where is she gone to?”

“She has altered her course or a bank of mist is floating by between us,” I suggested.

“That’s it, sir,” said he; “I wouldn’t be surprised but what she’d heave in sight again afor’ long, except she’s one of those craft one hears talk of, aboard of whom there’s no living man with flesh and blood to work them. If so be she is, I’d rather not fall in with her.”

I laughed. “No fear of that,” said I; “she has been reported to the captain, and we shall be making all sail in chase presently. We shall then soon find out what she’s made of.”

“Much as we did the schooner two days ago,” muttered Grampus, as I left him. “I don’t know what’s come over the ship that she don’t walk along faster.”

The stranger had been reported to the captain, who very soon came on deck, when all sail was packed on the ship in chase. The stranger, for some time, did not appear to be aware of our vicinity; indeed, we could frequently scarcely make her out through the darkness. At length, however, she discovered that an ugly customer was near her, and lost no time in setting every stitch of canvas she could carry, and running directly off before the wind. By this time we had got near enough to see that she was a ship, and of considerable size.

“That craft carries a good many hands, I suspect, by the smart way in which she made sail,” I heard Mr Willis observe to the captain. “I should not be surprised if she proves a privateer, or so-called ship of war belonging to the rebel government. To my mind, we shall do well to treat all the rascals we find on board such craft as pirates, and trice them up to their own yard-arms.”

“You forget, Mr Willis, that two can play at that game,” answered the captain. “The rebels have pretty well shown that they are in earnest, and have established a right to respect at all events. I don’t think hanging them will bring them to reason. Let us treat them as open and gallant enemies, and if we cannot make them fellow-subjects, at all events we may induce them to become some day our friends again. I confess to you I am sick of this sort of warfare.

We must do our duty, and take, sink, and destroy all the craft belonging to the misguided people we find afloat, but there is neither honour nor glory to be obtained by the work, and as for the profit, I would rather be without it. Bah! I'm sick of such fratricidal work."

"I can't say that I see things quite in the light that you do, sir," said the first lieutenant. "The British Government make laws, and it is the duty of British people to obey them; and if they don't, it's our business just now to force them to it."

"Your logic is unanswerable, Willis," replied Captain Hudson, turning away with a sigh. "There can be no doubt what our duty is, however painful it may prove."

I believe that many officers thought and felt like my gallant and kind-hearted captain, and yet not a more loyal man, or a more faithful subject of his sovereign, ever stepped the deck of a ship of war.

As the first gleam of day appeared from beneath a dark canopy of clouds, and shone across the leaden water, its light fell on the royals and topgallant sails of a large ship, with studden sails alow and aloft, running before the wind directly for the American coast. Smoothly as she glided on, and rapidly as she ran through the water, in all the pride of symmetrical beauty, she was in a very critical position. As I looked at her I bethought me she presented no inapt simile to a careless youth rushing over the sea of life regardless of all the dangers which surround him, and with the pit of destruction yawning before him. Haul her wind and fight us she dared not, for we should have blown her speedily out of the water; no friendly port that she could possibly make was under her lee. The only hope, therefore, her crew could have had of escaping was to run the ship on shore and to abandon her. This it was our object to prevent them doing. The usual devices for increasing our speed were resorted to. Every spar that could carry a sail was rigged, while the canvas almost swept the water on either side of us, but all to little purpose, it seemed. If we increased our speed, so did the chase, and not an inch was gained. As the day grew on, the breeze freshened, and at noon some on board asserted that we had begun to overhaul her. We were all of us on deck as often as we could, for she afforded far more subject of interest than the ordinary lumber-laden merchant craft it was our usual lot to chase. The clouds which had obscured the sky at sunrise rolled gradually away; the sun shone down on the blue ocean with undimmed splendour, glittering on the long lines of foam which the two ships formed as they clove their way through it.

I was, among others, watching the chase when McCallum came up to me.

"Sumner wants to see you, Hurry," said he; "I think a little talk with you will do him good. He is very low, left so many hours by himself, and he does not sleep much."

Our young messmate had been progressing favourably, according to the doctor's report, since he was wounded, but he was nervous and fanciful, poor little fellow! and wanted more tender nursing than the rough, albeit kind-hearted, treatment he could obtain on board. Captain Hudson would gladly have landed him, could he have found any friends on shore willing to take charge of him; but as this was impossible, all circumstances would allow was done to make him comfortable. I sat myself down on a stool by the side of his cot, and told him all that was going forward on deck.

"I wish that I could be about and doing my duty again," said he; "I'm weary of being boxed up here below."

"I should be glad if you could get sent home, and have your mother and sister to nurse you till you are strong and well."

"Who told you that I had a sister?" he asked quickly.

"You did, surely, Harry," I answered; "how else should I have known it?"

"Oh, I never spoke about her, I'm sure!" said he earnestly. "She is such a little angel, Hurry, that I could not bear to have her name uttered by any of our fellows in the way they speak of each other's sisters and female friends."

"Trust me, indeed, I will never mention her," I answered, appreciating his delicacy, though I felt a strong desire to see the little girl he praised so highly. I did not reflect that her portrait was painted by a loving brother. I got him to talk more about her, and when his heart was opened he seemed never tired of the theme. He told me how she was two or three years older than himself; how she had watched over him and instructed him in all that was good, and how bitterly she grieved at his going away to sea, and much did he blame himself for having often appeared ungrateful for her love and affection. Often in a night-watch did my thoughts recur to Julia Sumner. It was a midshipman's fancy, and perhaps a folly, but it was very excusable, I cannot help thinking even at the present time.

Our conversation was interrupted by the report of one of our bow-chasers: I sprang on deck. We had got the chase within range of our guns, and we were not likely to let them remain inactive. Still she stood on; not a trace nor a sheet did she slack; and as our gunnery was not first-rate it must be owned, we could not as yet hope to do her much damage.

"We have gained on her considerably since you went below," said Delisle, whose glass was fixed on the chase, watching the effect of our shot. "In another hour, if the wind holds, we shall get her well under our guns, and then she'll have very little more to say for herself."

"Land ahead!" shouted the look-out from aloft. I with others went to the mast-head to ascertain its distance. We judged it to be the land about Cape Cod, some fifteen miles or so away. It would take us a couple of hours to get up with it. Evening, however, was now coming on, and it would be dark before we could hope to reach it. We watched the chase more anxiously than ever; the prospect of bringing her to before she should reach the shore was every instant growing less. Those who manned her were no cowards. As we were watching her, her stern-ports opened, and a couple of shots came hissing by us. It was a desperate chance. Her object was to cripple us, and if she could do so,

perhaps she hoped to haul her wind, and, favoured by the darkness, to creep away from between us and the shore. We fired our bow-chasers as often as we could in return, and more than one shot told with damaging effect. Still every injury was repaired as soon as received. The land, seen under the glow of the setting sun, was growing more and more distinct, and by the time the shades of evening came over us we were near enough to distinguish it and the chase, now in dangerous proximity to its sands.

The chase had now lasted fifteen hours—another hour would decide the point. It soon passed. It was a moment of intense interest. Every man was at his station. Hands were in the chains with the lead. We were nearer the coast than under other circumstances we would willingly have been. The chase stood on with everything set. One felt it a grievous pity that so beautiful a fabric should be doomed to destruction. Her striking would give us time to haul off. On she glided, her symmetry unimpaired. In another moment her tall masts rocked to and fro; a loud crashing and tearing, even at that distance, reached our ears.

“Down with the helm!” shouted Captain Hudson. “Haul aft the starboard sheets! Flatten in the starboard braces! Give her the starboard broadside!”

These and other orders to bring the ship on a wind followed in quick succession amid the roar of our guns, which sent the shot crashing into the unfortunate chase. As soon as the ship was put about she stood back on the other tack, pouring in a second and still more destructive broadside. Again the ship was put about; once more the starboard broadside was loaded, and as we came abreast of the stranded chase, fired into her with deadly effect.

“Boats away!” was now the order. The men, with cutlasses by their sides and pistols in their belts, sprang into them. Mr Willis led the expedition: not a moment was to be lost. The stranger must be boarded before the crew could recover from the effects of our broadsides, or people would come off from the shore to defend her. She had fallen almost broadside on to the beach, and on the other side the sea was washing over her. We pulled round, and boarded under her counter, cutlass in hand. A slight resistance only was made by her captain and officers and some of the crew. A few were cut down, and the rest retreated forward, and escaped on shore by a warp, which had previously been carried there, no one attempting to stop them. As with lanterns in our hands, we wandered over the ship, everywhere signs were visible of the cruel effect of our broadsides. In the cabin lay an officer and two men. We thought they were wounded. We threw the light on their countenances; they had been dragged there by their shipmates to be out of the way, probably, and had died as they lay. Poor fellows! they had fought their last fight—they were dead. Not a thing was found on board. A glance showed Mr Willis that it would be impossible to get the ship off, so he ordered us to set fire to her in every direction. Having done so, and left the dead bodies to be consumed in a not ignoble funeral pile, we hurried to the boats. We had been taught by a former catastrophe not to delay too long. As we pulled away, the flames, climbing up the masts and spars; to which the canvas still hung, formed a magnificent pyramid of fire, which grew and grew in height till it seemed to reach the very skies. It was a fine spectacle, but a finer was to come. She was still burning when we got back to our ship, and the boats were hoisted in. I watched the conflagration from the deck. The fire threw a ruddy glare over the sand-hills and the dark woods beyond, and by its light we could see people watching, undoubtedly with bitter hearts, the destruction of their property. Without a moment’s warning, while the conflagration was at its height, the whole mass of flame seemed to be lifted together like a huge fire-work—then it spread far and wide, forming a fiery canopy of mushroom shape, and breaking into a thousand fragments, came hissing down into the surrounding ocean, while a few burning embers alone remained to mark the spot where the tall ship had lately been—a pretty night’s work for the officers and crew of his Majesty’s ship Orpheus. I don’t know that the thought of what we had been about disturbed the rest of any of those who enjoyed the luxury of turning into their hammocks. The next morning a boat with a flag of truce was sent on shore to learn particulars of the vessel we had destroyed. A number of persons were collected in the neighbourhood of the wreck, and, as may be supposed, they did not look very affectionately at us; but flags of truce were always respected, in spite of the animosity which was daily increasing between the belligerents, and an officer stepped forward to know what we wanted.

We told him our errand. “Tell your captain,” said he, “that he has done good service to his government, and saved the capture of many a rich merchantman, if I mistake not. The ship you have destroyed was the ‘Wilks’ privateer, mounting twenty guns—six-pounders—commanded by as brave a man as ever stepped, Captain John Williams, and bound into the English channel on a six-months’ cruise. If it is any satisfaction to you, you may say that she was only off the stocks five weeks. There’s the captain; he’ll never break biscuit more, nor will several of our people who were drowned coming on shore. There’s all that remains of poor Captain Williams.”

He spoke with bitterness, and, lifting a flag, exposed the form of a man in an officer’s uniform. He had been wounded, it appeared, by one of our broadsides, and carried on shore by his crew. I was not sorry, having received the information we were ordered to obtain, to get away from the scene of the catastrophe. This was our finishing stroke in the Bay of Fundy. During our cruise there it appeared by the log-book that we had seen ninety rebel vessels of various descriptions, of which we had either taken or destroyed thirty-three sail—a highly satisfactory amount of mischief to have committed in so short a time—but it had no effect in making the Americans loyal, or increasing their love for their British brethren.

Chapter Nine.

Recommended to Sir Peter Parker.—Join Chatham with Grampus and Tom Rockets—My messmate O’Driscoll.—Appointed to command Pigot tender.—Cruise with O’Driscoll.—Chase and capture a schooner.—Find two ladies on board.—New style of existence.—Discover skipper’s plot to re-take his vessel.—Madeline Carlyon and Mrs Tarleton.—Caught in a heavy gale.

One forenoon a midshipman from HMS Chatham came on board, with a letter from the admiral, Sir Peter Parker, to Captain Hudson. The Chatham was at that time Sir Peter’s flag-ship. The midshipman was of course asked below and

pressed to stop for dinner. In a remarkably short space of time he made himself at home with all hands. He had a very red head of hair, very red eyes, and very red face indeed. I have never met a redder person, but he was far from ugly, and his countenance was brimful of good-nature and humour. He and I quickly became friends. He caught my name.

“Faith, that’s not a bad name you’ve got of your own,” said he. “Mine is Patrick O’Driscoll. If it happens not to be particularly well known to fame just yet, I purpose to make it as notorious as it was in the good old days in my native land.”

While O’Driscoll was entertaining us with some racy anecdotes I was sent for by Captain Hudson into his cabin.

“Take a seat, Mr Hurry,” said he, in his usual kind way. “I have an offer to make which I hope will prove satisfactory to you. Sir Peter Parker has applied to me for some mates and midshipmen, and I have especially named you, as I am sure you will do credit to my recommendation. He has asked also for some of my people, and as you seem to have attached to you old Nol Grampus and Tom Rockets, they may, if they wish it, accompany you, for I like to see an officer with followers. It speaks well for both parties. I have not yet determined who else I shall send. I have recommended you because I have no doubt that you will get a step by the change.”

I warmly thanked my captain for the kind interest he had shown in my welfare. And here let me pay a just tribute to the character of my old commander. A more kind-hearted gentleman, or a braver or better officer never walked the deck of a man-of-war. I was sorry to leave my messmates of the Orpheus; but for the reason Captain Hudson gave me, the opportunity of serving under so distinguished an officer as Sir Peter Parker was not to be lost. I will pass over all my leave-takings. Midshipmen are not much addicted to the sentimentals. Let me be supposed alongside the Chatham, accompanied by Nol Grampus, Tom Rockets, and the chest which contained all my worldly possessions. Those possessions were, by-the-bye, considerably decreased in quantity and value since I left my paternal mansion two years before.

On stepping on board I was met by my red-haired friend.

“Ah! Hurry, my boy, it’s myself then is glad to see you!” he exclaimed, squeezing my fingers and wringing my hand with a vehemence almost sufficient to dislocate my wrist.

“Happy to meet you,” I answered, not letting him discover that he had hurt me.

This demonstrative mode of greeting was a trick of his, I found, to try, as he said, what people were made of. Sometimes, however, he caught a Tartar to his cost. The Chatham’s midshipmen were a more rollicking set than my late shipmates. However, I knew comparatively but little of them, for, as it turned out, during the greater part of the time I belonged to the ship I was away on detached duty. Scarcely had I joined her, when I was sent on shore in command of a party of men to clear a transport lying in Rhode Island. While I was engaged in this far from pleasant duty I had to put up at the Cat and Fiddle Tavern, kept by a certain Mrs Grimalkin. To cover her sympathy with the rebels she used to exhibit on all public occasions an exuberance of loyalty which I thought rather suspicious. By watching her narrowly I was not long in discovering that she kept up a constant communication with the enemy, and gave them notice of all our proceedings. However, once knowing this, I was on my guard, and used to amuse myself by telling her all sorts of wonderful tales of what we had done, and what it was proposed to do to bring the country to subjection. I hope that I was the means also of sending some of the American cruisers to look after merchantmen which had gone in totally different directions, and of making others keep clear of fleets which had no existence.

Mrs Grimalkin was a Dutch woman by extraction, and retained the appearance and many of the habits of her ancestors. Numberless were the petticoats she wore, and unceasing were the ablutions which her clean-tiled floors received. She was in the main not a bad old soul, and I dare say she considered herself perfectly justified, in consideration of the cause I served, in charging me a preposterous amount for my board and lodging while I resided under her roof.

Having cleared the transport, I returned on board. A few days afterwards Sir Peter sent for me, and expressing his satisfactions with what he had observed of my conduct, appointed me to the command of the Pigot tender, the officer who had hitherto had charge of her being on the sick list. A midshipman’s berth is a very jolly place, but still there is nothing like being captain of one’s own ship, so thanking the admiral for the good opinion he had formed of me, with a light heart I hurried below to prepare for my change of quarters. I had not been thus engaged many minutes, when I was joined by O’Driscoll, with a broad grin on his countenance.

“Well, brother skipper,” said he, “how do you feel with your new dignity?”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Why, faith, that I’ve got command of the ‘Lady Parker,’ a very tidy craft, and that we are to cruise in company. Arrah, now—won’t we have a jovial time of it, my jewel!”

“I hope so,” said I; “if we don’t happen to meet with poor Luscombe’s ill-luck. There are two sides to every question, remember.”

“Arrah, now. Never look at the reverse of a pleasing picture, Hurry,” he replied. “Because Luscombe met with ill-luck, we have a better chance of good luck, do ye see. So now let’s get aboard our respective ships. I feel wonderfully grown since I received my appointment.”

Luscombe, one of our master’s mates, had, while in charge of a schooner, fitted out as a tender, been a short time before captured by the enemy, after losing all his men, while he himself had been severely wounded.

Our orders were to make the best of our way to Long Island Sound, where we were to deliver some despatches to HMS Syren, and then, after cruising a week off Gay Head, to return to Rhode Island. Both our vessels were ready for sea, so, having obtained leave to take Grampus and Tom Rockets with me, we pulled on board, and got under weigh. A fine breeze carried us to sea, and did not desert us till we made the shores of Long Island. We ran into the Sound and delivered our despatches on board the Syren. The spot wore a very different aspect to that which it had borne when I was last there. Now the whole country was in possession of the royal troops, who were under the full belief that it was henceforward to remain their own. The reports were that the whole of the American forces were completely disorganised and disheartened, and that they would never again be able to make head against the royalists. The truth was what was supposed, but they had a man at their head who was a host in himself, and by his courage, his wisdom, and energy, he made amends for all deficiencies. George Washington was truly the man who established the American Republic. For that great work he was especially appointed by Heaven. Unhappily, the people of whom he made a nation have too often since forgotten his precepts and example. The farther they have departed from it the less dignified and respected they have been. But I am anticipating events.

O'Driscoll and I would have been right glad of an excuse to remain at New York, but we had not even sprung a spar, and our craft were as tight as bottles, and our crews did not want a single dose of physic among them, so we were obliged to put to sea again that evening. We however contrived to pick up a round of beef, two legs of mutton, and a turkey, with a sack of potatoes, and some other vegetables, out of a bumboat which had come down to supply the Syren, and which we waylaid before she reached that ship. I must not forget also some soft tack, three dozen of bottled ale, and a cheese, which set us up in the comestible way for some time. Just as we got to sea the wind veered round to the east and south-east, and with a favourable breeze, under easy sail, we stood to the northward. The next day O'Driscoll came aboard to dine with me. I had the turkey. The bird had made so many objections to remaining in the coop into which I put him, that I was obliged to kill him. He was consequently rather tough, but midshipmen's teeth don't stand at trifles, and we made considerable progress in devouring him.

"This is very jolly, Captain Hurry," said O'Driscoll, pouring out for himself a glass of foaming ale. "Here's to you, man, and I don't care how long we're on our cruise."

"It will soon come to an end if this wind lasts," I remarked.

"Not a bit of it, if we're inclined to make it longer," he replied. "Suppose now, a craft was to make her appearance in the south-east, we should have to make sail after her, and it might be many a day before we got back to port, do ye see. Do you twig, my boy, eh?"

"Oh, yes, O'Driscoll. I understand you perfectly," said I. "But that sort of conduct does not exactly come up to my notion of our duty to the service. We might get a long cruise, certainly, but I don't think we should enjoy it, and we might just possibly fall into the hands of an enemy, and end it in a prison on shore."

"Ha! ha! ha! that would be an unpleasant termination to our independent commands," he replied, laughing. "Well, I suppose to do our duty is the best policy. I shouldn't like the catastrophe you picture so vividly."

One thing I must say in O'Driscoll's favour, though his fertile brain conceived all sorts of mischief, he was very ready to abandon any of his proposals when he found that others objected to them. Though hot enough at times, and ready enough to fight anybody and everybody who came in his way, his anger was as quickly appeased. Thus also he was easily persuaded by me to adhere to the letter of his instructions, and, in perfect good-humour with all the world, he accompanied me on deck to smoke our cigars. It was one of those lovely days, which occur frequently in autumn in that part of the world, called by the Americans the Indian summer. A thin, gauze-like mist hung over the face of the deep—scarcely dense enough, however, to mitigate the heat of the sun's rays, which, darting forth from the pure, blue sky, sparkled brightly on the crisply curling wavelets, stirred up by a light southerly breeze. Everything gave promise of a continuance of fine weather, and so, like two pachas, we sat on the deck, calmly contemplating with philosophic indifference all sublunary affairs. Not another sail was to be seen within the circle of our horizon besides our two small craft, so that as we had nothing else with which to compare ourselves, we were content to believe that we were two very important personages indeed. We had our coffee brought to us in due form. It was not a common beverage among midshipmen, certainly in those days, but Tom had learned to make it well of a Spanish seaman on board the Orpheus. We finished our repast with more than one glass of grog apiece, but not sufficient, I am happy to say, to risk the equilibrium of either our minds or bodies. While we were discussing the seaman's favourite beverage, O'Driscoll indulged me, and by necessity my ship's company, with some of his choicest songs, trolled forth in a full, clear voice, and the liquor loosening the muscles of his tongue, every word came forth with the richest brogue of his native land. At first the people listened attentively as they sat forward. Then they by degrees crept up nearer and nearer, till at length Pat Doolan, a compatriot of the minstrel, seemingly unable any longer to contain himself, burst forth into the full chorus of one of the songs. To stop him would have been impossible. The poor fellow flung his whole soul into the melody. What a flood of recollections—of long pent-up feelings—it brought back! Sooner than hold silence he would have jumped overboard, I believe. The example was infectious. One by one the rest of the crew took up the strain. Not one but had the spirit of melody within him; and there we were, officers and crew, all singing away together like mad people, or as if our lives depended on the noise we made.

At sun-down we hove-to, and O'Driscoll returned on board his own vessel, insisting on my returning his visit the next day. The weather proving calm, I was enabled to fulfil my engagement, and a merry time we had of it. So pleasant did I find this sort of life, that I began to persuade myself that there would be no outrageous impropriety in acceding to O'Driscoll's proposal to lengthen our voyage. Two days thus passed pleasantly away, during which we made but little progress in our voyage. We might possibly by carrying a greater press of sail have made more, but we were, as I have observed, in no hurry to bring it to an end.

On the morning of the 14th, as I lay fast asleep in my cot, it having been my middle watch, I felt my shoulder shaken, while a rough voice exclaimed—

“There’s a sail in sight, Mr Hurry, sir, on the lee-bow. She’s the cut of an American merchantman.”

Looking up, I saw the weather-beaten countenance of Nol Grampus bending over me.

“Keep her away, and make all sail in chase,” I answered, springing up; “I’ll be on deck in a trice.”

I was not many seconds behind old Nol. The Lady Parker was on our weather-quarter. Her people had not been so quick-sighted as we were, but when they saw us making sail, they did the same. Away we both went in hot pursuit of the stranger, which proved to be a schooner. When she made us out she apparently took fright, and likewise set every stitch of canvas she could carry to escape.

There is nothing so exciting as a chase, whether on shore or afloat. Next to it is a race. Here we had both combined, for we wanted to catch the enemy and to beat the Lady Parker. The breeze freshened, but the Pigot looked up to her canvas famously; and sweeter to our ears than any music just then was the loud gush of the yielding waters as they were parted by the sharp bows of my little craft.

“You are a darling now!” cried old Nol, as he looked up at the canvas, ever and anon, to see that each sail drew its best. “Just show us what your heels can do this time, at all events.” The schooner seemed to understand him, and went faster and faster. We were somewhat distancing the Lady Parker, and coming up with the chase.

“If the breeze holds, sir, we shall be within gun-shot in half an hour, and then there’ll be but little chance for that small hooker there,” observed Grampus, chuckling. She was a bigger vessel than the Pigot, by-the-bye.

“It’s just possible that one of the enemy’s cruisers may heave in sight, and spoil our sport before then,” said I; “such a thing has occurred before now, and there are plenty of them in these seas.”

“The more call for speed, then, sir,” replied Nol. “Hurrah—blow your best, good breeze, and don’t stint us.”

In even less time than Grampus had predicted, we got the schooner within range of our guns. I half expected to see her haul her wind and show fight. We began to blaze away with our bow-chasers, but she stood steadily on, taking not the slightest notice of us. Rockets and I had both tried our hands at a shot, but without effect, so I sent him to the helm, and called Grampus forward, to see what he could do. More than once he looked along the gun without firing. “Here goes,” he at length exclaimed, applying the match. I watched eagerly. Away flew the shot—it struck. I could see the splinters fly, and down came by the run the main-topmast of the chase. All hands gave a grand hurrah. Still the chase stood on. In a short time, however, we saw that there was some confusion on board. The ensign was hauled down—then run up, and then hauled down again.

Just as we fancied that she was going to heave-to, up went the ensign once more, and the hands were seen going aloft, to clear away the wreck of the top-mast.

“What can the fellow be about?” said I; “he cannot hope to escape us.”

“Perhaps, sir, he sees a big friend ahead, whom he thinks will come to his assistance,” observed Grampus.

“We must give him another dose, then, to stop him before his friend appears. Fire low this time!” I exclaimed, for my blood was up at the thoughts of his escaping us. We yawed a little so as to bring all our starboard guns to bear. The shot took effect, and there appeared more confusion than before on deck. “Let them have it again,” I sung out; “this time they must give in!” The guns were loaded, and our people were about to fire, when, as I was looking through my telescope, I saw two figures rush on deck, and which instantly made me arrest the order to fire. They were women. By their gestures they were evidently endeavouring to persuade the crew to continue their endeavours to escape or to yield at once. Which it was I could not determine, but while they remained on deck I could not bring myself again to fire on the vessel. I hoped that we should be able to capture her without doing her further injury. On we stood, therefore, as before. The ladies remained on deck. I kept my eye on them, intending to fire at the schooner’s rigging the moment they went below. I told Grampus my reason for not firing. “That’s right, sir,” he answered warmly; “no man who’s fit to be a man ever hurts a woman if he can help it, whether old or young, or whatever her nation—or black or white. And they, d’ye see, bless their hearts, repays us; for no matter where it is, if a man is sick or wounded, or in distress, they are always ready to help him and nurse him and pity him—bless them, says I. I don’t know what we should do without them.”

The two ladies kept their posts, walking the deck, and every now and then stopping and eyeing us—taking our distance, I thought. We were rapidly decreasing it, however, and to me it appeared that the chase had very little chance of escaping. I must own that I was now doubly anxious to come up with her. All sorts of romantic ideas came crowding into my imagination, and I quite forgot that, after all, the petticoats might belong to the skipper’s double-fisted wife and rosy-cheeked, loud-voiced daughter. Still, whatever they were, I would not for worlds have run the risk of hurting them.

As time sped away the more eager did I become to solve the problem. When my eye began to ache with watching the chase, Nol took the glass. I had had my breakfast brought on deck. I ate my dinner there also. I was just washing down the cold salt junk and biscuit with a glass of rum and water, when Grampus exclaimed—

“The petticoats has wapperated, sir—that they has.”

I jumped up, overturning my glass of swizzle, and putting the helm to starboard, sung—

“Fire away, but high, my lads—take care, now.”

Grampus had handed me the glass and hurried to a gun. Never was there a better marksman. His eye coolly glanced along the iron tube. He fired. The schooner’s fore-yard was shot away in the slings, and directly afterwards her fore-

top-mast went tumbling over her bows.

“Hurrah!” shouted Nol, “we’ve got her now, my lads.”

I watched through my glass. The females did not return on deck. I only hoped that they were not frightened at the mischief we had committed. The chase was now a complete wreck aloft. Still her ensign was kept flying at her peak. Just, however, as I was about to yaw once more, it was hauled down, and she was luffed up into the wind. We were very soon up with her. Heaving-to just to windward of her, I ordered a boat to be lowered, and, with Tom Rockets and two other hands, pulled aboard. I directed Grampus to keep a very sharp watch on the movements of the schooner, should I go below, for the rebels were up to so many tricks that it was necessary to be prepared for them.

As I stepped on the deck of the prize, I was met by a man whom I took to be the master. He was a tall, lank man, and one of the most melancholy-looking beings I ever beheld. I looked round for the females.

“If they belong to our thread-paper friend here, the chances are that their attractions are but small,” I thought to myself. Still I was very curious to see them.

“Well, Mr Officer,” said the master, without giving me time to speak, “if it’s any satisfaction to you, you’ll understand that you’ve ruined a hard-working man with a large family by this capture, and frightened nearly to death two females aboard here.”

He spoke in a slow, drawling tone, but there was something in it which made me fully believe him.

“It cannot be helped. I do but my duty,” I answered.

“Your duty, sir! Is it the duty of a man, a gentleman, to attack the weak and the oppressed?” said a deep voice close to my ear.

The melancholy skipper had not spoken, the tones were too feminine for him. I turned, and saw standing near me a lady who had evidently just ascended from the cabin. I started. She was something so unlike what I had expected to see. Her figure, though slight, was tall and commanding, and a black dress set off the brilliant whiteness of her complexion. Her dark eyes flashed with fire as she spoke. Her features also, I saw, were very handsome. I have not often been abashed, such a feeling does not usually run in the blood of the Hurrys, but I was on this occasion completely taken aback. I felt that I should have liked to have jumped into my boat and pulled back to my own craft without saying a word. However, I mustered courage to speak.

“Pardon me, madam,” I stuttered out, “I obey the commands of my lawful sovereign, though those commands are, I own, often painful.”

“The excuse all mercenaries make,” said the lady, with bitter scorn in her voice. “And now, sir, that we are your captives, may I ask what you purpose doing with us?”

This question was rather a poser. I could not let the prize go free, and yet I had no wish to detain any women as prisoners.

“I cannot answer the question at once, madam,” I replied; “but I will do my best to land you as soon as possible at the nearest point I am able to reach, to wherever you may wish to go.”

I thought this would satisfy the lady, but not a bit of it.

“Oh, then, we are to be compelled to leave the vessel in which we have taken a passage and to be delayed on an errand of importance because George of Brunswick chooses to try and force unjust laws down the throats of a free people!”

“The fortune of war, madam,” I replied, my choler rising somewhat at her remarks; still I did not forget she was a lady, and that I was an officer and a gentleman.

“Such as brigands might be ashamed of,” she replied. “Then, sir, we are to consider ourselves as your prisoners?”

“Not a moment longer than I can help it, I assure you, madam,” I answered, rather inclined to be amused than angry, and hoping to pique her by my replies. “You are free to go in any direction you please directly you have an opportunity.”

“You speak mockingly, sir,” she said, apparently determined not to be on good terms with me.

I was anxious to bring the conversation to a conclusion without being rude to her; she was very evidently a lady, and probably accustomed to be treated with attention. My curiosity also was excited to know who her companion could be. We had seen two females on board, and she had used the word “we” several times as if her companion was her equal; whether older or younger was the question. She herself had the appearance and air of a matron who, though past the bloom of youth, still retained much of her beauty. Bowing to her again, I turned to the melancholy-faced master and inquired the particulars of his cargo, where he was from, and where bound to. He was from Boston, with a cargo of notions bound for Philadelphia.

“Well, then, captain, I’ll step below, just to have a look at your papers,” said I, trying to appear as unconcerned as possible. “Then we’ll get the wreck of your masts cleared away and take you in tow. You and your mate with two hands will go on board my vessel, the rest will remain here to help work this craft.”

He saw that my orders were not to be disputed, though he prepared to obey them with no very good grace. I had no

fear of any trick being played me, for the Lady Parker was fast coming up to the scene of action, or I should not have trusted either the lank master or the lovely dame. I hailed Grampus to send another boat aboard, and while she was coming I dived below, disregarding the black looks both of the master and the lady. I certainly was not prepared for the vision of loveliness which broke on my sight when I opened the door of the cabin. I somehow or other had taken it into my head that the lady on deck was the youngest of the two persons we had seen, and I expected accordingly to find a stout, elderly dame acting as her chaperone or attendant. Instead, however, there, half-reclining on a sofa, and reading, or pretending to read, was a young and lovely girl. The lady on deck possessed somewhat of a stern beauty; hers was of the most perfect feminine softness. She was fair, with light-brown hair, and a rich colour on her cheeks, and eyes so full and lustrous that they pierced through and through me at once. I was very glad she did not ask me to do anything I ought not to have done, for as Adam was easily tempted by Eve, I fear me much that I should not have had the resolution to refuse any request she might have made. I stood for a minute at the door, looking, I daresay, very stupid, and silent as a post. At last I blundered out—

“I beg pardon, miss; I came to see the ship’s papers; I hope that I don’t inconvenience you.”

“Oh, no, sir, as the ship is, I conclude, in your power, and the passengers are your prisoners, we can only be grateful for any courtesy you show us,” she answered; and oh! what a sweet, soft, musical voice she spoke in!

I was quickly followed below by the master, who proceeded to hand me out his papers from a well-battered tin case.

“You are, I conclude, Mr Saul Cobb, master of the ‘Crab’ schooner—not much like a crab though, by the way she went through the water,” said I, running my eyes over the papers. “All well and good, Mr Cobb. We will take the ‘Crab’ in tow as far as Rhode Island, where Sir Peter Parker, the English admiral, will decide what is to be done with her. Your passengers, I have no doubt, will be landed at Newport, and a safe conduct will be granted them in whatever direction they may wish to proceed.”

I looked up as I spoke, and bowed to the young lady. I found her eyes fixed on me, though she very quickly withdrew them, and I could not help fancying, vain puppy that I was! that a slight blush tinged her cheeks.

“I trust, madam,” said I, “that we shall be able to make arrangements satisfactory under the painful circumstances of the case to you and the lady who is with you.”

“She is my aunt,” she answered quickly. “But I fear that it will be difficult to make amends to her for the inconvenience to which she must be put and the bitter disappointment she feels. She was called to the bedside of a brother she believes to be dying from his wounds, and there being no one else whose assistance she could claim, I accompanied her. We hoped to have landed to-morrow. Could you not still manage to put us on shore?”

She looked up with such a beautiful, earnest expression that I instantly began to consider whether I could not by some possibility do as she requested. As the result of my reflections I replied—

“I am sorry to say I cannot do so. I dare not so far depart from my very clear line of duty; still, any accommodation I can afford you and your aunt will, I am sure, be sanctioned by the admiral.”

“You are very kind indeed, sir,” said the young lady. “I would not ask any officer to neglect his duty to the king he serves; I should despise him if he did.”

She had risen from her seat, and stood resting her left hand on the table, while her right was slightly raised to give expression to her sentiments.

“Ho, ho!” I thought, “your politics do not agree, then, with those of your aunt.”

I looked up into her face. I could not help it. How beautiful and animated she looked! Her figure was not tall, though exquisitely proportioned and rounded as if she enjoyed excellent health, and had been subject to very few of the cares and disappointments of life. In a word, I thought her a perfect heroine, and so she was. I could not help congratulating myself at the idea of having her society on board the tender for at least the next two days, and perhaps longer, and I must own that I was in no hurry to finish looking over the papers of the Crab, though for the life of me I could not have told a word of their contents.

“Well, mister, are you satisfied now?”

The harsh, grating sounds of Captain Cobb’s voice, for he it was who spoke, recalled me to myself.

“Yes, yes,” I answered. “Turn your hands up and get a hawser secured on board with plenty of scope.”

I then once more addressed the young lady—

“I must beg you and your aunt to come on board my schooner. This vessel is not in a safe condition for you to remain in her. I will, believe me, endeavour to do everything to secure your comfort and to mitigate the annoyance you must of course feel. I will go on deck and endeavour to persuade your aunt to do what is necessary.”

“I wish you would,” she answered. “I am afraid that you will have no little difficulty, though.”

I left the young lady preparing in a very methodical way to pack up her things to remove on board the tender, while I, with no little trepidation, went on deck to address the aunt. The Lady Parker was fast coming up, and I wanted to make all arrangements before O’Driscoll’s appearance.

The lady, as I expected, at first refused positively to leave the vessel she was on board of unless by force. I assured her that she would remain at very great risk to her own life and that of her niece, should bad weather come on, and I

assured her that I would spare no pains to secure her comfort, and I pledged my honour that she would be as safe under my protection as she had been under that of Captain Cobb. “Besides, Captain Cobb himself will be on board my vessel, madam.”

“In that case, sir, I will act according to your commands,” said the lady, with one of her bitter smiles.

As they had no attendant, she and her niece were some time in putting up their things, and though I offered my services they were stiffly declined by the elder lady. However, under the counteracting influences of her sweet niece I felt that I could bear a large amount of sourness from her.

At last I got them safely into the boat and on board the tender, together with Mr Cobb and his mate and two of his men. The rest I judged that I could safely leave where they were to help work the prize. I sent Grampus on board her to take charge, and we had the hawser secured when O’Driscoll came up. I had no particular wish just then for his company, though I could not for the world have shown any jealousy of him, so I signalised him that all was right and that I was going to make sail for Rhode Island. He, however, had seen the ladies on my deck, and he would have been unlike any Irishman I ever met had he not desired to know more about them. He accordingly signalised me in return not to make sail till he had held some private communication with me, and very quickly he was on board. After he had made a most profound bow to the two ladies and looked a thousand unutterable things, he seized me by the arm and led me forward.

“Oh, you lucky dog, Poynder,” said he, “to have fallen in with such a prize—that magnificent creature and that pretty little girl. Faith! I must accompany you back to the admiral, just to see that you don’t get into any mischief. I should like to bask myself every morning in their smiles, even though it may be at a somewhat long distance.”

I of course told him that he must do as he thought fit, but I wasn’t sorry when he tumbled into the boat to return to his own craft, and allowed me to prepare for the ladies’ comfort on board mine. I of course gave them up the entire cabin, and fitted up a sofa with sides for one of the ladies. What with canvas, and flags, and some planks, I very soon had some fair accommodation for them. My own cot I had slung in another part of the vessel. The younger lady, when she returned on deck, after inspecting the arrangements I had made, thanked me with a look which made ample amends for all the trouble I had taken. The elder one did not deign to take any notice of the matter. I had been anxious to know their names. I had seen that of Tarleton on one of the trunks, so I addressed the elder lady as Mrs Tarleton, which she seemed to acknowledge as her proper appellation, so I took the chance of being right, and called the other Miss Tarleton; but she with a smile observed—

“No; that is not my name. I am called Madeline Carlyon. That lady is the wife of my mother’s brother. She, as you see, is very strongly opposed to the Royalist party. She has reason, for she has suffered much from them. I am very much attached to her, for she is an excellent, noble-minded person, though she has, as you see, her peculiarities.”

“And are you, Miss Carlyon, equally opposed to the Royalists?” I asked.

I felt that I was venturing on dangerous ground.

“Some of my family are Royalists, though some of them are in opposition, and are what you, I fear, would call rebels. I do not like the word.”

“Nor do I,” I answered warmly. “Though I am a naval officer, and fighting is my vocation, I wish that this dispute were settled. I would rather have any other enemies than those we are now fighting with.”

“I am glad to hear you utter that sentiment, sir,” said Mrs Tarleton, who had overheard the last part of our conversation, as she continued her never-ceasing walk on deck. “Cherish it, for it may produce wholesome fruit in time to come.”

The wind held fair, and with the prize in tow, and the Lady Parker, which could easily keep up with us in company, we steered a direct course for the then small town of Newport, off which I hoped to find the admiral. After the conversation I have described above, the ice in Mrs Tarleton’s manner gradually thawed. She began to regard me with some degree of interest, and to look on me simply as a misguided young man whom she might hope to win over to the cause to which she herself was so warmly attached. I certainly did my best to obtain her good opinion, as well as that of her niece, and I felt that at all events I was winning that of the latter.

Delightful and strange were the sensations I experienced as I leaned over the bulwarks by the side of that lovely girl, while we watched the blue sparkling wavelets, and I told her of the wonders of the deep, and now and then threw in a description of some of the adventures I had gone through. It was, I repeat, fortunate for me that she was at heart a loyalist, or she would inevitably just then have converted me to whatever opinions she held. We watched the glorious sun descend into his ocean bed in a golden radiance which suffused the whole western sky; and then the pale moon arose, and we stayed to gaze on its silvery beams as they played over the calm waters of the ocean, just crisped into wavelets by the light easterly breeze which blew us on our way. It was very delightful. We were both of us very young, and very unsophisticated. I had scarcely ever spoken to a young lady. The last I had seen, and the impression she had made was not deep, was Miss Deborah Doulass, the fair daughter of a retired linen-draper at Falmouth. The Poynders are in no way a phlegmatic race. The young lady was not backward in appreciating my sentiments, and we might very probably have stood gazing at the ocean till the moon had gone to bed also, when Miss Carlyon was summoned somewhat hastily by her aunt. She put out her hand, and as I pressed it I felt as if an electric shock had run through me. The elder lady drew her shawl round her, and, bowing stiffly, they retired one after the other down the companion-ladder.

I walked the deck for some time, all sorts of new sensations jumping away round my heart and in my head, and then I turned into the temporary berth I had had rigged for myself in the hold, ordering Tom Rockets to keep a sharp look-out, and to call me the moment he suspected even that anything, however trifling, was going wrong. Close to my

berth, and divided only by a thin bulk-head, was the place where the prisoners were sleeping. They were all snoring away when I turned in, but after a time I heard one of them give some grunts.

“Peter,” said a voice. “Peter, are you awake, man?”

I knew by the grating harsh tones that it was that of the lank skipper.

“Yes, captain; I’m awake. What’s your will?” was the answer.

“I’ll tell you what I’ve been thinking of,” said the captain in a very low voice, evidently getting near the person he was addressing. “It wouldn’t be a hard matter to take this craft, and make off with her. She is short-handed. We have four stout fellows, and the woman I make sure would help us. I’d undertake, while he is caterwauling away with the young gal, to knock that young sprig of an officer overboard. Then we’d cast off the hawser, and let the ‘Crab’ go adrift. They needn’t know it was done on purpose; and while the other king’s ship was looking after her to pick her up, we’d have a fine start. At all events, this craft has the best pair of heels, and she would never come up with us again. What do you say, Peter, to this?”

“I’m your man, captain,” answered the mate chuckling. “There’s four to seven, and that’s no great odds if we choose our time. We can count, I guess, on the woman if you put her up to the trick. It may be a job to do that, though.”

“No fear on that score,” observed Captain Cobb. “By the look of the sky when the sun went down, there’ll be a breeze before to-morrow night. Just do you talk to Ahab and Silas, and I’ll see about the rest.”

The voices of the speakers sank so low after this that I could not catch another word.

“Thank you, gentlemen,” said I to myself. “I’ve had that trick attempted to be played on me before now; but I didn’t think that you, my melancholy-looking friend, were up to it. However—forewarned, fore-armed—I’ll be ready for you. I suspect that Mrs Tarleton will not be a little enraged when she hears the part she is to play in the drama. She’ll wither up the poor skipper into a mummy when she sees him.”

I could scarcely refrain from laughing aloud at the idea. I waited till the two conspirators ceased speaking, and as I believed had gone again to sleep; and then I noiselessly left my berth and went on deck. I had my own pistols ready, and I sent Rockets to arm himself and the rest of the people.

In the morning, when the lank skipper and his people came on deck, they looked somewhat dismayed at the appearance we presented. I, however, said nothing, and treated him as if I was totally ignorant of his kind intentions towards me. I was, however, preparing to speak to him, in the presence of Mrs Tarleton, hoping to enjoy her indignation and his dismay; but the sight of Miss Carlyon put everything I was going to say out of my head, as I sprang to the companion-hatch to hand her on deck. How bright and beaming was the smile which irradiated her countenance! While she was near, I scarcely had it in my heart even to frighten the poor skipper, and certainly not to hurt him, even had he attempted to carry out his kind intentions towards me. She looked about her, enjoying the sight of the blue sparkling sea and the fresh breeze.

“It is very beautiful,” said she at length.

“Very!” said I, but if she had asked me to say what I thought so beautiful it would have made her blush. She did not remark a bank of black clouds away to the eastward. I did, and was sorry to see them, for I thought how much discomfort a gale would cause her. The lank skipper saw them also, and probably hoped for an opportunity to carry his pleasant little plot into execution. I determined at once to spoil it. I had somewhat prepared Miss Carlyon, by telling her that I knew of the existence of a plan to take the vessel from me, but made very light of it that I might not frighten her. Calling Captain Cobb aft, while Mrs Tarleton was on deck, I looked him full in the face, and recounted the whole particulars of the plan he had concocted.

“And do you know, madam, our worthy friend not only expects you to approve of his project, but to help him carry it into execution, whether by the aid of the bowl or dagger I do not know; perhaps he expects you to help in smothering us with pillows while we are fast asleep.”

Never was a man more completely taken aback than was Mr Saul Cobb on that occasion, nor was his confusion lessened by the address of the lady.

“You wretched, miserable being! do you fancy that because I am a patriot I would consort with murderers, whose sole idea is how they may make money without a thought how they may best serve their country?”

Her attitude, expression, and manner, more than her words, expressed the vehemence of her feelings; and the skipper, without attempting to excuse himself, turned round and, bolting forward, dived down below to hide his head in darkness. I told Rockets to keep an eye on him, for I thought he might do some mischief.

“You, sir, will, I am sure, acquit me of approving even in the remotest way of such a scheme,” said the lady.

I assured her that I did, and I felt that I had, from the way I had taken the matter, gained a yet further step in her good graces. I then sent Rockets to tell the skipper that, should he attempt to make any such demonstration as he had proposed, I should forthwith be compelled to blow out his brains; but that, if he behaved well, I would pass the matter over. I felt very sure that he would give me no further trouble.

Scarcely had I thus settled this affair than down came the gale on us with a fury unexpected. I shortened sail, lengthened our hawser to the utmost, and then went to try and make the ladies comfortable in the cabin. Still, notwithstanding all my responsibilities and troubles, I had never before felt so happy and proud in my life.

Chapter Ten.

Gale continues.—My lady passengers.—My loyalty put to the test.—Reach Rhode Island.—Ordered to escort ladies to their destination.—Chased by a stranger.—Fearful dangers.—Run through a narrow passage.—Anchor.

The little schooner kept plunging away through the heavy seas caused by the gale, with her prize dragging astern. Grampus had got some sail on her to help her along, but still she not only made us labour much, but exposed us to considerable risk. This, under ordinary circumstances, I should not have minded, and of course, except in the case of the last necessity, I would not have thought of casting her adrift to look after herself. Night came on, and still there was no chance of the gale going down. I was much relieved by O'Driscoll ranging up alongside and hailing me, promising to stay by the prize should I be compelled to cast her off. Still, as I had taken her, I naturally wanted to have the satisfaction of bringing her in. As the darkness increased, the gale blew heavier and the sea ran higher. Still, fortunately, we were able to keep our course. Hour after hour passed away, the little vessel plunging bows under, and dragging away lustily at her heavy prize. I felt that she was straining very much, and on sending below I found that she was making more water than she ought to have done. Still I held on with the Crab, hoping that the gale would break. At last it seemed to have moderated a little, so I left the deck in charge of Rockets, and descended into the cabin to offer what comfort I could to its fair occupants. I asked leave to enter. Mrs Tarleton's voice assured me that I was welcome. I found both ladies sitting on a sofa which I had lashed close to the table. A swing lamp hung from above. They had books before them, and were attempting to read. I doubt if they had made much progress. I told them that I thought the gale was breaking, and that we might have fair weather again before the morning.

"I trust so, indeed," said Miss Carlyon. "It appeared to me that we have been in very great danger; even now the vessel seems dreadfully agitated, though my aunt assures me that such storms are constantly met with at sea."

"She is right, I assure you," said I. "There is no danger that may alarm you."

Just as I spoke there was a loud report. Both ladies shrieked.

"Oh, what is that?" exclaimed the younger. "What can have happened, Mr Poynder?"

"Parted the hawser, which was towing the prize," I answered hurriedly. "Let me entreat you: do not be alarmed, whatever happens. We shall have probably to lie by her all night. With daylight we may make her fast again."

Saying this I rushed on deck. I could just see the Crab astern of us. The mainsail being handed, we hove the vessel to, under her fore-staysail. She felt far more easy than she had done, going free, and with the prize in tow. Still I never spent a more anxious night. I did not either forget friend Cobb's kind intentions by me, and I hinted to him that I remembered them. At length daylight came, and a dark cloudy sky hung over a dull leaden sea. I looked anxiously around for the prize. She had drifted away some three miles to leeward of us. I would rather not have been nearer the coast than we were. Still I bore down to her. O'Driscoll was nowhere to be seen. A cheery reply from old Grampus assured me that all was right. He, moreover, volunteered to send a hawser aboard of us. I accordingly hove-to again on his weather-bow. A boat was lowered from the Crab, manned by the prisoners, and in a short time, though not without risk to the boat's crew, we had the prize once more in tow.

"I'll not forget you for this, my lads," I sang out.

Captain Cobb looked daggers at his people, but I took care that he should hold no communication with them.

My fair passengers, I found, had not suffered during the night. As the schooner, when hove-to, rode easily, they fancied that the weather had improved, and were perfectly satisfied. When we once more made sail, although there really was less wind and sea, they fancied that the weather had become worse, and I had some difficulty in assuring them to the contrary. The subject which caused me the most anxiety was the quantity of water the vessel was making. It became, therefore, necessary to man the pumps, and I was not sorry to have a good excuse for setting Captain Cobb and his people to labour at them. The master, especially, did not like it, and showed signs of disobedience.

"Come, come, my friend," said I; "I have been somewhat lenient with you. I might have kept you in irons, had I not run you up to the yard-arm, in return for the trick you wished to play with me."

"Well, now, mister, how did you find all that out?" quoth my friend, looking me coolly in the face.

"Never mind," I answered, tickled by his impudence. "Man the pumps." And I made him work away, as he deserved, as long as he could stand. I kept a look-out for the Lady Parker, and felt not a little anxious as to what had become of her. I should have liked to have passed much more of my time than I did in the cabin, but I was afraid of intruding on my passengers. I believe they fully appreciated my delicacy. Several times during the day Miss Carlyon ventured on deck, and seemed to enjoy gazing on the stormy, foam-crested seas. I stood by her side and supported her as the little vessel plunged into the troughs, and rose again buoyantly to their summits.

"This is very fine," she exclaimed enthusiastically. "I do think the life of a sailor must be very delightful, Mr Hurry. Had I my choice, I would select it above all others."

"You may be a sailor's wife, though you cannot be a sailor," came to the tip of my tongue, but I did not utter the words; instead of them I said, looking at her beautiful countenance, and admiring its animation, "I love it dearly, and would not change it for any other, Miss Carlyon, though it has its shadows as well as its sunshine."

"Ah, yes, but I always look at the *sunny* side of every picture," she remarked, smiling sweetly.

“You cannot help that. The light you see shed over everything is but the reflection from yourself!” I blushed as I felt an expression so different from my usual matter-of-fact style drawn from my lips.

Miss Carlyon looked up with a bright glance, (not smiling exactly), as much as to say, “What is that about?” She was not, I thought, displeased, but I did not venture anything of the sort again. I found myself led by degrees to tell her all about myself, and my early life, and my adventures, and then I described the sea under its various aspects, and I went on to talk about ships of different classes, and how to rig them, and the names of the ropes and sails and spars. She told me, in return, a good deal about herself and her family, and her likes and dislikes and occupations. Her father had property, I found, between the Chesapeake and Potomac rivers in Virginia, where she had generally resided. Since his death she had remained chiefly with her aunt, Mrs Tarleton, though she hoped to return in a short time, if the state of the country would allow it, to Virginia.

“If you knew what a beautiful country it is, you would love it as I do, Mr Hurry!” she exclaimed with enthusiasm. “When this dreadful war is over, and the people have attained their rights, and returned to their allegiance, you must come and see us. I am sure that my family will one and all, whatever their politics, rejoice in the opportunity of thanking you for your kindness and courtesy to my aunt and me on the present occasion.”

I of course said how delighted I should be, and fifty other very pretty things besides. All I can say is that I had never spent so enjoyable a time before at sea. Her aunt very seldom came on deck, so that Madeline and I were left very much to ourselves. I believe that Mrs Tarleton purposely did not interfere, hoping by means of her niece to gain me over to the cause to which she was so enthusiastically attached. From what I knew of her, I am certain that if such was the case, she fully believed that she was employing a lawful means for a good end. The more I saw, however, of Mrs Tarleton, the more I learned to admire her high-minded, noble, self-sacrificing disposition. The love of freedom was with her a passion, and she held in utter scorn all who submitted to, what she considered, tyranny. She was indeed a person of the old heroic stamp, ready to dare and to do all things in a righteous cause. The gale moderated sooner than I had expected, the sea went down, and we had moderate and pleasant weather. It was therefore with anything but satisfaction that I made out Sir Peter Parker’s flag flying aboard the Chatham, off Rhode Island, which our squadron had been busily employed in blockading. I brought up with my prize close to him, and assuring my passengers that I would endeavour to carry out the plans they had suggested would be most for their convenience, I pulled on board to report myself. The admiral smiled when I told him all that had occurred.

“So these very charming ladies would like to continue their voyage, and you pledged your word that I would not detain them?” said he in a kind way. “Well, you were safe there; we do not war against women, and we must not be behindhand in courtesy after the treatment which some of our English ladies have received at the hands of the rebels. They are anxious to proceed to the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. You shall go there in the ‘Pigot,’ and you will have no objection to keep them as your passengers. Probably the city itself is by this time occupied by the British forces; but I will give you a letter to General Howe, and will beg him to afford them a pass through the country occupied by our troops, and to allow you to escort them till they are placed in safety among their own people. No; do not thank me. I am glad to afford you what I have no doubt you will find an interesting occupation, but I also have great satisfaction in finding an opportunity of treating the ladies of the opposite party in the way I feel they should be treated.”

Never had I heard more satisfactory words. I could scarcely refrain from rubbing my hands with delight.

“Then am I to sail at once, sir?” I asked.

“Certainly, let there be no delay. You can supply yourself with provisions and water from the ship, and send the master and crew of the prize aboard here. I’ll have them put on shore. From what you say you will be glad to be rid of them.”

Promising Sir Peter to carry out his instructions to the best of my power, after seeing the purser about the provisions, and getting as many extra luxuries as I could out of him, I jumped into my boat and returned on board the tender. On my way I caught sight of two vessels standing in towards the roads. I made out one of them to be the Lady Parker, and the other looked very like a prize she had made. So it proved. Before I sailed, O’Driscoll came on board me, and explained how he had missed me. He was as much pleased to see me safe as I was that no harm had befallen him. In the squall during which the Crab had broken adrift he had been hove on his beam-ends, and on getting to rights he could nowhere see me. After some time he caught sight of a craft, which he took for me, and made sail after her. When morning broke she proved to be a stranger and on over-hauling her he found that she was a rebel merchantman, so he took her and brought her into Newport. He declared that he was very jealous when he heard of what he called my good fortune.

“Will you change places now?” said he coolly. “You shall have the ‘Lady Parker’ and all the prizes you are certain to take in her, and let me run down in charge of the ‘Pigot’ and the ladies.”

“You are joking now,” said I. “But stay a moment and you shall pay your respects to my passengers. They made many inquiries about you when they found that your craft was missing.”

The ladies were most grateful to Sir Peter when they heard of his courtesy, and begged O’Driscoll to bear their thanks to him. My friend remained till the stores came on board, and when he took his departure he vowed that he had irretrievably lost his heart to the beautiful widow. I at the same time made sail and stood to the southward. For the first day we had a fair breeze and fine weather, and I was in hopes, for the sake of my passengers, that we should make a good run of it to the Delaware. I need not describe the various incidents which occurred, interesting as they were to me, and important in their results. I entirely won my way to the good opinion of Mrs Tarleton, and I could not help being conscious that her niece no longer regarded me as a common stranger. Still, how could I venture ever to indulge any hopes of making her mine? I depended entirely on my profession for my support, and that profession compelled me to appear as an enemy of her relations and friends. Before I was aware of the tendency of her

reasonings, I found that she had taught me to look on the fratricidal war we were waging in a very different light to that in which I had at first regarded it. She, however, I must insist, in no way weakened my patriotism. I loved old England as much as ever, but she taught me to feel the warmest sympathy for her countrymen and mine truly, who were fighting in the noble cause of liberty. I describe my feelings as they then existed. I leave to others to judge whether they were right or wrong. A fierce war began to rage within me between principle and feeling, interest and duty, and all the tender sentiments of my nature. A less high-minded person would have thrown all her weight into the scale, and might have made me false to the sovereign in whose service I was engaged; but then I flattered myself that a girl of her exalted principles would not have so speedily won my affections. (See Note 1.) Now the murder is out; in plain English, I was head over ears in love, and it was a toss up whether I should, for the sake of Madeline Carlyon, desert my colours, go over and join the Americans, and get a captain's commission, or remain true to my king and run the chance of losing her. It puts me into a fever even now, to think of all the feelings which came bubbling up in my bosom, and all the ideas which came rushing into my brain, and the pulling and hauling and tugging at my heart. Never had I been so racked and tormented, tossed to and fro, kicked here and there, up and down. At length my good angel came to my assistance. "Do your duty like a man," he whispered. "Don't think of consequences, what you would like or what you wouldn't like. Find out what is right, and do that."

I had turned in, and, with a mind much calmed, fell asleep.

"There is a strange sail on our weather-quarter, sir," said Tom Rockets, rousing me up. "Grampus don't like her looks."

Nor did I, when a moment afterwards I stood on deck and made her out through the pale light of a grey cold November morning. "Make all sail!" I sung out. "If she is an enemy, the sooner we are out of the way the better." It was blowing fresh, but I cracked on the little schooner as much as she could carry, and away we went staggering under it with the wind on our larboard quarter. The stranger, apparently, had not made us out, and I was in hopes that we might escape observation. The increased motion, I suppose, awoke the ladies, and to my surprise before long they came on deck.

"What is the matter, Mr Hurry?" asked Mrs Tarleton. "It appeared in the cabin as if there was a fearful gale blowing."

"You see that the weather is not so very bad," I answered evasively, "and I am naturally anxious on your account to reach port."

I never could act the hypocrite, and the lady was not satisfied. As her quick-sighted eye ranged round the horizon she caught sight of the stranger.

"What is that vessel out there?" she asked.

"That I cannot exactly say, madam," I answered. "She may be a friend or she may be a foe. Under present circumstances I think it best to avoid her."

"If she is an American vessel her captain would never think of detaining you; and if she is English, you at all events need not fear her," she replied quickly.

"I would rather not run the risk of detention," said I. "It is possible, should she be an American vessel, that her people may not believe our story."

"Well, sir, I have no doubt that you act for the best," answered the lady, evidently not satisfied as she saw the vessel tearing furiously through the water.

Her niece had said nothing, but seemed rather to enjoy the rapid motion and the fresh air.

While they were still on deck, the stranger caught sight of us and bore up in chase. Mrs Tarleton soon discovered what had occurred, and was constantly watching the stranger.

I kept away a little, and, trusting to the Pigot's superior sailing qualities, I had little fear of continuing ahead of her during the day, and of escaping her observation in the night. The state of the weather, however, gave me most concern. I saw Grampus looking up anxiously at our spars, and ever and anon at the heavy seas which came up hissing and foaming astern. One of our best hands was at the helm, but he came aft and stood by him. I caught his eye as he was glancing over his shoulder.

"Beg pardon, sir; the more haste the worst speed, Mr Hurry, you know," said he in a low voice, thinking the ladies would not hear him.

Thick heavy clouds were rushing up, one past the other, rapidly astern of us. I saw that the time had indeed come to shorten sail if I would not run the risk of losing my masts, or, perhaps, of broaching-to and capsizing. I entreated my passengers in a few hurried words to go below to be out of the way of danger. Mrs Tarleton seemed inclined to stay. I was obliged to be somewhat peremptory, and I did not lose her good opinion by being so.

"Indeed, madam, there is considerable danger for you on deck. I cannot allow you to run it. You must go."

She gave me a look of surprise, and, without another word, allowed me to conduct her and her niece to the companion.

In the meantime the crew had come aft to take in the mainsail and gaff-topsail. I next had the fore-topgallant-sail and foresail off her. This was done only just in time, before the squall came down on us and I had to lower away and close-reef the foresail. The wind had at the same time caught the ship. I took her to be a flush-decked vessel, a corvette probably. She had been looking at us and not thinking of herself probably, for I soon discovered that several

of her sails had been blown away, and I suspected that she had received further damage. We at all events benefited by her misfortune, and kept well ahead of her. Still she continued the chase. I felt the truth of the saying that it is much pleasanter chasing than being chased. All day long we ran on, plunging into the seas, and wet from the foam which blew off them over our counter. More than once I thought we should have been pooped. The vessel also began again to leak. Night came on; the leak increased. We lost sight of our pursuer, but our condition became very trying. I endeavoured to make the best of matters, but my anxiety increased. We were off the northern coast of New Jersey. The wind was veering round more to the eastward, and we were getting a rock-bound shore under our lee. There were harbours I might run into, but the thick weather had prevented me from taking any observations, and though by my log I could tell pretty well how far we had run, yet I could not be certain, and, unless from dire necessity, I was unwilling to attempt to make any port short of the Delaware. At times the wind hauled a little more round to the northward, and as it did so my hopes proportionally rose of being able to keep off shore.

Only for a moment did I at times leave the deck to speak a word of comfort to my passengers. Mrs Tarleton was, I saw, fully aware of our danger. I think her niece suspected it, but if she did she completely concealed all signs of fear. On one occasion, when I entered the cabin, they rose from their knees. Together they had been offering up prayers to Him who alone can quell the tempest, for our safety. Their last words reached my ears. I stood at the door and humbly joined in their petition. I quickly had to return on deck. I had been obliged, when the wind shifted, to get some after-sail on the vessel. She heeled over fearfully, yet I knew must be making great lee-way. I could not venture to take any canvas off her.

“What do you think of it, Grampus?” said I, after some time.

“Why, sir, I don’t like it,” was his unsatisfactory reply.

I did not again ask him his opinion. The sea kept flying over us, the night grew darker and darker, and the gale blew stronger and stronger. The leak was increasing. Two hands were kept constantly at the pumps. I wished for Mr Saul Cobb and his companions. Nothing could be well worse. Still I never for a moment lost courage. I felt sure that the prayers of those below would not be uttered in vain. The hours wore away. I kept a bright look-out on the starboard bow to discover breakers, should they be near, while my ears were constantly awake to detect their terror-inspiring sound. How I longed for daylight! I dared not lay-to: I dared not shorten sail. I could only stand on with any prospect of safety. The gale increased: the sea was constantly making a clean breach over the deck. All hands had to hold on fast, or we should have been washed overboard. At the same time the water was gaining terribly on us. A new danger threatened the schooner; she might founder before we could gain a harbour, even if she escaped shipwreck. A considerable part of the New Jersey shore consists of long, low, sandy beaches, which in thick weather can scarcely be seen till a vessel is nearly on them. I judged by my calculations that we were by this time close in with Squan Beach, or Island Beach or Long Beach. My chart told me that there was a passage between the two latter, and several inlets to the south of the last, up which I could run and be safe; but to find them in the dark was impossible.

“Grampus! listen! what is that sound?” said I.

“Breakers, sir!” he answered in a slow way; “there’s no doubt about it. But we shall have daylight soon. Ah, look-out, there sir, there it is!”

I looked seaward, and a pale streak was just appearing in the eastern sky. It grew wider and wider, and at length darkness gave way to the rays of the yet hidden sun. The prospect revealed to us was not cheering. The sea broke as heavily as ever, and not a mile to leeward of us a terrific surf rolled over a long white sandy beach. As I watched the foaming broken mass of waters as they rolled furiously up to it, I felt convinced that, should the schooner once get within their power, not a human being on board would escape. Not a break was to be seen. The wind was dead on-shore, blowing with a determined heavy pressure; and the little vessel, though she made fair headway, was surely drifting nearer and nearer to destruction. Oh, what agony of mind I suffered! I cared not for myself, but I thought of that fair girl and her lovely relative doomed to so hard a fate. I called Grampus to me and asked him if he could advise anything. He shook his head—

“You’ve done all that a man can do, Mr Hurry,” was his answer.

“Then I must prepare those two poor ladies for their inevitable fate,” I thought to myself.

Before going into their cabin, I took another look at the chart which I kept outside it. At the south end of Long Beach was a passage, I found, leading into Little Egg Harbour.

Grampus hailed me. My heart bounded into my mouth again.

“There is an opening, sir. I make it out clearly. Keep her close and by, my lad!” he sang out to the man at the helm. “If we just clear the point we shall do it.”

I held my breath. The schooner dashed on, half buried by the seas. She was almost among the breakers—then broad on our bow appeared an opening—heavy rollers went foaming over it.

“Up with the helm! In with the main-staysail! Square away the fore-yard! Hold on for your lives!”

I rapidly uttered these orders, one after the other. Away before the gale we flew, the sea breaking high on either hand of us. One roller after the other came hurrying on, but we rose to their summits, and then with one more frantic plunge we sank down into smooth water, and in another moment, rounding the vessel to, I let go the anchor and we rode safely under the lee of the sand-bank.

Note 1. I had at first thought, from what Miss Carlyon said, that she was herself warmly attached to Royalist

principles; and so in truth she was, but love of country and love of freedom, with a clear sense of justice, had overpowered them, and although she did not possess the enthusiasm of her aunt, she was still a strong advocate of the popular cause. Had she indeed the bias I originally supposed, her aunt would have thrown all her influence to prevent me from making any further advance than I had already done, and I am certain that the young lady would not have acted in opposition to the wishes and advice of her family. Very unromantic principles these, but the young lady in question was totally unlike any heroine of any novel I ever read.

Chapter Eleven.

Run up Little Egg River.—Meet the militia lieutenant whose life I saved.—“One good turn deserves another.”—Set out for Washington’s camp.—Fall into the hands of the Hessians.—The ladies in danger.—Devastating march of mercenaries.—Escape.—House in which we are lodged attacked.—Place the ladies for safety in a root house.

We were saved. The gale blew as hard as ever outside; the sea broke furiously on the sandy shore, the foam reaching across the bank even to where we lay, while the wind whistled through the rigging with a shrill and mournful sound. No sooner did I see that the anchor held than as I was hurrying below to quell the alarm of my passengers, I met them coming on deck, unable to comprehend the cause of the sudden change from the wildest tossing to the perfect calm in which we lay. They looked about them with an expression of astonishment on their features, evidently puzzled to know how we could have got where we were; then they clasped their hands and raised their voices together in prayer and heartfelt gratitude for their safety. The sudden and simultaneous movement touched my heart, and while I admired their simple piety it made me sensible of the hardness of my own heart in religious matters.

“Where are we, Mr Hurry?” asked Mrs Tarleton. “We owe much, I feel sure, under God’s providence, to your excellent seamanship.”

I thanked her for her good opinion of me, and told her that we were, I believed, at the mouth of Little Egg Harbour, on the coast of New Jersey, and that I hoped to run up the river and to land her at some spot at which conveyances might be obtained, as I would not risk her safety by continuing the voyage. Her niece looked far more than her aunt expressed, so I was perfectly satisfied, though she said but little. They knew that I should be in no hurry to part from them; indeed, I had received orders from Sir Peter not to do so till I had conducted them to their friends or seen them in a place of safety.

While I was still talking to the ladies. Grampus called me aside and hurriedly told me that, if the hands were not sent to the pumps, in a very short time the schooner would go down. I accordingly set all hands to work, and when they had lessened the water in the hold I once more made sail, and, with the lead going on either side, I stood through a passage to the southward, and then to the west again up Little Egg River. I hoisted a flag of truce as I stood on. After some time I came in sight of a gentleman’s house—a long low building with a verandah round it—the usual style of building in that part of the country. Near the house was a village. I dropped my anchor and lowered a boat to go on shore.

“We will accompany you, Mr Hurry,” said Mrs Tarleton, who at that moment with her niece followed me on deck after I had announced my intention. “Should the country be in possession of the troops of George of Brunswick, you are safe; but if in that of our patriot troops, you may be liable to molestation.”

To this proposal I could raise no objection, so, ordering Grampus to keep the people at the pumps to prevent the vessel from sinking, I handed the ladies into the boat, and steered for a rough little wooden stage near the large house I had observed on shore. I had a white flag at the end of a boat-hook in the bows of the boat, that I might be prepared for friends or foes. Not a person was to be seen moving. I ran the boat alongside the stage, and with my passengers stepped on shore, leaving Rockets with the flag and two other hands in the boat. There was, for a short distance, a piece of uncultivated open ground, and then a wood of somewhat scrubby trees through which a path led. We had walked along it but a short distance, when, turning an angle, we were confronted by a body of militia, mustering some dozen or twenty men.

“Halt!” cried the sergeant at the head of the party. “Strangers! who are you?”

I tried to explain.

“That’s all very well, and may or may not be true, mister,” answered the sergeant, who certainly was not one of nature’s gentlemen. “I ain’t bound to believe your gammon, I guess; you may be spies, so come along with us and we’ll see about it.”

Here Mrs Tarleton stepped forward.

“We are American ladies,” said she. “We owe much to this officer, and trust that our countrymen will afford us the aid we require.”

The fellow still doubted, and was evidently inclined to use us roughly, when we saw a fresh body of men coming along the road, headed by an officer. He at once advanced to inquire into the matter. At first he also seemed not at all ready to believe us.

“So many spies are dodging about in various disguises that you may be of that character for what I know to the contrary,” he remarked, eyeing us hard.

Mrs Tarleton was inclined to be very indignant. As I looked at the man there was something in the tone of his voice and his countenance I thought I recognised.

“Is your name Spinks?” I asked.

“I guess you’re right,” he answered.

“And you were wounded before New York, and an English officer gave you a sup of spirits and some fresh water, and washed your wounds, and—”

“He did, he did; and you’re the man who did it!” he exclaimed, springing forward and grasping my hand warmly. “I thought I knew your voice—you saved my life, that you did. I said Amos Spinks would be grateful, and so he will. I’m a lieutenant now; I was then only a private.”

This was, indeed, a fortunate encounter. Full credit was now given to our statements. The house to which we were proceeding was, we found, the property of a gentleman of some consideration, who, although a patriot, had from ill-health remained at home. Lieutenant Spinks and his men escorted us to it. The ladies were cordially welcomed, and I was treated with the greatest civility and attention. Our host, John Plowden, was a perfect gentleman of the old school, who received us with many a bow, in bag-wig and sword, knee-breeches and buckles, flowered waistcoat and three-cornered hat. Dinner was instantly prepared, and beds were offered, but Mrs Tarleton wished to proceed on her journey that very afternoon. At first Mr Plowden would on no account consent to this arrangement, but, Mrs Tarleton having explained to him her earnest desire to see her brother, or to gain tidings of him, he willingly promised to do his utmost to enable her to proceed.

“I fear much, however, madam, that you will be exposed to insult from the troops of the enemy who still occupy part of the Jerseys, though I feel sure that the inhabitants, whatever side of the question they take, would in no way annoy you.”

Mrs Tarleton looked at me as this was said. We were sitting at dinner, a midday meal, with several members of Mr Plowden’s family round the table. My instructions from Sir Peter were to see the ladies in safety with Washington’s army. I turned to Mr Plowden—

“If, sir, you can guarantee the safety of my vessel during my absence, and secure me free egress from this harbour on my return, I will proceed with Mrs Tarleton and Miss Carlyon, and I trust shall have the means of securing them from any inconvenience of the nature to which you allude.”

Mr Plowden thought a little.

“I can be answerable for the safety of your vessel, and that no one will prevent her leaving the harbour when you return,” he answered. “But remember, sir, I cannot prevent your people quitting her if they wish to do so.”

“I will trust to your honour, then, sir,” said I. “My men are staunch, and I have no fear of their deserting her. I am ready to set out whenever the ladies desire it.”

“And I have determined to accompany you,” exclaimed Lieutenant Spinks, grasping my hand again. “One good turn deserves another. This is the gentleman who preserved my life, and I want to show that I am grateful. He will be safe enough from molestation on his way to General Washington’s camp, but he may find some difficulty when returning.”

Of course I told Mr Spinks that I should be very glad of his society, though I wondered how he could be certain of obtaining leave of absence from his regiment. I soon learned, however, that both officers and men took the liberty of giving themselves leave, with very little ceremony, from many of the militia regiments, into which but a very slack style of discipline had as yet been introduced.

While the ladies were resting, and preparing for their journey, I returned on board the tender, and, leaving Grampus in charge, received from all hands an assurance that they would obey his orders and remain faithful to their colours.

“Never fear us, Mr Hurry,” said Grampus; “we hopes you will see them beautiful ladies safe with their friends, and will soon come back to us.”

I told him I hoped to return in a few days, and as I went over the side all hands gave three cheers as an earnest of their sincerity.

The arrangements for the journey were soon made, and by two o’clock our party was ready to commence the journey. At the door stood a coach covered with gilding, but very much the worse for wear. Four horses were attached to it, but their sorry appearance showed that they would not be able to drag it except at a slow pace, and for a short distance. On the coach-box sat a white-headed negro. He had once been a strong stout man, but age had shrunk up his flesh and muscles, and his countenance now seemed composed alone of black bumps and wrinkles and protuberances, with two white orbs set in the midst of them. His lank body and limbs were covered with a livery of blue and silver, but, like the coach, sadly faded and worn. Two horses, of somewhat better appearance, were held near at hand by some negro boys, and a little farther off two black mounted servants held the reins of a couple of well-conditioned palfreys with side-saddles on their backs. Mr Plowden led the ladies to the door.

“I have done all I could, madam, for your convenience,” said he, bowing low and pointing to the equipage. “This war has left me in a very different state to what I have been accustomed, or I would have enabled you to journey in a style more befitting your position in life. The carriage will convey you as far as those sorry steeds are able, and then I fear that the bad nature of the roads will require you to continue your journey on horseback.”

Suitable replies were made, affectionate expressions were exchanged between Mrs and the Misses Plowden and their

guests, and the latter took their seats in the old family coach. Spinks and I mounted the horses, the black servants and the baggage-horses followed, and with many bows and waves of the hands the cavalcade moved forward. The carriage rolled creakingly on, pitching and tumbling and bumping over the stones and into the ruts in the road. Frequently I moved up to the window to exchange words with its occupants. They both expressed their anxiety for the time when they might dismiss the vehicle and mount on horseback. At first the country was very uninteresting, but by degrees it improved, and rich undulating ground and hills and fertile valleys, here and there dotted with cottages and flocks and herds, were seen on every side. As we proceeded, men in half-military uniform, working in the fields, would look up and inquire whence we came and where we were going, but they were easily satisfied with the civil answers we gave them.

It was late in the day before we drove into the courtyard of a house very similar in character to that we had lately left. We were not expected, but a note from Mr Plowden explained matters, and we were cordially received by the ladies of the family. The master was with the army, so were his sons. One had already fallen in the unfortunate strife. I at first was received with some stiffness. I could not expect it to be otherwise; but that soon wore off, and I felt myself as one of the family. I must not delay in describing each event of our journey.

A truly Indian summer morning ushered in the next day. In high spirits Miss Carlyon mounted her horse, as did her aunt, and with kind well-wishes from our late hosts we trotted out of the courtyard. They felt great relief from the noise and jolting of the old coach. The old black coachman gazed after us with a look of reproach, as if he thought we had no business to be merry after we had deserted him. That day's ride was to me one of the most perfect enjoyment. Scarcely for a moment did I leave Madeline's side, and every instant knit my heart closer and closer to her. I forgot all that the future might bring forth, all the difficulties to be encountered; the months, perhaps years, of separation, before I could hope by any possibility to call her mine, and revelled only in the present. I could not tell what she might think or feel. I dared not ask, lest the delightful enchantment by which I was surrounded might be rudely broken. She eagerly listened to all I said, smiled and blushed and—but I won't go on. I knew that I loved her, and I thought she loved me. Spinks was an excellent companion on such an occasion; silent and phlegmatic, he occasionally only would ride up to offer a few remarks to Mrs Tarleton, and then would drop astern and seem lost in his own reflections. As the day advanced, signs of war's malign effects began to appear. Poor fellows, with bandaged heads and arms in slings, were met limping and crawling along. Hedges and walls, overturned cottages, and whole hamlets burned to the ground. The tide of war had during the summer swept over this part of the Jerseys. The mischief we saw was, however, chiefly effected by foraging parties from the British forces, especially by the Hessians, so dreaded and hated by the colonists.

"Two causes have alienated all true hearts from the British crown in this country," observed Mrs Tarleton. "The supercilious manner of the civil and especially of the military officers sent from England towards the colonists, and the attempt to coerce them with foreign mercenaries. We could have borne unjust laws and taxes, because they could be repealed; but the pride of all the gentlemen of the land has been aroused not to be quelled, except by entire separation from those who could thus insult them."

We were within a few miles of that magnificent stream, the Delaware River, when we gained sufficiently exact information to enable us to guide our future course. The British fleet, under Lord Howe, had complete command of the lower part of the river. The city of Philadelphia, lately the seat of Government, had fallen into the hands of the army under General Howe, after the battle of Brandywine, when Washington had been compelled to retreat. General Howe, it appeared, had neglected to take advantage of his success, and the patriot forces, emboldened by, his inaction, were about to attack him again, when a terrific storm of rain prevented the engagement. After this the British troops, having advanced to Germaintown, were vigorously attacked by the whole patriot army, and victory seemed inclined to their standard when, the Americans becoming separated by a thick fog, a panic seized them, and they made a precipitate retreat. General Washington's army, we heard, was now at a place called White Marsh, about fourteen miles from Philadelphia. Thither Mrs Tarleton resolved immediately to proceed, in the hopes of meeting her brother, who, though wounded, was still, she heard, with his regiment.

As both shores of the Delaware were now in possession of the British, there was much chance of our falling in with some of their troops. Strange as it may appear, I felt very anxious to avoid them. I could not bear the idea of exposing my charges to the scrutiny and the inquiries to which they would be subject, though my presence would, I trusted, prevent their being exposed to any personal annoyance. We accordingly turned our horses' heads to the north, intending to cross the river at a spot a considerable distance above Philadelphia. We had travelled some miles without meeting anyone from whom we could make inquiries. I began to be somewhat anxious, fearing that the peasantry might have concealed themselves in consequence of the approach of an enemy, and I was on the point of begging Lieutenant Spinks to ride forward and make inquiries, when a cloud of dust rose up from a valley before us, and the dull heavy tramp of a body of men was heard ascending the winding road up the hill. I instantly reined up and drew my companions on one side, where they were concealed by a small clump of trees, while I advanced with Spinks a little way in front, each of us waving a white handkerchief, to show that we were there with no hostile intent.

"They are the enemy!" cried Spinks. "Oh, the villains! May they all be—"

"Which enemy?" I asked, forgetting for a moment that he was an American.

"The scoundrel Hessians," he answered with an oath. "They are the last people I would wish to have met."

I agreed with him, but there was no time to be lost, as we could distinguish the advanced guard with their glittering arms and dark uniforms coming over the brow of the hill. No sooner were we perceived than several men advanced at double quick step and surrounded us. We could not make ourselves understood, so, holding Sir Peter Parker's letter in my hand, and pointing to my uniform, I signified that I wished to be conducted to their colonel. By this time a halt was called. A light company was sent out as skirmishers into the wood through which we had passed, and the officer I asked for rode up in front. He looked at my naval jacket, and then at the militiaman's uniform, and evidently regarded us with no little suspicion. I found, however, that he could speak English, and I endeavoured rapidly to

explain matters.

“A very odd story this you tell me,” he answered. “How can you expect me to believe you?”

I handed him Sir Peter’s letter.

“I do not know his handwriting. This may be a forgery,” said he. The colonel was a weather-beaten, stern, wary old man. I have seldom met a person less likely to be moved by any of the gentler sympathies of our nature.

“I’ll tell you what it is, colonel. I was left for dead, near New York, by some of your people, and this sea-officer here came up and saved my life, and that’s the reason I came along with him,” exclaimed Spinks, who was excessively indignant at our statement being doubted.

The mention of New York reminded me of the narrow escape I had had of my life on the day to which Spinks alluded, and I thought I recognised in the man before me the officer in charge of the party of Hessians who so nearly finished Simeon and me when General Pigot came up to our rescue. I asked the colonel if he recollected the circumstance. He smiled grimly.

“I think I recollect the circumstance,” said he; “but what has that to do with the matter?”

“Simply that you thought I was a rebel then, and you found that you were mistaken, and in the same way that you will find you are mistaken now if you molest me.”

Scarcely had I ceased speaking when a shriek resounded through the wood. I knew too well whence it proceeded. I wheeled round my horse, and, putting my spurs into his side, was in a moment at the spot where I had left the two ladies and their attendants. I found them surrounded by Hessian soldiers, some of whom were attempting to catch hold of their horses’ heads and to drag them from their saddles. I drew a sword from the scabbard of the first man I reached, and before he could look round I had dashed in among the miscreants, cutting at them right and left. I felt maddened with rage, and thought not of the consequences. Madeline saw me coming, and held out her hands to implore my aid. I reached her just as a soldier had succeeded in catching the bridle of her horse and had almost dragged her to the ground. With a blow of my sword I sent the fellow reeling backwards, and placed her in her saddle. Mrs Tarleton had managed hitherto to elude the soldiers; but in another instant they would have closed in on her, when Spinks, followed by the Hessian colonel, galloped up.

The appearance of the latter prevented the soldiers from attacking her. He ordered them back into their ranks. I pointed to the pale and terrified ladies, and asked him if this was the way Germans behaved towards helpless women. He looked ashamed and attempted to apologise. I saw my advantage and pushed it to the utmost.

“They are anxious to visit a wounded, perhaps a dying, relation, and you threaten to delay them,” said I.

“We cannot allow people to wander about, and perhaps give notice of our expedition,” replied the colonel.

“As to that, colonel, depend on it, every step you take is well known to General Washington, and if he does not attack you it is because he does not think it worth while,” put in Spinks, in his amusingly independent manner.

The Hessian officer looked as if he would like to eat him.

“Well, sir,” said I, “you have every proof I can give you of the correctness of my statement. You see what Sir Peter Parker says. Will you allow my party to proceed?”

The colonel must have seen that we could in reality not do him the slightest injury by any information we could give as to his movements, so after some more conversation he ordered his detachment to advance, while he remained with us. It was with much satisfaction that I saw them march by, casting no very friendly looks at us.

“Now proceed as fast as you can,” said the grim old officer. “My men are rather unmanageable at times. They might have attempted to revenge themselves for the way you treated their comrades, though on my word you were perfectly right.”

We thanked the gruff old man for his courtesy. I suspect that he had a softer heart than he would have wished to appear under his rough exterior, and, taking his hint, moved on as rapidly as our horses would carry us to the northward.

I will not repeat the indignant expressions uttered by Mrs Tarleton at the conduct of the Hessians. I could only blush for my country, and bitterly regret that such men were employed in that fratricidal warfare. Madeline expressed her thanks to me, rather by her looks than her words. She said little, afraid of wounding my feelings, but I suspect that the behaviour of the Hessians made her abandon any sympathy for the Tories which she might have entertained. Every now and then we looked round to see that none of the Hessians were following us. Their march could be traced by the fields trampled down—cottages unroofed or burnt—stacks of corn scattered about, and walls and hedges overturned. It showed the utterly unprotected condition of New Jersey at the time—that no opposition was offered them in their progress. For my part I felt that the patriot cause was hopeless, and it was with a secret feeling of gratification that I pictured to myself the service I might render to my friends when the royal cause should finally triumph, and all ranks be compelled to submit. I did not venture to ask Mrs Tarleton what opinion she had formed from the aspect of affairs, but she apparently divined my thoughts.

“It is very sad to behold all this,” she remarked, pointing to the devastated country. “But, Mr Hurry, do not be mistaken. Those who come to conquer us little know the amount of endurance possessed by the Anglo-Saxon race, if they fancy that we are about to succumb because they have laid waste our fields, cut down our fruit-trees, and burned our villages, or because our undisciplined troops have in some instances been compelled to retreat before

them. I tell you, Mr Hurry, we shall be victorious in the end."

Soon after this we came to a spot where three roads branched off before us. We hesitated which to take, and not a person was to be seen to inquire our way. That to the right led, it appeared to me, in the direction we wished to proceed. We took it, and shortly began to ascend a steep hill among trees, now richly tinted with the varied hues of autumn, though many of the leaves had already fallen, and thickly strewed the ground. Never had my eye rested on such gorgeous colouring as that wooded height presented. Madeline and I could not refrain from reining up our horses, and turning round to enjoy the superb view which lay spread out before us over the country across which we had lately passed. At our feet was a broad valley, with a succession of undulating hills beyond, and fields and orchards and cottages sprinkled about. There were to be seen groves of the delicate straw-tinted beech, and the ruddy maple, with its shades of brightest yellow and green, and oak forests of a dark copper hue, as if changed into metal by an enchanter's wand, and in the hollows, dark patches of the sombre cypress of North America, which delights to grow in the stagnant marsh; nor was the graceful birch with its white stem, or the willow, wanting to add variety to the woodland scene. To our right the majestic stream of the broad Delaware wound round from the north-west towards the city of Philadelphia, now the head-quarters of General Howe's victorious army. While we were looking across the valley at the wood into which the Hessian troops had passed, we saw several men appear at the outskirts. After looking about them, it seemed to us, they descended rapidly the hill. Others followed, and it appeared as if the main body were making a retrograde movement, and perhaps might march along the very road we were taking. At all events I was anxious not to expose my charges to any fresh insults, and therefore once more put the party in movement. Spinks volunteered to ride back to ascertain in what direction the Hessians were about to march. He promised not to expose himself unnecessarily, and to overtake us speedily, so I saw no objection to his proposal.

We rode on as fast as the horses could go, without risk of falling over the very rough and ill-formed road. It was late in the day, and still Spinks had not overtaken us. I began to feel anxious about him, for I knew that, should he fall into the hands of the Hessians, he would have very little mercy to expect from them. After what had occurred they would probably look upon him as a spy, and hang him without ceremony. I thought of sending back one of the servants who had charge of the baggage-horses, to try and learn something about him, but Caractacus, the negro in question, positively refused to go.

"If Massa Spinks dead, Cractus no make him live again," he argued. "If he live, he come back of his self."

There was no controverting this opinion, so we continued our journey. We at last came to a cottage, in which was an old woman almost deaf and blind. After much interrogation, I found that her two sons had gone to the wars with General Washington, and that a daughter-in-law who lived with her was away to get some provisions, and, what was of importance to us, that we were on the road we had wished to take. We had still a league to go before reaching the house at which Mrs Tarleton wished to rest before crossing the river. Spinks knew of it, so we hoped that he would rejoin us there. There was something very genuine about that poor fellow. I had done him a service, and he wished to do me one, so I could not help taking a liking to him. Both Mrs Tarleton and her niece had become somewhat anxious about our friend. The shades of evening grew rapidly denser, for the twilight in that latitude is short, and still he did not appear. We could not, however, stop for him, and it became at last so dark that we could scarcely find the entrance to the house at which we were to stop. It seemed a long, low building, surrounded by a courtyard and walls, with several out-houses and gardens and orchards outside. I made out an entrenchment in front, with a wooden bridge over a moat, and then a stone wall with some massive gates. After ringing for some time they were opened, and several armed men appeared on either side. As we rode on to the hall door there appeared a blaze of light inside, and a tall, dignified old gentleman came down the steps to assist the ladies to dismount.

"I am glad to welcome you and your niece to my house under any circumstances, Mrs Tarleton," said he, as he led them up the steps. "But you find us somewhat in marshal array just now, and I am afraid may be put to some inconvenience. The enemy's troops have crossed the river, and it has been considered necessary to fortify this post."

"I can never complain of any inconvenience in our noble cause," said Mrs Tarleton.

I knew well that not only would she cheerfully bear any inconvenience, but would glory in any suffering or hardship she might be called on to endure on account of it.

The public rooms, as we passed along, were, I perceived, filled with a number of persons, some in military uniforms, and others in the dresses of civilians. I was formally introduced, and though at first I was received with some restraint, in a little time the manner of the host and his numerous guests became as cordial as if I was an old friend, instead of belonging to the party of their enemies. There were no ladies or any females left of the family. They had all been sent off to another house some way into the interior, to which it was believed the enemy were not likely to penetrate.

From what I could learn, it was not at all improbable that the house, which commanded a reach of the river, might be attacked before long, and I was therefore very anxious to get my friends across it, and once more on their journey towards head-quarters. Mrs Tarleton, however, seemed to think that she might wait safely till the next morning, and, as no news of the British troops had been brought in, I hoped that the delay would not bring them into any danger. Supper was over, and the officers of the little garrison not on guard had retired to their rooms. I had one allotted to me, looking out on the river, which shone with a silvery hue from the light of an almost full moon, while the swill of the stream, as it rushed by, had a pleasing and soothing effect. I could hear, ever and anon, the distant bark of a dog, the tramp and challenge of the sentries, and the voices of some of the men of a militia regiment quartered in the out-houses and in some hastily-constructed huts within the courtyard.

My mind was occupied with too many thoughts to allow me to sleep. After several attempts I gave it up. My companions in the room were much in the same condition, and as they rose and resumed their outer clothing, I did the same. They proposed making the round of the works, and I asked leave to accompany them. Scarcely had we reached the front door when voices were heard, and the clatter of a horse's hoofs in the courtyard.

“A scout has come in, and will bring us news of the enemy,” observed one of the officers. “Let us hear what he has to report.”

In another second the light of the lamp in the hall fell on the countenance of the newcomer, and I recognised my friend Lieutenant Spinks. His dress was bespattered with mud from head to foot; his horse shook in every limb as he dismounted; his head was bare, his countenance was pale as death, and through a rent in his coat I saw the blood oozing slowly out.

“They are coming!” he exclaimed. “The rascally Hessians! I have been watching them all the evening to ascertain which way they were taking. I got too close at last, and was discovered by one of their pickets, just as they were getting under arms. They are going to make a night-attack on this place. Of that I am certain.”

The senior officer in the house, Colonel Barlow, now came down, and Spinks made him a full report of his adventures. He had run a great risk of being taken, and I was truly glad that he had escaped. There seemed to be no doubt that the Hessian troops were advancing to attack the house. The officers assembled were unanimous in the opinion that they could defend it. Every one was instantly on foot. Loop-holes had been cut in all the walls. They were at once occupied by men. Some light field-pieces defended the front of the house—the weakest point; some men were stationed on the roof; the bridge over the moat was drawn in, and, indeed, every preparation was made to stand a siege.

In the midst of the preparations Mrs Tarleton appeared in the hall among the officers collected there. Her countenance was as calm, and her voice, when she spoke, as firm as if nothing unusual was occurring.

“You will be able to hold this fort against those wretched mercenaries, I hope, Colonel Barlow?”

The colonel replied that he had no doubt about it.

“Then we will remain and see the result,” she answered. “I cannot bear the thought of running away when so many of my countrymen are exposed to danger.”

“While such are the sentiments of our women, our cause is sure to triumph, madam,” said the colonel. “Still it is my duty to try and persuade you not to expose yourself and niece. The fortune of war is always uncertain. Independent of the risk you run from the shot of the enemy, we may be overcome, and then your fate would be a sad one. It will be wise in you if you will consent to leave us at once. A boat is being made ready to ferry you across the river, and on the other side the country is occupied by patriot troops.”

Still Mrs Tarleton would not consent to go. She knew that her presence would encourage the garrison to resist to the utmost. I would very much rather for her sake, and especially for that of her niece, that she had gone at once to a place of safety. As, however, I must, at all events, be a non-combatant, I felt that I could remain by their side and aid their escape. The better to be able to do this, I set off at once to examine the situation of the place, and to see that the boat was in perfect readiness to cross the river. Caractacus and his companion, I found, were both accustomed to pull an oar. There was a horse-boat also at hand, and as there would probably be time before the attack commenced, I got Colonel Barlow to allow the horses and baggage to be conveyed across at once, and left at a farm-house of which he told me, at a short distance from the banks. I directed Caractacus and Sambo, as soon as they had performed this duty, to return at once, so as to be ready for any emergency.

“Is, massa, we come back and fight de Hessians; oh, ki, berry likely,” exclaimed the negro, giving a poke with his elbow at his sable companion’s ribs.

The other grinned, as if he considered the bare possibility of his doing such a thing a very good joke. I saw that I could not very well depend on them.

“No, I don’t want you to fight, only to help the ladies escape; you understand me? I promise you a dollar each if I find you at the boat when I come down.”

The negroes understood this sort of reasoning better than any argument I had used, and promised obedience. Had Mrs Tarleton, however, known beforehand of the arrangements I had made, I believe she would have countermanded them, so confident was she on all occasions of the success of her party. When any defeat had occurred, she evidently looked on it as an exception to the general rule, or rather as a means to the victorious termination of the strife.

By the time I had made all the arrangements I had described it was past midnight. Some of the gentlemen retired again to their beds, but I with others sat up. My position was rather a curious one. Here was I, a guest in an enemy’s camp, with the prospect of an engagement, and unable to side with either party. Certainly, however, I could not have been treated more kindly or courteously than I was by the Americans on that occasion. A party of a dozen or more of us were sitting smoking and chatting in the large plank-lined dining-hall, by the light of a huge fire, when a sergeant of militia entered with the announcement that several scouts had come in, reporting that the enemy were advancing, and were not more than a couple of miles off. In less than an hour, then, we might expect an attack. I have never felt more anxious than I did on that occasion. Immediately all within the house were on the alert; the walls were manned; the wooden bridge hauled up, the guns loaded and run out, and every preparation was made to repel the assault. Being myself very doubtful of the result, I looked about for a place where the ladies might remain in comparative safety. The most secure spot was a root house, where stores of vegetables are kept during the winter. There, at least, no shot could reach my friends, and as it was on the side nearest the river, they might more easily escape thence to the boat. Having found a piece of matting, I carried it, with some chairs and cloaks, to the place, and then returned to beg Mrs Tarleton to take shelter there. She laughed at my proposal.

“What! do you think that the women of America are accustomed to skulk from their enemies when their presence may avail to encourage their friends, and they may be of use to the wounded?” she answered, looking at the same

time towards Madeline, in the expectation that she would utter her sentiments.

“Perhaps, dear aunt, we might be of more use out of the way of danger, in some place where, should any of our friends be wounded, they might be brought to us,” remarked her niece, “especially as Mr Hurry has so considerately prepared a refuge for us.”

Still nothing Madeline or I could say could move Mrs Tarleton from her purpose. At length Colonel Barlow came to our aid, and so strongly urged the point that she appeared inclined to give in. We were standing at the moment in the centre of the dining-hall. Our conversation was interrupted by the loud report of musketry—the pattering of the bullets against the roof and sides of the house—the louder roar of the field-pieces—the cries and shouts of the men within the building, and of their unseen assailants. The colonel and his officers hurried off instantly to the defences. Madeline trembled; even Mrs Tarleton turned pale. Several shots found their way into the room where we were. The shouts of the assailants grew louder; the bullets fell thicker and thicker. A bright glare burst forth. One of the out-houses had caught fire. Two wounded men were brought in and placed on the ground. Mrs Tarleton and her niece knelt down by their sides. I assisted. Madeline, I observed, had ceased to tremble while employed in her work of mercy. One poor fellow soon ceased to breathe; he had been shot through the lungs. The other groaned heavily; the haemorrhage was internal. I soon saw that their efforts to aid him were of little avail. He quickly joined his companion in another world. For a minute or more there was a cessation of the attack: then it began again with greater fury than before, and the bullets came pattering against the walls like hail, many finding their way into the room. I seized Mrs Tarleton’s hand, exclaiming—

“Come, madam! no woman should remain thus unnecessarily exposed.”

Madeline took her other hand, and together we led her through the garden to the place I had prepared for their reception.

Chapter Twelve.

The Americans overpowered.—Spinks assists us to escape.—Cross river.—Reach Washington’s camp.—Interview with the great chief.—Mrs Tarleton finds her brother, Colonel Hallet, wounded.—My stay in the camp.—An affair of outposts.—Farewell to Madeline.—Quit the camp, accompanied by Spinks.—After many adventures rejoin the tender.

Madeline and I endeavoured to hurry along Mrs Tarleton, but she appeared totally insensible to the dangerous position in which she and her niece were placed. Several bullets came whizzing by us, but she kept her head as erect as would the oldest veteran. I had almost to drag her on, and I was very thankful when at length we reached the door of the building unscathed. I had told Lieutenant Spinks where to find us, should he wish to communicate with the ladies.

In spite of his wound, he had joined in the defence of the place. Not so Caractacus and Sambo. When we entered, I saw two bundles among the piled-up turnips and potatoes. I gave a kick at them, and out tumbled our two sable attendants.

“Oh, ki, massa, is dat you?” exclaimed the first, springing to his feet. “Come along—dis no good place for any wise man. We get across de river, and away from dese Hesse devils.”

“All in good time,” I answered. “Do you take care of the ladies while I go and learn the state of affairs.”

It was now the part of Mrs Tarleton and Madeline to press me to stay, and not to expose myself to danger. I promised to obey in the latter point, but urged the necessity of ascertaining how matters were progressing, that I might judge whether we might safely remain where we were, or whether it would be better at once to cross the river. Unwillingly they let me go. I managed to climb up to the top of a wall. A glance showed me that a considerable body of men were engaged in the attack, and that they were well provided with field-pieces, which were already making some impression on the walls. Two of the out-houses were in flames; the roof of the main building had caught fire, and men were engaged in extinguishing it, while the number of the killed and wounded was very considerable. I felt convinced that, heroically as the garrison were defending themselves, they could not long hold out. With this conviction I returned to my friends, and urged Mrs Tarleton to allow me to conduct her at once to the boat. While she was still hesitating, Lieutenant Spinks rushed into the vault, blood streaming from his arm. “All is lost!” he exclaimed. “Fly, ladies, fly, or those villainous Hessians will be up to us before you can escape. The colonel is making a stout resistance, and may keep them back for some time, but he ordered me to come on and hasten your flight.”

After hearing this, I was determined that there should be no further delay; so, sending the negroes on to the boat, we took the ladies’ arms and followed as rapidly as they could walk. Not for a moment would I allow them to stop and look back.

The boat was in readiness: we stepped in. I urged Spinks to come also, as with his wound he could be of no further use. I had, however, almost to force him on board. Without a moment’s delay we shoved off. I put Spinks at the helm, and took an oar. The blacks seized the other two, and there was no necessity to tell them to pull away lustily. We were only just in time. The shouts and shrieks and cries increased. Thick flew the bullets—many passing over our heads. The flames grew brighter; the main building was on fire, and burned furiously. By its bright glare we could distinguish the dark figures of the combatants—the assailants climbing over the walls on either hand, and the defenders of the place in detached parties, still desperately endeavouring to oppose them. Suddenly trumpets sounded, voices were heard calling loudly, and there was a cessation of firing. We pulled on, however, across the river, for I thought very likely that, if we were discovered by the victors, we should be fired at, and compelled to return. The ruddy glare was reflected on the broad stream, and the banks were lighted up by the flames of the

burning house, so that we had no difficulty in finding our way across to the right landing-place.

The farmer in whose charge the horses had been left, brought them out as soon as we appeared. “I would ask you to stay,” he said, “but I know not how soon the enemy may come upon us. You must take a stirrup-cup, though; it will do the hearts of the poor ladies good. They want something to keep up their spirits, I’m sure.” I forget the mixture that was produced. I know that it was very good, though the ladies would not be prevailed on to do more than taste it. Lieutenant Spinks would allow us to make only a very short delay to get his wound washed and bound up, declaring all the time that it was of very little consequence. “I’m well accustomed to shot-holes by this time, I guess, so never fear,” said he. I must say this for him, that he was decidedly a very plucky fellow, and was, I suspect, a fair sample of the men who won independence for America. The good-natured farmer then ordered a lad on horseback to show us the way, and uttered many hearty good wishes for our safety. “None of the enemy are to the north of us, so I think you may reach the camp without difficulty,” he remarked. He asked no questions about me. I suspect that Caractacus and Sambo had fully enlightened him.

We pushed on for the remainder of the night, and did not even draw rein till morning dawned. It was wonderful how well the ladies endured the fatigue they were undergoing; not a complaint escaped either of them; indeed, Mrs Tarleton seemed rather to glory in the hardships she was undergoing.

Instead of striking at once into the country, we kept to the north, so as to make a circuit towards the spot where it was understood General Washington was then encamped. I tried to persuade Spinks to stop and rest, but on he would go, as long as his horse would carry him. Our steeds, however, at last began to knock up, and we were glad to discover a farm-house among the trees a couple of hundred yards from the road. The inmates received us cordially. Breakfast was instantly placed before us, and a room prepared where the ladies might lie down and seek that rest they so much required. The farmer put Spinks into an arm-chair, and scarcely had he finished his breakfast than he leant back and fell fast asleep. I felt much inclined to follow his example, but our host would not let me. He wanted to hear all about us, and, to do him justice, he was ready to impart an abundance of information in return. Unaccustomed to the sight of uniforms, it never occurred to him that I was a British officer, and from the far-from-pleasant way he spoke of my countrymen, I felt no inclination to enlighten him. What surprised me most was to hear of the disorganised state of Washington’s army—the want of food and clothing from which it was suffering, and the utter insufficiency of all the commissariat arrangements. The wonder was how, in such a condition, the American forces could withstand General Howe’s well-supplied, and well-disciplined troops.

“I’ll tell you what it is,” observed the farmer; “one has a just cause, and the other hasn’t—that’s the difference.”

I did not tell him that there were two sides to that opinion, and that some people might consider the royal cause the just one.

A three hours’ rest refreshed all our party as well as our horses, and we were once more in the saddle. No further incident of importance occurred till in the afternoon we came suddenly on an outlying picket of the patriot forces.

The main body of Washington’s army was at this time encamped at a place called White Marsh, about fourteen miles to the north of Philadelphia. We had approached it from the north-east. The officer in command of the picket came forward, and Mrs Tarleton explained who she was, and her object in visiting the camp.

“Can you give me any information respecting my brother, Colonel Hallet?” she asked with an anxious voice.

“Colonel Hallet is alive, madam, but he requires more rest than he obtains,” answered the officer with a grave look. “I see him often, but I cannot report favourably of him.”

I saw that more was implied than was said. While this conversation was going on, I brought my horse close up to that of Miss Carlyon. I could not but realise to myself that the moment of our parting had arrived. The thought sent a pang, such as I had never before felt, through my heart. Madeline herself looked grave and sad. Was it the account of her uncle’s state of health which made her so or was it—vain puppy that I felt myself—because we were about to part—perhaps for ever.

How distant the prospect appeared, with the numberless vicissitudes of a sailor’s life intervening, when we might hope to meet again! Could we venture to indulge that hope? Should we ever meet? Should I not rather be prepared to part for ever? I would not allow myself to be overcome by a thought so full of agony.

“Miss Carlyon!” I gasped out, and I drew my breath, while I felt as if I could not utter another word.

“Hurricane Hurry!” said a low voice within me, “what are you about? Act like a man!” However, I did not feel a bit the wiser. “Miss Carlyon,” I began again, “I have almost completed the duty I was sent on. You and your aunt will soon be within the lines of General Washington’s camp.”

She looked very grave, and I thought pained. I continued: “I must now return with all speed to my ship, though—though—” I could not for the life of me find words to express what I wanted to say.

“Mr Hurry must be aware how deep an obligation he has conferred upon my aunt, and we should have been glad if we could have avoided making his duty irksome,” said Miss Carlyon in a low, deep voice, while the colour came into her cheeks for an instant and then fled, leaving her paler than before.

I was certain her voice trembled as she uttered the last words.

“Irksome!” I exclaimed. “Oh, Miss Carlyon, how could you for a moment think so? It has been the most delightful duty I ever performed. Duty did I call it? It has been unspeakable joy and happiness to me, almost from the time you came on board my vessel, to feel that I was of service to you; that you were under my care and protection. Day after day

that feeling increased, till it has grown into a part of my being. It would be my delight to feel that I could spend my life in the same way. Why should I conceal it? You may not care for me—you will return to your own people, and perhaps scarcely ever cast a thought on the rough sailor who is tossing about on the wild ocean; but he never, never can forget the days of intense happiness he has passed in your society, in watching your every look, in serving you with a true and faithful love—in—”

The temper of the Hurrys was breaking forth with a vengeance.

“Oh no, no; do not say those words!” she exclaimed; “I do—I do regard you with—with—deeper feeling than I ought. Can you ask me to say more? But oh, Mr Hurry, this dreadful war!”

“Madeline, the war will end; the time will come when you may be mine!” I exclaimed vehemently. “Will you—will you then consent?”

“Mr Hurry, I will,” she answered calmly. “If you come and claim me, you will find me true. Some women never love more than once. Yet I will not bind you. You have your profession to occupy you. Your family may disdain a rebel’s child with her property confiscated. You may wander to all parts of the world: you will see numberless women—many very far superior to me—you may—”

I interrupted her with a vehement exclamation of denial as to the possibility of anything she suggested occurring. I need not repeat all I said—all the vows I uttered. I did not believe that mortal power could make me break them.

We had remained somewhat behind the rest of the party while Mrs Tarleton was speaking to the officer of the picket, and Lieutenant Spinks was gaining information as to the road we were to take to reach head-quarters. It was now time to move on. Anxious as I was not to part from Madeline till the last moment, I felt that, as an officer of the Royalist party, I ought to offer to remain in the outskirts of the camp; but to my great satisfaction Mrs Tarleton at once overruled my objections.

“Our friends will wish to thank you for the great service you have rendered us, and you will require a few hours’ rest at least before you commence your return journey,” she observed.

Madeline’s look I thought said, “Do not go yet;” so I agreed to the proposal. The marks of recent strife were sadly evident along the road over which we passed, in the blackened remains of houses, woods cut down, and fences destroyed.

We passed through several other pickets till we finally came to where a considerable body of troops were encamped within intrenchments, and with some rugged hills in front. Among the troops was a corps of fine, tall, active-looking young men, whose uniforms and accoutrements were in the most perfect order. Accustomed as I had been to see the ill-clothed, various-sized, undisciplined militia, I was particularly struck by their appearance.

“Those are General Washington’s guards,” observed Mrs Tarleton. “He has much need of such men; for, though prizing the lives of those under him, he is sadly careless of his own. He himself is, I do not doubt, not far-off.”

We had not ridden a hundred yards when we saw before us a group of mounted officers in handsome uniforms, with plumes nodding and arms glittering. I had somehow or other pictured to myself the rebel generals as a dingy-looking set, like the Covenanters of old, or Cromwell’s Invincibles, and I could scarcely persuade myself that those I saw were officers of the enemy’s army. Among them rode one whom the eye would not fail to single out from the rest—tall, handsome, and graceful—the noble expression of his countenance showed that he had the right to command. I was struck, too, with the way in which he managed his horse, and sat on his saddle. He was an enemy and a rebel; but for the life of me I could not help pulling off my hat and bowing low, when, as he saw Mrs Tarleton, he rode forward to greet her. I guessed he could be no other than the renowned chief General Washington. Among the officers were Generals Sullivan, Wayne, and Woodford; Lord Stirling, a gallant Scotchman, who in spite of his rank had joined the patriots; the noble Frenchman, the Marquis Lafayette, and his veteran German friend the Baron De Kalb; as also Generals Irvine, Reed, and other native officers. Their appearance was very military, but I had no eye for anyone but the commander-in-chief. He bowed to Madeline, and took Mrs Tarleton’s hand in a most kind and courteous manner, while his voice as he spoke was gentle and melodious.

“I gladly welcome you to our camp, madam, deeply as I mourn the cause which has brought you here. Your gallant brother is still with us. One of my aides-de-camp will conduct you to his quarters. You will, I fear, find Colonel Hallet much changed. He should long ago have retired from active duty, but his patriotism overcame all suggestions of prudence. I would that all who advocate the independence of our country were like him!”

Mrs Tarleton made a brief answer. She was anxious to hurry to her brother. A short conversation, however, first ensued between her and the general, which I did not overhear; then, calling me up, she introduced me formally and explained who I was. General Washington received me in the frankest manner.

“I am happy to welcome one who has been of so much service to those I highly esteem, and Mr Hurry may be assured that he will find none but friends as long as he thinks fit to remain in this camp.”

I made a suitable reply, regretting that duty must summon me so speedily away.

“Perhaps you will have reason to alter your intention,” said Mrs Tarleton with marked emphasis. “I will make you known to Lord Stirling and other friends; they may have more success than I have had in proving to you which is the right side of the question.”

Madeline looked at me, and I thought she seemed to say, “Oh, I wish they may succeed!”

General Washington simply remarked, “At all events, Mr Hurry is welcome here as long as he stays with us. I hope to have the pleasure of his company at dinner to-day.”

Several of the other officers came forward and spoke to me very kindly, and by the general’s directions a junior aide-de-camp attached himself to me, while another accompanied Mrs Tarleton and her niece to Colonel Hallet’s quarters.

As they rode away I could do no more than take a hurried and formal farewell of them both—I dared scarcely hope that I should be able to see them again. Lieutenant Spinks had several friends in the camp, with one of whom he intended to take up his quarters. He promised to call for me if I persisted in my resolution to commence our return journey on the following day. I found Captain Douglas, the officer in whose charge I was placed, a very pleasing, gentlemanly man. To avoid giving any cause of suspicion, I refrained from moving about without first asking him if I could walk in that direction, and I thus soon gained his good opinion, as he fully appreciated the motive of my conduct.

As the dinner-hour approached he took me to his tent, where I might get rid of the dust of my journey. It was pitched close to a farm-house occupied by the general. A barn attached to the farm-house, and hastily fitted up, served as a dining-hall and council-chamber. Here a number of officers, mostly generals and colonels, were assembled. I, a midshipman, felt very small among them; and certainly the attention which was paid me by so many great people was well calculated to turn my head. However, I was wide awake enough to know that all is not gold that glitters. From what I had previously heard, and from what I saw when passing through the camp, I could not help discovering that the American forces were in many respects in a very bad condition, ill-fed and worse clothed. Whole corps were in a very ragged state, and some were almost shoeless, and entirely stockingless. This in the summer was bad enough, but with winter coming on, it was enough to disorganise the whole army.

The feast to which I had been invited was, considering the state of affairs I have described, a very grand one. Everyone was in good spirits, and laughed and talked with the greatest freedom. I could scarcely believe that these were the men who had lately been engaged in a deadly strife, and might any moment be called out to give battle to a well-disciplined and fierce enemy. The provisions were somewhat coarse, and probably not cooked by the most experienced of artists; but I had been accustomed to meet with much worse at sea, so that I did not think much about the matter. Toasts were drunk, healths were pledged, and I was frequently invited to take wine by the officers present, although some looked at me, I thought with eyes rather askance, as if they did not quite approve of an officer of the opposite cause being at large in the camp.

The party, however, did not sit long after dinner, and when it broke up, Douglas took me with him to his tent. “Come, we will have a cup of coffee together before you turn in,” said he, as we sat down; “I have a French servant who understands cooking it better than any man I ever met. You shall have at the same time a pipe of the true Virginia weed. No one produces better than does our general on his estate; and this he gave to me as being some of the very best he ever saw.”

I found my friend’s encomiums were fully justified by the excellence of the tobacco; nor was his coffee to be despised. Several officers looked in occasionally, and we had a very pleasant evening. They were, however, at last hurriedly summoned off, and I threw myself down on the camp bedstead my host had prepared for my use.

Weary as I was I could not sleep. Something I was certain was going forward. More than once my ear caught the not very distant rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon, and I could not help fearing that the camp itself might be the object of attack, and that Mrs Tarleton and Madeline might be involved in the confusion which must ensue, and perhaps exposed to greater danger than any they had yet escaped. I considered how I could find means of being of service to them. Unhappily I did not know my way to Colonel Hallet’s quarters, and should the necessity I apprehended arrive, I was not likely to find anybody to guide me to them.

Douglas had gone out; I felt that I ought not to leave the tent till his return as I might very naturally, by wandering about, have thereby exposed myself to the suspicion of some sinister motive; so I lay still, eagerly listening that I might make a guess at the way things were going by the sounds which reached my ears. Now and then there was a roll of a drum—now a bugle sounded—then the distant report of a field-piece, and next, a whole volley of musketry. I sat up with my arm resting on my pillow, ready to spring to my feet at a moment’s notice. I felt very sad. I could not bear the thought of not seeing Madeline again; and even should I see her, I knew that I must be prepared to part from her for an indefinite period—for many long years perhaps. How changed might she and I be by that time!

“It will not do to indulge in these thoughts,” I exclaimed, passing the palm of my hand to my brow; “they will unman me, or make me turn traitor. Traitor! ay, that’s the word. I must throw no false gloss over it. Deserter—a wretch, false to his flag! No, no; she herself would despise me. These men now in arms around me have never sworn allegiance to their sovereign; they have been forced into rebellion by ill-treatment and injustice, by numberless insults. I should have no such excuse. If I unite myself to them it will be for my own gratification alone. No, no, I’ll not do it.”

I must confess that many such discussions as this I had in my own mind at this period, but I resisted the tempter in whatever form he came. The firing ceased; still I listened, expecting it to recommence. At length Douglas returned:—

“An affair of outpost!” he remarked carelessly. “You were disturbed by the firing. Howe’s army is somewhat near at hand. He wishes to draw us into the lower ground, but General Washington knows the strength of our position, and the advantage it gives us, too well to be tempted out of it. The enemy has retired; you may rest in quiet for the remainder of the night.”

By daylight all the camp was astir. Lieutenant Spinks soon made his appearance. He looked pale, but said that his wound did not hurt him, and that he should be able to accompany me if I was ready to commence our return journey. I had no excuse to offer to myself for delay, but every reason for getting back to my vessel. I however frankly told Captain Douglas that I wished to bid farewell to the ladies I had escorted to the camp. I have an idea that he

suspected how matters stood.

“We will ride to Colonel Hallet’s quarters directly after breakfast,” he answered promptly. “By that time they may be ready to receive you.”

Spinks promised in the interval to get the horses and servants prepared for the journey.

A frugal and somewhat hurried meal over, I set out with Captain Douglas. A ride of upwards of a mile over exceedingly rugged ground brought us to a hamlet of log huts. I remarked on the way the inaccessible nature of the ground, and saw the wisdom of Washington in holding it. I made no remark in reference to this, but we talked freely on various topics not immediately connected with the war. My heart beat quick as my companion pointed out a long low hut, and remarked—

“There lies poor Hallet, and I fear that he will never leave the place alive.”

The walls of the building consisted of long rough trunks of trees piled one on the other, the ends fitting at the angles together, and a scoop made in the lower log to admit the convex part of the upper one. Not that I remarked this at the time; all my thoughts were occupied with what was to occur. Douglas went to the door. It was opened by a soldier. After a minute’s delay he beckoned to me to follow him. In a small roughly-boarded room sat Mrs Tarleton and her niece. They rose, and the former took me cordially by the hand—

“Again I must thank you for enabling me to reach my poor brother in time to find him alive,” she said in a mournful voice.

I of course expressed my satisfaction of being of use, and looked to see what Madeline would say. I had taken her hand. She forgot to withdraw it.

“Indeed, indeed we are grateful,” she uttered in a low voice.

She could not trust herself to say more. I would have given much to have been alone with her, but I saw no chance of this. Perhaps it was better as it was. What she herself wished I could not tell. Mrs Tarleton showed no intention of leaving the room. I longed to say a great deal, but I felt tongue-tied. Captain Douglas had but little time to spare. He looked at his watch. I saw that I could no longer delay. I bade farewell to Mrs Tarleton. Madeline came to the door of the hut. I took her hand—it trembled in mine:—

“Oh! Mr Hurry,” she said in a low, faltering voice, “I will never, never forget you.”

Douglas had thrown himself on his horse. I leaped on mine and had to follow him at a gallop. Madeline was still standing at the door of the hut when a rocky height hid it from my view. Spinks was in readiness for a start with Caractacus and Sambo. We soon left the camp of the American army far behind, and pushed on for the Delaware. We crossed it some way up, for the British forces were now in possession of both banks for a considerable distance above Philadelphia. That city remained entirely in their hands. An attack had, however, I found from Spinks, been planned by the American generals to re-take it, but had been abandoned by Washington on account of the great loss of life it would have entailed.

In spite, however, of the general want of success of the patriots in the south, their spirits were raised, and their determination increased, to hold out by news of the surrender of General Burgoyne and his entire army to General Gates at Saratoga, as well as of the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and several forts on the Hudson, and the abandonment of a marauding expedition up that river from New York. We succeeded in crossing the Delaware without impediment; but we had no little difficulty, at times, to avoid falling in with the troops of the contending parties. Once or twice we had to gallop very hard to get out of their way. As Spinks observed, “It would be very disagreeable to be hung up as spies before we had time to explain who we were.” In spite of his weakness, he, poor fellow, bore up manfully, and I was truly sorry to part from him. At length we came in sight of Little Egg River, and, to my very great satisfaction, I caught a glimpse of the tender, directly opposite Mr Plowden’s house. I rode up to the door to restore him his horses, and to return him my thanks for their loan. He most kindly pressed me to remain a day with him, but I was anxious to be on board my vessel and once more at sea. Three cheers greeted me as I got alongside. Not a man had deserted, and Grampus gave me a favourable account of the behaviour of all hands. The tide and wind were fair for us. The anchor was hove up and sail was made. It was fortunate that I had not delayed. Scarcely were we under weigh when, through my glass, I saw a considerable body of troops with some light artillery march down to the beach. I doubted much whether Mr Plowden could have protected me. One or two shots came flying after us to make us heave-to, but the wind freshened. The little vessel glided swiftly on, till once more she bounded freely over the blue ocean. As I inhaled the fresh sea air I felt happier than I had done for many a day. I trimmed sails and stood away to the northward to rejoin the admiral off Newport.

Chapter Thirteen.

Rhode Island.—Sent to assist Syren and transport.—Frigate blows up.—Take a prize.—Grampus in charge.—Tender on her beam ends.—Join Sir Peter Parker on board Bristol.—My old messmates.—Appointed as lieutenant to the Chameleon and then to the Camel.—Sail for Gulf of Florida.—Fever.—War with France.—Once more at Jamaica.

I gave the land a wide berth, thereby getting fine weather, and with a fair breeze had a quick run for Rhode Island. I brought up close to the flag-ship, and hurried on board to make a report of such of my proceedings as I thought it incumbent on me to inform the admiral about. He was pleased to approve of all I had done, but when I mentioned the ladies, he looked hard at me as if he had read my secret.

“You’ll not wish to be idle, I know. Give your vessel a refit, and I shall have work for you before long,” said he with, I thought, a significant look.

I accordingly ran into harbour, hove the tender down, and in three days was ready for sea, when I received orders to accompany his Majesty’s ships Flora, Lark and Lady Parker tender to the assistance of the Syren frigate, which with a transport had run on shore at Point Judith, the people being made prisoners by the rebels.

At ten o’clock at night we, with the two frigates, dropped anchor about two miles off shore, having the wrecked ships just inside of us. We were not long allowed to remain in quietness before we were discovered by the enemy, who commenced a hot fire on us from three eighteen-pounders. As it was important not to allow the enemy to increase their force, four of our boats were instantly manned ready to proceed to the attack. The first lieutenant of the Chatham was sent in command of them, and each officer was furnished with a supply of combustibles, with directions to heave them on board the ships, so as to blow them up without delay. The first lieutenant of the Flora had charge of the second boat, the second of the Lark the third, and I commanded the fourth. We were all ready by eleven o’clock, when we pulled away towards the Syren. There was no use to attempt concealment, for we were conscious that our motions were narrowly watched; and this was proved when we approached the shore, for we were welcomed with a very warm salute of big guns and small-arms, the musket-balls and round-shot rattling round us in a far from pleasant manner. To add to the difficulties to be encountered, a heavy sea was running, which washed up alongside the stranded frigate, and created a considerable risk of causing the boats to be stove in.

“Pull away, my hearties, pull away!” sang out our gallant commanding officer. “We’ll make a short business of the work in hand when we once get alongside.”

He was as good as his word. In spite of the iron and leaden shower which rattled around us, we dashed on. The masts had gone by the board, but had been secured, and by this means a stage had been formed leading from the ship to the shore. Along this stage the enemy, till we drew near, were busily engaged in carrying off the stores and provisions out of the ship. When they saw us coming they gave up the work and poured instead a number of armed men on board. The bowmen stood ready, boat-hooks in hand, to hook on as the sea sent us surging alongside. When our boats rose to the top of the waves we tumbled in on deck through the ports, with our cutlasses in our teeth and all sorts of combustibles under our arms. The enemy did not like our looks, and as retreat was open to them they could not resist the temptation of taking advantage of it; so when we appeared through some of the headmost ports, they retired over the stern. To set fire to our grenades and other fiery engines of destruction, and to heave them down below and to scatter them fore and aft, was the work of little more than a minute. The enemy scarcely understood what we were about, or they would have tried to interrupt our proceedings. The effect of our combustibles was very rapid. A number of inflammable things were scattered about; they at once caught fire, and thick wreaths of smoke, followed by fierce flames, darted upwards on every side.

“To the boats! to the boats!” sang out our commander.

It was time indeed to be into them, for the fiery element was already surrounding many of the guns, which, being shotted, were going off as the touch-holes became heated. Almost enveloped in wreaths of smoke and fiercely crackling flames, we rushed to the ports, aware that any moment the ship might blow up and carry us high into the air. Explosion after explosion followed each other in rapid succession, giving us warning of what might occur. Our gallant leader got dreadfully burned. I saw him just as he was about to fall, I feared, into the flames. I grasped his arm, and together we leaped into the first boat we saw alongside.

“All hands quit the ship!” he shouted, before he would allow the boat to shove off.

No one, we were assured, was left behind. It was time to be free of her. Glad enough we were to pull away, and we soon had the satisfaction of seeing the other three boats free of the ship and pulling out to sea. Several of the crew of the boat had once belonged to the Syren.

“There goes the old girl. She deserved a better fate,” they exclaimed, as they watched the conflagration. “She keeps up her spirits to the last, though,” they added, as her guns were discharged one after the other in rapid succession—some of them doing, I suspect, some damage on shore, towards which their muzzles were pointed. We were saved the trouble of destroying the transport, for by some means or other she had caught fire, and before the enemy could get on board to put it out or to save any of her stores, she had burnt to the water’s edge. The enemy kept popping away at us while we pulled off from the shore, for the light of the burning frigate falling on the boats’ sides made us tolerably conspicuous targets. However, we kept the ship as much as possible between us and the rebels, and as they were likewise not particularly good shots, we escaped with a very trifling amount of damage. Indeed, I should, before I had had experience in the matter, have believed it scarcely possible that so much powder and shot could have been expended with so small a result. One man got a flesh-wound in the right arm, and another had his head grazed, while the boats were struck not more than half-a-dozen times in all. Suddenly the firing ceased. There was a perfect silence. Then the flames from the frigate seemed to burn brighter than ever, and it appeared as if the whole blazing mass was lifted bodily up into the air like a huge sky-rocket. Fragments of masts and spars and planks darted above the rest, and then, scattering around, very quickly again came hissing down into the water. A deep groan escaped the bosoms of many of our men. There was no cheering—no sound of exultation. An old friend had been destroyed; they mourned for her, though they themselves had assisted in her destruction. War, and what war produces, is at the best very horrid work. I cannot, even now, think over all the havoc and destruction we, as was our duty, were the means of producing, without feelings of regret and shame.

It was nearly midnight when I got back to my craft. The signal was soon afterwards made to weigh anchor, when we made sail towards the mouth of the harbour. There had been a stiffish breeze all the time we had been engaged in the destruction of the Syren, but it had not come on to blow very hard, and the night was extremely dark. The schooner’s head was off shore, and, overcome with fatigue, I had just thrown myself on a locker, with my clothes on, to snatch a few moments’ sleep, when Tom Rockets roused me up with the information that a strange sail was

crossing our bows. I instantly sprang on deck, and, catching sight of the stranger, put up the helm in chase. Away we flew through the hissing, heaving seas after her, shrouded in a mass of foam. I asked Grampus what he thought her.

“A schooner, sir. When I first saw her there was no doubt of it,” was his answer. “An enemy’s coaster.”

Just as he spoke, a gleam of light breaking through the clouds showed us the chase right ahead. She had now very little chance of escaping from us. We were coming up with her hand-over-hand. As we drew near I fired one of our bow-chasers. Still she held on, so I fired another, and this time with some effect, for she at once put down her helm and hauled her foresail to windward. The tender had a jolly-boat belonging to her. I jumped into it with Tom Rockets and another hand, and soon stood in safety on the deck of the prize. She had, I saw, a number of hands on board, and I felt somewhat surprised that they did not bundle me and my two hands into the boat, and tell us to go back whence we had come. She was, however, only a quiet honest trader, so her master affirmed, from Bedford, bound to Connecticut with fish and oil. On counting her people, I found that she mustered sixteen in all—stout, fierce-looking fellows. Some two or three of them said they were landsmen, and one hailed as a Quaker and a non-combatant, but I did not like the looks of any of them. I sent Rockets to the helm, and told him to keep the prize under the lee of the tender. I found that the schooner had a large boat on board. I accordingly ordered the crew to lower her into the water.

“Now, my lads,” said I, “tumble into her yourselves, and make the best of your way to the shore. It is a dark night, and not very pleasant weather, I own, but it is either that or a prison, you know.”

Before I had done speaking the rebels had begun to launch the boat, too glad of the opportunity of getting on shore to consider the danger they must run in reaching it. The Quaker, however, did not appear at all to relish the trip, and protested vehemently against being thus unceremoniously sent adrift. He protested that he was as quiet as a lamb, and, that he would obey my orders as strictly as if he had taken the oath of allegiance to King George. I told him that might be, but that “necessity has no law greater than itself.” Then he assured me that he was a non-combatant; that to fight was against his principles, and that he would not dream of lifting a finger against any man.

“I dare say not, friend,” I answered, “but you wouldn’t mind boring a hole in a ship’s bottom and letting her go down, or setting fire to her, and letting her blow up with all hands on board, provided you could make your escape unhurt, eh?”

I saw that I had by chance hit the right nail on the head, and that he had, some time or other, done the very thing I suggested. He said nothing further. Still he evidently did not like being turned adrift in the boat. I, however, was inexorable. The enemy had so frequently retaken vessels which had been captured from them, that I was, I own, afraid to trust any of the prisoners I had just made. I accordingly bundled the Quaker in with the rest. I must own that I acted a harsh part. It turned out a terrible night. It was blowing very fresh, and there was a heavy sea running, while it was more than usually dark. I scarcely reflected at the time on the dreadful risk to which I was exposing the poor fellows. In vain I afterwards endeavoured to discover what became of them. They might have reached the shore in safety, or been picked up by some friendly vessel; but they might have been run down, or their boat might have been swamped, and they all might have perished miserably. I pray they might have escaped. If not, their deaths were at my door.

As soon as the prisoners had shoved off, I sent the boat back to the tender, and Grampus and two men returned in her.

“Grampus,” said I, “I put you in charge of this craft. I hope that it is not the last of which you will get command.”

He pulled the front lock of his hair when I made him this speech, and looked round with a glance which showed that he did not over highly appreciate the honour.

“I’ll try to get her into harbour, sir, at all events,” he answered, as I stepped into the boat, and not without difficulty returned to the tender, when, with my prize, I again made sail for Rhode Island. An hour afterwards I captured a whale-boat, from Connecticut to Bedford, with four hogs-heads of salt. As I could spare no people to man her, after making the prisoners come on board, I took her in tow. I was in hopes of carrying her into harbour, but it soon came on to blow harder than ever, and before long I had the dissatisfaction to find that I had towed the prize under water, and, to avoid any mishap to ourselves, I had quickly to cut her adrift. When the morning broke, so heavy a gale was blowing that, being unable to reach Rhode Island, I bore away for the Seaconnet Passage, making a signal to my prize to do the same. We reached it not without difficulty. I was well content to drop my anchor not far from his Majesty’s ship Kingfisher, which I found lying there. Grampus came in soon after, and brought up near me. I asked him if he was sure that his ground tackle was good. He answered, “Pretty well,” but he wished that it were better. An officer from the Kingfisher soon after came on board, and advised us to look to our cables, for it was coming on to blow harder than ever. The caution was not needed. I had done all I could to secure the tender, and she seemed well able to ride out the gale. The prize, however, I saw was labouring heavily. I watched her anxiously, both on my own account and that of Grampus and the men with him.

At noon, just as I was leaving the deck, I heard an exclamation from Rockets, which made me pop my head pretty rapidly up the companion-hatch, and, looking to leeward, I saw my prize, amid a mass of foam, driving away at headlong speed towards the enemy’s shore. To help her was impossible. I was more sorry at the thought of losing Grampus than of anything else. Even should he and his companions escape with their lives, they would, at all events, be made prisoners by the enemy, and I might chance never to meet my old follower again. First one cable parted, then another. Grampus made sail as quickly as he could, but he could only show a very small amount of canvas with the gale there was then blowing. I watched the schooner anxiously through my glass. Tom Rockets stood by my side, as eager about her as I was. On she drove. She appeared to be almost among the breakers.

“She’s lost, sir, she’s lost!” exclaimed Tom.

“No, no,” said I, taking another glance. “Grampus is handling her like a good seaman, as he is. She keeps her luff, and is shooting out again into clear water. Hurrah! Well done, Grampus! She stands up to her canvas bravely. She is making for Fogland Ferry. If she carries nothing away she will reach it too.”

Such were the exclamations to which I gave utterance as I watched the progress of the prize. More than once she appeared to be nearing the land, and I thought that I could make out people following her course, ready to take possession of her should she drift on shore. Then, again, she stood off clear of danger, and at length disappeared in the distance. By daylight next morning, the weather having moderated, I once more made sail in quest of my prize, and as I drew near the wharf at Fogland Ferry, to my great satisfaction, I found her safely moored alongside of it. We remained here some days, till at last, the weather becoming finer, on the 27th of November I sailed with my prize for Newport. I was very anxious to carry her there in safety. I had gained her not without danger and difficulty, and she afforded a substantial evidence that I had not been idle during my cruise. Scarcely was I clear of the land when I made out a large whale-boat, which I chased for three hours and ultimately took. She had on board a cargo of beef, pork, cheese, and tallow. However, it came on to blow harder than ever, so, much against my will, I had to heave a cold shot into her, which sent her to the bottom, and once more I was compelled to run for the Seaconnet Passage.

Next day, that is, on the 28th, I once more put to sea, but in a short time it came on to blow harder than ever. Still, in my anxiety to reach my destination, I did not like to put back, and kept hammering away in the hopes of making good my passage. Feeling that I must take ten minutes of sleep, I went below, but scarcely had I thrown myself on a locker when I was hove off it. I sprang on deck, and found that a squall had thrown the vessel on her beam-ends. I sang out an order to cut away topsail halyards, sheets, main and fore ties, peak halyards. It was done, not without difficulty. Still she would not right. I put the helm up. She answered it, and away we floundered, almost water-logged, to our former place of anchorage in the Seaconnet Passage.

On the 29th, getting all things to rights again, I once more sailed; and this time, in spite of the gale, and not without difficulty, I reached Newport with my prize. I got some credit for my proceedings, and I felt that I was amply rewarded by the way the admiral spoke to me.

“I have my eye on you, Mr Hurry, and it is, I feel, my duty to mark out merit for reward,” he observed, with a pleasant smile, one day when he had invited me to dine with him.

I got three or four days’ rest, and, on the 3rd, sailed once more on a cruise.

I had not been out many days when a tremendous gale sprang up which compelled me to lay-to. During this time the little vessel shipped several heavy seas, which I more than once thought would send her to the bottom. At last one heavier than its predecessors came rolling and roaring towards us.

“Hold on, my lads!” I sang out.

There was nothing else to be done. It struck the vessel.

“She is sinking! she is sinking!” cried out several of the people, as the sea washed over us.

She rose again; but our enemy had left us in a pretty state of wreck and confusion. The caboose was gone, and so was everything on deck not thoroughly secured. The water, too, in torrents was rushing down below. Still our masts stood, and not a rope was carried away. I immediately ordered the pumps to be rigged, and had to keep all hands spell and spell at work at them. The gale, which had been blowing from the north-east, now shifted to the north-west as hard as ever. I had no choice but to remain hove-to, and to work away at the pumps to keep the vessel afloat. Our caboose being gone, and as we had no stove below, we were unable to light a fire to cook anything. We were all, therefore, compelled to live on raw meat. The crew didn’t seem to think this anything of a hardship; indeed, seamen, when not hard pressed, will often, to save themselves the trouble of cooking, or because they prefer it, eat it in that state.

I have had many a hard time at sea, but that was as hard as any as long as it lasted. As soon as I could venture to make sail, I shaped a course for Rhode Island, and, getting a better land-fall than I expected, I reached it on the 12th of December. When I went to report myself to Sir Peter, he received me very kindly.

“You have had a pretty rough time of it, Mr Hurry,” he remarked.

“Yes, sir,” I replied, and I told him how the tender had been knocked about, and what a hard time we all had had of it; but I made no complaint, and finished by saying that I was ready to go again to sea in her as soon as she had undergone the necessary repairs.

“No, no, my lad,” he answered. “I like your spirit; but she and you have had enough of it just now. You shall lay her up for the winter, and probably before the spring we may have other work carved out for you.”

I was very glad to hear this, and very speedily got the tender dismantled and laid up. The admiral, of course, knew more than I did as to what was going forward, and I guessed that none of us should have long to remain idle.

On the 20th of December, 1778, the Bristol, Raisonable, Nonsuch, Somerset, and a fleet of transports arrived from the Delaware River; and on the 27th Sir Peter Parker shifted his flag to the Bristol, taking with him the officers of the Chatham and a hundred seamen. Sir Peter Parker was now only waiting the arrival of Lord Howe, to proceed to the West Indies to take the command there. I looked forward to the time with great satisfaction, for I had no doubt that the admiral would give me every opportunity in his power of winning the step I so much coveted.

Two or three days after I joined, Delisle and another old shipmate, O’Brien, made their appearance on board the Bristol, to which I found that they had been appointed. It was a pleasure to us all; for latterly I had been so constantly

on detached duty that we had seen but little of each other. We were, I may truly say, like brothers, regarding each other with the most sincere and truest affection. I doubt if any friendship is greater than that of people thus situated. We anticipated all sorts of fun in the West Indies; for those were the palmy days of the islands, when the planters, or rather their managers and the merchants residing there, lived like princes, and treated all visitors with unbounded hospitality. It was in too many instances with them a short life and a merry one. Delisle had been there for a short time, and so had several of our other shipmates, and the accounts they gave were quite sufficient to make us long to go there.

On the 4th of January Lord Howe arrived at Rhode Island, and on the 15th we sailed thence for our destination. One thing only made me regret leaving the American shores; the certainty that I should have no further chance of again meeting Madeline Carlyon till the war was ended, and I might obtain leave to go on shore to visit her no longer as the professed enemy of her countrymen, but, as I trusted, an accepted suitor and a friend of America and the Americans. Though I may not be constantly mentioning her, it must not be supposed that she was ever out of my thoughts. All my hopes and wishes for the future were wrapped up in her; and often and often I had to struggle hard against the wish of quitting the service, and of seeking her out without delay. Of course I very quickly saw the folly, not to say hopelessness, of such a proceeding. I had nothing but my profession to depend on; and if I were to desert that profession, how was I to support a wife and as to joining the ranks of the enemy and fighting against my countrymen, that, even in my maddest moods, never entered my imagination. However, I will not now dwell further on the matter.

The first island we made was Antigua, where we arrived, without meeting with any adventure worthy of note, on the 5th of February. We found there HMS Aurora, with Vice-Admiral Young’s flag on board. We sailed again the next day with two transports under our convoy, and arrived at Port Royal in Jamaica on the 15th. Here Sir Peter Parker superseded Vice-Admiral Gayton as Commander-in-Chief. On the 18th we went alongside the wharf at Kingston, and hove down to repair and clean the ship’s bottom. We had now many opportunities of seeing this, one of the most beautiful and picturesque of the West India islands, as well as of engaging in the gaieties of the place. With regard to the scenery, others have often described it far better than I can pretend to do, while the thought of Madeline kept me from entering into the somewhat extravagant gaieties which were of daily occurrence. The repairs of the ship took us till the 20th of March, when we hauled out into the harbour.

A short time after this, two ships came into port direct from England, the Ostrich and Active. Each of them had left a lieutenant behind them; and Sir Peter appointed two of ours to fill up the vacancies, and in their steads my friends Delisle and O’Brien obtained their commissions. I was beginning to feel somewhat jealous of them, when the Chameleon came in. Several of her officers had been disabled, having been blown up in a prize she had taken, and were now gone to the hospital. Among them was Lieutenant David Mackey, in whose room the admiral gave me an acting order.

I was sorry to part with my old shipmates, still it was with great satisfaction that I found myself raised to the rank I had longed to obtain, as I had no doubt that I should soon be confirmed in it. My duty in the ship was, however, both disagreeable and severe. In those days, when the schoolmaster had made but little progress, in the Navy especially, and not much on shore, it was difficult to obtain good and steady warrant officers, and I was especially troubled with a drunken boatswain, gunner, and carpenter. Drunk or sober, they were constantly insubordinate, setting a bad example to the crew, and quarrelling with each other. I determined, however, to master them, and compel them to do their duty, or get them dismissed from the service. As I was the only officer in the ship directly over them, my task was not an easy one.

Having run the ship over to water at Rockfort, I found, on my return to Port Royal, that the admiral shifted his flag from the Bristol to the Chameleon. He had just been promoted from Rear of the Blue to Rear of the Red.

My troubles and annoyances with my subordinates continued to increase. Scarcely a day passed but what they were guilty of some neglect of duty, which more than once placed the ship in a dangerous position. I was continually afraid that the gunner, by some carelessness in the magazine, would blow her and all on board up into the air. I have no doubt that most of the catastrophes of that nature, which have from time to time occurred, have been caused by the conduct of which he was guilty. Fortunately for me, I was thoroughly supported in my duty by Captain Douglas of the Chameleon, who was in every respect the officer and the gentleman, and I am much indebted to him for many kind and favourable remarks he made respecting me to the admiral. When a man is endeavouring to do his duty, it is pleasant to be spoken of as an active, zealous, intelligent officer, as I know he did of me. The misconduct of the gunner grew more and more unbearable, and at length I was compelled to bring him, as also the boatswain and carpenter, to a court-martial. The result was that the former was broke, and rendered incapable of again serving his Majesty; while the other two, who did not deserve a less punishment, were severely reprimanded. They would have been broke likewise but for the difficulty which then existed of finding intelligent and educated men to fill the posts they occupied.

The Camel, Captain Bligh, having come into harbour with one of her lieutenants sick, I was appointed to her as acting-lieutenant, her captain having done me the favour of applying for me to the admiral. We left the harbour on the 10th of June, and anchored next day in Bluefield’s Bay, where we found lying HMS Hind, Southampton, and Stork, with a hundred sail of merchantmen.

On the 25th we proceeded with them to the Gulf of Florida. The weather was intensely hot, the sun struck down with unmitigated fury on our heads, and in a few days seven cases of fever appeared on board. Scarcely was a man taken ill than he became delirious, and in a few hours he was dead. Thus in six days we lost twenty seamen and seven marines, together with Lieutenant Thomas Philipsmith of the marines, and Mr John Eaglestone, master’s mate. It was a sad and weary time we had of it. Captain Bligh kept up his spirits in a wonderful way. I messed with him all the time I was on board, and he always spoke frankly and openly to me; indeed, I should be most ungrateful did I not acknowledge the kindness with which he treated me on all occasions.

“I hope we may do better when we get clear of the land,” he remarked. “This climate tries the poor fellows sadly.”

It did indeed. On the 28th the master, purser and surgeon were taken ill, and a few days afterwards I was myself struck down, as were the gunner, surgeon's mate, and fully sixty more men. Thus, we had not enough men to work the ship; and for some time Captain Bligh and one of the only officers capable of doing duty had to take charge of the ship watch and watch. The weather also was constantly squally, with thunder, lightning, and heavy rain, and this kept us in the gulf till the 20th of July.

On the 28th, in latitude 32 degrees 30 minutes North and 74 degrees 19 minutes West, we parted company with the fleet, which was bound for England, while we made sail back to Jamaica.

I pass over this period of my adventurous existence more rapidly than I have described the former part of my sea-life, because it is full of painful recollections. I had often and often seen men struck down in battle, without allowing my feelings in any way to be agitated; but it went to my heart to see my brave shipmates carried off one after the other with fever, without being in any way able to relieve their sufferings, or to devise means to save them from death. That fever, "yellow jack" as we used to call it, is truly one of the most dreadful scourges of the West Indies. There is no avoiding him. All ranks are equally sufferers, for he picks off rich and poor alike, the strong and weak, the brave man and the coward. Still, I believe that the best way to prevent his attacks from proving fatal is to live moderately but well—not to be afraid, and to avoid exposure to rain and fogs. It is wiser to soak the clothes in salt water than to allow them to be wet with fresh and to dry on the back. However, it is very certain that, if a man does not play tricks with his constitution when he is young, as do so many young fellows in every variety of way when he is exposed to similar baneful influences, he will better be able to withstand them.

On the 17th of August we made the Island of Hispaniola. Two days after that, as I was walking the deck as officer of the watch, the look-out at the mast-head hailed to say that a sail was in sight. We were then off Cape François.

"Where away?" I asked.

"Right ahead to the westward!" was the answer.

"What does she look like?" inquired the captain, just then coming on deck.

"An English frigate, sir!" replied the look-out.

She might be, or she might be an enemy's cruiser, for I was aware that they had already some large ships fitted out. We were, as far as I knew to the contrary, still at peace with France and Spain. Weak as I was from the fever, (though I had got over it far more rapidly than I could have expected), I was so anxious to ascertain, as soon as possible, the character of the ship in sight, that I went aloft myself to watch her with my glass. As we drew near each other, Captain Bligh ordered the drum to beat to quarters, and the ship to be got ready for action. The nearer we got, the more convinced was I that the look-out was right, and that the stranger was an English frigate. In a short time she hoisted English colours, and soon afterwards made the private signal, by which we knew that she was his Majesty's frigate Minerva. On getting within hail we hove-to and exchanged civilities, which, as they cost nothing, are very current coin. We found that she had been out on a cruise for some time, but, like us, had not made any captures. Her captain was deploring his ill-luck.

"Better than being taken oneself," remarked Captain Bligh.

"No fear of that," was the answer; "I shall take very good care that no one—Frenchman, Spaniard or rebel—captures me. As for the two first, I don't suppose they will ever go to war again with us."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Captain Bligh. "A pleasant cruise to you, however, and a more fortunate one than we have had. We are bound back to Jamaica. I hope we shall make a quick passage there."

Such, as far as I can recollect them, were the parting words of the two captains. Scarcely had we lost sight of the Minerva than we fell in with a fleet of merchantmen from Saint Domingo. We agreed that, if there was but a war, what rich prizes they would prove, and we should, without difficulty, have been able to take the greater number of them. They sailed on their way, and we continued on our course for Jamaica. We reached Port Royal without any further adventure on the 28th of August. Scarcely had we dropped anchor than a boat from his Majesty's ship Niger boarded us.

"Grand news—glorious news!" cried a midshipman who came in her. We all asked him what he meant. "Why, there's war with France, and a rattling war it will be, too, from all accounts. All the ships here are getting ready for sea, and we shall pick up no end of prizes."

Captain Bligh stamped with his foot and turned round when he heard this. And well he might, when he recollected the rich prizes we had let slip through our fingers. A vessel came in directly after us, which brought the unwelcome intelligence that the Minerva had been taken by the French frigate Concord only nine hours after we had spoken her. Had we, therefore, only come up a little later, the tables might have been reversed, and we might have brought in the Concord as our prize. The Minerva was, as may be supposed, taken by surprise, her captain not believing that a war had broken out with France, or I am very sure that she would not have so easily become the prize of the enemy.

The circumstances I have mentioned were of course vexatious, but such is the fortune of war, and I believe the knowledge that we had now a foreign nation to contend with, instead of those whom we could not but look upon as countrymen, afforded unmitigated satisfaction throughout every ship in the British Navy.

Chapter Fourteen.

In command of Dolphin.—Sent to warn ships.—Chased.—Captured by Chermente.—Carried to Saint

Domingo.—Find old friends in misfortune.—On our parole.—Tom remains with me.

Pretty well worn out with fatigue, which the duties of the ship entailed, as soon as we had made all snug I turned into my berth, hoping to get some sleep. Scarcely, however, had I closed my eyes and forgotten for the moment all sublunary matters, than I felt some one tugging at my shoulder, and on looking up I saw a midshipman standing at my bedside.

“Sir,” said he, “the admiral wishes to see you up at the Penn immediately.”

“I wish he didn’t, though,” I thought to myself. “Couldn’t he let a poor careworn wretch have a few hours’ quiet sleep after knocking about for so many weeks at sea, and having been in the clutches of Yellow Jack?” I didn’t say this, though.

“Very well,” I answered, jumping up and putting on my coat with a yawn which nearly gave me the lock-jaw. “I’ll be up there forthwith.”

The Penn, it must be understood, is the name given to the residence usually occupied by the head commander-in-chief on the station. It is beautifully situated on an elevated spot above the city of Kingston, overlooking the noble harbour of Port Royal.

Ordering a boat to be manned, I pulled on shore, and climbed up to the Penn.

“I’m glad to see you back, Hurry,” said Sir Peter kindly. “I know your zeal for the service, and I have more work for you. You know of the war with France. I must send you off at once to sea in quest of the cruising ships to give them notice of the event, and to direct them forthwith to return into port. In the first place you will look out for the ‘Druid’ at the east end of the island, and give her notice of the war, and then you will proceed to the Saint Domingo coast, where you will find, probably, the greater number of merchantmen. How soon can you be ready?”

Of course I replied, “At once,” wondering what craft I was to go in.

“Very well,” said Sir Peter; “I expected as much of you. You will take command of the ‘Dolphin’ schooner. She is now in the harbour. I am not quite certain in what condition you will find her. However, there is no other disposable craft. Fit her for sea as fast as possible. Take three or four hands with you; I cannot spare you more. Let your two followers you spoke to me about, be of the number. Here is an order by which you can obtain all the aid you require from the dockyard people and others. Good-bye; I hope to see you back shortly.”

With these words I parted from the admiral. It was now three o’clock in the morning. Hurrying on board the flag-ship, I got hold of Grampus and Rockets with their bags, and accompanied by them and a couple of more hands and a boy, I called for my own traps and bedding on board the Camel, and then went alongside the Dolphin tender. She looked certainly in a very hopeless condition. She had her lower-masts standing, but was entirely unrigged, without stores or sails, or even ballast on board, while her bottom was covered with grass a foot at least in length. Still I knew that not a moment was to be lost; the service I was required to perform was of the greatest importance, and I was not to be deterred by difficulties. I unmoored her immediately, got her alongside the dockyard wharf, and began taking some ballast which I found there on board before anyone was up. Then I sent Grampus to rouse up the authorities, whose aid I required. Fortunately the sudden outbreak of war kept people on the alert, so that I had less difficulty in getting assistance than would have otherwise been the case.

Soon after daybreak the deck of the Dolphin presented a scene of ant-like industry. Gangs of negroes were hurrying backwards and forwards with coils of rope and spars and sails; others were rolling down kegs of water, and others casks of beef and pork and biscuit, and packages of other comestibles, while the riggers were at work getting the rigging over the mast-heads, setting it up, bending on sails, and my own people were below, stowing away the various articles as they came on board. I made a list of essentials, and took good care to see that they came on board and were stowed where they were to be found, or very likely I should have gone to sea without them. I saw to everything myself, or sent Grampus to ascertain that people were losing no time in executing my orders. I left nothing to chance. I met with no little grumbling from some of the slow-going officials.

“What a hurry you are in, sir!” said one or two of them, who dared not, however, openly disobey my authority.

“Yes, my friend,” I answered, laughing, “that’s natural to me; and just now I am in as great a hurry as I ever was in my life; so be smart, if you please, and keep your people moving.”

That is the way I managed. I did not swear or abuse them, but if I found anyone slow I pulled out the admiral’s order and said that the work must be done faster.

“Impossible, sir!” answered another official to one of my demands; “it cannot be done. In two or three days we may get the matter settled for you.”

“Impossible! In two or three days do you say?” I exclaimed, looking fixedly at him. “In two or three hours you mean. Impossible,—I don’t understand that word, nor does Sir Peter, depend on that. If the things are not on board in three hours I shall report you. I don’t want to be severe, my friend, but I am in earnest.”

The gentleman understood me, and within the time specified the stores were on board.

In spite of all I could do, however, I could only get a mainsail, foresail, fore-staysail, and jib. I had no topsails and no square sail. Thus, should I be chased by an enemy, I should be, I felt, like a bird with clipped wings, I should have very little chance of escaping. I got some of the weeds scraped off the vessel’s bottom, but still there were more than enough remaining. Such good speed did I make, that before three o’clock in the afternoon of that very day I was

ready for sea, or, rather, I was in such a condition that I could put to sea, though the urgent necessity of the case alone warranted me in so doing.

“Well, sir,” observed Grampus, with the familiarity of an old shipmate, “if we comes to meet with Harry Cane in our cruise, it’s like enough that we shall be nowhere.”

Just before we got under weigh, Captain Lambert, of his Majesty’s ship Niger, came on board. He shrugged his shoulders when he saw the condition I was in.

“The admiral ordered me to get to sea as fast as I could,” I remarked; “I’m doing my best to obey him.”

“That you are, Mr Hurry,” he answered. “You’ve done very well—very well indeed, I say. I wish you to keep a look-out for me off Saint Domingo, and bring me any information you may have picked up. I am under orders to sail to-morrow morning to cruise off that island with my own ship, and with the ‘Bristol’ and ‘Lowestoffe,’ and I shall have my tender with me. You will know the squadron by one of the three ships having a poop, and from our being accompanied by a schooner. Now good luck to you. I will not detain you.”

“Thank you, sir,” said I; “depend on it I will not disappoint you.”

With a light breeze we stood out of the magnificent harbour of Port Royal, leaving a fleet of merchantmen, which the news of the war with France prevented from putting to sea. I certainly was not given to be much influenced by outward circumstances, but I did not feel at all in my usual spirits, and could not help fancying that some calamity was going to occur to me. These sensations and ideas probably arose both from my being overworked and from the unsatisfactory way in which my vessel was fitted out; added to this, I knew that the seas would be swarming with the enemy’s privateers, both Americans and French, and that I could neither fight nor run away. I considered over the latter circumstance, and bethought me that, if I fell in with any enemy, I would, at all events, endeavour to escape by stratagem. My men would, I knew, support me. Nol Grampus and Rockets I was sure I could trust, and the others I had chosen because they were sharp clever fellows, and up to anything.

It was not till the 3rd of September that I weathered the east end of the island of Jamaica. I cruised off Morant Point for some time, keeping a very bright look-out for the Druid. She was nowhere to be seen. Sir Peter had directed me not to lose much time in looking for her. She might have chased an enemy for leagues away and not be back to her cruising ground for days. Perhaps she might have taken some prizes and returned to Port Royal. As I began to lose all hope of seeing her before nightfall, the wind came fair for me to proceed through the windward passage. I accordingly put up my helm, made all the sail I could, and stood for the island of Heneago.

On the evening of the 6th I made Cape Tiberoon, on the west end of the island of Saint Domingo, without having fallen in with any vessels, and about eight o’clock the same evening I passed the Navasa, and carried a fine breeze till the following morning, when I brought Donna Maria to bear east at the distance of two or three leagues. I had not liked the look of the weather for some hours.

“What do you think of it?” said I to Grampus, as I saw the clouds gathering thickly around us from all directions, while the sea assumed a peculiarly dark, leaden, ominous colour.

“Why, sir, Mr Hurry, do you see, to my mind, the wider berth we give the land the better,” he replied, giving his usual hitch to his trowsers. “There’s what they calls in these parts a whirlwind or old Harry Cane coming on, or my name is not Nol Grampus.”

I was too much afraid that Nol was right, and accordingly stood off the land under all sail, keeping a look-out, however, on the signs of the weather, so as to take in our canvas in time before the gale came on. I had not, notwithstanding this, made good much more than a league when it fell a dead calm. The sails flapped idly against the masts, and the little vessel rolled from side to side, moved by the long, slow, heaving undulations which rolled in from the offing.

“I’m not quite certain that you are right, Grampus, as to the coming whirlwind, but we will shorten sail, at all events,” I observed.

“Beg pardon, Mr Hurry, sir; but just do you follow an old seaman’s advice, and take all the canvas off her,” he answered with earnestness. “It’s doing her no good just now, and we haven’t another suit of sails if we lose them. When the wind does come, it is on one before a man has time to turn round and save the teeth being whisked out of his mouth. Come, my lads, be smart, and hand the canvas,” he added, calling to Rockets and the other men.

I was soon very glad that I was not above taking an old seaman’s advice. Scarcely ten minutes had passed, during which time the calm had been more profound than ever, when, as suddenly as Grampus had foretold, the whole ocean around us seemed covered with a sheet of seething foam, and the whirlwind, in all the majesty of its strength, struck the vessel, pressing her down till her bulwarks touched the water, and I thought she would have gone over altogether. I sprang to the helm and put it up, while Grampus hoisted the fore-staysail just a foot or so above the deck. Even then the canvas was nearly blown out of the bolt-ropes; so far she felt its power, however, and, her head spinning round as if she had been a straw, away we drove before the hurricane. Where were we driving to was the question. I anxiously consulted the chart. We were in that deep bay in the island of Saint Domingo, with Cape Donna Maria to the southward, and Cape Saint Nicholas to the north, and I saw that a slight variation in the course of the gale might hurl us on the coast, where the chance of our escaping with our lives would be small indeed. Happily the wind at present came out of the bay, or I believe my ill-found little schooner would have gone to the bottom, as did many a noble ship about that time. The sea, even as it was, soon became lashed into furious billows, which broke around us in masses of foam, which went flying away over the troubled surface of the ocean, covering us as would a heavy fall of snow. Grampus and I stood at the helm, keeping the little vessel as well as we could directly before the gale, but we tumbled about terrifically, and more than once I caught him casting anxious glances over his shoulder

astern, as if he expected some of the seas, which came roaring up after us, to break over our decks.

“What do you think of it, Grampus?” said I.

“Why, Mr Hurry, sir, I don’t like the look of things,” he answered. “If one of them seas was to fall aboard of us, it would wash every soul of us off the deck, and maybe send the craft in a moment to the bottom. Still, I don’t see as how there is anything we can do more than we are doing. If the schooner was to spring a leak just now, and that’s not unlikely, we should be still worse off, so we may be content with things as they are.”

I admired Nol’s philosophy, though I kept an anxious look-out on the larboard bow, dreading every instant to catch a sight of the shore, past which I knew we should have a narrow shave, even should we be fortunate enough to escape being driven against it. The coolest man on board was Tom Rockets. He kept walking the deck with his hands in his pockets, ready enough, I saw, for action, but certainly not as if a fierce hurricane was raging around him. Now and then he had to pull out his hands to lay hold of the bulwarks as the craft gave a lively roll, or plunged down into the trough of a sea; but as soon as she grew comparatively steady, he began walking away as before.

On we drove. The dreaded coast did not appear. Still I could scarcely hope that we had passed it. The wind began to shift about at last. Grampus said that it was the termination of the hurricane. Still it might play us a scurvy trick before it was over, and drive us on some inhospitable shore. I began now to look for further signs of the ending of the storm. It got round to the northward, and on we drove till we caught sight of the coast. It was a most unwelcome sight, though, for should the little craft once get within the power of the breakers, which were dashing furiously against it, I could not hope that a single man on board would escape with his life. Even Tom Rockets began to think that the state of things was not so pleasant as it might be. I saw that he had taken his hands out of his pockets, and was holding on with the rest of the people. Away we drove—the threatening shore every minute growing more and more distinct.

“What prospect is there, think you, Grampus, of the hurricane coming to an end?” said I. For from want of anything else to be done I was obliged to keep my tongue going.

“I thought as how it was going to break but just now, Mr Hurry,” he answered, casting his eye all round the horizon. “It seems, howsomedever, to have breezed up again, and if it don’t shift before long, there’s little chance of the schooner’s living, or any of us either for that matter, many hours more.”

“We must meet our fate, then, like men, and Christians too, I hope,” I answered, looking at him. “We have done all that men can do, I believe.”

“Yes, sir, that we have,” he replied. “We can do no more, and it isn’t the first time Nol Grampus has had to look Death in the face, so I hopes that I shall not shrink from him. Come he will, I know, some day, sooner or later; and it matters little, as far as I can see, if he comes to-day or to-morrow.”

“Not if we put our trust in One who is able and willing to save our souls alive,” I observed. “That makes all the difference whether death should be feared or welcomed. It is not what we suffer in this world that we should dread, but what we may deserve to suffer in the next; in the same way it is not what we enjoy here, but what we may be able to enjoy through all eternity, that we should long for.”

“Very true, sir—very true, Mr Hurry,” replied Grampus; “but the worst is, that we don’t think of these things till just at such moments as the present, when the flood has done, and the tide of life is fast ebbing away.”

Thus we talked on for some time. I felt really with my old friend Nol, that though there we all stood in health and strength, we might soon be removed to behold the glories of the eternal world.

Suddenly Nol looked up. Holding his hand to the wind, and casting his eye on the compass—

“I thought so, sir,” he exclaimed. “There’s a shift of wind. It has backed round again into the eastward.”

Such was providentially the case. I took the bearings of the land. We might now hope to drive on clear of it. The sea was, however, getting higher and higher, but the Dolphin proved to be as tight as a cork and as buoyant, and I began to get rid of all my dread of her foundering, provided her masts and rigging did not give way.

Considering the manner in which she was fitted out, however, I did not feel quite easy on that score. Still nothing more could be done, so we had, as best we could, to wait events. At length there was a lull. I expected that it would breeze up again.

“The gale has worn itself out, to my mind, Mr Hurry,” observed Grampus, after a careful survey of the sky and sea.

“I am sure I hope so,” I answered; “I was getting somewhat tired of it, and so I suspect was the schooner. Sound the well, and see what water she has made.”

He sounded the well, and reported three feet.

“I thought so. Rig the pumps, and let us try and get her clear while we can.”

All hands pumped away with a will, and soon got her free of water, when the sea went, as it soon did, gradually down. It showed me that the leak had been caused by the way the little vessel had strained herself, and that probably, had she been exposed much longer to the fury of the hurricane, she would have foundered. By night the gale had sufficiently abated to enable me to set a reefed foresail, and once more to haul up on my course. I made but little progress during the night and following day. I was standing along the coast, towards the evening of the next day, with the wind from the northward, when I discovered in-shore of me what I took to be the masts of a vessel just

appearing out of the water. I conjectured that she had been sunk in the hurricane of the previous day, and on the possibility that some of the crew might still be clinging to her rigging, although I was on a lee-shore, I resolved to bear down on her. I pointed her out to Grampus, and asked his opinion.

“No doubt about it, sir,” he answered. “There may be some danger to us, I’ll allow, especially if it was to breeze up again, but where’s the man worthy of the name who refuses to run some danger for the sake of helping his fellow-men in distress? To my mind, sir, let us do what’s right, and never mind the consequences.”

I’ve often since thought of the excellence of some of old Grampus’ remarks.

“Up with the helm, then! Ease away the main and head sheets!” I sang out. “We’ll run down and have a look at the wreck.”

I kept my glass anxiously turned towards the object I had discovered, in the hopes of seeing some people clinging on to the rigging. As we drew near, I found that only a single mast appeared above water, as well as her bowsprit, and that she had all her canvas set. Not a human being could be seen in any part of the rigging. I got close up to her. She was a sloop of about seventy tons. She had evidently been caught totally unprepared by the hurricane, and every soul on board had been hurried into eternity. Finding that there would be no use in waiting longer near the spot, for there was not the slightest probability that anyone was floating on any part of the wreck in the neighbourhood, I again hauled my wind, and stood to the northward. At ten o’clock at night a fresh gale sprang up, which compelled me once more to bring-to under a reefed foresail. I am thus particular in narrating details of events which led to a most disastrous result. Truly we cannot tell what a day may bring forth. I had fallen in with no merchantmen, which would have been a most suspicious circumstance, had I not supposed that they might have been lost in the hurricane, or run into port for shelter, otherwise I should have supposed that they had fallen into the power of the cruisers of the enemy. On the 8th I passed Cape Nichola Mole, and on the 9th made the island of Heneago, bearing nor’-nor’-east, four leagues. At eight o’clock in the evening I tacked, and stood off-shore, with a fine breeze, with the intention of passing in the morning between Heneago and the little Corcases, for the purpose of speaking his Majesty’s frigate Aeolus, stationed in that passage, and bearing her the information that the war had broken out. At five o’clock of the morning of the 10th, the wind shifting round to the eastward, I tacked, and stood to the northward, through the Corcases. At daybreak Tom Rockets was sent aloft to keep a look-out for any sail which might be in sight. Soon afterwards he hailed the deck to say that he made out two sail on the lee bow, just appearing above the horizon. I went aloft with my glass and soon discovered four altogether, one much smaller than the others. She was a schooner, the other three were ships. I had little doubt that it was a squadron, composed of the Bristol, Lowestoffe, and Niger, with her tender, which were to sail the day after me, and which I expected to fall in with in this neighbourhood. They were still too far-off to make out exactly what they were. I came down, however, with my mind perfectly at ease, and went to breakfast. Grampus, who had charge of the deck while I was below, watched them narrowly, and did not differ with me as to their character. I therefore stood towards them, as I was anxious to communicate with them without delay. My orders directed me to speak all cruisers, and besides, as it may be supposed, I was eager to get the duty I had been sent on accomplished, and to return again to Port Royal.

When I came on deck again, I found that we had drawn considerably nearer the strangers. I scrutinised them again and again. One of them had a high poop, and I remembered Captain Lambert’s remark to me the day I sailed, that this was one of the marks by which I should know his squadron. I thus stood on boldly towards them. As we drew nearer, I saw Grampus eyeing them narrowly. The expression of his countenance showed me that he had considerable doubt on his mind as to their true character. We had now got within three miles of them.

“What do you think of them, Grampus?” said I, as I took the glass which I had just before handed to him.

“I don’t like their looks, sir,” he answered. “That headmost frigate is English—so I take it from the look of her hull and the cut of her canvas—but the others I can’t make out by no manner of means. I don’t think the ‘Bristol’ or the ‘Lowestoffe’ are among them.”

I had come to the same conclusion that Grampus had; but I wished to confirm my own opinion by his. We stood on for five minutes longer. My suspicions of the character of the strangers increased.

“We are running into the lion’s jaws, I suspect!” I exclaimed; whereat Grampus and Rockets opened their eyes to know what I meant. “Hoist our colours, and let us learn what they are without further delay.”

Scarcely had we run our ensign up to the peak than up went the French flag at that of the headmost frigate which at the same time fired a warning gun at us.

“Up with the helm! Ease off the main-sheets! Keep her away!” I exclaimed.

The orders were quickly obeyed, and away we flew with a strong breeze directly before the wind. I had two very good reasons for endeavouring to escape by keeping before the wind. In the first place, a fore-and-aft vessel has generally a great advantage over a square-rigged ship on that point of sailing, and I might otherwise have drawn the enemy’s squadron towards the station of the Aeolus. As she was so much inferior in strength to it, she would easily have fallen into their power, especially as, not being aware that war had broken out, she would have been taken by surprise.

As soon as I put up my helm and kept away, the headmost of the strangers crowded all sail in chase, making signals to the rest of the squadron to follow her—undoubtedly not to allow me any prospect of escaping. She fired two or three shot, but she was still too far-off to hit me. All the other vessels hoisted French colours, and any lingering hope I might have retained, that after all I might have been mistaken, and that the strangers were English, now vanished. Still my principle has always been never to give in while life remains, and so I resolved to hold on till I got completely under the enemy’s guns, and then, when I found that there was a strong probability of my being sunk, to haul down my colours, but not till then. I had heard of a small vessel escaping even from under the very guns of a big enemy, and I intended not to throw such a chance away. I called my crew aft.

“My men,” said I, “I won’t ask you to stick to me to the last, because I know you will. Those ships astern are enemies: we’ll do our best to escape from them, and if we are taken and the chance is given us, we’ll endeavour to heave our captors into the water, and to re-take the schooner, won’t we?”

“Yes, sir, that we will,” answered Grampus. “I speak for the rest, because I know their minds, and you are just the man to do the thing if it is to be done.”

I told the people that I was gratified at the good opinion they had formed of me, and sent them back to their stations. I did not like the look of things. The chances of escaping were very small, and the prospects of a French prison in the climate of the West Indies was anything but pleasant.

The breeze freshened, and we went tearing away through the smooth blue sea, sending up the white sparkling foam on either side of our bows, and leaving a long line of white astern; but I now sadly felt the want of a square-sail and topsails. Had I possessed them to set, I fancied that I could easily have kept ahead of my pursuers. My glass was seldom off them, while I also kept it sweeping round ahead in the hopes, though they were not very sanguine, of discovering the British squadron, for which I had at first mistaken the enemy. On we flew, but the sharp line of the horizon on every side was unbroken by the slightest dot or line which might indicate an approaching sail. I watched the enemy. It was soon too evident that they were coming up with us at a speed which sadly lessened our prospects of escape. Still we kept beyond the range of their guns. Unless, however, fortune changed in our favour, this could not long be the case. Gradually I saw the chance of getting away diminishing, and the conviction forced itself on me that we should all be soon prisoners of war. I called Grampus to me; he was of the same opinion.

“Well, then,” said I with a sigh, “our first duty is to destroy all the letters and despatches with which I have been entrusted. Bring them up at once.”

Grampus dived below, and returned with the despatches delivered to me by Sir Peter Parker, as well as with some thirty or forty letters from the merchants of Jamaica, addressed to the masters of their privateers cruising off the island, with none of which I had hitherto fallen in. I tied the whole of the documents up in a piece of canvas, with a shot in it ready to heave overboard when the last ray of hope had disappeared. I stamped with rage as I saw my enemies overtaking me; I could not help it. My men, too, eyed them as if they felt that if they had been on board a ship in any way able to cope with such opponents, they would speedily have given a good account of them. I scarcely knew what to wish for. A tornado was the only thing just then likely to serve me. It might have sent the schooner to the bottom, but if she weathered it, I hoped that I had a chance of escaping from the big ships, which were very likely to be widely scattered before it.

The sky, however, gave no indication of any change of the sort. Grampus and Tom I saw pulling very long faces at each other, as much as to say, “It’s all up with us.” They were too right. On came the headmost ship with the Dolphin hand over hand, the flag of France flaunting proudly at her peak. A shot from one of her bow guns was a significant notice to me to heave-to. I did so with a very bad grace, and as I put down my helm, I could not help wishing that France and all Frenchmen were swept away into the ocean.

“They always have been, and always will be, an unmitigated nuisance to old England!” I exclaimed, as I took a turn on the deck, while my little craft lay bobbing away slowly at our big opponent, which, having also hove-to, was lowering a boat to board us. Then I took up the bundle of letters and hove them overboard, when down they sank, probably to find a tomb in the stomach of some hungry shark.

“At all events, Messieurs Crapauds, you will not be much the wiser for what is in them,” I exclaimed with a feeling of no little bitterness.

If I did not feel inclined exactly to cut my own throat, I certainly had a very strong wish to knock the fellows on the head whom I saw pulling towards me. It did not take me many minutes to pack up my own wardrobe. My people, as is usual, put on all the clothes they possessed, one over the other, and then we all stood ready to receive our most unwelcome visitors.

Their boat was soon alongside, and a well-dressed, gentlemanly-looking officer jumped on board, and announced to me in English that I was a prize to the French frigate Chermente of thirty-two guns, Captain McNamara, an Irishman in the French service.

“It is the fortune of war,” he observed. “You did your best to escape us when you found out that we were not your friends. You and your people will come on board my ship; the schooner may be useful to us.”

I could only bow to this polite speech, and say that I was ready to attend him on board his ship. The French seamen, however, did not seem inclined to treat us with much ceremony, and several who came on board rummaged about in every direction to pick up whatever they could find.

With a heavy heart I left the Dolphin, and was soon transferred to the deck of the French frigate. The squadron to which I had become a prize consisted of the Dédaigneuse and Chermente, both of thirty-two guns, the Active of twenty-eight, and the Providence privateer, which with the Active they had taken the day before. I cannot say much for the discipline of the French frigate; for it appeared to me that the crew were very much inclined to be insubordinate, in consequence of which the officers had to exercise a considerable amount of severity in keeping them under necessary discipline.

It was a bitter pill I was compelled to swallow. For ten long years I had been serving my country incessantly as midshipman and master’s mate, and now at the very moment when I felt sure that I was about to emerge from the subordinate rank of a petty officer, and to obtain my commission as a lieutenant, no longer to be subject to the midnight calls of quartermasters and the unnumbered snubs which patient midshipmen from their superiors take, I found all my hopes of my promotion dashed to the ground, and myself an unhappy prisoner of war.

I had, however, plenty of companions to share my misfortune; on board the two French frigates were most of the officers and crew of the Active, as well as of the privateer. Scarcely had I stepped on board than who should I see walking the deck in melancholy mood but my old friend and messmate Delisle, and by his side was Paddy O'Driscoll. How changed had soon become the light-hearted, jovial midshipman! The feeling of captivity was weighing heavily on his spirits. Indeed, what is there more galling to an officer than to see the ship to which he lately belonged in the hands of his enemies, and himself compelled to submit to any commands they may choose to issue? They both, as they turned in their walk, started at seeing me; for of course they did not know that I was on board the vessel just captured. They came forward and shook hands warmly.

"I cannot welcome you on board this craft, my dear Hurry," said Delisle, "though under other circumstances I should have been truly glad to fall in with you."

"Bad luck to the day when we fell into the power of the Frenchmen!" exclaimed O'Driscoll. "And to think that an Irishman, or the son of an Irishman maybe, should be their captain makes matters worse. I'm ashamed of my countryman, that I am, except that to be sure he has behaved like a gentleman to us since we came on board, and so have all his officers."

"What more could we expect?" said I. "He did but his duty in capturing us: perhaps before long the tables may be turned, you know. There's a larger squadron of our ships not far-off, and I don't give up all hopes that these ships may fall in with them."

My two friends pricked up their ears at what I told them, though I myself was very far from sanguine about the two squadrons meeting. Should they meet I had no doubt which would prove victorious. We of course did not express our hopes to our captors, but we kept a constant look-out for the British squadron. Not a sail, however, appeared, our hopes of obtaining our freedom grew less and less, and on the 11th of the month sunk to zero when we entered the harbour of Cape François. We found there the French frigate Concorde and the late British frigate Minerva which she had captured. There were also several sail of French Saint Domingo ships. In my hurry and annoyance on quitting the Dolphin I discovered that I had left behind me my chest of clothes. They were not of any great value, though, as I much wanted them, they were so to me. I therefore requested Captain McNamara to send for them. He at once politely complied with my wish, but the midshipman he sent soon returned with the unpleasant information that the chest was in the cabin, but was empty. It appeared that after the Chermente's boat had left the Dolphin, the people of the Dédaigneuse had boarded her, and plundered her of everything of value. When Captain McNamara heard of this, he instantly sent on board that ship, and endeavoured to recover my property; but all his trouble was in vain. The French seamen were far too knowing to give up anything they had once got possession of, and after a good deal of trouble I was finally compelled to be content with my loss, as I saw that there was no probability of recovering my property.

On the 14th my brother-officers lately belonging to the Active and I were politely informed that we were to be conducted on shore to give our parole that we would not attempt to make our escape. After a short consultation, we all agreed that, although to get away from the lion's jaws into which we had fallen was not altogether impossible, it was very unlikely that we should succeed, and that by not giving our parole we should be subject to a vast deal of annoyance, it was wiser at once to give it, and to wait patiently till we were exchanged. Constant confinement in a prison in the West Indies, or on board a guard-ship in harbour, it was suggested was very likely to release us; but it would be into another world, to which we had just then no inclination to go if we could help it. We were received on shore by a guard of ill-favoured blacks—"regular blackguards," as O'Driscoll observed—between whom we were conducted to the residence of his Excellency Governor D'Argu. We were kept waiting for some time in a balcony which ran round the house, subject to the inspection and remarks of a number of black and brown urchins, who made us feel some of the bitters of captivity by jeering and pointing at us, while we had not even the power to drive them away. At length an officer came into the balcony and asked us into a large room, furnished only with mats, a few chairs, and some marble tables, on which stood some red earthenware jars, full of water, and some decanters of claret, looking very cool and pleasant. The great man was seated at a table at one end of the room. He received us, I thought, at first very grumpily. He did not understand English, but I recognised the polite officer who had boarded the Dolphin when I was captured, and who appeared to be there in the capacity of an interpreter. The governor enquired our respective ranks. I fully expected to be classed among the midshipmen, and to receive my pay and treatment accordingly; but I fortunately had in my pocket the appointment given me by Sir Peter Parker as acting-lieutenant of the Camel. I bethought me of exhibiting it, and, much to my satisfaction, it was acknowledged, and I was told that I should be treated in all respects as a lieutenant, especially as I had been in command of a vessel when captured. I was surprised indeed to find a considerable sense of justice in all the proceedings of our captors at this time. Perhaps the bitter feeling they afterwards entertained for the English, when they had sustained numberless defeats, had not then sprung up. My friend, the second captain of the Chermente, having explained to us the alternative to which we should be subject if we refused to pledge our words of honour, told us that we should be at liberty to go on shore whenever we liked, and to walk about within a distance of a mile from the shore. Some of us complained of the narrowness of the circle to which we were confined. The governor looked quietly up, and remarked that we might consider ourselves fortunate that it was no narrower. The observation was interpreted for our benefit, and no further remark was made on the subject. We all went through the ceremony required of us, and then, without loss of time, were once more marched down to the boats and conveyed on board the Chermente, where all the rest of the prisoners were collected. Most of the men were sent away in a cartel. Nol Grampus parted from me with great reluctance, but when Tom Rockets was told he must go, he turned round towards me and exclaimed—

"Mr Hurry, sir, do you want to part with me? I've sailed with you since I was a boy, and, come foul weather or fair, if I have my will I'll follow you still. Just tell these mounseers that you want a servant to tend on you, and that you can't do without me, and then maybe they'll let me stay."

I tried to persuade Tom that it would be better for him to go away, but all I could say would not turn him from his purpose, and so I made his wishes known to the governor. To my surprise, he was allowed to remain in the capacity of my servant, on my pledging my word that he would not attempt to escape. I afterwards found that a considerable

number of seamen were detained by the French, to be exchanged afterwards when more Frenchmen were taken prisoners. On the outbreak of the war on this station, at all events, the French had, I believe, the advantage in that respect. Afterwards, however, it was all the other way, and we English had more prisoners than we could well look after.

We spent a week on board the Chermente while, I suppose, our captors were considering what was to be done with us. Now I must say that, though I have no love for the French, or French manners or customs or ideas, still I should be very ungrateful if I did not acknowledge the kindness and attention we all received from Captain McNamara and his officers. O'Driscoll said it all arose from his father being an Irishman. However, as his officers were not Irishmen, I am inclined to believe that a portion of the nation are capable of great courtesy and kindness, and I am not at all disposed to utter a sweeping condemnation against them, like an old master in the service whom I once knew. My worthy messmate was taken prisoner and kept in France some eight or ten years or more. When at last he was released, and an officer was wanted for some special purpose who spoke French well, he was applied to, it being supposed that by that time he would have acquired a perfect knowledge of the language. "What!" he exclaimed, with an indignant expression, "do you suppose that I would so far forget what was due to my nation and my profession as to go and learn the humbugging ugly language of the enemies of my country? No, indeed, I did my best not to learn a word, and I am proud to say that I know as little of French now as when I was first taken prisoner." Though I may have laughed at my worthy friend's want of worldly wisdom, I could never help admiring his sturdy, uncompromising patriotism.

Chapter Fifteen.

Ordered to proceed to Ou Trou.—Escape from our black guards.—Kind reception at a country-house.—Our guards re-appear. Meet Delisle.—Again well entertained by a planter.—Adventures on the road.—Reach Ou Trou.—Put up in a stable.—Bad treatment of prisoners of war.

Hitherto we had been treated with kindness and attention by the officers of the French frigate, but a change in our lot was about to occur. On the 20th September we were suddenly ordered to go on shore, and when there we found that we were to prepare for an immediate start to a place called Ou Trou, thirty miles away in the interior. Having been marched up to the governor's house, we were told to be ready to commence our journey by three o'clock, and were then allowed to go about our business. We accordingly, feeling the necessity of fortifying the inner man, went to the first inn of which the place could boast, called the Dutch Hotel, and ordered the best dinner it could turn out. "Plenty of wine!" was the general cry, at which Mynheer von Tromp grinned furiously. We were just the customers he liked, and promised to fulfil our wishes to the utmost of his power. In the meantime we strolled about the town. There was very little to attract us in it, and our footsteps took us involuntarily to a spot whence we could obtain a good view of the ocean, which we feared that we were destined for so long a time not again to see. Alas! how many of us were destined never again to behold that ocean we loved so well! As Delisle and I sat together and looked out on the bright blue expanse spread before us, and dotted here and there with white sails glancing in the sunbeams, and observed the unfrequented shore and the fishermen's boats drawn up on the beach, we agreed how easy it would have been, had we not given our parole, to have made our escape, and as to danger, we settled that we would have run it willingly for the sake of escaping from our confinement. We would have put off in one of the canoes and pulled away right out to sea till we were picked up by an English cruiser or merchantman. While we were sitting admiring the scene several negroes passed us, great, big, burly fellows, laughing and singing at the top of their voices. Each couple of them carried a burden resting on two poles. We soon suspected their errand. On reaching the beach, close to the water, they threw down their burdens and began digging away with short spades they carried at their waists. They did not cease laughing and shouting, and had soon dug a shallow hole big enough to contain a dozen people. The burdens which they had borne to the spot were quickly tumbled in. Before the operations were concluded other big, half-naked negroes arrived with more corpses, which were treated in the same unceremonious manner, and then all were speedily covered up, and the black monsters went stamping and dancing, singing all the while, carelessly over the huge grave.

"Who can they be?" I asked of Delisle; "I mean the poor fellows who lie buried down there at our feet."

My messmate spoke French, so he called one of the negroes as they passed and made the inquiry of him. The black fellow grinned horribly.

"English seamen. Taken prisoners lately. They have the fever among them. Yellow Jack. They are dying like rotten sheep. No matter. They are all heretics, so we bury them here. They are not fit for consecrated ground. Bah!" was the answer, delivered with a broad grin, as if the speaker had uttered a good joke.

Delisle turned away and came back to me.

"Let us return to the inn," said I. "It must be dinner-time; I cannot enjoy this spot any longer."

All our party quickly assembled at the hotel, and we soon forgot the unpleasant scene we had witnessed. Mynheer had not forgotten our order to have an abundance of liquor ready, though I cannot say much for the delicacy of the viands he placed before us. I know that the bottles circulated round the table very rapidly, and that the wine was pronounced very good. It possessed, I remember, the quality of being very strong, so that we soon forgot, thanks to its fumes, all the misfortunes which had been oppressing our spirits, and soon hilarity and fun reigned among us. While we held up our sparkling glasses, and the joke and laugh went round, no one would have supposed that we were a party of forlorn prisoners about to be marched off to a solitary abode in the midst of a half-barbarous island. Toasts and sentiments were uttered, and even songs were sung, and, for my own part, I know that I entirely forgot where I was or what I was about to do. While our revels were at their height a black officer made his appearance at the door.

“Messieurs, it is time to begin your journey. Your mules are at the door. You must mount at once and proceed.”

The order was more easily given than obeyed. With regard to the matter of mounting and sticking on, that, in whatever condition a seaman is, he can generally accomplish; but the guiding a horse, mule, or donkey is a very different affair, and beyond often the power of a sober sailor, much more of a drunken one.

“Oh, bad luck to the blackguards! we are not going to have our conviviality cut short by them or any like them!” exclaimed O’Driscoll, filling up his glass with Burgundy as some of the party were about to rise from their chairs.

“Let’s sit down and be merry yet awhile longer—we shall not get such liquor as this at the town where we are to take up our abode.” He little knew what a true word he was speaking when he said that. His example was infectious, and, captain and all, we sat down and filled up our glasses. A toast was proposed, succeeded by a tremendous rapping on the table. Before it had ceased the door was swung open and a nigger officer marched into the room in a furious rage.

“For what you disobey orders?” he exclaimed, in very tolerable nigger-English; “you come out at once and mount, or I get the whip in among you and make you fly!”

“Ho, ho, Quasho, you’ve got an English tongue in your head! where did you pick that up, you rascal—you run-away slave from Jamacy, I guess—eh, eh?” cried O’Driscoll, turning round and looking at the fellow with an expression of supreme contempt.

I fully expected to see the anger of the negro become ungovernable; instead of that, however, he prepared to back out of the room, and as far as a negro can turn pale, he did so, and seemed at once to lose all power of speech.

“You’ve hit the right nail on the head, O’Driscoll,” observed Delisle; “however, there is no use in exciting the anger of the people, we may suffer for it in the end.”

Others were of the latter opinion; and at last we all rose, and paying the landlord’s somewhat extortionate demand with the best grace we could, considering the hole it made in our pocket, went out to inspect our beasts. They were tolerably strong animals, and two or three looked as if they had some go in them, at all events.

“I say, Hurry, just keep an eye on those two beasts,” said O’Driscoll, pointing at two of the best mules. “No one else seems to know one brute from another.”

Such was the case, for all hands, except Delisle, were more than three sheets in the wind. Poor Robson, one of the lieutenants, was one of the worst. Two negroes mounted on mules appeared to serve as our escort or guard. They were armed with long, formidable-looking pistols stuck in their belts, with hangers by their sides. Had we wished to get away, or had we known of any place to which we could fly, we should have used wondrous little ceremony in disposing of them.

“Mount, gen’men, mount!” exclaimed the black officer.

“More easily said than done, old codger,” hiccoughed Robson, essaying to get across the back of a restive mule. “I should like to see your nigger grand excellency with three bottles of Burgundy under your belt attempting to do that same. However, to men of courage nothing is impossible—so here goes. Heave ahead, my hearties!” Making a spring, he threw himself on to the top of the saddle, but with an impetus so great that he toppled over completely and came down on his nose on the opposite side.

One of our black escort, seeing the catastrophe, hurried up to help the fallen officer. Robson seeing him coming, and not comprehending his intentions, tackled him at once as if he had been an enemy, and the moment he came within reach began pommelling him away most vehemently. This naturally excited Sambo’s anger, and forgetting his habitual dread of white men, he paid him back much in the same coin. The spectators meantime shouted with laughter, urging on the combatants. Drunk as he was, Robson soon, I saw, got much the best of it, and was punishing the nigger most severely. The latter did not like this treatment, and was, I suspected, growing vicious. Now one rolled in the dust, now the other, but Sambo was generally the sufferer. Fearing that he might make use of a long knife I saw stuck in his belt, I made signs to Tom Rockets, who not having had the means of procuring Burgundy, was happily sober, to go in and put an end to the combat.

Poor Tom had better not have interfered, for Sambo, mistaking him for his first antagonist, began pommelling away most furiously at his head, while Robson, not comprehending the cause of his interference, attacked him on the other side.

“Who are you, you son of a sea-cook, who ventures to interfere in the quarrels of two gentlemen, I should like to know?” he hiccoughed out; “let me tell you, I don’t allow such proceedings!”

“My eyes, two gentlemen!” exclaimed Tom, fairly nonplussed; “you is an officer, sir, but a rum sort of gentleman is t’other, I should think.”

Tom bore his hammering for some time, when, getting a fair lick at Sambo, he sent him spinning away ten yards off with a blow of his ox-like fist. Sambo looked very much astonished, scarcely comprehending at first whence the blow had come, but it had the effect of teaching him, I suspect, for the future, to respect the arm of a British tar, and of putting an end to the combat, which, I fain must own, did not redound much to the credit of my brother-officer.

“Come, sir,” quoth honest Tom, seizing him by the leg, “just let me hoist you aboard this here animal, you’ll be more comfortable-like than kicking away here on the ground.”

Robson made no objection, but looked up with a smiling aspect in Tom’s face.

“Yeo-ho! heave-ho!” sang out my follower, and the lieutenant was quickly seated on the back of the quadruped, though, I suspect, he sat there with no great amount of comfort, for he held on tightly by the pommel with both hands, as if he expected soon to be tossed off again. Perhaps he had in his recollection the occurrence of some such accident in former times.

After this there was a general cry of “Heave ahead, my hearties, heave ahead!” And we all mounted as best we could. Our two black guards got on their steeds in no very good-humour with affairs in general, and us in particular, though their mules were the greatest sufferers.

How the authorities could suppose that two niggers, albeit armed with the longest hangers, and the biggest pistols ever used, could keep in order a party of half-drunken British officers rendered reckless by vexation, I do not know. It made us fancy that they had very few men to spare for any service but that of actual warfare.

They had our word that we would not run away, but certainly we had given no pledges that we would not indulge ourselves in any frolic which might be suggested to our fertile imaginations.

The word at last was given, and off set our cavalcade from the town of Cape François, the negroes shouting and the mules kicking and snorting and making all sorts of wonderful noises. We did not leave the place with any especial regret, but we should have done so had we known where we were going. Robson, whose head was pretty strong, soon recovered his equilibrium, and he, Delisle, O’Driscoll, and I rode together. I am no great hand at describing scenery. I remember it was wild in the extreme—blue ranges of hills and deep valleys, and plains partly cultivated, but mostly left in a state of nature overgrown with giant ceybas, between which were seen in rich profusion every species of parasitical plant twining and twisting and hanging in drooping wreaths, which monkeys converted into swings, while humming-birds at the pendant ends built their tiny nests. Then there were mango thickets, which as we journeyed among them, with their dense foliage, shut out the view on every side, and tall palm-trees towering up proudly here and there in the plain. There were rice and sugar plantations also, and their houses of one storey and red-tiled roofs and broad verandahs, and gangs of negroes as they trudged, laughing and shouting, to their work at the baking-house or mills for crushing the canes, and in the wide savannahs there were cattle grazing and herds of long-eared, fine mules, which put our sorry steeds to shame.

“I say, this is terribly slow work,” quoth O’Driscoll, ranging up alongside me; “what do you say to giving our nigger friends the go-by? We can’t come to much harm. We’ve got the bearings of Ou Trou, I fancy—indeed, I don’t think that there is any other town in that direction. At all events, we may meet with some adventure, and it will be pleasanter than jogging along at this rate.”

The proposal was one which jumped amazingly with the fancy of all the party. We had not long to wait before we had an opportunity of putting our scheme into execution. We four were ahead of the rest of the party. Suddenly we came upon a spot where four roads branched off in different directions.

“Away we go, my boys,” shouted O’Driscoll, and to the astonishment of our guard we struck our spurs into the sides of our mules, and off we galloped, each by a separate road, or rather track, for road, properly so-called, there was none. We had agreed to reunite after riding on for twenty minutes or so, but we forgot that such a determination might not be so easily accomplished as designed. Our black guard pulled up, shouting lustily, and tugging at and scratching his woolly locks, uncertain in which direction to pursue us. In vain he shouted, and shrieked, and swore. The extraordinary mixture of nigger and French oaths in which he gave vent to his fury had no effect on us. He might as well have tried to stop a fly-away eagle with them. We turned round and shook our hands and laughed at him. After going on for a little time I discovered that he did not pursue me, so when my mule began to show signs of fatigue I pulled up and rode on leisurely. Not long after. I heard a tramping behind me, and expected to find that it was the negro, but on looking back I made out O’Driscoll in chase of me. I having accordingly hove-to, he came up to me, laughing heartily.

“Well, faith, we have clean done the niggers!” he exclaimed. “We may now ride on leisurely and see what fortune has in store for us. I intend to throw care to the dogs and to forget that I am a prisoner of war. What’s the use of moaning and groaning, and sighing and dying? But oh, Molly Malone! Molly Malone, what will ye do when ye hear that your own faithful Patrick may chance to be kept so many long years away from you? Ay, there’s the rub, Hurry. Now you, you happy fellow, don’t care for anybody. It’s all the same to you where you may be, but should Molly, now, think I was never coming back and go and marry some one else, it would be a bitter pill to swallow.”

Paddy went on conjuring up all sorts of melancholy pictures in which Miss Molly Malone played a conspicuous part, till his feelings fairly got the better of him and he began to blubber outright. This was too much. I doubt not the Burgundy helped the tears to flow. My own feelings and thoughts I kept to myself and did my best to comfort him, and in another three minutes he was roaring at the top of his voice with laughter.

“Hillo, what’s that ahead? A stately mansion, as I am a gentleman!” he exclaimed, as a red-tiled building of a single storey appeared before us. “We’ll go and request the hospitality of the noble owner. I have no doubt that he will be enchanted to afford it when he discovers that we are officers and gentlemen.”

We turned aside through a gateway which led to the mansion. It was a large, low edifice surrounded by a broad verandah, a flight of stone steps leading to the principal entrance. As we rode up a thin old gentleman, with a powdered wig, long-tailed coat, silk breeches and diamond buckles, appeared at the top of the steps and summoned a troop of negroes, who rushed forward to assist us to dismount and to hold our mules.

“This is treating us with proper respect,” observed O’Driscoll, assuming an air of as much dignity as he could command, and, mounting the steps, he commenced an address, which the old gentleman, in spite of his politeness, showed that he could not possibly comprehend. I could command a few sentences in French by this time, so I tried to explain that we were travelling towards Ou Trou, and that we were uncertain of our way. He said something about

commissionaires. I suspect he took us for Americans. However, he politely invited us into a large airy room covered with mats, and made us sit down on a cool cane-bottomed sofa and had sweetmeats and cakes and delicious cool wine and water brought in, and then he produced a bundle of unexceptionable cigars, and we were speedily made very happy and comfortable. We smoked and laughed and talked away, but I doubt that our host understood anything we said. This was all very pleasant, and we enjoyed it amazingly. At length the ladies of our host's family arrived. They had been driving round the estate—it was a large sugar one—in a volante, jogging and jolting, I doubt not, for the roads, if so they might be called, were execrable—a fine thing for the bile, as O'Driscoll observed.

The ladies looked as if their drive had agreed with them, for they were full of life and animation and courtesy and kindness. A French creole is really a very handsome creature—I mean those of the softer sex. The men are generally dried-parchment, shrivelled-up-looking little monstrosities. I cannot account for the difference. We made out that there was *madame la mère* and three daughters, and a brace of cousins. They must have had a couple of volantes or more, for the mother would have amply filled the half of one at least, and two of the daughters would have required a capacious vehicle to convey them, independent of hoops, with which they had not encumbered themselves.

They speedily threw themselves into chairs and sofas, and coffee was brought to them, and then cigars, which they lighted, without ceremony, from small lumps of hot charcoal handed to them by a little black slave-girl.

In a short time some young men came in. They appeared to be brothers and cousins of the young ladies, or perhaps there was a lover or so among them. One went to a spinet which stood at the end of the room, and another brought in a violin and began to strike up a dancing air. Then, to show that we were civilised beings, O'Driscoll and I rose to our feet, and each offering a hand to a young lady, we commenced a minuet to the air which was being played. We flattered ourselves that we performed our parts to admiration, though our knowledge had been picked up during a few evenings spent on shore at New York during our last stay there. To the minuet succeeded a regular country-dance. Here O'Driscoll felt that he could show off in right good style, and accordingly frisked and frolicked and jumped about in the most vehement way imaginable. He soon danced himself into the good graces of all the lady part of the community, who seemed to admire his red hair and ruddy cheeks, which formed so great a contrast to their own complexions. I heard them remarking that he was a *joli garçon* and a *bon garçon*, and the more impudent he looked, and the more he frolicked, the more they admired him. I came in for some share of their commendations, I flatter myself, though not perhaps to so large a one as he did, but whether or not from the same cause I will not pretend to say. Evening was drawing on and our contentment and hilarity were at their height—as to being prisoners, we forgot all about that—when who should pop his head in at the door but the ugly black rascal who had acted as our guard, the fellow with the long pistols and hanger. We endeavoured to ignore his acquaintance and laughed heartily in his face, when he said that he had come to carry us off.

"Pooh, pooh!" exclaimed O'Driscoll, going up to him, and, shaking him by the shoulders, turned him about to shove him out of the room; but an harangue he uttered appeared to have a considerable effect on our host. What he said I do not know. Our host's manner at once changed towards us.

"It appears, gentlemen," said he, coming up to us, "that you are setting at defiance the authorities of the island. I cannot sanction such a proceeding. I took you for very different people to what I now find that you are. I regret it, but I must give you back into custody."

Such was the import of the old gentleman's address as far as we could comprehend it. It made us look very blue and feel very foolish. The worst of it was, that even our fair friends began to turn up their noses at us. Suddenly O'Driscoll slapped his leg with vehemence.

"I'll bet a thousand dollars that black scoundrel has been telling a parcel of lies about us, which has so suddenly made our friend, Monsieur Shagreen here, so suddenly change his opinion of us. I'll ask him, and assure him that the blackamoor is not to be trusted."

On this O'Driscoll held forth to the old gentleman, who, however, as he could not make head nor tail of what was said to him, was not much edified. Had we been able indeed to speak French fluently, I have no doubt that we should have got the better of the nigger. As it was he got the better of us, and finally got us again under his guardianship. The only consolation was that we obtained the sympathy of the ladies, who, when they really understood our painful position, at once exhibited a delicacy and kindness which we had not expected when we were first introduced to them. They quickly disappeared, and came back with a variety of articles which they thought might conduce to our comfort. Blessings on the sex, whether black, brown or white, wherever they are found! The negro fumed and foamed and talked very big, I doubt not, though what he said we could not clearly comprehend. He seemed also disposed to prevent us from receiving the gifts which the ladies offered. This made them, we saw, very indignant; but they quickly managed to get round him, and, either by threats or bribes, induced him to promise that he would treat us with kindness. They stowed all their gifts, which consisted chiefly of eatables, into some grass bags, which were slung across our mules' backs in front of us. The negro showed by his impatient gestures that he wanted to be off, so, bidding our kind hostesses farewell and expressing our gratitude as best we could, we descended the steps to mount our beasts. Our host's leave-taking was far more formal than his reception of us. He was evidently a kind-hearted, generous man, but could not shut out of his sight certain visions of offended dignitaries angry at the entertainment he had afforded to the enemies of La Belle France.

We were sorry that we could not more clearly explain to him our sense of his hospitality. He waved his hand as we mounted, but declined to take ours, and showed to the bystanders by every means in his power that he was heartily glad to be rid of us.

"Never mind, we'll not be offended," said O'Driscoll, as we rode on. "He is a fine old gentleman, and I dare say, if it were not for his fear of the powers that be, he would have been as polite as ever to us."

We had gone on some miles when the clattering of an animal's hoofs attracted our attention, and to our satisfaction

we saw Delisle coming along a track to our right. He had lost his way and met with all sorts of adventures; but, as he spoke French well, he easily got out of them. He also had been entertained very kindly by a creole family, who took him for a French officer, but threatened if any heretical Englishman came into their power they would do for him. At that time the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the French colonies were bigoted in the extreme—though surpassed probably by the Spaniards and Portuguese, who even then would have thought they were doing God service to burn a heretic.

It was now growing dark, or rather the sun was on the verge of the horizon, and we knew that in another ten minutes day would have changed into night, so rapid is the transition in those latitudes from light to darkness. We began to wonder what had become of Robson. Half-seas-over as he had been, as we grew more sober and capable of reflection we began to fear that he had met with some accident. Still, as we should not find him by stopping still, and our guard would not let us go out of our road again—at least, the instant we gave signs of such an intention he began tapping away at his hanger or presenting one of his long pistols as a signal to us to keep in our straight course—on we jogged, therefore, as fast as our mules could trot, for we had yet a long distance to accomplish before we could reach Ou Trou, and were anxious to be there. Fortunately, before long the moon rose. Oh! what a magnificent pure orb she looked floating in the clear ether—a pure, chaste globe, one could see its roundness—not like the patch of red putty she generally seems in northern climes stuck on to a black board. The dark outlines of the hills and tall trees stood clearly defined against the bright sky, and in the damper and more sheltered spots fire-flies were darting about and filling the air with their brilliant flashes, while the shrill cries of frogs and night-birds and whirr of beetles resounded on every side. We were riding on, listening to these varied sounds of animated nature, when we saw some dark objects, which appeared like human beings, lying on the grass by the road-side.

“What can they be?” exclaimed Delisle. “Dead men, I fear.”

We rode on—O’Driscoll was ahead. He dismounted.

“Very noisy dead men, for they snore most confoundedly loud,” he cried out. “As I am a gentleman, here’s Robson, and he has chosen the fat stomach of a greasy nigger for his pillow! I hope he enjoys the odoriferous, sudoriferous resting-place. His dreams must be curious, one would think. What is to be done with him, I wonder?”

By this time we had all assembled round our fallen shipmate. We in vain tried to rouse him. A few inarticulate grunts were the only answers he could give to our often-repeated remonstrances. The negro was much in the same condition; but it was evident that he had had sense enough before falling into repose to allow the ruling passion to have sway, and he had contrived to pick our friend’s pocket of his purse and watch, which he held firmly in his grasp. The negro guard, when he came up, wanted to prevent our recovering Robson’s property, and pretended that it belonged to his compatriot and that we had no right to it.

We guessed, as was the case, that Robson had been hospitably entertained at some farm, when, having taken on board a further supply of liquor, he had been completely overcome, and that the negro had been sent to guide him on his way. Probably our shipmate had been treating him in return, and, when pulling out his purse to pay the reckoning, had excited his cupidity. Happily for Robson his guide was too far gone by this time to run off with his booty, and so both had come to the ground together, the robber and the robbed levelled by that arch destroyer of the human intellect—strong drink. Oh, when I now come to think of it, how disgusting was the scene!—though I did not trouble my head much about the matter myself in those days. Robson was a gentleman, and had refined ideas and pleasant, agreeable manners, and yet, when once wine thus got the better of him, he would thus sadly demean himself. After some pulling and hauling we got him up, and having caught his mule, which was quietly grazing near, wiser than his rider, we put the biped on his back. Delisle went ahead and O’Driscoll and I propped him up on either side—the negro we hauled up on a hank and left to recover and make the best of his way home. We had difficult work to keep Robson steady, for the bumping of the mule brought him sufficiently round to make him fancy that he could take care of himself, and he every now and then made an attempt to do something which he was utterly unable to accomplish. Certainly one of the most trying things to the patience is to conduct a drunken man along a straight road. Our guard also was continually urging us to go faster, which we were utterly unable to do. Fortunately, before long we came in sight of a house belonging apparently to a large coffee estate, and standing near the road. Bright lights were gleaming from within, and the sounds of music and revelry came forth through the open windows. It was a sight tempting indeed to poor forlorn creatures like ourselves, who had little chance of seeing such again for many a long day.

“What say you?” cried O’Driscoll. “Perhaps we may kill two birds with one stone. We may get these merry people to take care of Robson and at the same time to entertain us, if Sambo there don’t interfere. We’ll try at all events. Delisle, my boy, come along and interpret for us, will you?”

Delisle, who on most occasions was one of the most quiet and best behaved men in existence, albeit a perfect fire-eater on occasion, entered at once into the fun of the thing and followed his countryman under the balcony, when the latter began to cry out—

“Oh messieurs! oh mesdames! ici, ici! un pauvre garçon se va mourire!”

Several ladies came into the balcony and looked over, curious to ascertain what was the matter. When they saw us bearing Robson in our arms, some of them cried out that a stranger had come with a dead man. Others said that he was only sick; and then some gentlemen came and looked out, all dressed in knee-breeches, long silk waistcoats and coats, and with swords by their sides—a very respectable-looking assemblage. They all talked away and consulted for some time, and the upshot of the matter was that several of them came down, and calling us round to the front door, assisted us to carry Robson up the steps and into a quiet room, away from the scene of revelry. There we put him to bed, one of the gentlemen recommending a tumbler of *eau-sucré* as the best medicine we could give him. He took a huge draught of it.

“Superb nectar! finest grog I’ve tasted for a long time?” he exclaimed. “Give me more of it.”

We gave him another huge jorum. He sucked it down with great satisfaction, and it undoubtedly cooled the fever which was raging in his inside. Our French friends, we flattered ourselves, did not find out his real condition; and when we had made him comfortable they invited us all to the room in which they were holding their revels. Sambo, our guard, for some reasons best known to himself, made no objections to the proceeding. Perhaps he judged that it was the best way of disposing of us. Perhaps he had some acquaintance—I won’t say of the fair sex—among the sable inmates of the mansion, with whom he had no objection to pass a short time while we were amusing ourselves in the society of the masters and mistresses.

We danced, and ate sweetmeats, and drank coffee and claret-and-water and smoked cigars and cigarettes to our hearts’ content, and laughed and talked to the nut-brown maids who composed the female portion of the party, for there was not a white face among them. We were quite disappointed when our black guard put his head into the room and sang out—

“Allons, messieurs, allons?”

“I should like to *allons* you and your ugly mug?” exclaimed O’Driscoll, eyeing the negro with no friendly look. But there was no help for it. The black fellow was our master; we had passed our word of honour not to attempt to escape, and to behave ourselves orderly, and we felt that we had already verged on the bounds of propriety in what we had done. Our polite hosts promised to take very good care of Robson and to forward him on with an escort the next day, should he have recovered his strength.

Once more, therefore, we were in the saddle and proceeded through forests and among mountains and by plantations, guided by the light of the moon, till, very sore and very tired, we arrived, past midnight, at a place which our guard informed us was Ou Trou. We said that we wished to lodge at the best inn, on which he chuckled audibly, and told us that we had better take up our abode for the night in a shed hard by among some piles of Indian-corn straw. We agreed that we had often been compelled to sleep on far more uncomfortable couches, and that the next morning we would set out to explore the town and choose lodgings. With this comfortable reflection, after our guard had disappeared into a neighbouring shed with our weary beasts, we, not less weary, I suspect, fell asleep.

We were awakened at an early hour the next morning by the sound of English voices, and, getting up from our straw couches, we found several of the officers lately belonging to the Minerva, who also had been sent to this place, and, hearing of our arrival, had come to look for us. They gave us an account of the way in which their ship had been taken. We were not aware that they had been captured, and together we bemoaned our hard fate in thus being made prisoners at the commencement of a war which probably would be a long one. Having stretched ourselves, we looked out at the door of our shed. The prospect was very rural and very tropical, but, as just then we wanted some of the civilised comforts of life, a few substantial houses would have been more gratifying to our sight. However, at that moment a voice was heard indulging in a half-French, half-negro song, and a jolly fat blackamoor appeared, with a white apron on, a bowl under one arm and a towel over the other.

“Ah, there comes our perruquier. He’s a capital fellow. You’ll want his aid, some of you. Venez ici, Antoine!” sang out one of our friends.

Antoine, nothing loth, turned aside to us, for every new chin added to his wealth; and he very soon had us shaven and shorn as clean as the friar the old nursery song tells about, and all the time he was talking and laughing and singing in the most cheery way imaginable. Our friends then brought us some milk and bread for breakfast, and, hungry as we were, we were right glad to partake of it. This done, we sallied forth to inspect the town, as we had hitherto persisted in calling it. What was our disappointment and disgust to find that it was not superior to a village of very poor pretensions, and that there was scarcely a house fit, in any way, for us to occupy. There were, however, three shops, great rivals, each trying to ascertain what atrociously bad articles they could pass off on their customers, and how high the price they might venture to demand. Thoroughly disappointed, we returned to our shed to rest during the heat of the day. In the afternoon we again sallied out, and succeeded in securing a tumble-down looking house, with three rooms in it and several out-houses adjoining.

This miserable place, then, was to be our abode for weeks and months, perhaps for years! We were all of us but scantily supplied with clothes; we had but few books, and but a scarcity of writing materials, and no fowling-pieces, so that we could not even look forward to the prospect of obtaining some sport to enable us to pass the time, and to assist in furnishing our ill-supplied table. Altogether, our prospect was gloomy and disheartening in the extreme, nor could any of us discover a ray of light in the distance to cheer our spirits. Happily, sailors are not apt to moan and groan except when they are more comfortable than they have ever been before in their lives on shore, surrounded by their families and all the luxuries of civilisation; and then if they want their promotion, or can manage to dig up a grievance, they grumble with a vengeance. However, when real difficulties and dangers and troubles come, no men look up to them better; and so we resolved to be as happy as we could, but I must say that I never in my life had as much difficulty in making the best of it as I had on this disastrous occasion. Bitter, bitter indeed is the lot of a prisoner of war!

Chapter Sixteen.

Our quarters at Ou Trou.—My asthmatic companion.—Illness and death of Captain Williams.—The melancholy burial-ground.—Try to kill time, but it kills most of my companions.—Startling news.—Life in the village.—Our condition becomes worse.—Death of more of my companions.—Orders for our release arrive.

Our mansion at Ou Trou consisted of three rooms, for which the liberal-minded copper-coloured owner insisted on our paying nineteen dollars a month. This was to serve as the habitation of twenty officers ranking as lieutenants. The

midshipmen had another house appropriated to them of much the same character. Ours had out-houses connected with it, rather more extensive than the building itself, and as it was impossible for us all to stowaway in the house, especially in such a climate as that of Saint Domingo, we came to the resolution of drawing lots to determine who should occupy the outer buildings. An inspection of a comfortable barn in England will give no idea of these unattractive edifices. To increase their undesirableness as abodes for men, most of them were already occupied by mules or horses or cows or donkeys. When we gave signs of our intention to dispossess them, the owner asserted that we had no power to do so; they were the first tenants, and had the right of occupation in their favour.

“Now, gentlemen, are you all ready?” exclaimed the senior officer present; “we must settle this important matter. Four persons in each room is as many as they can possibly contain, the remainder must abide by the lot which falls to them. Two in the stable where the old horse now lives, two in the cow-shed, two in the tumble-down barn, and two in the large stable, where the mules and donkeys have till lately held their revels.”

This last edifice was in tolerable repair, and, provided its four-legged inhabitants were turned out, we considered would make a very tolerable abode. One after the other of us drew lots. Lieutenant Manby of the Minerva found himself the occupier of the shed with the old horse, and I was beginning to hope that I might obtain a berth in the house, when, lo and behold! I found that I was destined to share my abode with him. He was, as everybody who knew him would agree, a first-rate excellent fellow, so with regard to my human companion I had reason to consider myself fortunate; but the old horse, with the thermometer often at a hundred, was a considerable drawback to any comfort we might hope to find in our abode. Our landlord probably suspected that we should turn him out, so the very first night that we retired to our new abode the fellow made his appearance and told us to remove him at our peril.

“But the horse may eat us!” urged Manby.

“More likely that you will eat the horse,” answered the Frenchman, who was a bit of a naturalist. “He is graminivorous; you are carnivorous. He can’t eat you, but you can him.”

“He may bite, though!” I suggested.

“No, he has no teeth; he is too old for that,” replied the Frenchman, laughing.

“Ah! but his odour; that isn’t pleasant to delicate olfactories,” I observed humbly.

“Oh, that’s nothing when you are accustomed to it,” replied the tyrant, grinning from ear to ear. “You are too particular. Just let him take his side of the building, and do you take the other, and you will be completely at your ease.”

As it was useless arguing with so pertinacious a disputant we were compelled humbly to submit. The horse had one stall—we took possession of the other. To make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow, we collected all the hay and straw and reeds, so as to form a thick layer of dry materials between our bodies and the damp ground—for damp it was, in spite of the heat of the climate. It was too late in the day for us to attempt more, and, weary in mind and body, we climbed up into our nests, and were soon asleep. I was awoke by the wheezing and coughing of the asthmatic old horse, and, looking up, I saw what appeared to me an extraordinary phenomenon. Suddenly the air around us was filled with bright sparkles of light. Now they flashed on one side, now on the other; now the whole space above our heads was illuminated; then all was darkness; then the lights—thousands of them there appeared to be—burst forth once again, more brilliantly than ever. I could not help rousing up Manby, to ask him what he thought about the matter.

“The matter, Hurry!” he answered, yawning; “why, that our stable stands in a particularly damp situation, and that the place is full of fire-flies. You’ll hear frogs croaking before long, and see great big water-snakes crawling about, and reptiles of all sorts. The snakes, they tell me, are harmless; but it is not pleasant to awake and find one encircling one’s neck. However, we shall soon get accustomed to them, so people say, and that’s a comfort. I don’t know whether it is pleasanter to be asleep or awake. Just now, when you roused me up, I was dreaming that I was a horse, and that ugly copper-skinned landlord of ours was trying to put a saddle on my back to take a long ride, but I would not let him, and so he was thrashing me unmercifully. I dare say he would treat his beast much in the same way if left to himself.”

“Do not let us be talking of our dreams. Our waking thoughts are sufficiently unpleasant,” I observed.

After a time we managed to go to sleep again, but for some weeks scarcely a night passed without our being disturbed by unusual noises or by the visits of snakes or reptiles of some sort. Once we were invaded by a whole army of land-crabs, which were passing across the island, and it was some time before we could persuade them to turn aside from our door. Many paid the penalty of their temerity with their lives, and were cooked next morning for breakfast. By-the-bye, in the cooking department we were at first sadly deficient, but from the instruction we received from some of our French masters, we soon became great adepts in the art, and were independent of any help. One reason why we did not succeed at first was the scanty supply of food with which we were furnished. The Frenchmen, however, showed us where we might go out into the woods near the village, and gather vegetables and roots and nuts of all sorts for ourselves. After that we were never in want of the bare necessaries of life. We received an allowance from the French Government for our subsistence. The lieutenants received three shillings a day; the purser, master and surgeons only two; and the midshipmen but one shilling; on which, poor fellows, it was scarcely possible for them to exist. The captains were allowed more, I believe, and had a house found them some little way from Ou Trou, where they were able to live in somewhat less discomfort than we did. They used, however, their best exertions to lessen the inconveniences we were doomed to suffer; but the authorities paid but little attention to their representations. The residence hired by the midshipmen was even smaller and in a more dilapidated condition than ours, and from the smallness of their allowance, considering that their appetites were fully as good as ours, they were truly very badly off, poor fellows. We of the lieutenant’s rank accordingly consulted together, and agreed to

have our mess in common for them and for ourselves. The midshipmen gratefully accepted our offer, and each of us threw his pay into a common stock and appointed two caterers to make the necessary arrangements and to contract with one of the copper-coloured French shopkeepers to supply us with breakfast and dinner and to do our washing. These arrangements being made, we flattered ourselves that all would go on swimmingly. Certainly our provisions were better and more abundant than we had expected; but we fancied that we had fallen in with a liberal-minded man, who was anxious to treat us well. We had a dreary time of it, however. Day after day passed away much in the same way. We had no shooting or fishing—no musical instruments—so that we had not even music to relieve the monotony of our existence. We had but few books also; some of us read them; but, generally speaking, under the relaxing influence of the climate, we felt very little inclined for any literary pursuit. A few games were invented which served to kill time, but killing time is not a pleasant or inspiriting occupation, especially when a man reflects that time is sure to kill him in the end. We walked about the neighbourhood of our dreary abode as far as we were allowed to go, but we soon got weary of the negro huts, and the palm-trees and the rice fields and the coffee plantations, and the cocoa-nuts and plantains and bananas, and the monkeys and opossums and racoons, and parrots and humming-birds. I dare say, if we had not been prisoners and compelled, as it were, to see the wonderful productions of animal and vegetable life, we should have been highly interested in them—at least, we ought to have been. One or two of our surgeons, who had a little turn for natural history, contrived to pass their time by collecting specimens, and examining into the nature and habits of the animals which abounded in the country; but naval officers, especially in those days, did not trouble their heads much about such matters, and were somewhat inclined to look down upon those who did. We talked of our prospects—they were gloomy enough; we tried sometimes to sing, but for that we had not much spirits; and so the days passed away. It would have been surprising, even in a healthy climate, if disease had not attacked us under similar circumstances. For some time it stood aloof, but it came at last, and made ample amends for its delay by its violence. We had been about a month at Ou Trou, when one day we were all seated at dinner in a sort of courtyard, which being in shade served us as our mess-room and drawing-room, unless the weather was bad, when we had to retire into our hot, stifling little house. We were all in tolerably fair spirits that day. O'Driscoll had been telling some of his good stories, more than one song had been sung, and jokes were flying about, far more than was usually the case. There were a few absentees in consequence of sickness, and we heard also that Captain Williams, lately commanding the Active, was ill. Poor man! he severely felt the loss of his ship, though, having been compelled to yield to a vastly superior force, no blame was attached to him. His spirits, it was said, had never risen again since he was taken prisoner, and he was thus but ill able to combat with the baneful effects of the climate and the irksomeness of imprisonment. Just then, however, few of our party were thinking about anything but the present moment and the unusually good dinner we had been enjoying, when who should make his appearance near the head of the table but Monsieur Roquion our purveyor, with a smiling countenance and a long bill in his hand.

Our caterers inquired why he had come.

"For to present my litte *compte* to you, gentilmen," he answered, for he indulged occasionally in a few words of English, especially when he wanted to say anything very disagreeable.

One of the caterers took the bill, and we saw them both looking over it together, and pulling wonderfully long faces.

"What is the matter?" asked Delisle. "Anything wrong with the account? Let us know the worst. It cannot be very bad, I hope."

"Only our excellent friend here has brought us in a charge of a hundred dollars more than we expected to have to pay, or than we ought to pay," was the answer.

"Never mind; we'll contest it, and the fellow will have to go without the money, I hope."

Monsieur Roquion understood the remark, for he grinned widely from ear to ear.

"Go and get us a proper account, Master Yellow-face," said our chief caterer. "This little bill of yours is too much by half."

I don't know if the worthy understood what was said, but he refused to take back the account, and, after grinning at us a little longer, took his departure.

We finished our dinner without much concern about Monsieur Roquion and his bill; but we had unfortunately come to the end of our stock of wine and tea, and a few other luxuries, and where to obtain them except from Monsieur Roquion was a puzzle. The next morning we determined to try, so we went to his shop to order what we wanted; but he instantly met us with a hint that "*Le petit compte* must first be settled."

We appealed to the commandant—a personage of whom I have not hitherto spoken, because I had nothing to say in his favour, but very much to the contrary. He replied that the demand was a just one. We suspected that he was to come in for his share of the spoil. We at length got angry, and said that we were cheated and would not pay. Thereat he grinned broadly, and informed us that it was his duty to see justice done to Monsieur Roquion, and that he should stop a portion of our allowances till the debt was paid. We protested loudly against this decision; but he only grinned the more, and with a bland smile informed us that might made right, and that we might take what course we liked.

We could do nothing but submit; and the next pay-day we found that he had determined to stop half our allowance. So we found ourselves reduced to eighteen-pence a day, while the poor midshipmen had only sixpence—a sum on which they could barely exist. We did our best to help them out of our own pittance; but to all of us it was like falling from affluence to penury. Misfortunes, it is said, never come alone. Certainly at that time we experienced plenty of them. We were all sitting together discussing what was best under our circumstances to be done, when Delisle, who had gone to see Captain Williams, came back with the report that he was much worse, and wished to see his son, who was a midshipman, and had been living with the others. Delisle went for the boy; and as he passed by, on his return, I saw that he looked especially sad. That evening notice was brought us that Captain Williams was dead, and

his poor young midshipman son was left an orphan; and a prisoner in that far-off pestiferous land. Delisle brought the boy back with him, and with all the kindness of his heart endeavoured to console him.

In that climate decomposition follows death so rapidly that, almost before the human form is cold, it is necessary to commit it to the grave. We agreed, therefore, that early next morning we would all go and pay the last respects to the late unfortunate captain of the Active. Accordingly, snatching a hasty breakfast of dry bread and milk—for that was all the food the present low state of our finances would allow us to indulge in—we sallied forth, taking poor little Williams with us, whom we intended should act as chief mourner. When we arrived at the house, and went into the room where Delisle had last seen the body, it was no longer there. We searched about, but nowhere could we see it. In another room we found Captain Stott, late of the Minerva. His health, like that of his brother captain, had given way, and he looked very ill and wretched.

We told him that we had come to assist in burying poor Captain Williams.

“You have come, then, too late, gentlemen,” he answered with a deep sigh. “Two ill-conditioned negroes came this morning with a guard of three or four soldiers, and informed me that they had come to remove the body. I protested vehemently, and, had I possessed force, would have prevented them, but it was in vain. The wretches, with taunts and sneers at our being heretics and unworthy of Christian burial, carried away the body of my friend and brother-officer, and, I conclude, have thrown him into the ground in some out-of-the-way place.”

Captain Stott was too ill, or he would have followed the barbarians in spite of the soldiers. Two or three other people tried to do so, but were driven back with angry threats, and at last gave up the attempt. We were very indignant when we heard this, and resolved at once to go and try and find out where the wretches had buried the captain. We ascertained the direction they had taken and pursued them. We should soon have been at fault in that trackless part of the country, but we fell in with a little negro boy to whom I had been kind on more than one occasion, and he told us that he had followed the men at a distance, and undertook to show us the spot where our countryman had been buried. It was not far-off, and when we reached it our indignation became greater than ever. The authorities had evidently studied how they could most insult and annoy us.

In a piece of waste ground where offal and rubbish was cast, and where the bodies of the few malefactors who were ever brought to justice, as well as those of dogs and other animals, were deposited, they had ordered our poor friend to be interred. He had been placed there, fastened up in a piece of canvas, without a coffin and without ceremony of any sort. We stood with mournful countenances and with hearts full of bitterness and indignation over the foul spot, discussing among ourselves whether we ought not to dig up the body and carry it to the churchyard of Ou Trou, there to bury it among others who at all events had called themselves Christians. Our intentions must have been suspected, for in a few minutes a guard of soldiers made their appearance, and, threatening us with their pikes or halberds, made us desist. We then determined to go at once to the commandant. He received us with a look of haughty contempt. He remarked that our countryman was a heretic—that the priests considered that he had died out of the pale of their true Church like a dog, and that like a dog he must be buried.

“Does the holy religion of Christ teach you thus to treat your enemies?” exclaimed Delisle, indignantly. “We are Christians, as you call yourselves, and have, as such, a right to Christian burial.”

“I know nothing about that matter,” answered the commandant. “The priests say that you are not, that you are cut off from the only true Church, and are thus condemned to everlasting punishment. This being the case—and I am bound to believe it—what matters it where your bodies are placed?”

Such was the tenor of the reply we received from an officer holding a commission under the government of a nation which prided itself on being the most enlightened and civilised in the world.

Though in France the outward signs of religion were still adhered to, the *savants* and *literati* were already paving the way by their false philosophy for that terrific outbreak of popular fury which deluged their country in blood, and well-nigh rooted out all that was noble and good and worthy in the land. At this time in Saint Domingo, and probably in the other French dependencies, there was an ostentatious show of religion which was sadly belied by the manners and customs of the people. At all events, a person bearing his Britannic Majesty’s commission was entitled, as a prisoner of war according to the law of nations, to all the respect due to his rank as an officer and a gentleman.

We returned to our home, wondering who next among us would be carried off to be put into that revolting receptacle of the dead. We had now seriously to turn it in our minds how we should be able to exist. A bright idea struck me—I would become a gardener. There was a considerable portion of ground attached to our mansion. I had had some little experience before in my life; others also knew something about the art, and so we hoped that our united stock of knowledge would produce us a good supply of vegetables. We had unfortunately but little money to purchase tools, or seeds or plants, but we did not disdain to turn beggars. We borrowed what tools we could, and manufactured spades and hoes and rakes out of wood. They were not very neat, but they answered our purpose. Seeds cost but very little; many were given us, others we bought. The poor unsophisticated, ignorant blacks were very kind-hearted, and gave us all they could spare. Thus our garden became our greatest source of amusement, and at the same time a most profitable employment.

Often for days together we had no other food but that which our garden produced. We had yam, cassava, choco, ochro, tomatoes, Indian kale, Lima beans, potatoes, peas, beans, calalue, beet-root, artichokes, cucumbers, carrots, parsnips, radishes, celery and salads of all sorts; nor must I forget the magnificent cabbage-trees some two hundred feet high—not that we planted them, by-the-bye—or the fruits, the cocoa-nut, plantain, banana, the alligator pear, the cashew, papaw, custard apples, and others too numerous to mention; the recollection of which even now makes my mouth water, as it did sometimes then, when we saw but could not obtain them. If it had not been for our garden I believe that we should one and all of us have succumbed to that fell climate. In vain we endeavoured to learn how the war was going on. No news was ever allowed to reach us but what was of the most disheartening nature, and

Monsieur Roquion always contrived to bring it with a grin on his countenance which we knew meant mischief, though we could not make up our minds to believe him or not. One day he came in with a smile on his countenance, and shrugging his shoulders—

“Very sorry for you, as we do not here benefit by your loss,” he remarked, endeavouring to put on a look of perfect sincerity. “You have, undoubtedly, heard the sad news. Your brave Admiral Keppel has been defeated in the channel. Most of his ships have been sunk or taken, and he himself has been captured and is a prisoner in France.”

Days and days passed away and we heard no more, and though we used every exertion to discover the truth, no one we met could contradict it. Next we heard that the successful French fleet had pursued Admiral Byron on his voyage to America, had brought him to action and completely dispersed and destroyed his fleet. We daily talked the matter over among ourselves. We could scarcely believe that the sun of England had set so low, and yet what right had we to doubt the truth of what we heard? We had ourselves been captured by the enemy, and might not others have been equally unfortunate?

Then we heard that the French had blocked up Lord Howe in New York, and that the American patriots had triumphed over the British army and were everywhere successful. How earnestly we longed for letters which might inform us of the truth! but our cunning captors took care that we should not get them. Perhaps they themselves believed the reports they spread among us. One thing we knew, that in spite of all their reverses, the English were not likely to give in without a desperate and prolonged struggle, and that, therefore, our captivity might be continued to an indefinite period. I therefore considered if I could not make myself more comfortable than I had hitherto been. I called Tom Rockets to my councils. He, faithful fellow, had been constantly in attendance on me.

“To my mind, sir, the best thing to do would be to keep chickens,” he observed with a look of simple earnestness. “My old mother used to keep them, and I helped her to feed them, and I know all their ways; and if we could get a few we could keep them in this here stable of yours, sir, and they would well-nigh feed themselves.”

I thought Tom’s proposal so good a one that I forthwith put his plan into execution. I had made several friends among the negroes by stopping and talking to them and exchanging a joke occasionally. Not that what I said was always very comprehensible to them, nor were their replies to me, but they understood my signs as I did theirs, so that we got on very well.

“Now, Tom,” said I, “we will go out and buy these same chickens. You know a laying hen from an old cock, I suppose?”

“Lord love ye, yes, sir,” was Tom’s answer, with a grin. “And if so be ye wants any of the rhino, I’ve saved three dollars, which will go far to buy them; and you know, Mr Hurry, sir, it will be an honour and pleasure to me if you will take them. I’ve no use for them, and may be, if they stop burning in my pocket, I shall only drink them up some day.”

I thought this too probable, but still I was unwilling to take the honest, generous-hearted fellow’s money. I had myself scraped together a couple of dollars, with which I expected to be able to purchase a cock and five or six fowls, and I thought that would be enough. Tom and I accordingly set out on our expedition, with our dollars in our pockets. Before long we reached the hut of an old negro and his wife, where I had seen some good-looking fowls. Looking about, however, we saw none of them. As we were going away old Quasho made his appearance, followed by Quashie, his better half. In vain, however, did we tell them we wanted some fowls; I had forgotten the French word, and they did not understand us.

“I think as how I can make them know what we wants, sir,” said Tom and he began crowing away at the top of his voice; then he cackled most lustily and began running about as a hen does before she begins to lay an egg, and finally, having provided himself with a round stone, he produced it as if he had just deposited it in a nest. Then he pulled out one of his dollars and held it up before them. Quasho and Quashie clapped their hands with delight at the significance of the action, and away they scuttled into the woods, soon returning with a couple of hens.

“Bons, bons!” cried Tom, taking them, but not giving up the coin. Again he crowed and again he cackled, and gave the old couple a shove to signify that they were to go off and bring more fowls. It did not suit them, it appeared, to comprehend what he wanted, but Tom was not to be done, so at last Quasho exclaimed—

“Jiggigery, niggery, hop,” or some words which so sounded, and away scuttled the old lady, bringing back a couple more hens.

Tom, having secured them by the legs under his arm, allowing them to peck away at his back, attempted the same manoeuvre, but the old people put on such a look of dull stolidity that I was certain they would give no more fowls for the dollar. I told him, therefore, to give up the dollar, and we continued on our way to another hut, where, for another dollar, we got the same number of fowls. Three dollars were thus expended, and, with our newly-acquired farm produce, we returned in triumph to my stable.

Manby was highly amused at the notion of my turning egg and chicken merchant, which I told him it was my intention to do. In that country food of all sorts for my fowls was easily procured, so I had no difficulty in collecting an ample supply. This became one of my chief occupations. Tom Rockets and I used to go out into the woods with bags, and come back loaded with nuts and seeds and roots for my pets. The consequence of their being thus amply supplied with provisions was that they quickly took to laying eggs, and thus in a short time I had four or five eggs every morning. Some of these Tom and I ate, and others we sold or exchanged for meat. They, with the produce of our kitchen garden, enabled us to be pretty well independent of the provisions furnished us by the authorities. Thus, what I at first thought a misfortune turned out to be a real benefit, because the necessity of procuring food made me exert myself, and afforded me an occupation of interest. I gave them all names, and I knew each of them, and they soon learned to know me and to come at my call. Whichever I summoned came flapping up to me, cackling or crowing as the case might be, whether cock or hen. I was rather proud of the nickname which my messmates gave

me of “the farmer.” Often, when they were almost starving after our mess was broken up, I was able to supply myself and Tom with a comfortable breakfast and dinner. Never, indeed, were dollars better expended. I have already mentioned the various reports of disasters to the British arms, both by sea and land, which reached us from time to time. Soon after I got my fowls we were told, as an undoubted fact, that Jersey and Guernsey had been taken by surprise, and that every man, woman, and child in them had been destroyed on account of their loyalty to England; but the most terrific and heart-rending news came at last. It was that England herself had been invaded; that the enemy, having gained a secure footing in the country, had won three or four pitched battles, and had finally taken London, after a terrific resistance, when half the population were slain. Probably, under other circumstances, we should not have believed this last report unless it had been fully authenticated, though, unguarded as the shores of England at that time were, we knew that it was possible; but, dispirited and ill as many of us were, we were fully prepared to give credence to any story even of a less probable character. For two or three weeks we were left in the most dreadful state of doubt and uncertainty as to whether England still existed or not as an independent nation. Some of us fully believed that liberty no longer was to be found except in the highlands of Scotland and among the mountains of Wales.

The first gleam which banished these dreadful surmises was the announcement which reached us on the 5th of November, that Captain Philips, of the 60th Regiment, and Mr Rankin, a passenger in the Minerva, were forthwith to be set at liberty. They received permission to go at once to Jamaica under a flag of truce.

We could scarcely believe this information when we heard it, and it was only when we saw them setting off with joyful countenances, bidding us all farewell, that we were convinced of its truth. It also assured us that the various accounts we had from time to time heard of the disasters which had befallen the power of Great Britain were very contrary to what was the case. The invasion of England had long been a favourite scheme of the French, and I thought then, as I have since, that some ambitious general or sovereign will find it one of the very best cards he can possibly play to make the attempt for the purpose of gaining supreme power in the country, or of securing the position he may before have obtained.

Death was now busy among us. On the 20th of November Captain Stott’s steward died—a faithful fellow, who had willingly followed his master into captivity. Near the village was a wide savannah—an extensive open, level space, destitute of trees, and overgrown in most parts with a rank vegetation, and dotted with pools of water, among which snakes and venomous reptiles of all sorts delighted to roam. Here the poor man was carried by a couple of blacks and cast into a hole they dug for the purpose.

Very soon after this event, which I find recorded in my journal, I most unexpectedly received a box containing linen and clothes, sent me by a friend at Jamaica. In the pockets of some of the clothes I discovered a packet of letters. Two of them were from home. What a thousand thoughts and feelings and regrets did their contents conjure up! Many, many months had passed away since I had heard from any of my relations and friends in Old England, and I had begun almost to fancy that I was forgotten, and should never receive any more letters. I read these over and over again, and then I went in search of Delisle, that I might have the pleasure of reading them to him. He and I were like brothers, and like a brother he entered into all my feelings, and was almost as much interested in the contents of my letters as I was myself. One of them was from my sister Lucy—a sweet, good, pretty girl. I described her to him, and, poor fellow, from my portrait, (I am sure it was not overdrawn, though), he fell in love with her. He was ever afterwards talking of her, and constantly asking to see her letters, and I agreed to introduce him when we got home, whenever that might be, and he promised, if she would have him, to marry her. So it was settled between us. No one will find fault with him or me for what we did.

I must not forget another important letter from the friend who sent the box. In it he told me that the admiral had most kindly kept a vacancy open for me as a lieutenant on board the Ostrich, but at last, when he could not arrange my exchange, he had been reluctantly compelled to fill it up. This, of course, added to my annoyance at having been made prisoner. The parcel of clothes was very valuable, for I found that they would fetch a high price in the place, and as in that warm climate a very small supply was sufficient, I resolved on selling the greater portion of them. This I forthwith did, at a price which enabled me to pay all my debts at the hucksters’ shops, and gave me a good sum besides. I thought that it would have been inexhaustible, and accordingly feasted sumptuously for several weeks, and entertained my friends freely in my stable, or rather in front of it, where, under the shade of a grove of cocoa-nut trees, I used to spread my board.

On the 2nd of December, Mr Camel, who had been purser of the Active, and the son of Captain Williams, were sent to Jamaica on their parole in a cartel, but no one else of our party was allowed to leave the place. Reports had just been going about to the effect that we were all to be forthwith exchanged, and therefore, when we found that they were false, an overpowering despondency sprung up among us. To increase the misery of our condition, a report reached the commandant, invented by some malicious person, or perhaps by the authorities themselves, to increase the harsh treatment to which we were subjected, to the effect that we had formed a plot to set fire to the village, and that, taking advantage of the confusion thus created, we intended endeavouring to make our way to the sea, and then to seize some small vessel and escape in her to Jamaica. It was not likely that a number of officers who had given their parole to remain quiet would be guilty of an act so dishonourable as to endeavour to escape. It was, however, believed, and we were in consequence even more severely treated than before. I say believed, but I should be more correct if I said that the authorities pretended to believe it. We had now a guard constantly set over us, and whenever we went out we were narrowly watched. The food with which we were furnished was worse than ever, and when we complained of the purveyors or hucksters the commandant replied that he could not interfere, and that we must take what was offered us, and be thankful that it was no worse. Often many of our poor fellows had not the bare necessaries of life, and it was only by great exertion that I was able to procure them, as I have described, for myself and a few of my more intimate friends. I had not supposed that so degenerate a race of Frenchmen existed, for when they saw us all rapidly sickening and advancing towards the grave, instead of relaxing their system of tyranny, they only increased their ill-treatment, and made us believe that they really wished to put us to death by inches.

On the 4th, poor young Bruce, a midshipman of the Minerva, died, and was buried in the savannah among many of

our countrymen who had already fallen victims to disease. Captain Stott, we heard, was sinking fast, and on the 15th he too succumbed to sickness and, I truly believe, a broken heart. Some of his friends attended him to the last, and a large body of us went up to keep guard, to prevent his body being carried away, as had been the case with Captain Williams.

As soon as he was dead, we lieutenants carried him to our own house and in the morning we sent a deputation to the commandant, saying, that as Captain Stott was one of the oldest officers in his Majesty's service, we considered that he ought to be buried with as much form and ceremony as circumstances would allow in the public cemetery of the place. Our request was, however, peremptorily refused. We all of us, accordingly, assembled in our uniforms, and bore the body of the old captain to the savannah, where, at a lonely spot, we dug a grave with such implements as we possessed, and, prayers being said, deposited him in it near his midshipman and steward.

There they rest, in that scarcely known locality, free from that trouble and care which has followed many of those who attended them to their graves. Some of those were, however, soon to be laid to rest alongside them. Perhaps it was through some feeling of humanity that, a few days afterwards, the son and nephew of Captain Stott—two little fellows scarcely more than ten years old—were allowed to go to Jamaica under charge of Mr Varmes, purser of the Minerva. Bartholomew, one of the lieutenants of the same ship, was very ill of the fever. He had scarcely been able to creep to the burial of his late commander, but still he had some hopes of recovery. Our medical man had very little experience of the nature of the fell disease which was attacking us, so that those taken ill had but a small chance of getting well.

I was sitting one day by the side of poor Bartholomew, endeavouring to afford him what consolation I could. Alas! with regard to his worldly prospects there was little I could offer. I tried to point to higher things—to the world to come. Unfortunately men do not think enough of that till they are on its very threshold. He was expressing a hope that he should get better, and I entertained the same; suddenly the door of the room was thrown open, and Adams, another of the Minerva's lieutenants, rushed into the room with an animated countenance—

"Cheer up, Bartie, old fellow!" he exclaimed. "An order has just arrived for our release. I have seen it, and we are to set off at once for Jamaica."

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the other lieutenant, lifting himself up in his bed. "Then I shall not have to leave my bones in this horrid hole. Hurrah! On, my fine fellows, on!"

He waved his hand above his head as if he had his sword in it, and was leading a party of boarders. I heard a rattling sound. I looked at his countenance. An awful change had come over it. Before I could even support him he fell back in his bed and was dead. Adams and I stood for a moment like persons petrified, so sudden and shocking was the event. We bore him at sunset to our field of the dead in the savannah, and there the hands of his friends and brother-officers laid him beside the grave of his late captain. Adams, however, got away and reached Jamaica in safety. Thus ended, in gloom and almost hopeless despondency, that, to us prisoners, ever memorable year of 1778. For what we could tell to the contrary then, we might have to remain till peace was restored, or till England succumbed to the enemies gathering round her.

Proud of our country as we were, and confident of the bravery of her sons, what had we to hope for? Although at sea the ancient supremacy of our flag had been ably upheld, on shore, either from want of good generals or from our pernicious military system—perhaps from both causes combined—no brilliancy had been shed on the British arms; indeed, we only heard of defeats, ill-conducted expeditions, and disasters of all sorts, which often made our hearts sink to the very depths of despondency.

Chapter Seventeen.

Attacked with fever.—Mammy Gobo, my black nurse.—Recovery.—Death of Delisle.—Sail for Jamaica.—Promoted.—Join the Porcupine.—Chase.—A mishap.—Becalmed.—Provisions run short.—Sufferings.—A fresh breeze brings us relief.—Jamaica again.

I had long held out against the attacks of that arch enemy, the yellow fever, to which so many of my companions in misfortune had succumbed. Several vacancies having occurred in the house, Manby had gone there and left me to the society of Tom Rockets and my cocks and hens. I, however, had got so accustomed to the place that I had no wish to go elsewhere. Impunity had made me fancy that I was proof against the fever. It found me out, however. In an instant I was struck down. I entreated that I might be left where I was. Tom made me up as comfortable a bed as he could, and covered me with a boat-cloak and a blanket. Strange as it may seem, in that climate I felt excessively cold, and thought that nothing would warm me. Hour after hour I lay shivering as if nothing could ever make me warm again, and expecting all the time that I was about to die, and thinking that those I loved most on earth would perhaps never gain tidings of my fate. Then I felt so hot that I had a longing to jump into the nearest stream to cool my fevered blood. Poor Tom sat by my side, often wringing his hands in despair, not knowing how to treat me, and yet anxious to do all in his power to be of assistance. At length one day he jumped up as if a bright thought had just struck him, and out he ran, leaving me alone. I scarcely expected that I should be alive when he came back, so weak and wretched did I feel. An hour or more passed when he reappeared, accompanied by an old black woman with whom I had occasionally exchanged a joke in passing, and I believe bestowed on her some trifle or other,—Mammy Gobo I used to call her,—little thinking the service she would be to me. She felt me all over and looked at my tongue, and then off she trotted. She soon, however, came back with some pots and herbs and some bricks. She first made Tom dig a hole, in which she lighted a fire and at it heated some bricks. These she applied at once to my feet, and, putting on her pots, formed some decoctions with the herbs, which she made me swallow in large quantities. Had she not providentially come, I believe that I should have died that very night. As it was, I was evidently a subject requiring all her care and skill. She seemed anxious to bestow both on me. All night long she sat up by my side, and all day she

watched over me. It appeared to me that she never slept. If I opened my eyes they were certain to fall on her jolly ugly visage, with her large eyes turned full upon me, seemingly to inquire what I wanted. When at last she began to go away occasionally for half an hour at a time to collect more herbs, or for some other purpose, Rockets was always ready to take her place, and attended me with all the affection of a true and warm friend. Strong as my constitution was, I am very sure that had I not been watched over by Mammy Gobo and Tom I should not have recovered—that is to say, I felt then, and I feel more strongly now, that they were the instruments, under a merciful Providence, by which I was preserved so long from destruction while hanging between life and death, and ultimately of my recovery, though it was long before that took place. Probably in consequence of his constant attendance on me, before I had begun to recover, Tom himself was attacked with the fever, and there he lay in the stall next to me, moaning and groaning, and occasionally raging with delirium. I ought to have mentioned that some time before this our old horse had been removed to a place of superior accommodation—I suspect to our tumble-down, rickety stable; but, as we wanted his room more than his company, we did not complain of this. Mammy Gobo was no respecter of persons, and I was glad to find that she attended on Tom with as much care as she had done on me. The poor fellow was very grateful.

“Ah, sir,” he said, “though that ’ere nigger woman has got a black skin, to my mind she has as good and red a heart in her body as any white-faced person. It’s just the painting of the outside which ain’t altogether according to our notions; but after all, sir, beauty is, as you know, sir, only skin deep.”

I fully agreed with him on this point, and at that moment poor Mammy Gobo was more welcome to our sight than the most beautiful creature in existence. What cooling drinks she concocted out of herbs and simples, and what delicious messes out of various sorts of vegetables and fruits and roots, the productions of that fruitful climate! However, Mammy Gobo could not always attend on us, for she had several other patients and had to look after her own affairs at home. During her absence our poor chickens fared but ill, for we could not go out to collect food for them, and the supply we had before stored up was soon expended. They, in consequence, had to go forth to forage for themselves. At first they came back regularly enough, but then we remarked that one was missing; then next day another did not make its appearance, and so on the third day two were missing. In a few days half our stock were lost. We told Mammy Gobo of what had occurred, and she said she would try and find out who had robbed us. When, however, she was present, all the chickens came back. We certainly did not suspect her of being the thief, but we felt sure that the real thieves watched her movements and ran off with our fowls when she was out of the way. We were compelled also to kill several of our stock of chickens for food, Mammy Gobo having especially prescribed chicken-broth when we became somewhat convalescent. They were now reduced to a very small number. One by one they also disappeared till none remained, and then we were indeed in a very miserable and forlorn condition. We were still too ill, however, to think much of the future, but we found it impossible to supply even our present wants; and had not the kind-hearted black woman catered for us, assuring the hucksters that I was certain to recover and pay them, I believe that we should have starved.

At last I was able to get about a little, though the fever was still on me, and I managed to crawl to the house to see some of my brother-officers. The greater number of them were sick, or had been ill and nearer death’s door. I inquired for my old shipmate and friend, Delisle. “He is ill in that room,” was the reply. I went forthwith to him. A few short weeks of sickness had made a great change in his countenance. He took my hand when I approached the wretched pallet on which he was stretched.

“I am glad to see you recovering, my dear Hurry,” he said in a low, feeble voice. “It is all up with me, though. I shall never be a post-captain—never command a ship—my last battle is fought. I must yield to God’s will. It seems hard, though. You know all about my friends. If you ever reach home, go and tell them about me. I can’t talk more. I am weak—very weak—couldn’t hail the maintop if I was to try. Oh, it’s hard, very hard, to be thus cut off by the arm of this vile climate—very, very.”

He was silent. I tried to console him, to raise his spirits, for I was certain they had a good deal to do in enabling a person to recover. In vain were all my efforts. He sank slowly, and before morning one who had long been my friend and the companion of my Orlopian days on board the Orpheus, and lately my messmate also in the Bristol, was no more. The blow prostrated me in body and spirits, and I felt inclined to give in, and lay my head down beside his. Soon after daylight we sallied forth with the body of our brother-officer, and took our way towards the dreary savannah. We were followed by some of our guards and other individuals, anxious, we concluded, to watch our proceedings. Our party was but small, for alas! the greater number of the lieutenants were unable from sickness to attend the funeral. We were a melancholy party—pale, haggard, and squalid. We placed the body on the grass. What a fine, handsome young fellow he looked! We began to dig his grave. Without consideration, we began to dig it east and west. When we had proceeded some way in our work, our French masters interfered and said that we ought to dig it north and south, that only Christian men, good Catholics, should be buried east and west, that they might be ready to rise when summoned by the sound of the last trump. We resolved, however, not to give in to so absurd a demand, and continued our labours. Again the Frenchmen interfered. On a further consultation one of our party recollected that graves were usually placed east and west in England, and so we told our tyrants that we were only following one of our own national customs, and to it we intended to adhere. From our not recollecting the custom, all our other countrymen had been buried north and south. After some further dispute about the matter we were allowed to proceed, and thus poor Delisle rests in the position which is considered most orthodox, though I cannot say that I should be inclined to attach much importance to the matter. Sad and sick, I went back to our stable. The exertion I had gone through almost finished me. The other lieutenants wanted me to go to their house, but I had no spirits for society. I preferred my own wretched abode and the companionship of Tom Rockets and the old black woman. Never did one brother mourn for another more sincerely than I did for Gerard Delisle. Thus the days and weeks and months drew slowly along till April arrived. That month was passed much as the others till on the 28th, a day not likely to be forgotten by me. Several of my friends had come in to see me, and they were all sitting about in the stable. We were bemoaning, as we often did, our hard fate.

“As for me,” I exclaimed, “I fully expect to lay my bones in that dark, dreary savannah! What hope have I of ever getting away?”

Suddenly a voice was heard outside the door shouting lustily. We thought it was one of our friends running about in the delirium of fever, when in rushed Lieutenant Moriarty with an open letter in his hand of a very official appearance.

“It was directed to me, so I broke the seal. You and Manby and I are free. Hurrah, boys, hurrah!” he exclaimed. “Hurrah, hurrah!”

I thought at first that he was mad, and could not believe him till he let me inspect the letter. It was from General D’Argue, informing us that, in consequence of a request from Sir Peter Parker, we had leave to embark on board a cartel for Jamaica. I turned the document over and over again in my hand. There could be no doubt about its genuineness. Ill and weak as we all were, for we still had the fever on us, we resolved to set off the moment we were able. After the first ebullition of our feelings was over, we recollected what must be the sensation of the friends we were leaving behind, and Moriarty did his best to soothe them by assuring them how rejoiced we should be if they were able to go likewise. Some of them, I thought, looked compassionately on me, for I was at that time confined to my bed, such as it was, and, as I thought, utterly unable to walk. The news of my liberty, however, worked more wonders towards my cure than all the physic the first of doctors could have given me, or the decoctions of good Mammy Gobo. The next day, however, when it was known that I had got my liberty, the hucksters, shoemakers, and washerwomen poured in their bills on me, which, though not of any great amount, I found totally beyond my means to pay. I promised them that I would transmit the amounts the instant I got back to Jamaica; but they said that would not do, and that if I could not pay them they must appeal to the authorities, and that I must be detained. I was in despair. I was eager to be gone. I felt that I should not live if I remained. In my dilemma Lieutenant Lawford, who had a letter of credit on a merchant at Cape François, came forward in the most liberal and generous way, and supplied me with fifty dollars, which was all I required to satisfy the demands of my creditors. My mind being thus relieved, I felt myself strong enough to get up and assist in making the preparations for our journey. We engaged a carriage to convey us to the coast, for none of us were in a fit state to ride on horseback. I will not dwell on the sad countenances and the depressed spirits of our brother-officers whom we left behind.

On the morning of the 30th of April, with a buoyancy of spirits to which I had long been a stranger, I with my companions got into the rickety vehicle which was to convey us the first part of our journey, Tom Rockets being perched on a seat behind. We arrived at about eight o’clock at the village of Lemonade—an attractive name on a hot day—and near there found a boat in readiness to carry us to Cape François. How delicious the sea-breeze smelt!—how refreshing to our parched skins and stagnant blood! It appeared to me to drive away at once all the remains of the fever. I felt like a new being, strong and hearty, in a moment. I found, however, when I attempted to exert my strength, that I had very little of that left. Once more we found ourselves in the far-from-delectable town of Cape François. As the cartel was not ready, we had to take up our abode at a tavern, where we were joined by two other naval officers who had been imprisoned in another part of the island. We had some difficulty in amusing ourselves during our stay, but every day we were picking up health and strength, and at length, on the 8th, we all five embarked, with two masters of merchantmen who had lost their vessels, and thirty seamen, on board the cartel, and commenced our voyage to Jamaica. On the 10th we put into Saint Germains, another part of Saint Domingo, where we received some more released prisoners, and on the following day we bid what I hoped would prove an eternal adieu to the most inhospitable of islands. With the exception of the houses we had stopped at on our way to Ou Trou, we had not been received into the abodes of any of the white inhabitants of the country. Some of the coloured people would willingly have treated us kindly, but they were kept in awe by the authorities, and thus the only real kindness we received was from the poor unsophisticated blacks. For my own part, I have felt ever since deeply grateful to Mammy Gobo and her ebony-skinned countrymen and countrywomen, and have been most anxious to do them all the good in my power. With regard to the French residents, all I can say is that I recognised among them none of the supposed characteristics of the French nation. Instead of proving hospitable and polite, I should say that I never saw a greater set of bears in my life.

Our voyage was short and merry, though one of the subjects which afforded us most amusement was our own forlorn, half-starved, almost naked condition. We were all much alike, so we could afford to laugh at each other. The weather held fine and our voyage was speedy, and on the ever-to-be-remembered 13th of May we sighted the entrance of Port Royal harbour, where we dropped anchor in the afternoon. I found that I had been absent exactly nine months and three days. In spite of my tatter-demalion appearance and my consciousness that I was much like the wretched apothecary who supplied the love-lorn Romeo with the fatal potion, as soon as I got on shore I hastened up to pay my respects to Sir Peter Parker. He received me, as I knew he would, with the greatest kindness, and when I apologised for my ragged appearance he laughed and assured me that he would much rather see an officer in a threadbare uniform, worn out in active service, than in one shining and bright in consequence of want of use.

“You’ll stay to dinner with me, Mr Hurry,” said the admiral. “We must try to put some more flesh on those bones of yours.”

I looked at my tattered garments.

“Oh, never mind those; they are honourable, like a flag well riddled,” he observed. “I want you, besides, to tell me all that happened to you during your captivity.”

Dinner was soon afterwards announced, and during it I gave the admiral an account of the chief events which had happened while I was at Ou Trou. He was very indignant when he heard of the way we had been treated, and especially of the mode in which Captains Williams and Stott had been buried. I made him laugh at some of our contrivances, and particularly at my having turned hen keeper. I described also to him our residence in the stable with the old horse. I declared that I had tried to teach the horse my language, and, not succeeding, had endeavoured to learn his, and that I was in a fair way of succeeding when he was removed from our habitation. This really was the case; I had made great friends with the old animal, and I was beginning to know exactly the meaning of all the noises he made. The admiral was highly amused with all I told him. He put me, in return, in high spirits by informing me that, on hearing I was captured, he had directed that I should be rated as a mate of the Bristol, and kept on her

books, and that, in consequence, I was entitled to a share of prize-money, which, as she had been very successful, would be of some amount. Several officers, post-captains and others, were present, as were three or four civilians, planters and merchants. The latter invited me to their houses, and one of them, Mr Martin, insisted that I should drive back with him, and make his house my home till I got a ship.

“That he has got already,” said the admiral, presenting me with a paper, which I found was my commission as lieutenant, and that I was appointed to the Porcupine sloop-of-war of fourteen guns, commanded by Captain John Packenham. I could not find words to express my thanks to the admiral, but he said, “Pooh, pooh; we want active, intelligent, gallant young men not afraid of a gale of wind, or of an enemy ashore or afloat,” he answered. “You have fairly won your promotion, and I congratulate you on obtaining it.”

With these kind words I parted from the admiral, and took my seat in my new friend’s carriage.

“We have time to see old Stukely this evening, and ascertain the amount you have got to your credit. It won’t make you sleep the worse,” said he, as we drove along.

“Forty or fifty pounds, probably,” I remarked. “It would make me feel as rich as a king.”

“We will see, we will see,” he replied.

To the agent’s we went. He was a friend of Mr Martin’s, so without more ado he turned to his books.

“Hurry? Hurry of the Bristol?” he muttered. “A trifle, I know.”

I bethought me, “It won’t be ten pounds after all, perhaps.”

“Oh, yes, here I have it. Three hundred pounds, Mr Hurry! You can draw it whenever you like: our friend here will assure me of your identity.”

I couldn’t help throwing up my cap for joy.

“Well, I am rich,” I exclaimed; “like that old fellow Croesus I once read of at school. Thank you, sir—thank you. Hurrah, hurrah!” I burst out into a loud fit of laughter.

At first Mr Martin smiled at my joy, but he soon began to look grave, as did the agent, for they perceived that I was over-excited—that, in truth, the admiral’s good wine and my unexpected good fortune, acting on a frame shattered by sickness, had upset me, and they seemed to think that there was every probability of a return of my fever.

“I am very glad to hear that you have got this little sum. It will help to supply you with an outfit,” observed Mr Martin, wishing to calm me down a little.

“Enough for an outfit!—enough to fit out a prince or found a kingdom,” I exclaimed vehemently. “Ha, ha, ha!”

“Well, never mind that just now,” said my kind friend; “just get into my barouche, and come along to my house in the meantime. To-morrow we will talk about these matters.”

I made no resistance, and, getting into his carriage, we soon reached his cool and comfortable mansion in the neighbourhood of Kingston. I was immediately put to bed, and off I went into a sleep so sound that an earthquake or an hurricane would scarcely have awoke me.

It was late in the day when I at length opened my eyes, feeling quite a new being. A thorough sound sleep, with my mind at ease as to my prospects, was all I required to restore me to health. This I had not got since I left Ou Trou. As soon as I had dressed and breakfasted I set off for Port Royal harbour, and joined my ship, as happy a fellow, I may truly say, as ever crossed salt water. I was most kindly received by my new shipmates, who seemed to vie with each other in trying to make amends to me for the sufferings I had undergone. I had very little time to be idle, or to amuse myself on shore. That I suspect was the better for me. The ship was all ready for sea, and on the 18th of the month, just four days after I got back to Jamaica, we sailed on a cruise, in company with his Majesty’s frigate Hinchinbrook, commanded by Captain Parker, the admiral’s son, off Cape Saint Antonio. I found that the Camel, which had been sent to accompany a fleet through the gulf, had on her return, when off Cape Saint Antonio, seen a considerable number of Saint Domingo ships. One she had taken which was very valuable, but, being a slow sailer, the others had escaped her. Her captain informed Sir Peter that he was certain if a couple of ships would sail immediately the fortunes of all on board would be made. In consequence of this the admiral despatched the Hinchinbrook and my ship the Porcupine, directing us not to wait to fill up with provisions or water, but to proceed at once to the locality where these rich prizes were to be found.

On the 25th we arrived off our station. The next day a stranger was reported in sight—a schooner. We made all sail in chase. How delightful it was to feel myself once more on board ship, bowling away with a fine breeze through the free sparkling waters, with England’s time-honoured flag above my head. I could scarcely refrain from shouting with pleasure, and I do not think that anybody would have been much astonished had I done so, for I should have replied, “Let me tell you, old fellows, if any of you had been shut up in a dull village in an abominable climate, half-starved, ill-treated and insulted, hearing constantly that old England was conquered, that her fleets were destroyed, and her people led into captivity, with your companions and friends dying about you, and, when dead, buried like dogs, you would shout when you found yourselves at liberty, and able once more to do battle with the enemies of your country.”

Whether the schooner was American or French we could not at first determine, but that she was an enemy there could be no doubt. The prospect of prize-money is always pleasant, though when obtained, in too many cases, it is spent in folly and extravagance. All hands were in high spirits; a good beginning to a successful cruise we thought it

would prove. Cape Antonio bore at the time south-east. We had almost got the chase within range of our guns, when a grating sound was heard, and a shock was felt which sent most of the ship's company toppling down on their noses; the water surged up alongside, and we found that we were on shore. Here might be a speedy conclusion to all our hopes of prize-money—not that we cared for the paltry sum the vessel in sight might have given us, but for what we might obtain by our cruise altogether. Not a moment was lost in clewing-up everything, lowering boats, and in laying out anchors; but, notwithstanding, we stuck hard and fast. British seamen, however, do not give way to despair in a hurry. Fresh anchors and warps were laid out. We sounded round the ship to see where most water was to be found. Then we worked away with our purchases. We had no wish to start our water or to heave our guns and provisions overboard till the last extremity. Fortunately the wind fell. We hove away with a will. "Hurrah, hurrah?" was the cry fore and aft; "she moves, she moves!" Our success encouraged us. The Hinchinbrook, before we got on shore, was out of sight; so was the chase by this time. At length our efforts were rewarded with success, and once more we had deep water under our keel. What was satisfactory, also, we had suffered little or no damage.

For the next fortnight we were employed chiefly in chasing and speaking a vast number of Spanish merchantmen bound to the Havannah, and as we little suspected all the time that war had been declared between England and Spain, we allowed them to proceed. This was provoking enough, for, they would have proved very rich prizes. We spoke also his Majesty's ships Winchelsea, Camel, Lynne, and Druid, with a convoy from England for Jamaica, and on the 15th of June, the period of our cruise being up, and our provisions, moreover, growing short, we left our station and made sail for Port Royal.

On the 1st of July, judging by our reckoning that we were within a few leagues of Jamaica, our surprise was very considerable when we struck soundings on the Misteriosa bank, about a hundred leagues to the westward of where we supposed ourselves to be. Captain Packenham sent forthwith for the purser, and in consequence of the report he gave we were immediately put on half allowance, having, even at that rate, provisions to last us only for fourteen days. There we were, dead to leeward, while light winds and frequent calms occasioned our progress to be very slow. We kept at it, however, making every inch of ground we could. Still by the 12th, being at a considerable distance from land, we were of necessity put on yet further reduced allowance of a biscuit a day, an ounce of pork and half a pint of water. I, who just then required sustenance more than most of my companions, felt the want of substantial food very much. The Hinchinbrook, with which we were still in company, was also short of provisions, and could ill spare any to supply our wants. We now both of us felt the inconvenience of having sailed in so great a hurry. It had been calculated that we should take a week to get to our station; that we should cruise there a couple of weeks, and take a week to return. Things were now growing extremely serious, though the men bore their want of food very well, but we could not help seeing clearly that the time might shortly come when we should really have nothing whatever on board. On the 15th, believing that we could not possibly reach a port, we stood to the northward and kept in the latitude of Jamaica, hoping thus to fall in with a fleet of merchantmen under convoy of some ships of war, which we knew were to sail from Jamaica about that time. We had look-outs stationed at each mast-head, eagerly on the watch for any strange sail, friend or foe, from which we might have obtained relief. We should certainly have attacked any foe, even twice our force, for the sake of obtaining food from them. I believe that, so desperately we should have fought, we should have conquered. Men are like wild beasts when hungry. There is nothing they will not dare and do. Still we were doomed to disappointment. On the 30th of July, all our bread and water being expended, we were reduced to an allowance of one ounce of pork for each man daily. It did just to keep body and soul together. We were compelled to send each day on board the Hinchinbrook for a small cask of water, which was all they could spare us. Even of this small allowance we felt that we might any day be deprived, should we, as was very probable, be separated from our consort by a gale of wind. On the 2nd of August the faces of the purser and his clerks were longer than usual. The ounce of pork was diminished to half an ounce, and then some of the messmen found that they were getting only a quarter of an ounce, I guessed, by the countenances of the men as they went forward, but they said nothing. They very well knew that the present state of things could not be helped. Very soon the purser came aft to the captain who was on the quarter-deck—

"Sir, I have to report that there is not a pint of water or an ounce of bread or biscuit, or anything eatable on board," was his very unsatisfactory announcement.

The captain stood as cool and unmoved as if he was hearing an account of any ordinary occurrence.

"You have some tallow candles and oil, and some raisins, and a few other little things of that sort?" he remarked.

The purser said there was a small supply on board.

"Very well, they will serve to keep all hands alive for a day or two, and by that time we may hope to fall in with assistance," he answered.

He then called us all round him, and officially announced what the purser had told him.

"I'll let the people know the state of things," he added, and directed that they should be summoned aft.

Their pale, thin faces, and the slow way in which many of them walked, showed that the want of sufficient food was already telling on their strength.

"My lads," said Captain Packenham, "we put to sea in a hurry, and we expected to be back before our provisions were expended, but we are mistaken. We are short of food, but many ships have been in a worse case. We have done our best to get back to Jamaica, and as we cannot get there, I hope we may fall in with some vessels or other from which we may get a supply of provisions, either friends to give them to us, or enemies from which we may take them, and, hungry as we are, I would not fear to lay you alongside an enemy's ship, for I am very certain you would take care to provide yourselves with a good supper at the end of the fight."

The crew warmly cheered this speech, though the voices of many of the poor fellows sounded hollow and faint. They

knew, however, that, badly off as they might be, not an officer would touch a mouthful of food while they were without it. How eagerly we all looked out for a sail which might bring us relief! There was no necessity to hail the mast-heads to ascertain that the men stationed there were doing their duty. I certainly did not wish myself back at Ou Trou, but I never suffered such pangs of hunger there as I was now doing. We had two or three prophets of disaster on board, and they were continually citing instances where the whole crew of a ship had died from starvation, or perhaps where only one or two had survived to tell the tale of their misfortunes. Water was our greatest want. The wind was light, almost a calm, and the sun shone forth on the calm shining sea with intense fury, the very pitch in the teams of our decks bubbled up, and if we had a beef steak we might have cooked it on the capstan-head. We put on our sword-belts, and drew them tighter and tighter round our waists. The men used their handkerchiefs for the same object. But all would not do. Tight as we drew them we could not stop the gnawing pangs which attacked us. Those on watch had, of course, to keep the deck. The rest of the officers lay down in their cabins, but I could not remain in mine. I was soon again out of it, and climbing up aloft eagerly to scan the horizon, in the hopes of finding a sail in sight. In vain I looked round; not a speck was to be seen above the horizon. At length the sun went down, and darkness came on, and there the ship lay becalmed, with her crew of starving men. Anxiously all that night passed away—the calm continued. We had indeed practical experience of how hard hunger and thirst is to bear. We could see the Hinchinbrook at a little distance from us, rolling her polished sides in the water, over which the moonbeams were now playing. She was now in as bad a condition as we were, and could no longer render us any assistance. The sun again rose, and then the two ships lay with their sails idly flapping against the masts. A hurricane would at that time have been welcomed—anything to move us on. There was no piping to breakfast that day. The boatswain put his whistle to his mouth, but instantly let it fall again. The men, however, were mustered at divisions, and then they were set on to do all sorts of work, to keep their minds employed if possible, although their jaws were to be idle. At dinner-time as much of the oil and tallow candles as could be spared was served out, but some of the men could not touch the greasy compound, even though about a thimbleful of rum was offered at the same time to wash it down.

“Stay a bit,” observed the surgeon, “in two or three days they will take it eagerly enough.”

It was not from hunger we suffered so much as from thirst. That was terrible. Hour after hour passed by. No relief appeared. I began almost to wish that I had laid my head down alongside my poor friend and old shipmate, Delisle, in the desolate savannah near Ou Trou. The thought was wrong—rank ingratitude to the merciful providence which had preserved me—but it was human, I fear. How admirably our gallant fellows behaved! Scarcely a murmur or a grumble was heard. Again the sun went down. That night was one of great suffering among many of the crew. Some tried to keep up their own spirits and those of their messmates by singing and cutting jokes and telling stories. Still it would not do. They soon broke down. The surgeons kept going about, administering stimulants to those who appeared sinking, but their store of medicine was soon exhausted, and they could do no more. Day came again, but no relief was brought us. I with others climbed aloft. Not a sail was in sight. In vain—in vain we scanned the horizon, the calm continued, and the ships floated idly on the smooth, sullen, treacherous water. Yet who that could by any possibility have seen those two fine, well-appointed men-of-war would have supposed that so much suffering, alarm, and dread existed on board them! Death had not yet visited us, but we could not tell when he would commence his work of destruction. Any moment he might begin to strike, and we knew that he would not cease till he had made an end of all. The men were piped to divisions, but scarcely an attempt was made to find employment for them. They lay listlessly along the decks, some could scarcely walk. The voices of the officers, as they issued their orders, sounded hollow and strange. I felt sure that many would not last out another day. The hours still drew slowly on, without bringing us any relief. Captain Packenham had retired to his cabin to conceal the pain he was suffering. The first lieutenant and I still kept the deck, but I began to feel that I must soon go below, or I should fall where I stood. The greater part of the crew were completely prostrate. Some few of the stronger men continued every now and then to go aloft to take a look-out round the horizon, to learn if any sail were in sight. I turned to my brother-officer—

“What think you, Staunton, of our prospects?” said I.

“The Jamaica fleet ought to be here by this time,” he answered.

“But if they have been delayed, or have already passed or steered another course, what are we to do?” I urged.

“Starve to death,” he answered, in a hollow voice. “A day—a few hours—will settle the point.”

We neither of us spoke again for long after that. The ship’s head kept going round and round the compass. Some of the people were too weak even to endeavour to crawl into the shade. We supported ourselves as long as we could against the bulwarks, but at length had to sit down on a gun-carriage, our knees refusing any longer to hold us up. The day was drawing on. I felt with Staunton that another day would settle the question of life or death for most of us. One by one the men had come down from aloft, giving up all hope of seeing a sail approaching to our relief. Weak as they were, we could not insist on any of the poor fellows remaining up there, except as volunteers.

I was thinking over all I had gone through at different parts of my life, and how often I had been mercifully preserved. “I’ll not give in even now,” I said to myself. “I’ll go aloft, and have another look-out.” Suddenly I felt my strength returning. I got up, and, slinging my glass over my shoulder, went up the fore rigging. It appeared to me that I was as strong and active as ever. I gained the foretop mast-head. I unslung my glass and looked out. There, right away to the westward, was a long, dark line in the horizon, which could be caused I knew alone by a fresh breeze, and even as I looked and hailed the welcome sign of deliverance, several dots appeared above it, the loftier sails, as I well knew, of approaching ships. I rubbed my eyes. Again I looked to assure myself of the reality of what I fancied I saw, and that I might not be deceived by some phantom of the brain. No, I was certain that I was right; there were the approaching sails. With a strong breeze they came on quickly towards us.

“Several sail in sight!” I shouted out, and my voice was scarcely weaker than usual. I waved my hand and pointed in the direction I saw them.

The effect was electrical. Men who seemed before almost at their last gasp rose to their feet. The officers came hurrying on deck. Captain Packenham himself appeared. Many mounted the rigging and joined me aloft to assure themselves that I was not deceived. There could be no doubt about the matter. All saw the approaching ships. Royals, topgallant sails, topsails appeared one after the other above the horizon. They might be the ships of the expected Jamaica fleet, or they might be enemies. By that time the sea was swarming with them. In that case we should have to fight for what we wanted.

“No matter,” was the cry of all on board, “we are ready and able as ever to meet a foe.”

The prospect of relief roused everyone, and though our cheeks were thin and our strength was feeble, our spirits rose and we felt that we could fight as well as ever. Anxiously we watched the approaching strangers. As we rose their courses out of the water we felt pretty certain from their appearance that some of them were men-of-war. At length we made out their colours. They were English. They might, however, have been hoisted to deceive us. Not to be taken by surprise we went to quarters. We now clearly ascertained that the two headmost ships were frigates and the rest merchantmen. They soon showed the private signals. They were the Aeolus and Prudente frigates with the long-expected convoy for England. We hoisted signals of distress, and, lowering our boats, they were alongside them by the time they hove-to near us.

The different way in which we were treated by the officers of the two frigates was very remarkable. Captain Waldegrave of the Prudente aided us in the most kind and compassionate way, and he was warmly seconded by two of his lieutenants, Campbell and Ferris, who exerted themselves to the utmost to bring provisions on board without an instant’s delay. They sent us their own dinners which had just been dressed, and also all the cooked meat on board, so that we were able at once to satisfy the cravings of hunger. They despatched also all the delicacies they could think of, likely to be of use to us from their own private stores. The officers of the other frigate, on the contrary, treated our sufferings with heartless indifference, and seemed much vexed at having to give up some of their provisions towards supplying our wants, and at the delay which we caused them.

The masters of the merchantmen seemed to vie with each other which should afford us most voluntary assistance, and among others we were especially indebted to Captain Louis of the Augustus Caesar, a large London ship, who sent us wine, tea, sugar, sheep, fowls—indeed, everything we could possibly require. Altogether from them and the men-of-war we were supplied with provisions for three weeks. Delightful indeed was the change from actual starvation to the abundance we now enjoyed. With right good-will did we cheer the fleet which had so amply relieved our distress as we parted from them and made sail once more for Jamaica.

The following day, the 6th of August, we saw the Island of the Grand Caymayne. Here we anchored for a few hours and were then ordered by Captain Parker to proceed direct for Jamaica with despatches for his father. One of the ship’s company was destined never to reach it. The captain of the maintop, a fine active fellow, fell from aloft, and, striking part of the rigging, bounded overboard. The ship was instantly hove-to, a boat was lowered and pulled towards the spot where he fell. Some thought they saw his head floating above the waves. In vain we looked about for him. Either stunned by his fall he sank at once, or a shark, one of those ravenous monsters of the deep, had made him his prey. Poor John Nettlethorp! There were mourning hearts in your quiet home in Devonshire when the ship returned and your fate was told those who had long-expected to see you once again.

On the 19th we reached Port Royal. We found everybody in the greatest excitement making preparations to receive Count D’Estaign, who, with a powerful fleet and army, was hourly expected to make an attack on the island. None of England’s colonies can boast of more loyal and devoted inhabitants than does Jamaica, as they have given abundant proof of on numberless occasions.

> “Yes, gentlemen of England, who stay at home at ease,
> Ah! little do you think upon the dangers of the seas.”

Little also, say I, do you dream of all the racketing and knocking about your naval defenders have to go through in time of war that you may stay at home at ease!

My journal will give you some idea of what seamen have to endure. In harbour one day, at sea for weeks, then to encounter storms and ship-wrecks, battles and wounds, famine and sickness, extremes of heat and cold, pain and suffering, defeat sometimes and imprisonment, with the many ills which make the heart sick, and when at length we return into port, instead of obtaining rest we have to refit ship, take in stores and provisions, and seldom enjoy a moment of leisure till we are once more ready for sea. I was very far, even in the days of which I speak, of complaining of this. I chose my profession. I loved it. I delighted in action, and all I wish to impress on my readers is the nature and duties of a sailor’s life. Still, had I again to begin my existence in this sublunary world and once more to choose my profession, above all others I would select that of an officer in the glorious navy of old England.

Chapter Eighteen.

Expected attack from Count D’Estaign.—War with Spain.—Expedition against Saint Fernando D’Omoa.—Visit from King of the Mosquito Shore.—Cannonade the town.—Set it on fire.—Storm the town.—Rockets and his two cutlasses.—Gives one to Spaniard to fight with.—Rich galleons captured.—I have command of the Saint Domingo.—Nearly lost.

That summer of 1779 was a busy time for the right loyal and patriotic people of Jamaica, and I believe that even had the Count D’Estaign, with his twenty-six line-of-battle ships and nine or ten thousand troops, made his appearance, he would have found it no easy task to gain a victory.

After our return from our starvation cruise we remained but a day in harbour, and again sailed for Old Harbour with

despatches for the Penelope. Having delivered them we were returning when we fell in with a small schooner. She made a signal to us to heave-to, and an officer came on board who brought us the news that war with Spain had broken out, and directed us to go in search of the Penelope and acquaint her with the fact. We overtook her the following day, and of course we all regretted that we had not been aware before of the war, as we had allowed so many Spanish vessels to pass us which, had we captured, would have proved rich prizes.

Once more we got back to Port Royal, and had to go alongside the wharf to heave down and repair the ship. Sir Peter had made every preparation to receive the enemy. An advanced squadron was kept cruising off the coast, while the entrance of the harbour was rendered impracticable by strong booms laid across it, and by forts armed with heavy guns on either side.

On the 11th, however, notice was brought us that Count D'Estaign had sailed for America, where, having been severely handled at the siege of Savannah, he returned to Europe with the greater part of his force, sending some, however, back to the West Indies. They had, however, already done us some mischief by the capture of the Islands of Saint Vincent and Grenada, with other places of less importance, while they had also made not a few prizes on their voyage.

Sir Peter Parker was now designing an attack on the fort of Saint Fernando D'Omoa. He had been informed that the Spaniards had threatened to attack the bay-men on the Mosquito shore and Bay of Honduras, and that they had already landed at Saint George's Quay, which place they had plundered, and treated the inhabitants with the greatest cruelty. To protect this settlement from further insults, the instant she was ready for sea, the Porcupine was directed to take on board Captain-Commandant Dalrymple and a small party of the Loyal Irish, and to proceed to the Black River on the Mosquito shore. We sailed on the 12th of September, but, having carried away our mainmast, we had to return to replace it, so that it was not till the 20th that we could make a fair start. We reached our destination off the mouth of the river on the 27th. This is one of the most dangerous situations in which a ship can bring up, as the bay is completely open to the north, the quarter from which the winds are most prevalent. The only safe proceeding, as the anchorage is none of the best, is at once to run to sea. A bar, on which a tremendous surf breaks, stretches across the mouth of the river, so that, except in calm weather and a slack tide, the landing is dangerous in the extreme. Of this we had a sad proof soon after we arrived there. Everything being made snug, to obtain fresh provisions was our first consideration. For this purpose a boat was despatched under the command of Mr York, a master's mate, with directions to enter the river and to procure fresh beef and other eatables. All sorts of commissions were likewise given him.

"Give my compliments to King Hodge-podge, and tell him that I'll knock up his quarters before long," sang out one of his messmates.

"Take care of those rollers there, Mr York," I observed. "They are apt to play people a scurvy trick every now and then."

"Ay, ay, sir," he answered; and then in a lower tone he added, "I've crossed such bars as that fifty times, and I should think I knew by this time how to handle a boat on one of them."

I pretended not to hear the remark, and the boat pushed off from the ship's side. Away she pulled towards the bar. I could not help following her with my glass. The bay was calm, but the current was running out strong, and a slow, smooth, rolling swell came in from the offing. The boat glided swiftly on towards the mouth of the river. Just before she reached the bar I had observed two or three rollers break with great fury on it. I called the attention of Captain Packenham and some of my brother-officers to what I had remarked. I fancied that I could see York looking back in triumph, as much as to say, "You see I don't fear the bar you speak of." Then on glided the boat. A huge roller rose between us and her so suddenly, it seemed to come from the very depths of the sea. On it went; others followed; but where was the boat? A cry of horror escaped from all those looking on. With my glass I made out through the mass of foam a black object and several smaller ones floating near, but they rapidly disappeared. There could be no doubt that the boat was swamped. The instant this was ascertained the captain ordered all the boats to be lowered that they might go in and endeavour to pick up any of the crew who might be carried out to sea. I went in one of them. Our orders were especially not to venture on the bar. We were not long in reaching the place. We looked eagerly about for any traces of our lost shipmates. Even the boat had been rolled over and over till not a plank remained holding together. An oar came floating out towards us, and as I watched it I saw one end rise up suddenly as if the other had been pulled at violently. We pulled up to it, and as we got near I saw a dark triangular fin gliding away through the blue bright water. I now saw clearly what had been the fate of any of the crew who might have hoped to save themselves by swimming. We returned with sad hearts on board, but sailors cannot mourn long even for their best friends. The fate of those who have been taken may be theirs to-morrow.

A few days after this Captain Packenham invited me to accompany him on shore to pay a visit to the Intendant of Black River. We took care, warned by the accident which I have described, to have a black pilot, and under his guidance we safely crossed the dangerous bar. Once in and able to draw our breaths freely, we were delighted with the beauty of the scenery which on every side met our eyes—woods and green fields, and hills and valleys, diversified the banks of the river, which branched off in different directions, and added much to the picturesqueness of the landscape. From the accounts we received of the barbarities committed by the Spaniards, we longed to meet them, to chastise them as they deserved. They had just before this made an attack on the settlement, where they had destroyed a large amount of property, and carried off a number of prisoners, both men and women, to Merida, the capital of Yucatan. Thence they were afterwards shipped to Havannah, where, if they were no better treated than we were at Saint Domingo, their fate was hard indeed. On the 5th of October we were highly honoured by a visit from his Indian Majesty of the Mosquito shore—King Hoco-poco we used to call him—I forget his name. He came accompanied by a long retinue of princes, generals, and chiefs of all sorts, rejoicing in very curious names, very dark skins, and a very scanty amount of clothing. We received his Majesty with all the honours we were able to pay him, by manning yards and firing a salute of twenty-one guns. We had also a feast spread for his entertainment, with an abundance of liquor, which he seemed to consider much more to the purpose. He and his chiefs indulged very freely

in the potent beverages placed before them, and at length they returned on shore, highly delighted with the entertainment, vowing eternal friendship to England, and excessively drunk. The accounts of the atrocities committed by the Spaniards, which we had just received, induced Captains Packenham and Dalrymple to come to the resolution of making an attack on one of their settlements. We accordingly beat up for volunteers, and in a very short time collected a hundred Indians and Black River volunteers, under the command of an Indian general named Tempest. Having embarked our army, we sailed on the 6th of October from the Mosquito shore with light westerly winds. On the next day three strange sail were seen from the mast-head to the northward. They very soon also discovered us, and made all sail in chase.

“Are they friends or foes?” was the question we asked each other.

Captain Packenham was not a man to run away from either one or the other, so we backed our main-topsail, and lay-to for them. We watched them with no little anxiety till they drew near. I forgot to say that my old friend O’Driscoll had joined the ship as a supernumerary, and that I had once more with me my faithful companions in many an adventure, Nol Grampus and Tom Rockets. Nol did not look a day older than when I first came to sea. Rockets was now grown into as stout, active and strong a seaman as any in his Majesty’s service. I could not so often have a yarn with my old followers as I used to when I was a midshipman, but I frequently exchanged words with them, and never failed to take them on any expedition on which I was sent.

“I hopes as how them strangers are friends, old ship,” I heard Tom remark to Grampus. “Three to one is long odds if they ain’t, and I suppose our captain intends to fight, as he don’t seem inclined to run. I only hopes as how he will fight, and sink rather than give in. I’ve no fancy to be made prisoner, and to be kept on short commons among blackamoors, as we was at Ou Trou.”

“No fear, my boy,” answered Grampus. “Our skipper has got some dodge or other in his brain-box, and depend on it he’ll make the ‘Porcupine’ stick up her quills all in good time. You’ll see.”

I could not help telling the captain the opinion the crew formed of him, which was a very just one. Neither he nor I had much doubt that the ships in sight were British. We hoisted British colours, so did they; and in a short time we were all paying compliments to each other, they being his Majesty’s ships Charon, Lowestoffe, and Pomona, under the command of the Honourable Captain Luttrell. He confirmed the account we had received of the attack of the Spaniards on the British territories, and informed us also that he had been in quest of two Spanish galleons which had taken shelter under the strongly-fortified town of San Fernando D’Omoa. He had wished to attack the place, but, it being remarkably strong, he had considered that, with the force under his command, he could scarcely hope for success. Now, however, with the reinforcements we brought him, he considered that he would have a fair chance of taking it.

Having called a council-of-war, all the captains agreed that the exploit might be accomplished. Accordingly, we made sail for the westward. There was a general satisfaction throughout the fleet when it was known that an attack on the fortress was to take place. As with light and variable winds we moved slowly on to the westward, the ships’ companies were employed in making scaling-ladders, fascines, and all the other requisites for a siege. Our whole force consisted of the following ships and vessels:—

	Guns.	Men.
Charon	44	300
Lowestoffe	32	220
Pomona	28	200
Porcupine	16	100
Racehorse	8	50
Peggy	6	15

All the above together with 100 Indians and Volunteers, and 12 Loyal Irish—no very mighty armament for the attack of so strong a place. But British sailors hold to the belief that what men dare they can do; so we went on, never doubting of success. We anchored to wood and water at the Bay of Truxillo, and then sailed on, touching at various other places till, on the evening of the 16th, we anchored in Porto Carvalho Bay, not far from the place we had come to attack. Night had set in before we approached the land, so that there was little fear that the enemy would obtain notice of our approach. All of us were in high spirits at the thoughts of fighting the Spaniards, and O’Driscoll and I agreed that it was far better than having to make war on the Americans, whom, rebels as they might be called, we could not help looking on as our brothers and cousins.

All arrangements had in the most judicious way been previously made, so that we were ready, directly the anchors were dropped, about nine o’clock at night, to commence landing our forces. Everything was done with the most perfect order and in complete silence. The boats from all the ships were lowered, and about three hundred seamen and marines, with about a hundred and fifty Indians, volunteers and regulars, were embarked in them. The oars were let fall in the water, and together they pulled in for the shore. I watched the boats as long as they could be seen through the darkness, like some sea-monsters gliding noiselessly towards their prey. O’Driscoll accompanied the shore expedition. On landing, the Indians, who were sent forward, attacked the enemy’s look-out houses, and, having killed a Spaniard and taken two more prisoners, returned in triumph. At midnight the army began their march to the westward, and the ships at the same time weighed and stood along shore. On Sunday morning, the 17th, the ships lay becalmed about a league off shore, when the troops halted to report themselves. No time, however, was lost. They had hoped to have arrived before the place just at daybreak, when they would certainly have surprised it, and even now it was hoped that the enemy would not have heard of their approach. On the summit of a high hill, overlooking the fortress, stands the governor’s house—a very important post. Towards it they hurried, and before ten

o’clock reached its base. Up the hill like a swarm of ants they rushed, and in spite of all opposition quickly carried it. The garrison were now, of course, on the alert to receive us. It was not, however, till three in the afternoon that the wind allowed us to stand into the harbour, when we made the signal to the forces on shore that we were ready to co-operate with them. As we took up our stations, directly opposite the town, we commenced a heavy cannonade, which was warmly returned by the enemy from a battery of between twenty and thirty heavy guns. In a short time the effect, of our fire was very visible. Flames burst forth from different parts of the town, which was soon burning furiously in every quarter, and it seemed to us very evident that it would soon be entirely burnt to the ground. As the unfortunate inhabitants were afraid of leaving the town, for fear of falling into the hands of the Indians, from whom they could expect no quarter, many of them, we had too much reason to believe, were burnt to death.

During the heat of the engagement the Lowestoffe, in her eagerness to get close up to the fort, ran on shore, and was considerably galled while she remained there by the enemy’s fire. The rest of the squadron lending her assistance, she soon got off. All the ships were, however, much cut up both in spars and rigging, while a considerable number of men had been killed and wounded. The commander, in consequence, finding that we had produced no impression on the enemy’s works, threw out a signal for the ships to haul off for the night. As we sailed out of the harbour, the Spaniards, fancying that we were about to abandon the enterprise, made a sortie, and furiously attacked the forces on shore. They were, however, repulsed with much loss, and again took shelter within their works. At night a lieutenant was sent in command of a hundred men, to try and open a communication with the forces on shore, but the enemy were too much on the alert to render the attempt practicable.

We were under no little apprehension all the time as to the fate of the forces on shore, for we could see that a furious attack was being made by the Spaniards on Governor’s Hill, and its result it was impossible to ascertain. At daylight we once more stood in, when we had the satisfaction to discover that our forces still held Governor’s Hill, and had thrown up works on it from which they were bombarding the town. As the wind would not allow us to get in close to the forts, we hove-to main-topsails to the masts, and employed ourselves in firing random shots at the enemy’s works while the Lowestoffe repaired damages. At five in the afternoon, seeing a British Union Jack flying close to the woods at the water’s edge, the Porcupine was directed to run in and land her guns. This was done under a heavy fire from the fort. I was among those sent on shore, and I was ordered to take fifty men under my command, and with four guns to lead them up through the town of Omoa to the top of an exceedingly high hill on the other side of it. The enterprise was of no slight danger and difficulty, but it pleased me the more. I had Grampus and Rockets with me. Placing our guns on light carriages between us, away we rattled as fast as our legs could move. The faster our speed, the greater would be our safety. Where we were going the enemy could not guess; they never thought that we were about to scale the rocky height before us; they did not know what tricks blue-jackets could play on shore. They kept peppering away at us as we proceeded, and now and then one of my men was hit; one poor fellow was killed, three were wounded. A fine fellow, Jackson, who was near me as we dashed through the town, caught sight of a dog running through the streets, evidently having lost his master.

“I’ll have that ’ere animal,” he exclaimed, springing on towards him.

The dog turned tail and ran off, but Jack was too nimble for him, and catching him up under his arm, and holding his head so that he could not bite, he was bringing the animal in triumph when a shot struck him on the arm. He staggered on notwithstanding.

“Jackson, my man, I’m afraid you are badly hurt,” I exclaimed, as I saw the blood streaming down his side.

“Never fear, sir,” he answered, “I’ve got the dog; I wanted him for you. Take him, sir.”

I had a piece of rope in my pocket, which I fastened round the dog’s neck and led him on. Jackson was a severe sufferer, for he lost his arm in consequence of his wound. On we hurried, and, climbing the height, dragged up our guns after us. Before the enemy guessed what we were about, we had them on the top of the hill ready to open on the fort. With the same rapidity we threw up the necessary earthworks and soon began firing away with a right good will down into the fortress. The Spaniards showed us that two could play at the same game. All night long we blazed away, doing no little mischief to the enemy. They, however, in return, dismounted one of our guns. On the morning of the 19th three fresh batteries were opened from our works on Governor’s Hill, and our hopes increased of speedily taking the place.

I enjoyed from my elevated position a full view of the whole surrounding sea and country. Below me was the town, still burning in places and smouldering in others. On one side was Governor’s Hill, with the batteries blazing away at the devoted fort which lay below the town, and was replying from all sides to the fire directed towards it from the land and sea. Now the ships, with the exception of the Porcupine, stood in to attack the fort in more serious earnest. Boats came passing and re-passing to her, and, as I found was the case, as all our guns were on shore, Captain Packenham with the greater part of the ship’s company went on board the other ships to assist in fighting them. The ships stood in very close to the walls of the fort before they dropped their anchors, and then commenced a heavy cannonade, the effects of which soon became apparent by the crumbling away of the works on every side. Night, however, put a stop to the work of destruction. Darkness had just closed in when I received orders to leave my exalted post and to join the party destined to storm the works at daybreak on the following morning. This was just according to my taste. I had never a fancy to know that work was being done and not to be engaged in it.

It was nearly midnight before I joined O’Driscoll and my other friends. I found them sitting round their watch-fires, not so much on account of the cold as to keep off the mosquitoes, and enjoying a good supper, which they ate as they cooked. We had no cloaks, so we sat up all night discussing the probabilities of our success on the morrow. We talked and laughed and joked as if there was nothing particularly serious to be done. Adams, one of our midshipmen, was the merriest of the merry. He above all of us was making light of the difficulties and dangers to be encountered. Towards morning our voices grew lower and lower, and at length no one spoke. I sat also silent, looking up at the dark sky studded with a thousand stars, wondering to which of them I should wing my flight should I lose my life in the coming struggle. I dozed off for a few moments, it seemed to me, and then the drum beat to arms and I sprang to

my feet. At the same moment the ships re-commenced their cannonade. Every arrangement had already been made, so that each man of the expedition knew his station. Not an instant, therefore, was lost. We hurried to our ranks. I had a hundred men under me. Of course Grampus and Rockets were among them. Grampus had armed himself with a musket and cutlass, but Rockets had managed to get hold of two cutlasses. I asked him why he had thus encumbered himself.

“Why, sir, you see as how one on ’em may be broken, and then I shall have t’other for fighting with,” he answered with his usual simplicity.

Down the hill we rushed, the marines and Loyal Irish on either flank. Nothing stopped us. It seemed scarcely a minute from the time we were on our feet till we were close under the walls. The fascines were thrown into the ditches, and the ladders being planted against the walls, up we climbed, as O’Driscoll observed, like ants attacking a sugar cask. We had already mounted the walls and were leaping down into the town before the enemy knew what we were about. As soon as they were aroused they made a stout resistance and poured a heavy fire on us. Several men near me were killed or wounded. Poor young Adams was cheering on his party placed under his orders. A bullet struck him. His sword was uplifted, his cheerful voice was still sounding on my ear when I saw him fall over, and before he reached the ground he was dead. Our men poured over the walls, and on we rushed among the buildings in the fortress. We encountered a body of Spaniards led on by an officer who apparently had only that instant been roused out of bed, for he had neither his coat buttoned, a hat on his head, nor a sword in his hand. Another party of men on my left engaged my attention, and I was about to attack them when I saw Tom Rockets rushing towards the unarmed officer. I thought Tom was going to cut down the Spaniard, and so I dare say did the latter, but instead of that I heard him sing out, “Señor Don Officer, you no habby cutlash-o, I’ve got two-o! Take one of mine, old boy; let’s have fair play and no favour. Stand aside, mates, and we’ll have it out like men!”

On this, to the very great astonishment of his enemy, he presented him with one of his cutlasses, and made a sign that he was ready to begin the fight. The Spaniard, however, had no notion of fighting with so generous and brave a fellow. Probably, also, he found the Englishman’s cutlass rather an awkward weapon to use, so he made signs to him to take it back, and that he would yield himself up as a prisoner of war. Tom thereupon took back the cutlass, and, shaking the Spaniard by the hand, assured him that he should be ready to have the matter out, if it so pleased him, as soon as the public fighting was disposed of. So sudden had been our attack, and so unexpected by the Spaniards, that we had even fewer men killed and wounded than on the previous days. The Spanish officer and his men having yielded, I left them under charge of Tom and some of my people, while I pushed on, accompanied by Grampus, towards the summit of the fortress, on which stood a flag-staff with the Spanish flag flying. The Spaniards rallied bravely round it, but, charging them cutlass in hand, with loud huzzas we put them to flight, and very soon Nol Grampus had hauled down their flag and hoisted our own glorious ensign in its stead. It was a signal to the ships to cease their fire, which was becoming somewhat annoying to us as well as to our foes. In a few minutes all the defenders of the fortress were scattered far and wide, or had thrown down their arms and sued for mercy. Thus the important fortress was won. The first thing I did was to look-out for Tom Rockets, whom I found guarding the Spanish officer, and endeavouring to assure him of his friendship and protection. Some of the prisoners were carried on board the ships, others were shut up under a guard in the fortress, and others were allowed to take their departure. Besides two richly-laden galleons and a dhow with dry goods in the harbour, we found in the fort twenty thousand dollars, a vast quantity of quicksilver, three or four hundred slaves who had been lately landed, and were to have been sent into the interior, and sixty thousand pounds’ worth of silk, cables, anchors, and other naval stores,—the whole not being of less value than a million sterling.

On my return on board I acquainted Captain Packenham with Tom Rockets’ gallantry. He was much amused, and at once sent for the brave fellow to come to him on the quarter-deck. Tom approached, hat in hand, looking somewhat sheepish, as if he was afraid of getting scolded for having done something wrong. When, however, the captain praised him for his conduct, he gave a hitch to his trowsers and a twist to his hat, exclaiming—

“It’s all right then, sir? I thought as how perhaps I ought to have knocked the Spanish gentleman over; but you see, sir, I didn’t like to take the life of a man who hadn’t even a cutlash to fight with.”

Captain Packenham assured him that he had done perfectly right, and that he would look after his interests. He spoke to the commodore about him that very afternoon, and it was agreed to give him a boatswain’s warrant; but Tom at once declined the offer, saying that he had only done his duty, and did not want any reward.

After Captain Packenham’s return from the commodore’s ship, he told me that he was going home at once with despatches, and that I was to be removed from the Porcupine into the Charon in order that I might with some of her crew take charge of the Saint Domingo, one of the galleons we had just captured. I had placed under me a mate, three midshipmen, and thirty-six of the best seamen of the Charon, including my two followers, for whom I got leave to accompany me. I had now a new follower, the dog I had captured in the burning town. I gave him the name of Omoa, to which he soon answered and became greatly attached to me. I at once set to work to get the prize ready for sea; but she had much to be done to her, and it was not till the 8th of November that, having scaled guns and bent sails a few days before, I warped out of the harbour, and made sail in company with the other ships of the squadron, leaving the Porcupine and the captured dhow for the defence of the fort.

I must remark that a short time afterwards, the place being attacked by a thousand regular troops, the men we had left there in garrison were compelled to make their escape on board those two vessels. And now commenced one of the most unpleasant and anxious voyages I ever made in my life. I did not think it was to be so at the time, though. On the contrary, I was highly delighted at obtaining the command, when I got on board, and discovered that the galleon was the richest-laden vessel we had captured, and that several thousand pounds would come to my share alone if I succeeded in carrying her safely into port. Not, I must say, that I thought about the money for itself. I never was mercenary. I should have been considered wiser had I been so, but my thoughts instantly flew to Madeline Carlyon. I pictured to myself peace restored between the revolted provinces of America and England, and I, with wealth at my disposal, able to go over and claim with a good grace the hand of the only girl for whom I had ever felt

that deep affection which would induce me to marry. She was always in my thoughts, and now that I felt that, with the required wealth within my grasp, there was a possibility of our being united, I began in my imagination to realise the happiness I anticipated. Whatever dangers or difficulties I was in, I always thought of her. She, though far away, spurred me on to exertion. She—in the tempest, on the lee-shore in unknown seas, in darkness and surrounded with rocks and shoals—was ever present, and I believe that, had it not been for her, I should more than once in despair have given up the struggle with the adverse circumstances which well-nigh overwhelmed me.

It was soon seen that the bulky old galleon would not keep way with the men-of-war, so the Lowestoffe took us in tow, not much to the satisfaction of those on board. Thick squally weather with rain came on, and away we went plunging after her. For two days this continued, and during the time I could scarcely ever leave the deck. At last I went below on the night of the 10th, but hardly had I turned in and got my eyes well closed when I was aroused up again by a terrific uproar, and, rushing on deck and hurrying for'ard, I found that the Lowestoffe was taken aback and was making a stern-board right down upon us. Fortunately an axe was at hand. With a couple of strokes I cut the hawser, and, putting up the helm, we were just able to run to leeward out of her way. Soon after this the commodore made the signal to tack, and the wind then shifting and a heavy gale coming on, I lost sight of the squadron. Directly after this I made out the land on the lee bow bearing east-south-east, three or four miles off. Whether I could weather it was the question; but I made all the sail I could venture to carry. I stood as close-hauled as I could, watching with no little anxiety the unwelcome coast. The vessel looked up to the gale in gallant style, and at length I was able to bring-to under my foresail.

Thus I remained all night. At six in the morning made sail under the courses to the north-east, and at eight wore and saw the land bearing south by south, distant five or six leagues. At noon was again obliged to bring-to under the foresail, it blowing hard with a thick fog and squalls.

On the 11th, the wind continuing to blow as hard as before, I saw the island of Rattan. At 5 p.m. I fired six guns as signals for a pilot, but night coming on with the accustomed bad weather, I wore and stood out to sea. The next morning I bore away for Truxillo, on the Spanish main. At 10 a.m., being close in-shore, the wind shifted, and blew a heavy gale with very thick weather, which obliged me to stand to the eastward. At noon, though we lost sight of the land, I found that we were in very shoal water, and as may be supposed I became very anxious when I found that there was no one on board who had ever been there before, or was at all acquainted with the coast. All we knew was that it was considered a very dangerous and difficult one. Since we left Omoa, from not having even seen the sun, I had been unable to take an observation, nor had I any chart of the Gulf of Honduras in the ship. My officers, as were all on board, were as well aware as I was myself of the danger the ship was in, and a bright look-out was kept for the land. At 2 p.m. we made out an island under our lee. I soon saw by the way the ship was setting that we should be unable to weather it. My only resource therefore was to attempt to run between it and the main. I kept the helm up, and stood for the channel. I was under the impression, as were my officers, that it was the island of Bonacca, between which and the main a book of sailing directions we had on board told us there was a passage; but as we neared it the characteristic features which we discovered convinced us that we were mistaken, and that it was the Hogsties. Now we had been assured at Omoa that between it and the main there was no passage. We did not make this discovery, however, before we had stood on too far to return. Our eyes, however, could not deceive us; a passage there certainly was, but whether a shallow or intricate one we could not tell. I kept the lead going and a bright look-out in all directions; still it was work to try any man's nerves. There was a nasty broken sea running, and I felt sure that if the ship struck on any of the numberless rocks under her bottom, not many minutes would elapse before she must go down. I kept her on, notwithstanding this, under her foresail. We were gradually shoaling our water—sixteen fathom, twelve, ten, six, four had been announced. I drew my breath faster and faster. It was not a moment I should have liked anyone to put a trivial question to me; still I could make out a channel of clear water ahead, and I did not despair.

"By the mark three," sang out the man in the fore-chains.

Matters were coming to a crisis. If we shoaled the water much more we could not hope to force the heavy galleon through. Not only should we lose all her rich cargo, but our lives also would be sacrificed, for the few boats we had were in so bad a condition that they would scarcely be able to carry even half the people we had on board. For my own part, I did not feel that I had many more hours, or I might say minutes, to live, for I always held to the opinion that a captain should always be the last to leave his ship, and not then till he has seen to the safety of all those entrusted to his care.

On we glided—not very fast though. I stood conning the ship; sometimes we passed so close to shoals and rocks that we could have thrown a biscuit on them, and still the lumbering old Saint Domingo floated free.

At length we were once more in four fathoms of water, then in five; but still I did not feel that we were clear of danger; there might be other reefs running across from the island to the main which might bring us up. I however began to breathe more freely, and the faces of my officers wore a more satisfied expression. Still we had many a turn and twist to make, but with a leading wind we had little difficulty in doing this. "Breakers ahead!" sang out Grampus from forward.

"Starboard the helm," was my reply.

"Starboard it is," cried the man at the wheel.

"Breakers on the larboard bow!"

"Port the helm."

"Port it is," was heard along the deck, and so we glided by danger after danger till all were passed, and I breathed freely at finding the ship at length clear of the island. I then once more hauled in for the land to try and ascertain our

situation; but the weather came on so thick again with heavy squalls that I was compelled very soon to stand off once more, still ignorant of where we were.

My difficulties were not over. At 5 p.m. the mizen-yard was carried away in a heavy squall, though happily no lives were lost by the accident. While we were endeavouring to repair the damage it fell a stark calm, and the old galleon began to roll away awfully in the swell. I at once ordered the lead to be hove, for I knew that there were treacherous currents hereabouts.

I had soon proof of this. The first cast gave us thirteen fathoms; very soon we had ten, eight, and so on, till we shoaled the water to five fathoms. I guessed that we should very soon be on shore if this continued, so I saw that I must resort to the only alternative of anchoring, a dangerous proceeding in the uncertain weather we were having. Still I held on as long as I could, and hoped for a slant of wind to enable me to beat off. My hopes were in vain. It was near midnight, when a heavier gust than we had yet had struck the ship, and soon the man with the lead gave notice that we had shoaled our water to three fathoms. Not a moment was to be lost, so I gave orders to clew up all our canvas and to let go the best bow anchor. This was done without delay. Our cable held on, but I soon discovered that a strong current was setting past us to the east-south-east, at the rate of three knots an hour, which, should our anchor not hold, would very soon send us on shore.

I at last began to feel as if my anxiety would break me down, as all the dangers with which we were surrounded were brought to my thoughts. We had a dark night, a heavy gale of wind, a lee-shore, a strong current, untried and probably not over-good ground tackle, and a great uncertainty as to our position. Added to this, I had under my command a vessel worth four hundred thousand pounds, and between thirty and forty lives entrusted to my care. Our anchor held, but not without dragging slightly. Anxiously I walked the deck and waited for break of day. I thought it would never come. It did at last, however, and revealed a sight sufficient to make the stoutest heart quake. Scarcely more than a cable’s length from the ship appeared a ledge of rocks over which the waves were washing with sullen roars, while the log hove overboard showed me that there was a strong current setting towards a high rocky bluff land dead to leeward of us. Towards it the ship was surely though slowly dragging her anchor. One thing only could save us. We must without delay get sail on her. We tried to weigh the anchor, but soon abandoned the attempt as hopeless. I called the officers round me, in a few words explained our position, then sent every man to his station. Nol Grampus stood, axe in hand, ready to cut the cable as I gave the word. Two good hands were at the helm. The men were aloft, ready to loose sails. I waited till the ship’s head tended off the land, then at a wave of my hand the sails were let fall and sheeted home, down came old Nol’s gleaming axe, the end of the cable disappeared through the hawse-hole, the sails filled, and away glided the big ship from the threatening rocks. Still she was not free from danger. I held my breath, as did every seaman on board, as we gazed at the bluff land it was necessary to weather. The current set strongly towards it, a shift of wind might yet cast away the ship. Down she seemed settling towards it. We were doing our utmost to avoid the danger; we could not carry more sail, the ship was kept as close as possible to the wind. Still we had already escaped so many dangers before that I hoped we might this. Higher grew the land frowning above us, nearer appeared the breakers. In ten minutes I saw that our fate would be decided. The wind remained steady. None of our gear gave way. The surf broke under our lee as we glided by; we were safe; and once more reducing sail we stood out to sea. We, however, were still in far from a pleasant position, or rather, we could not tell in what position we were, and had every reason to believe it a bad one. Various were the opinions broached on board as to our whereabouts. Some thought we were in the Bay of Dulce; others that the point we had just weathered was Point Manwick; while the Spanish prisoners affirmed that we were certainly down in the bottom of the Gulf of Honduras. I could scarcely believe that the currents and gales we had encountered, strong as they were, could in so short a time have drifted us so far out of our course. As the day drew on the weather moderated, and the mists clearing away, we found ourselves surrounded by a number of rocks and islands. The Spaniards nodded their heads and affirmed that they were right in their assertions. Fortunately the sun came out to settle the question. I was able to take two altitudes, and found that we were abreast of the Island of Rattan. Not long after this I got a sight of Truxillo Bay, the place the commodore had appointed for the rendezvous. I accordingly ran in and anchored there at six o’clock, hoping to find the rest of the squadron in the place, but, much to my disappointment and surprise, not another ship was to be seen. This being the case, I had to examine my officers, to ascertain what I was next to do. Much to my satisfaction I found that I was forthwith to proceed home to Falmouth, and, having reported my arrival to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to await their further orders. In consequence of this I immediately proceeded to wood and water the ship. This was a long and tedious operation, for having lost all our boats one after the other in the gale, I was obliged to employ a couple of very frail canoes. I persevered, however, and by working hard managed to make progress in the task. While some of the crew were on shore cutting wood and filling the casks, others were employed in towing them off in the canoes, which were likewise laden with wood. Though I worked myself, for the purpose of setting an example, I found time to make an excursion or two a little way into the interior. I was accompanied by Martin, one of my master’s mates, and a great friend of mine. We took our guns with us and my dog Omoa, who had now become much attached to me. The shores of this bay of Truxillo are wild and desolate in the extreme. Nature here revels in perfect freedom, and gigantic trees of all sorts tower up on every side. It is a long way from any inhabited place; I had heard, however, that the Spaniards once had a settlement here of considerable size, but it having been attacked by the buccaneers and Indians, about a hundred years ago, they were compelled entirely to abandon it; since which time nature had resumed her original sway over the territory, and as we wandered through the forest not a sign of human life or human industry did we for a long time perceive. At length, however, landing one day at a different part of the bay to that which we had before explored, about a quarter of a mile from the beach, we came suddenly upon a high-built wall. A little farther on we found ourselves walking over what had evidently been a paved street of great length and breadth. In another minute we found ourselves with the walls of houses on either side of us, the vast trees growing out from among them and forming a sheltering roof with their boughs, showing for how long a period they must have been deserted. There were churches too, which we discovered to be such by their construction and the massiveness of their walls; many of them of considerable size, and built of well-burnt bricks. Altogether we were struck by the elegance and substantial appearance of the different buildings, so superior to those of modern architecture, and which convinced us that we were standing in the midst of a once magnificent and wealthy city. Its wealth had proved its destruction, and now, like many of the cities of the ancient world, it had become the habitation alone of the wild beast of the forest, the birds of the air, and the reptiles which

creep on the earth. I cannot properly describe my sensations as I stood in the midst of that abandoned city; the scene was so unusual and curious, there was so much beauty and elegance even in the masses of ruins, and still more in the trees and shrubs which had taken possession of these walls, once the abodes of men engaged in all the active pursuits of life. I could not help picturing to myself what it must have been like; what scenes were going on within it, such as are enacted in most cities in the present day, when sudden destruction overtook it. I learned a lesson, I drew a moral, and I received a warning from the fate it told, from which I trust my readers will profit likewise.

Chapter Nineteen.

Visit ruins of Truxillo.—The commodore receives me and my galleon with joy.—Fearful sickness on board squadron.—The Island of Rattan.—Capsized in a squall.—Ship rights.—Beat off a privateer.—Reach Jamaica.—The Saint Domingo condemned, and cargo placed on board the rotten Leviathan.—Rejoin the Charon.—Sail with convoy.—Piratical exploits.—Sinking of Leviathan, and my hopes of prize-money lost.—Reach the Downs, and start for Falmouth.

Whenever the duties of the ship would allow me to go on shore, I repaired to the ruins of Truxillo, for I was never weary of wandering among its deserted streets and exploring its shattered edifices. Meantime the repairs of the ship went on as expeditiously as possible, and by the 16th of November we had set up our rigging, got all the wood and water we could stowaway on board, and made every other requisite preparation for encountering a winter passage to England. I had arranged to sail the next day, when at noon it was reported to me that a brig was seen standing into the bay.

“Make the signal for the people to hurry on board,” was my reply as I went on deck.

Having examined the stranger through the glass, I thought she looked suspicious, so I hoisted the private signal and waited with some little anxiety to ascertain if it was answered. The fact that we had got possession of the Saint Domingo, with all her wealth on board, would be known to the Spaniards, and if they should discover that she was separated from the rest of the fleet, they would very naturally send in quest of her. The signal was not answered. “My lads, I suspect we shall have a fight for it,” I sung out, as I gave the order to prepare for action, resolved to put the ship in as good a state of defence as circumstances would allow. The ship was armed with sixteen four-pounders, and four six-pounders, besides swivels and cohorns. I first got springs on my cables, so as to have complete command over the ship, and as I had not men sufficient to fight all the guns, I ran them all over on one side, in order to make the first broadside as formidable as possible. I hoped thus to sink or disable our antagonist, or to make her sheer off. Should she, however, venture to board, I had no fear, as I felt certain that my men would not fear to encounter twice their number. They were full of fight, and the way they went about their preparations gave me every confidence that we should succeed. The brig approached us with a great deal of caution. If we did not like her looks, she evidently did not like ours. I knew that it would be best to show I was ready for her, so as soon as she was within range of my guns I hoisted my colours and fired a shot ahead of her. The next was a moment of suspense, and I believe my people were not a little disappointed when she hoisted an English ensign and fired a gun to leeward. Having sailed close past us and hailed, she brought up at a short distance from me. She then lowered a boat, and Lieutenant Butcher, whom I had before met, came on board, and informed me that the commodore had hired the brig and sent him in charge of her to look-out for the Saint Domingo, which he had heard had been lost on the Solomadinas, the most dangerous rocks on the coast.

“A ship we spoke informed us that you had been seen to go on shore, and we hoped that though the galleon might be lost, we might save some of your lives,” he added; “however, I am heartily glad to find you all alive and the old craft afloat.”

“Not more glad than I am, that we have escaped all the dangers we have encountered,” I replied, and I told him of all the narrow escapes we had had.

He then informed me that the Charon and Lowestoffe had several times nearly been lost, and were now at Port Royal Harbour, in the Island of Rattan.

To that place I found that I was at once to proceed. I will not describe all the incidents which occurred before I got there. I must try and hurry on with my adventures, or I shall never bring them to an end.

By the 19th I got off the harbour, and, making a signal for assistance, some boats came out to help tow me in, and by six o’clock I was safely moored under the guns of the squadron. The commodore was delighted to see me. I did not flatter myself so much because of my own merits, as on account of the richly-freighted old galleon. However, I was not addicted to trouble myself as to the cause of any attention I might receive, or any compliments which might be paid me; but I always received them with a good grace, as if they were invariably due to my own especial merits. The commodore told me that he should at once send me on to Jamaica, under convoy of the Lowestoffe, and gave me directions to get ready again for sea. I had a number of visitors on board, who came to congratulate me on my escape, and to have a look at the galleon, which was much such a craft as some of the followers of Columbus might have sailed in to conquer the New World. I found the squadron in a very sickly state. No less than two-thirds of the crews were living on shore in huts and tents, suffering from sickness, and since the time they had left Omoa they had buried upwards of a hundred men, the master of the Lowestoffe being among them. Altogether I know in a very short time they lost one hundred and twenty men—while I had not lost one on board the galleon. Rattan itself was not supposed to be unhealthy, but at this time there were no inhabitants on it. When the war broke out with Spain, one of her first acts was to attack our settlements on the coast of Honduras, and totally to put a stop to our logwood trade. The merchants and traders connected with that business accordingly earnestly solicited the commodore to take possession of the Island of Rattan, which is admirably placed to guard the entrance to the Gulf of Honduras. It had belonged to the English in the late war, but by the treaty of peace made at its termination it was restored to the

Spaniards, or rather abandoned, and all the works on it had been destroyed. In consequence, however, of the requisition of the merchants which I have spoken of, the commodore, on the 25th of November, 1779, again took possession of it in the name of his Britannic Majesty, and immediately set to work to put the place in as good a state of defence as circumstances would allow. A number of logwood cutters and other settlers, as well as some merchants and traders, had already arrived there. These were at once regularly drilled and taught the use of their arms. Each of the ships of the squadron also launched two of their guns, which we mounted on the works for the defence of the harbour, while they were furnished likewise with an abundant supply of ammunition and stores of all sorts. The harbour of Port Royal is, without doubt, as good a one as any in the West Indies, and so well formed is it by nature for defence, that with a small amount of art employed on it, I should think that it might be made perfectly impregnable from any attack by sea. At the time of which I speak the island was entirely uncultivated, and produced only the trees and shrubs nature had planted there; but from what I saw of the soil and from what others who knew more about agricultural affairs than I did, I had no doubt that in a few years it would become a very flourishing spot, and amply repay the planters who might settle on it. Just now it was serving as the burial-place of many poor fellows, who were carried off day after day by the malignant fever which had got among them. It was sad to go on shore to visit the sick and dying, and all the time to feel that one could be of no use to them. I had seen a good deal of that sort of thing lately, but it had not hardened my heart. At last I scarcely went on shore at all. Nothing I found so depressing to my spirits as to see the long rows of graves beneath which so many of my poor countrymen were sleeping, and still more to see them day by day increasing in number.

While I was getting ready for sea, the Charon, having taken on board the whole cargo of the Saint Joseph galleon, sailed with the purpose of proceeding at once to England, leaving the Pomona at Rattan, to bring off the sick as soon as it was deemed practicable and safe to remove them.

On the 26th of November, having taken leave of the commodore and saluted him with three hearty cheers, such as he well deserved, and having on board several passengers, some of whom were taken prisoners at Omoa, I put to sea in company with the Lowestoffe. Scarcely had I done breakfast next morning, and was congratulating myself on having a pleasant run to Jamaica, when Nol Grampus entered my cabin with the pleasing intelligence that the Saint Domingo had sprung a leak. “Allowing to her being manned by heretics, as the Spaniards would say,” I exclaimed petulantly as I hurried out, and with the carpenter endeavoured to ascertain where the injury was to be found. At the same time I set both the pumps going; but do all we could, we could not keep the leak under. At length I most unwillingly gave orders to hoist the signal of distress. As soon as it was seen on board the Lowestoffe her boats were sent to my assistance.

On inquiring among the Spanish prisoners I found from them that she had been struck by lightning in the harbour of Omoa, and had been injured in some place aft. On examining I discovered the injury to exist under the larboard counter, and having got some lead nailed on over the leak, I soon had the pleasure of seeing the water sensibly decrease. One danger over, it was not long before I had to encounter another of a still more serious nature, and I had great reason to fear that after all I had gone through I should still not succeed in carrying my prize into port. Had I been followed by the curse of some revengeful old witch I could scarcely have been compelled to encounter more difficulties and mishaps; such a witch as Shakespeare describes as sailing in a sieve, and like a rat without a tail doing something dreadful.

On the 29th the wind was favourable and light, and the big galleon was gliding swiftly over a smooth, laughing sea, when, the decks having been washed down, I was taking a turn, as was my custom before breakfast, with Martin.

“Fine weather, sir,” he remarked. “After all our mishaps there seems a fair prospect of our getting into port in safety.”

“There’s many a slip between the cup and the lip, and for my part I never again will make sure of a thing till I have got it in my hand, and then I should look very sharp that it does not jump out again,” was my answer, for I was, I own, beginning to be discontented with sublunary affairs in general.

“Oh, no fear now, I think, but what we shall get the rich old galleon safe into port at last, and some day touch the prize-money she will bring us,” remarked Martin, rubbing his hands at the thought of the wealth he was about to obtain, and the way in which he would very soon manage to get through it.

“Breakfast ready, sir,” said Tom Rockets, coming up to me and touching his cap. He was doing the duty of Jenker, my steward, who had broken his leg in one of the many gales we had encountered.

I invited Martin to breakfast with me. When we left the deck the wind was light and the sky had scarcely a cloud floating on it to dim its splendour. We had finished a plate of scraped salt beef, and had begun upon a salt herring, (what would I not have given for a fresh, juicy mutton chop!) I had just taken a cup of coffee and Martin was helping himself, holding up the coffee-pot, when I saw it and him and the breakfast-things gliding away to leeward, and felt myself following them. There was a terrific roaring sound and a loud rush of waters almost overwhelming the shouts and cries of the people on deck. Over went everything in a confused mass. I rushed out of the cabin, followed by Martin, to ascertain what had occurred, though I had no doubt about the matter. The ship had overset in one of the sudden squalls to which these seas are liable. There she lay like a log, with her sails almost in the water. She appeared to me to be going lower and lower every instant. Nothing could exceed the confusion the deck presented. The crew were rushing about and letting go any ropes they could lay hands on, in accordance with the orders of the officer of the watch to take in sail. The lady passengers were shrieking out for help as they paddled about to leeward, and the men were in vain endeavouring to afford it, shouting and striking out in the water and endeavouring to climb up towards the weather bulwarks.

“There go all our hopes of wealth,” I thought to myself as I saw the condition of the ship. Strange that that should be the first idea which came into my head. I did not think that the ship would swim many minutes longer. I looked out for the Lowestoffe. She was not far-off, and was lowering her boats, to come to our assistance. Only one chance of

saving the ship remained. We must cut away the masts. I gave the necessary order. While some of the crew set to work on the rigging with their knives, I sung out for an axe. One had fallen overboard the day before. Another was not to be found.

“Can no one find an axe?” I sung out, not a little enraged. “Bear a hand, then.”

Rockets was searching in one direction, Nol Grampus in others, with several of the rest of the men, while I felt almost frantic, expecting the ship to fill and go down every instant. The officers were hurrying about for the same object. Were the ship to go down, I felt many lives might be lost, for the frigate’s boats could scarcely save all hands with the passengers. The confusion and noise was increased, it must be remembered, by the roaring of the wind and the dashing of the seas over us.

At last Grampus appeared with a couple of axes. I seized one and sprung to the mainmast. He rushed forward. I had lifted up my gleaming weapon, and was about to give the fatal stroke, when there was a sudden lull of the wind, and the stout old galleon, no longer feeling its pressure, sprang up and righted herself in an instant, sending a dozen of the crew across the deck and all the passengers spinning about in every direction. Except a little of the standing rigging cut, a few shins broken, and a complete ducking received by all the passengers, no damage had occurred. We soon got the lady passengers put to rights, and seated on the hencoops, where they had been taking their breakfast, the coffee-cups picked up, the men restored to their legs, and their cigars re-lighted, and everything in its proper place, while the boats which had been coming to our help returned to their frigate.

“All’s well that ends well,” was Martin’s observation when we again sat down to a fresh supply of coffee, red herrings, and biscuits.

Nothing else occurred till the 5th of December, when one of the Spanish prisoners was found dead in his bed in the gun-room.

On the 8th we made Jamaica, but were beating away under the south-west end of the island, till the 15th, when I carried away my fore-topsail-yard, and had to put into Bluefields Bay to repair the loss.

On the 16th we sailed again with the Lowestoffe. In the evening, as we were pretty close in with the shore, the Lowestoffe signalised that a suspicious schooner was in sight and made sail in chase. Scarcely had we sunk her courses below the horizon when another vessel appeared from under the land, standing towards us. She was also a schooner, and we were not long in making up our minds that she was an enemy’s privateer. I did not fear her though. We loaded and ran out all our guns and prepared for the encounter. I knew that my men would not yield while the galleon kept afloat, and so I did not watch the Lowestoffe’s departure with so much anxiety as I might otherwise have done. Tom Rockets and others were tightening in their waist-bands, fastening handkerchiefs round their heads, feeling the edges of their cutlasses, and making all the other usual preparations for a fight.

The stranger came on boldly towards us. I had no doubt of the character of the schooner, but as she sailed two knots to our one there was no use in attempting to try and escape her. It was not long before she got within gun-shot and exhibited her true character by running up the Spanish ensign and by firing one of her bow-chasers at us. As our guns would not carry so far as hers I let her come on considerably nearer before I returned the compliment. The privateer, thinking that they were going to make an easy victory of us, fired again, but the shot, as had the first, flew wide of us. I saw that my people were impatient to fire in return.

“Hold fast, my lads,” I cried out. “Let her come on a little nearer, and we’ll show her that she has caught a Tartar for once in a way.”

I waited for another ten minutes, but as I saw the way in which the well-armed daring little craft approached us I could not help thinking to myself, “I wonder whether this will be another slip between the cup and the lip.” I, of course, did not show what I thought. I now judged that we had got her well within range of all our guns. Again she fired, and the shot flew through our rigging.

“Now give it her, my lads,” I sung out. “Blaze away!”

The men were not slow to obey the order. Our broadside told with fearful effect. Many of our shot tore along her decks, killing and wounding a considerable number of her crew. Notwithstanding this the schooner stood after us. From the spirited way in which she came on I thought that she must be American, and, knowing the rich prize we should prove, had determined at all risks to get hold of us. She only carried six guns, but they were heavier than ours, and while her crew were amply strong to man them, mine could not fight more than half the guns we had. The contest, therefore, was much more equal than at first appeared to be the case. Still I had not much fear as to the results, especially if the privateer really was Spanish, for however bravely or furiously Spaniards come on, and however much bravado they make, I have always found that they never can withstand English pluck and determination. As soon as we had fired our first broadside we loaded again as fast as we could, while the schooner gave us the contents of her three guns from one side, and was about to keep away and run under our stern to fire the three on the other—the first having done us no little damage, wounded one of our masts, and cut a poor fellow almost in two—but just as she was on the point of firing we let fly four or five of our after guns right down upon her, and one of the shot striking the helmsman, knocked him over, and before another man could take his place the schooner had flown up again into the wind. Her starboard broadside not being loaded, we were able to give her another dose before she was ready to fire, and in the meantime the report of the guns being heard on board the Lowestoffe, she was seen standing towards us under all sail.

The privateer had now had quite sufficient taste of our quality, and greatly to my vexation and to that, I believe, of everyone on board, she hauled her wind and stood away from us on a bow-line, a point of sailing on which we had no chance of overtaking her. We gave her, however, a parting salute and three cheers and many a hearty wish that she had stopped to receive the thrashing we all felt confident we should have bestowed on her.

The Lowestoffe soon came up and chased her for a few miles, having in the course of it recaptured a prize which the privateer had just before taken. Had not the captain of the Lowestoffe been apprehensive that some more of these privateering gentlemen might try to get hold of my tenderly-loved galleon, he would probably have continued the chase and captured the schooner herself, but remembering that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, he wisely would not allow himself to be tempted on, but returned to keep ward and watch over me.

“You said, sir, that there was many a slip between the cup and the lip,” observed Martin, as on the morning of the 18th December, 1779, we sighted the entrance to Port Royal Harbour, Jamaica, and with a fair breeze stood into it with our rich prize, followed closely by our faithful guardian the Lowestoffe.

“Yes, my boy, but we have not touched the rhino yet, and even then it may be long before the sweets reach our mouth,” was my answer. “So I have always found it to be, and so I always expect to find it. These bales of indigo which are said to be worth so much, are rather cumbersome articles to put into our pockets and walk off with. The ship has to cross the Atlantic and the cash has to pass through the hands of merchants, and brokers, and prize-agents before we touch it.”

I little thought at the time how necessary my warning was, and how well it was not to reckon too much on the riches which might so easily take to themselves wings and flee away. Still, as I have before said, I could not help believing that I should some day or other possess the portion which was my due; and over and over again I conjured up the delightful picture when I should find myself once more in America, no longer as an enemy to her sons, but as the affianced husband of Madeline Carlyon and the friend and companion of her kindred and people.

In high spirits, therefore, and with no small amount of pride in my heart, I sailed up the harbour and saluted Sir Peter Parker with thirteen guns, which compliment he returned with eleven. After this expenditure of gunpowder I hurried up to pay my respects to him, and was received with all his usual kindness and urbanity. To my astonishment, and somewhat, I own, to my disappointment, I found my own ship, the Charon, at anchor among the rest of the fleet. I thought that she had long ago sailed for England. On going on board I soon was made acquainted with the cause of her return. On her passage through the Gulf of Florida she had spoken HMS Salisbury, from which ship Captain Luttrell gained the information that many very disparaging reports reflecting on his honour were circulating in Jamaica respecting his conduct at the taking of Omoa. This made him at once resolve to return to the island, to vindicate his character. He immediately demanded a Court of Inquiry, which was held on board the Niger, when he was honourably acquitted of one and all the malicious charges alleged against him. Officers, especially in the navy, would always do well to imitate the commodore’s conduct in this particular. All men may have dirt thrown at them, but the honourable man will never allow it to remain a moment longer than can be avoided, lest it should leave a stain behind.

Captain Luttrell’s return to Jamaica had a considerable influence on my fortunes. I was in high feather at having so far escaped all the dangers of the voyage with the old Galleon, and was making every preparation to fit her yet further for encountering the passage in mid-winter across the Atlantic. During this period I had not altogether an unpleasant time of it, for the merchants and planters of Kingston were proverbially hospitable, and I had many friends among them, so that every moment I could spare from my duties on board ship was occupied in receiving the attentions and civilities they showered on me. This was all very agreeable. I made haste to enjoy the moments as they passed, for I expected to be at sea and far away in a very few days. My pleasure was, however, of shorter duration even than I anticipated. I met O’Driscoll one day, who had just come from the admiral.

“I say, Hurry, my boy,” he began; “do you know what they talk of doing with your old galleon?”

“Send her to sea at once, before her repairs are finished,” I answered. “It’s the way they too often do things.”

“Not a bit of it,” he replied. “They say that she is not fit to go to sea, so they propose transferring her cargo to the old ‘Leviathan,’ which to my certain knowledge is very much out of repair, and sending her home with it.”

“Some abominable job!” I exclaimed, stamping with rage. “It’s too bad, after all I have gone through, to deprive me of the credit I ought to have gained. I won’t believe it.”

I soon found, however, that O’Driscoll’s account was too true. A survey was held on the Saint Domingo, and she was condemned as unfit to proceed on her voyage to England. Her cargo, consisting of twelve hundred and thirty-two saroons of indigo, and a large quantity of sarsaparilla and hides, was put on board HMS Leviathan, and her captain was to have three thousand pounds freight. I protested as loudly as I could against this decision. I asserted that the Saint Domingo was far more calculated to take home so valuable and bulky a cargo than the Leviathan, or any other man-of-war, and I undertook, with twenty of my people, who had been in her already for three months, to carry her across the Atlantic in safety. All I could say was of no avail. Not only I, but many other officers said the same thing. The affair was decided against us, and I saw, with no small regret, the whole of the Saint Domingo’s cargo transferred to the rotten old Leviathan.

On the 16th of January, 1780, having given up the hull of the Saint Domingo to our agent at Jamaica, I joined the Charon, with my two followers, for the first time since my appointment to her. On the next day we sailed from Port Royal, in company with his Majesty’s ships Ruby, Lyon, Bristol, Leviathan, Salisbury, James, Resource, Lowestoffe, Pallas, Galatrea, Delight, and about ninety sail of merchant vessels. Except the capture of a Spanish privateer, and a vessel laden with mahogany, nothing particular occurred till the 9th of February, in latitude 29 degrees north, and longitude 72 degrees west, when the admiral and his squadron put about to return to Jamaica, leaving us and the Leviathan in charge of the convoy, to pursue our way to England.

We had hard work enough in keeping our convoy together, and in whipping up the laggards. In spite of the danger they ran of being picked up by privateers, some were continually getting out of the order of sailing. The Leviathan kept ahead, and led as well as she could, while we did the duty of huntsman, or of whipper-in. One night when it was

my watch on deck, as I was keeping a bright look-out in all directions, I saw the flash of a gun on our lee quarter, and the sound directly after reached my ears. It was, it struck me, from a petronel, or some small piece of ordnance such as merchantmen carried in those days. I reported the circumstance to Captain Luttrell, who ordered me at once to make sail in that direction. One or two other shots followed, and I could just discern the flashes of pistols, though the reports did not reach our ears. The night was very dark, but we were able to steer clear of some of the convoy, which had been near us on our lee quarter. I had carefully taken the bearings of the spot where I had seen the flashes. We were not long in getting up to it. There was a large barque under sail, steering somewhat wildly, but still keeping after the fleet. We hailed as we got close to her, but received no answer. A second time we hailed, still louder, but there was no reply. We then fired a shot across her bows, but she stood on as before. On this the captain directed me to take a boat and board her. There was not much sea, but in the wild way in which she was steering about, and in the extreme darkness, this would, I knew, be no very easy matter. However, singing out for volunteers, I soon had eight good hands to man a boat, and away we pulled towards the barque. As we got near I again hailed. As before, there was no reply. At last, watching the proper moment, I pulled in towards her, and hooked on to her mizen-chains. We soon, with lanterns in hand, scrambled on board. As I was hurrying along the deck, I stepped on some substance which very nearly made me measure my length on it. I called to Tom Rockets, who was of course near me, to throw the light of his lantern on the spot. It was blood. There could be no doubt of it. The deck in several places was moist with the same, but yet no one had we seen. Aft there was no one. The helm was lashed amidships, and the ship was left to steer herself. Ordering a hand to the wheel, to keep her close after the Charon, I again traversed the deck to examine her forward. On my way I stumbled over two human forms. The light of the lantern, which fell on their countenances, showed me that they were not Englishmen—dark-bearded, swarthy fellows, dressed in true buccaneer style. I had little doubt that they were pirates, or belonging to the crew of one of the Spanish privateers, most of which deserved no better character. Farther on were two or three English seamen, so they seemed. Here evidently had been a desperate fight, but it was too clear which party had gained the victory. Two other bodies were found locked in a deadly embrace—an English seaman and a Spaniard. One had been endeavouring to force the other overboard. The Spaniard’s knife was sticking in the Englishman’s throat, but the latter had not died till he had strangled his antagonist. A few moments sufficed to reveal this tale of horror. I looked out to endeavour to discern the pirate. I fancied that I could make out the sails of a fore and aft vessel to leeward, but when I looked again I could see nothing of them. I had now to examine the vessel below. I went aft into the cabin. There also had been a desperate struggle. The master apparently had been surprised in his cot, and lay half out of it, stabbed to the heart. Several passengers had sprung out of their berths, it seemed, and been shot or stabbed before they could reach the door of the cabin. The mate, I judged, and two other men, lay in a pool of blood just inside the door. They had retreated there, fighting for their lives. The table and chairs were upset and broken. One of the pirates had fallen, and so hurried had been the retreat of his companions that they had been unable to carry him off. He still breathed when I threw the light of the lantern on his face, but the moment he was moved he fell back and, with a deep groan, died. I marched through the whole of the vessel; not a living soul was found on board. On returning on deck, I again looked out for the pirate—not that I had much hopes of seeing her. All appeared dark to leeward, the Charon’s stern lanterns only being visible just ahead of me. As I was peering into the gloom, suddenly a bright light burst forth, as it seemed, out of the ocean. Up it rose, increasing in size, a vast mass of flame into the air. I could distinguish, with the greatest clearness, the masts and spars and canvas of a schooner, lifting upwards high above the surface of the dark sea. Then they seemed to separate into a thousand fragments, and to fall down in showers of sparks on every side. For a moment I was in doubt whether what I saw was a reality or some hallucination of the mind, such as the imagination of a sleeper conjures up, but from the exclamations I heard around me I was soon convinced that the pirate crew who had effected all the mischief we had witnessed had met with a sudden and just retribution for their crimes, and that they and their vessel had been blown up.

The next morning a midshipman and ten men were sent to relieve me, and to take charge of the barque, which proved to be a vessel bound for Bristol. Sad was the tale she would have to convey to the wives and families of her officers and crew. On the 20th a signal of distress was seen flying on board one of our convoy. A couple of boats were manned, and I pulled away to her assistance. As we got near we saw the crew waving to us, some in the rigging, and some leaning over the sides. Her boats, I concluded, had been knocked to pieces in a gale. At all events none were lowered. The people waved and shouted more vehemently than ever. They had good reason for so doing. I saw by the way that the vessel was labouring, and by her depth in the water, that she was on the point of sinking. Already she had given one or two ominous rolls. I cried out to my men to pull up alongside as fast as they could. We were soon up to her. “Leap, leap!” was the shout. I was afraid that the boats might get foul of some of the rigging, or be drawn into the vortex. Not a moment was to be lost. The merchantman’s crew saw their danger, and threw themselves headlong over the bulwarks. The deck was already almost awash with the sea. Some reached the boats unhurt, others got much bruised, and two poor fellows plunged into the water. One of them sank before we could get hold of him, and the other we had considerable difficulty in saving from the vortex made by the foundering ship.

“Shove off! shove off!” I had to cry out. “Give way—give way, my lads!”

We had barely time to get clear of the vessel before she gave a terrific roll, her stern lifted, and down she went, as if dragged by some invisible power towards the depths of the ocean. We hurried back to the Charon, without attempting to pick up anything, for the weather was coming on bad, and the boats were already as full as they could hold. I could not help remarking how little the men seemed to care for the loss of their ship. Most of them grumbled about losing their bags, but as to any thought of gratitude for their preservation, it did not seem to occur to them that there was any necessity for feeling it. Had no other ship been near, or had their vessel gone down in the night, not one of them would have been saved.

“Oh, they are a precious rough lot, are my men,” observed the master. “There’s nothing they wouldn’t do, and nothing they care for.”

I thought as he spoke that he was precious rough himself, and that it was very much owing to him, and men like him, that merchant-seamen are so often little better than barbarians—without a thought of religion, or a knowledge of a future life. Several more days passed by, and we were making good progress. I little guessed what was in store for

us. Often, as I kept my midnight watch, my thoughts flew to Madeline Carlyon, and I delighted to picture to myself the happiness which I anticipated when I should one day be united to her. Of course I could not tell how or when that was to be, but I had so often and so long dwelt on the subject that I began to consider my union with her as a settled thing, that was to be a reality. Of one thing I was most certain, that she fully returned the affection I had bestowed on her. I pictured to myself how delightful it would be to bring her over to England as my wife—to introduce her to my father and mother and my relations, and to witness the admiration I was certain they would bestow on her. However, I did not intend to trouble my readers with a minute account of my own private thoughts and feelings, and yet, had I neglected to speak again of Miss Carlyon, I might have been accused of having heartlessly forgotten one for whom I had before expressed so ardent an affection. Most of my hopes of the successful termination of my love were based, it must be remembered, on the fortune which floated within the ribs of the huge Leviathan, and then my feelings may well be imagined, when, on the morning of the 24th of February, I saw a signal of distress flying on board her. I instantly communicated the circumstance to Captain Luttrell, who ordered all our boats to go to her aid. What was the matter we could not tell. Some thought a fire might have broken out among her cargo—others that she had sprung a leak. At all events it was very evident that her demand for relief was urgent. The boats were speedily lowered. Several of the merchantmen were sending off theirs also, and away we pulled towards her as fast as we could. I was the first on board. I found all the men with their bags on deck, and the officers collected with traps of all sorts. I did not see the captain and first lieutenant. The second lieutenant I knew, and spoke to him.

“We have been holding a council of war, and it has been resolved to abandon the ship, as there does not appear to be the slightest prospect of being able to keep her afloat a day or perhaps an hour longer,” he remarked with a look in which I thought that there was some little amount of shame mingled. “You see, it would not do to risk the lives of the people, or our own either, on the mere chance of keeping the old ship afloat a few days longer at most. The cargo they have put into her is more than she can carry—that is very evident.”

“Yes, indeed—that ought to have been known before?” I exclaimed, stamping with my foot vehemently on the deck. I could not for the life of me help the action. “And is this valuable cargo to be allowed to sink to the bottom of the sea without anyone straining a muscle to save it? That shall not be, and though every body else is afraid of remaining on board, I’ll undertake to stay by her and do my best to keep her afloat.”

“You’ll make your offers to your own captain, sir,” said the captain of the Leviathan, who just then appeared on deck. “If he thinks fit to accept them, he must be answerable for your life. My officers and I have come to the decision that to remain on board is certain destruction. No human power can keep the ship afloat.”

To all this I of course said nothing. I had been too long a midshipman not to know that the less a subordinate differs with his superior officer the better. I therefore merely stated that the boats I commanded were at the captain’s disposal, to convey him and his people on board the Charon, or any of the vessels in the convoy.

The captain, I thought, looked not a little sheepish, though he tried to brazen it out by as pompous a manner as he could assume. For want of sufficient courage and energy he was not only losing three thousand pounds, which he would have received on arriving in England, but allowing a number of other people to lose the hard-won wealth which might have been theirs. It was a very bitter subject to think of, I know. The captain had made up his mind to abandon the ship, and accordingly every boat alongside as well as their own was filled with the men and their bags, and the officers and their private effects. Many preferred taking passages in the merchantmen rather than be crowded up and subject to the discipline of a man-of-war. The captain of the Leviathan resolved on going on board the Charon, and when he got there it struck me that Captain Luttrell received him with an expression of scorn on his countenance which I thought he fully deserved. The men who had been in the boats declared that from what they saw of the old ship she would, with a good crew on board, be able to swim for many a day to come. I of course did not keep silence, but complained bitterly among my shipmates of the cowardice which had caused so valuable a cargo to be deserted. Finding that I could get plenty of support I resolved to ask Commodore Luttrell to let me go on board and try and save the cargo. When I expressed my intention the whole ship’s company begged that they might be allowed to go with me. I told them that I would take as many as I could. The commodore, who had been hearing all the reasons given by the captain of the Leviathan for deserting her, at first tried to dissuade me from going, but when he found that I persisted, in his usual kind way he told me that I might take fifty men, and that he heartily wished me success in my enterprise. By the time I had selected my crew and got the boats in the water it was quite dark. My object was to try and keep the ship afloat during the night, and in the morning to endeavour to discover where the worst leaks were to be found. I had but two boats, so that I could only take part of my crew at a time—the boats were to return for the rest. We shoved off with the full intention of saving the old ship. I felt sure I could do it. Nol Grampus and Tom Rockets were with me, and all were men I knew I could trust. The night was somewhat dark, and there was a good deal of sea on, so that the danger we had to encounter was not small. As we drew near the abandoned ship I saw that she was tumbling about and rolling in a fearful manner. Even in daytime, when we could have watched her movements and better calculated the proper moment to pull up alongside and hook on, the risk would have been very great, and now it was positively terrific. Now the ship came down with a roaring slush into the sea, as if she was never coming up again, and then suddenly she rose and away she rolled over on the other side, lifting her keel almost out of the water. Still to go back was impossible—I could not bring myself to do it. At every risk I determined to get on board. I watched anxiously for the moment. She seemed to be rolling away from us, and I calculated that we should have time to spring on board just as she returned.

“Now, my lads, give way!” I sang out.

They did give way, poor fellows. A sea sent us closer up alongside than I expected. Over again rolled the vast lumbering hull—down—right down upon us it came. Oh, mercy! A cry of horror rose—shrieks for help. The boat was dashed to fragments and pressed under the ship’s bilge. I found myself struggling in the waves with my poor fellows around me. I made a desperate effort to reach the main-chains. Now I was driven back, and all I could see was the dark hull of the old ship rolling above me, and I seemed to be sinking down into total darkness. Then the sea lifted me in its rough embrace just as I thought my last moment had come, and carried me right up to the very spot at which I was aiming. My struggles had so much exhausted my strength that I do not think I could have grasped it, but

a strong arm seized mine and lifted me up, and a voice I recognised as that of Nol Grampus exclaimed—

“All right, mate, here you are!”

Tom Rockets had just before reached the same place, and together they hauled me up out of the water. Some of the other men had climbed up by the main-chains, and others by the mizen-chains; but when we all at last got on deck and I began to muster them, I found that seven poor fellows were missing. There was no time to grieve about their loss. Our business was to try and get the crew of the other boat—the jolly-boat—on board, and to set to work to see if the ship herself could be kept afloat. Warning them of what had happened, we stood by with ropes to tell them to approach at the proper time. I waited till the ship was actually rolling over on that side, and then singing out to them they got alongside just as she was on an even keel. They were not many moments in scrambling on board. The boat’s falls were happily rove, so we hooked on and hoisted her up out of harm’s way. Not a boat belonging to the ship remained, and here was I in a sinking craft, with only twenty-two men instead of the fifty I had expected to have to stand by me—a dark night—a heavy sea—a gale brewing—not far from an enemy’s shore—not that that mattered much, by-the-bye. Still, thinking about our condition would do no good—action was what was required. My first care was to sound the well. There were nine feet of water in the hold. It was no wonder she tumbled about in the strange way she was doing. It was only surprising that she kept afloat at all. Grampus proposed returning to the Charon for more people; but as I thought very likely, when Captain Luttrell heard that so many had been lost, he would not allow any more to come, I would not let him go. Besides, I had no fancy to be left in a sinking ship, without even a boat to take my people and me off, should she, without more warning, go down. Instead of that I made my men a speech—a very short one, though—told them that if we set to work with a will we might yet, without further aid, keep the old Leviathan at the top of the water till the morning, when more hands would come to our assistance, and we might probably save some of the rich cargo on board. They at once saw the justness of my remarks, and they knew that the Charon had no other boats remaining in which the rest of those who had volunteered could come to our assistance. Accordingly, having trimmed sails as well as could be done to keep way with the convoy, I ordered the pumps to be manned, and we all set to with a will. Everyone worked as if they felt their lives depended on it; so they did, I was convinced, for had we relaxed for ten minutes the old ship might have given one plunge too much and gone down. I took my spell with the rest, or rather, I may say, that I and all the rest laboured away with scarcely an interval of rest. After two hours’ hard pumping I sent Grampus to ascertain whether we had in any way diminished the water in the hold. All we had done was to get it under about a foot. From the quantity of water we had pumped out I therefore knew that the leak or rather leaks must be very bad ones. Still, if I had had my fifty men with me, I should have been able, I was sure, unless the weather came on very bad, to keep the leaks under. However, I resolved to keep up my own spirits and those of the people with me as well as I could. Now and then I shouted out a few words of encouragement, then I sang a few snatches of some well-known song, or cut a joke or two suited to the taste of my followers. This kept them in good spirits and prevented them from thinking of the dangerous predicament in which we were placed. Hour after hour dragged its heavy footsteps along, and often I felt so weary that I thought I must throw myself down on the deck and give in. Then I would take a few minutes’ rest, sitting on a gun, and go at it again.

Everything contributed to make me persevere, and not the least, I must own, was my anger and disgust at the shameful and cowardly way in which the ship had been abandoned. Oh, how I wished for daylight! and yet daylight I knew was far-off. I kept Grampus and Rockets near me that I might send them, as might be necessary, to ascertain the state of affairs in different parts of the ship. In a small craft I might more easily have known what was going forward, but in a huge lumbering ship like the Leviathan I could not tell what might be occurring. When the condition of a ship has become desperate, sailors have very often broken into the spirit-room, and, getting drunk, have allowed her to sink with them. I had my fears that my poor fellows, when they became weary, would be guilty of some similar excess.

“Well, Grampus, how is the ship getting on?” I asked, after he had returned from one of the trips on which I had despatched him.

“The old craft is sucking in almost as much water as our fine fellows drive out of her, sir, but for all that there isn’t one of them shirking his duty,” he answered, in a cheerful voice. “If we could have a glass of grog apiece served out among us, I don’t think as how it would do us any harm.”

“I’ll see to it,” I replied. “Here, give me a spell; I’ll get some myself from the spirit-room.” Searching about I found a can, and lantern in hand I descended to the lower regions of the ship. As I groped my way there, the strange noises which assailed my ears—the creakings, the groans, the wash of the water—almost deafened me. I felt strongly inclined to turn back, for I could not help fancying that the ship was that instant about to go down. The air, too, was close and pestiferous, as if all the foul vapours had been forced up from the inward recesses of the hold. She continued pitching and rolling in a way so unusual that I could scarcely keep my legs. This was owing to the unseamanlike mode in which the cargo had been stowed: indeed, a ship of war was not calculated to carry a cargo at all, in addition to her own stores, water and ammunition.

At length I filled my can and returned with it on deck, filling it up on my way at one of the water-casks. Then I went round and served it out to the people, and never was grog more thankfully received. It did them all a great deal of good, and I am certain that on this occasion, by pouring the spirit down their own throats, they were enabled to get a great deal more of the water out of the ship. I took very sparingly of it myself, for I never was in the habit of taking much liquor of any sort, and I felt the vast importance, under present circumstances especially, that it was for me to keep my head cool. Not only on this occasion, but on all others did I feel this; indeed, though the licence of the times allowed a great deal of hard drinking on shore, I held the vice in just abhorrence. In the navy especially, more men have been ruined body and soul by drunkenness than by any other way, and many a fine fellow who would have been an ornament to his profession have I seen completely lost to it and to his country by giving way to the vice. I will say that I considered it very creditable to my fellows that, although they might at any time have found their way to the spirit-room, they never for a moment left the pumps, and only took the grog I served out to them.

Even the longest night must have an end. It was with no little satisfaction and gratitude also that I hailed the first faint streaks of light in the eastern sky. As the light increased, and I saw that we were surrounded by a number of vessels, with the Charon at no great distance, my spirits rose, and instead of wishing at once to abandon the Leviathan I bethought me that it still might be possible to get some of her cargo out of her before she went to the depths below, if go she must. Grampus agreed with me that this object might be effected. I signalled my intentions accordingly to the Charon, and very soon I had the satisfaction of seeing the commodore speaking a number of the merchantmen. They quickly replied, and he then signalled to me to set to work and get up the cargo as fast as I could. I could have wished to be supplied with more men, but, weak-handed as I was, after my faithful fellows had taken such food as could be found for breakfast, we set to work and rigged tackles and cranes to hoist up the indigo and sarsaparilla and anything on which we could lay hands. It was heavy work, for the old ship was still rolling very much, and we were all pretty well knocked up with what we had gone through in the night. The appearance of half-a-dozen boats or more, however, pulling towards us gave us fresh spirits. We sang away cheerily as we got saroon after saroon of indigo up on deck. This was, however, only part of the labour; the greatest difficulty was to lower them into the boats. The wind fortunately fell, and I was able to get up altogether during the day no less than 123 saroons of indigo, valued at sixteen thousand pounds. Why more assistance was not given me I cannot say. I do not like to dwell on the subject. In the evening the masters signalled to their boats to return, and my people and I were left alone once more on board the rotten old ship, with only the jolly-boat in which to make our escape should she go down. As the sun set the sky looked very windy, and there was considerably more sea than there had been all day. I called Grampus to my councils. He agreed with me in not at all liking the look of the weather. The people were ready to stay by me as long as I thought fit to remain on board, but they had already begun to express a wish to return to the Charon.

Taking all things into consideration I resolved to follow this course, and with a heavy heart ordered the people into the jolly-boat. I was the last man to quit the ship, and as I went down the side I certainly did not expect to see her afloat the next morning. I had no time, however, for sentimental regrets, for the sea was getting up, the sky was looking very wild and windy, and darkness was fast coming on. The boat also was much overcrowded. We, however, left the Leviathan’s side without an accident, and pulled slowly towards the Charon. She lay across the sea, and was rolling considerably when we got near her. We pulled up under her quarter. The bowman stood up, boat-hook in hand, to catch hold of the rope hove to us, when, losing his balance, he was pitched overboard. In vain his mates forward tried to catch hold of him; the next sea, probably, struck his head against the ship’s side, and he sank from our sight. While we were endeavouring to save him, indeed, the boat herself very nearly capsized, when probably all or most of us in her would have lost our lives. Happily, however, as it was, we managed to scramble on board, and the jolly-boat was hoisted up safe.

The commodore, as did my brother-officers, complimented me very much on what I had done, but as I had been left alone, I thought very unfairly, in my glory, I cannot say that I valued their compliments at a very high rate. I knew that I had done my duty at all events, and that was enough for me. Captain Luttrell, however, of his own accord agreed to remain by the Leviathan till the morning, in the hopes of being able to get more of her cargo out of her. Out of spirits at the loss of so many poor fellows, and after all at having done so little, I entered the gun-room. Supper was placed before me; I could scarcely touch it. Getting rid of my wet clothes, I threw myself at last into my berth, and scarcely had my head touched my pillow than I was fast asleep. Still the thought of the Leviathan haunted me, and I continued dreaming of the scenes I had gone through during the time I had been on board her. At last I awoke, and, slipping on my clothes, found my way on deck. There she lay—a dark, misty-looking object—rolling away even more violently than before, so it seemed to me. Still she was afloat, and while she remained above water I still had hopes of saving more of her cargo. As I gazed at her a strange sensation came over me. I know that I began to talk loudly and to wave my hand, and to play all sorts of antics. How long I was doing this I do not know, when one of my brother-officers put his hand on my shoulder and said, “You have had hard work, Hurry; bed is the best place for you.” I let him lead me below without a word of remonstrance. It struck eight bells in the morning watch when I once more awoke. I hurried on deck; the sky was dark and lowering—the leaden seas tumbling about with snow-white crests, from which the foam flew away to leeward, blown by a strong gale, which seemed every moment increasing. We were still close to the Leviathan. I kept gazing at her with a sort of stupid stare I dare say it looked like.

“It will not do, Hurry,” said Captain Luttrell. “We must give it up. I cannot risk your life or those of any of our people on board the old ship again.”

I was scarcely inclined to acquiesce in his remark. I wanted to make another effort to save the ship, and regretted that I had not remained on board all night. Just then she made two or three rolls heavier than usual—a sea appeared suddenly to lift up her stern—she made a plunge forward. I watched, expecting her to rise again—but no. It was her last plunge. Like the huge monster from which she took her name, she dived down beneath the waves; the waters washed over her decks; gradually her masts sank till the pennant alone was to be seen streaming upwards for an instant, till that also was drawn down to the depths of the ocean. I could not help uttering a groan of grief, not for the wealth which I thus saw engulfed beneath the waves, but for the destruction of all the hopes I had been so fondly cherishing.

The signal was now made for the convoy to continue on their course. The bad weather which had been brewing now coming on, ship after ship parted company from us, and at length, after a passage of six weeks, we reached the Downs on the 21st of March without a single one of the convoy with us. I had been absent from home just five years and a half. I had left it a boy—if not in age, in habits and feelings; I had come back an officer—bearing his Majesty’s commission as lieutenant, with ideas expanded and feelings wonderfully changed. Without any difficulty, the moment I applied for leave Captain Luttrell granted it, and, taking Tom Rockets with me, I set off immediately for London on my way to Falmouth.

Chapter Twenty.

Adventures on the road.—Welcomed at home.—Confess my love for the little Rebel.—Tom's grief for his mother's death.—Hear of Captain Cook's death.—Visit to London.—The Gordon riots.—Encounter with the mob.—Save an old gentleman in his carriage.—Give him my name.—Wonder who he can be.—Join the Charon, Captain Thomas Symonds.—Sail for West Indies.

Seldom, I suspect, have two rough-looking subjects made their appearance at an inn in the great City of London than Tom Rockets and I must have seemed when we arrived there by the Deal heavy coach on the evening of the 22nd of March, 1780. Our faces were of the colour of dark copper, and our beards were as rough and thick as holly bushes, while Tom sported a pig-tail and love-locks, which he flattered himself would prove the admiration of all the belles in his native village. They, at all events, drew forth not a few remarks from the little errand-boys in the streets of London, as we heard such remarks as, "There go two sea monsters!" "Where can those niggers have come from?" "Look there, at that sailor man with a bit of a cable fastened on to his pole!" More than once Tom turned to try and catch hold one of the little jackanapes, but he was off so fast down some lane or other that even Tom could not overtake him. I advised him to give up the attempt, and to take their impertinence coolly. I kept Tom by me wherever I went, for I felt pretty certain that, should I once lose sight of him, he might never find his way back to me.

I cannot stop to describe all the sights we saw, and the places we visited in the mighty metropolis. The town was talking a great deal of a duel which had taken place the very morning of our arrival in Hyde Park between Lord Shelbourne and Colonel Fullerton. The quarrel was about some reflection which the latter gentleman had cast upon his lordship. On the second shot the colonel hit Lord Shelbourne, who fell to the ground, but the wound was not considered dangerous. I bethought me of the duel I had fought when I was a boy, and that these two great people were very little wiser than I was then.

As soon as we could get places in the old coach we started for Falmouth, intending to visit the remainder of the sights on our way back to the ship. Away we rumbled, one fine morning, on board the big coach, as Tom called it, with a guard behind well armed with a huge blunderbuss and a brace of horse pistols. We stopped to change horses at an inn about thirty miles from London. A long line of horses, with packs on their backs, were collected in front of the stables to be watered. Twenty men or so were lounging about, apparently belonging to them. Presently there was a cry of, "The Custom-house officers! the Custom-house officers!" The men ran up from all directions, unloosed the halters, leaped on the backs of some saddle-horses standing ready, and the whole party began to move along the road. They had not gone many yards when another party of horsemen were seen galloping up from the direction in which they were going. The smugglers—for such the guard told us they were—turned round and dashed by us, but they were again met by another party of Custom-house officers. Swords were drawn, pistols were fired, the bullets came flying about the coach, greatly to the alarm of some of the passengers, who cried out and begged the combatants to desist. Our horses kicked and plunged, and nearly upset the coach. Tom and I could not help wishing to join the skirmish, and had jumped off for the purpose, though I had scarcely made up my mind with which party to side, when some of the smugglers threw down their arms and cried peccavi, while the rest tried to escape across the country over the hedges and ditches. Some were caught, but several effected their escape. I was well satisfied, when I had time to reflect on the matter, that I had not had time to mix in the affray. Altogether, thirty horses were captured, as were several of the smugglers, some of whom were wounded, as were five or six of the horses. We were, when passing through Devonshire, attacked by a party of highwaymen, but they, finding several armed men on the top of the coach who did not look as if we would stand any nonsense, thought it was wiser not to make any further attempt at robbing us. These trifling circumstances were the only events which occurred to us worthy of notice till we reached Falmouth. Tom accompanied me to my father's house, for I wanted to show him to them all, and also to ascertain whether his mother was living before I let him go home. We had been so long without hearing that I could not tell what might have occurred during our absence; my knees positively trembled as I approached the dear old red-brick house, and I felt as if I could scarcely walk up the flight of stone steps in front of it. The door was open. A little child was playing on the steps, and when he saw us he ran into the house, crying out—

"Oh, Grannie, Grannie! dear me, dear me! there are two big ugly blackamoors a-coming!"

Tom made a face, and looked at himself as if he did not much like the compliment, though he might have felt he deserved it. I should have caught up the little fellow and kissed him heartily, for I guessed that he must be one of my dear sister Mary's children, and the first kindred thing I had seen for many a long year. The cry brought out a neat, trim old lady, in a mob cap. She gave me an inquiring glance through her spectacles, and then, hurrying forward, caught me in her arms and kissed me again and again on both cheeks in spite of my huge beard and whiskers.

"My boy, my boy! you've came back at last to your old father and mother, bless Heaven far it?" she exclaimed, holding me at arms' length to examine my features, and then drawing me to her again. Tom pulled off his hat, and scraped his feet, and hitched up his trousers, and looked as if he expected to receive a similar welcome. Poor fellow! his heart yearned, I dare say, to have the arms of his own old mother round his neck. My mother looked at him to inquire who he was, and when I told her, an expression of sorrow crossed over her features, and I too truly guessed that she had some sad tidings for him. She, however, summoned a maid-servant, to whom she whispered a few words, and then told her to take him into the kitchen and make him comfortable. My father was out, but while I was sitting in the parlour I heard him come in. My mother went out to tell him that I had arrived, and he came hurrying in with steps far more tottering than was formerly his wont. He wrung my hand with both of his for more than a minute. From the tremulous motion of his fingers, and the tone of his voice and his general appearance, with sorrow I observed that he was much broken and aged. Still his playful humour had not deserted him, and he soon began to amuse himself by cutting jokes on my swarthy features and unshorn visage. Mary's little boy, Jack, in a very short time, became perfectly reconciled to my looks, and came and sat on my knee and let me dance him and ride him, and listened eagerly to the songs I sang him and the stories I told. Though I had not had a child in my hands for I don't know how many years, it all came naturally, and the little chap and I became great friends. Only my sister Jane, the one just above me in age, was at home. All my brothers were scattered about, some in England, others in different parts of the world seeking their fortunes. I was in a great hurry to talk to Jane about Madeline. I knew that she would sympathise with me. I had not written home a word about her, for I knew that it would never do to say that

I had fallen in love with the daughter of a rebel, as my feelings and motives and reasons would not fail to be misunderstood. I thought that I would first interest Jane, and then that we could win over my mother to listen to what we had to say, and then that my father would easily be brought round. Of course I knew that two important events must occur before anything I could say or do would be of any use. The abominable war between England and the United States must cease, and I must become possessed of a competence to support a wife as I felt Madeline ought to be supported.

I had not been long in the house before the news of my arrival had spread among our friends and neighbours. Many came in to see the long-absent sailor, as the ladies called me, and some to inquire about their relatives, my old shipmates and comrades. Of too many, unhappily, I could give but a bad account. Some had died of fever, others had been killed fighting with the enemy, and many, knocked up by hard work and disease, would, I thought, never return, or, if they found their way home, it would be but to die. I tried, however, to make the best of all the accounts I had to give, but I strained my conscience not a little a times to do so. This was a moral cowardice, I own. I could not stand the tears and sorrowful faces of friends when I would have wished to have had smiles and laughter. Still there can be no doubt that the truth should be spoken on all occasions, and I should, at every cost, have had it out at once. After all, the worst was to have to tell poor Tom that his mother was dead. For the life of me I could not do it, so I got Jane to go and break the sad news to him. I knew that the good girl would do it as gently as it could be done. She screwed up her courage, and went into the kitchen and sat down, and began to tell him how she was always talking of him, and hoping that he was a good lad, and then how ill she had been. At last Tom got up—

“Oh, Miss Jane!” said he, almost choking, “I know by your looks what you are going to tell me. Bless you for your kindness. The old lady has gone to heaven; that’s it, I know. She was a good mother to me, and I don’t care who knows, I would sooner by half have died myself. Bless you, miss! Bless you, miss!”

Then Tom sat down, and, putting his hands on the kitchen table, hid his face in them, and by the working of his brawny shoulders I knew how much he was affected. We left him to the care of our old cook, Betsy Treggle, who, we knew, could minister to his sorrow better than we could, and returned into the parlour.

“Sailors have got hearts, I see,” observed my mother.

“I should think so, mother,” said I; “the sea does not wash them away; and yet there isn’t a braver fellow ever stepped the deck of a ship than the same Tom Rockets, who seems to be almost pumping his heart out yonder.”

Then I gave them all an account of his adventure at the taking of San Fernando D’Omoa, when he handed the Spanish officer a cutlass to fight with him. In the first few days I was at home I was made more of than I ever had been before in my life. Tom stayed on with us. He had now no home to go to—no friends for whom he cared. He recovered his spirits and became as great a lion among his class as I was among mine—indeed, I suspect a far greater, as he made more than I could of all the adventures he had gone through, and was eager to tell about. The days passed by very pleasantly, but I felt a weight oppressing me, and could not rest till I had unburdened my mind to Jane about Madeline early on. At last I got her alone quietly, and told her all that had happened from beginning to end, and all my hopes and fears and wishes. She listened attentively. Her countenance changed its expression frequently as I went on. I looked at her earnestly to try and discover what she thought.

“Oh, brother,” she exclaimed at last, “I doubt not that she is a dear charming girl. I doubt not that you love her, and that she is deserving of your love, but she is the daughter of a rebel. She is living among rebels; she will not leave them; but for you to go to them, to wed with her would assuredly bring dishonour and disgrace upon your name.”

“Why, Jane, I did not expect you to speak thus,” I exclaimed. “You are hard upon me. I would not wish to go and live with rebels; but the Americans will not be rebels much longer. We are pressing them hard by land and sea, and they will soon come to terms. If they do not give in I think we shall give up, for everybody is heartily sick of the war. Nobody is gaining anything, and everybody is losing by it. Fighting the French and the Spaniards is a very different thing. Everybody feels that. It’s all natural, you know.”

“I’m sure that I shall be glad to hear that the war is over,” said Jane, with a sigh, “but surely the Americans must be very wicked people to behave as they have done to their lawful sovereign King George.”

“They say that he has been a very ill-advised King to behave as he has done to them,” I replied. “You see, dear Jane, that there are two sides to every question; but do not let us discuss that matter just now. You’ll say that, for the sake of Madeline Carlyon, I am siding too much with the Americans, but that is not the reason. I have been on the spot. I know the feelings of both sides. I have seen how things have been managed. I am sure the war can bring no honour or profit to England, and I heartily wish that it was ended one way or the other.”

“So do I, brother, believe me,” said Jane warmly; “and then, if Miss Carlyon is all you describe her, I for one will cordially welcome her as a sister if you can persuade her to come over here to visit our kith and kin.”

I jumped up and gave Jane a hearty kiss when she said this.

“Just like my own good sister,” said I at the same time, and in a moment I pictured to myself the happiness which would be mine, when perhaps in that very room I might be introducing Madeline to my family. I forgot that I was still a poor lieutenant—that the wealth I had so nearly possessed, and had fought so hard to obtain, had gone to the bottom in the old Leviathan—that I had saved but a few hundred pounds of prize-money—that England and the American States were still actively engaged in war—that the Atlantic still rolled between her and me, and that her kindred would probably exert their influence to make her give up all thoughts of one fighting on the side of their enemies. I was young, and hope was bright, and difficulties and impediments were speedily kicked away. Before another day Jane and I were talking away as if my marriage with Madeline Carlyon was a settled thing. At last we told our mother, dear old soul! She didn’t see how it could be exactly, but then that was her fault; and though she used to have some idea formerly that the Americans were red, and wore leathern cloaks and petticoats covered with beads

and feathers, and painted their faces, yet, as I assured her that Miss Carlyon was quite fair, and spoke English like an English girl, she would be very glad to receive her as a daughter, and for my sake love her very much. The toughest job was to tell my father. I was half afraid how he would take the matter. He did not scold me, or say I had been acting foolishly, but merely smiled and remarked that he had heard of midshipmen falling in love before, and that he had no doubt that Miss Carlyon was a very charming young lady; but that when I brought her over as my wife he should be able to pronounce a more decided opinion on the matter. There was, however, a touch of irony in his tone which I did not altogether like. However, he used after that to listen very patiently when we were all talking about her, and, I flattered myself, began to take an interest in my project. The days flew by very rapidly. I was invited out everywhere, and became quite a lion, not only because I had been in so many engagements and storms and dangers of all sorts, and had had so many hair-breadth escapes, but more especially because I had actually seen and conversed with General Washington. The young ladies, however, looked upon me as a very insensible sort of a person, especially for a naval officer, and could not in any way make me out. Of course, neither Jane nor my mother and father said a word about Miss Carlyon, and so we let them wonder on till I believe that I completely lost my character among them. Six weeks thus passed rapidly away. The time thus spent was interesting to me, but no events occurred of sufficient importance to describe to my readers. My regular employment was to search the public papers for news from America, to see how affairs were going in that country; and though most naval officers would have been anxious for a continuance of the war, my great wish was to discover signs that there was a probability of its being brought to a conclusion.

Since I had known Captain Cook I had always taken great interest in his adventures, and just now the sad news arrived of his death on the island of Hawaii, one of a group of newly-discovered islands in the Pacific Ocean called the Sandwich Islands. Four of his marines were killed at the same time. At first the natives treated him and his people as divinities, but on some misunderstanding they furiously set upon Captain Cook, and killed him with their clubs as he was retreating to his boat. The Resolution and Discovery proceeded on their voyage under the command of Captain Clerke, but he soon after dying at sea, Mr King took command of the expedition. Captain Clerke was a very gallant fellow. I knew him well.

At last my leave was nearly up, and I had to set off to rejoin my ship, allowing myself a few days to spend in London. Jane advised me to stop at Bristol to visit our great-uncle, Sir Hurricane Tempest, but I replied that I did not think the old gentleman would care about seeing me, and I certainly should not find any pleasure in seeing him.

“You don’t know,” she answered, laughing; “he might take a fancy to you and make you his heir. He has asked me to visit him, and I think I will, some of these days.”

“I hope that you will, Jane, dear,” said I. “You are far more likely to win an old man’s heart than I am. I am as likely to become his heir as Sultan of the Turks.”

Jane still further urged the point, but I only laughed and went on to London without stopping to see him.

On arriving in London, accompanied by Tom Rockets, I went to the house of a relative of ours in Bloomsbury Square, one of the most fashionable and elegant quarters of London. He and his wife were very grand people, but they had a fancy for patronising celebrities small and great, and having by some chance heard that I had seen a good deal of service, and could talk about what I had seen, they begged I would come and see them, and make their house my home. I took them at their word, though I think they were somewhat astonished when Tom and I arrived in a coach with our traps stored inside and out of it. They looked, at all events, as if I had tumbled from the moon. However, I made myself perfectly at home, and we soon became great friends. I was on the point of leaving them when a letter reached me from Captain Luttrell, prolonging my leave, and I found that I might have remained three weeks longer at home. When they heard of it, they most kindly invited me to remain on with them. I amused myself pretty well, after I had seen all the sights of London, by wandering about and examining the outside, as it were, of the huge metropolis. One of the places at which I found myself was the suburb of Tyburn, to the north of Hyde Park. It was a considerable distance from London itself, and well it might be, for here was the place of execution of all ordinary malefactors. One day I was passing this spot when I saw four carts approaching. In each of them were three persons sitting, with their arms closely pinioned. On each side of the carts rode public officers, the sheriffs, city marshals, the ordinary of Newgate, and others. I asked a bystander where they were going and what was to be done to them, for I did not know at the time that I was near Tyburn.

“Why, of course, they are all going to be hung,” was his reply. “We are pretty well accustomed to such sights about here.”

“Are they all murderers?” I asked, thinking, perhaps, that they were a gang of pirates.

“No—oh no!” said my friend. “They are mostly guilty of robbery, though. You will hear what they have to say for themselves before they are turned off; I will learn for you, if you have a curiosity to know.”

He went away, and soon returned with a paper on which were written the names of the malefactors and their crimes. One had stolen some wearing apparel; another had robbed a gentleman of his watch on the highway; a third had purloined some silks and ribbons from a shop, and so on. None of the crimes, that I remember, were attended with violence, and most of the criminals were mere lads, from seventeen to twenty years of age, and only one or two above it. I remarked this to my companion.

“Yes,” he observed. “The older ones are too knowing to be caught.”

The poor lads seemed terribly agitated and cast down at their approaching fate, and shed abundance of tears. One after the other was led up to the fatal drop and cast off. I could not stop to see the end, but hurried away. I had seen hundreds of my fellow-creatures die, but I hoped that I might never again see any put to death as these were.

After this I went down to Chatham to see how the ship was getting on, and then returned to London. I found the city

in a complete state of uproar and confusion. It was on a Friday, the 2nd of June, when Tom and I made our way towards the Houses of Parliament, for I had heard that Lord George Gordon was going with a large body of people to present a protest against the repeal of any of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics. I wanted to see the fun. There must have been twenty thousand people at least, who arrived in three different bodies before the Houses of Parliament. Here they behaved very orderly, and dispersed after being addressed by some of the magistrates; but the mob in other places broke out into all sorts of excesses, and as we went home we found them busily employed in demolishing a Romish Chapel in Duke Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. They hauled out all the ornaments, and what they thought of no value they trampled under foot, but the rest they made off with. Several houses, either belonging to Romanists, or inhabited by persons supposed to be favourable to them, we saw completely gutted. The same sort of work went on for several days. At last I got so completely mixed up with one of the mobs that I could not get free of them.

"Here, you look a likely man to lead us!" exclaimed a fellow standing near me. "Where shall we go next?"

I did not answer him, but endeavoured to get away. This did not suit him.

"What does the captain say?" he exclaimed.

"To Sir George Saville's, to Sir George Saville's!" cried some one.

"Hurrah for Sir George Saville's in Leicester Fields! He was the very man who brought the Romish Bill into Parliament. Down with his house, down with it!" shouted another fellow. "Lead on, captain—lead on!"

I at once saw that this was a trick that the real leader of the mob might be screened. I was determined to escape or I might be ruined. I told Tom to keep his eye on me, and to follow my movements. The mob began to move on, destroying one or two houses on their way. We at last passed the entrance to a narrow lane. Leaping aside, I darted down it. Tom followed. None of the mob missed me. I had got some way along the lane when a big, ill-favoured-looking fellow rushed out of a house with a thick stick in his hand, evidently with the intention of joining the rioters. Seeing a gentleman, and probably thinking I was a Romanist escaping from the mob, he immediately turned on me and aimed a blow at my head. I was just turning a corner, and he did not see Tom Rockets, but Tom saw him, and with a stroke of his fist felled him to the ground. Some other persons in the neighbouring houses saw the transaction, and the fellow quickly recovering there was a hue and cry made after us, the people rushing from their doors just as dogs are seen to run out from their kennels, yelping and barking when a stranger cur passes through the village.

As we were unarmed we could do nothing to defend ourselves, and had to trust to our heels for safety. Our pursuers were very likely, I knew, to tear us in pieces without asking any questions, and before we had time to explain who we were. I never ran faster in my life. How we were to escape them I could not tell. On we went: I sang out to Tom to stick by me, for if I should lose him I was afraid he might never find his way home again. We were distancing our pursuers. I made as many turns as I could, so as to cause them to lose the scent; but there were knowing fellows among them, and I conclude that they found as great an interest in the chase as a foxhunter does when following the hounds. At last I saw before me a large mob. There is safety in numbers, I thought to myself, so I called to Tom to dash in among them.

"Hurrah! hurrah! have you caught the fellow?" I sang out.

"No, he's slipped out of his kennel, but we'll take care that he does not burrow in it again," replied some of the people.

I guessed that they referred to the unfortunate inmate of the mansion into which numbers of them were forcing their way, while pictures, books, and pieces of furniture were being thrown out of the windows. I pretended to be very eager to get into the house, but making my way round on the opposite side, followed by Tom, we got free; and when I looked back I saw that no one was following us. We now walked along as composedly as we could, but it was not without difficulty that we found our way into Bloomsbury Square. As we got there we saw a mob following at our heels, and we naturally thought they were after us. We had to run for it to reach my relative's house. On came the mob. One of the finest houses in the square belonged to my Lord Mansfield. They rushed towards it, and began thundering at the door. They soon broke it open, and in they poured. In an instant the place became the scene of the most dreadful havoc and destruction. Again did I see pictures, clothes, books, furniture of the richest sorts, ruthlessly destroyed. I could scarcely have supposed that the work could have been done so rapidly. Then the most daring of the ruffians broke into the wine-cellar, and we saw them coming out with bottles and jugs and glasses, and distributing the rich liquor to the rabble outside.

What had become of my lord and his lady all this time we could not tell; we had great fears that they had fallen victims to the blind fury of the ignorant populace. I wanted to go out, but my relative would not let me. What the drunken mob might next have done I do not know, when a fresh party were seen entering the square; but they were a body of the royal guards with a magistrate at their head. He boldly approached the mob, and, halting the soldiers at no great distance from them, began to read the Riot Act. He finished it without faltering, the mob continuing as before their work of destruction. "Men," he shouted, "I have warned you. I am going to give the order to the troops to fire if you do not desist. Once again I warn you—your blood be on your own heads—Fire!"

No sooner was the fatal command given than the soldiers levelled their muskets and let fly in among the rabble. Several fell; there were shrieks and cries and curses; but the people were too eager in their thirst for plunder to be driven off from the work they had in hand. Again the order was given to fire; but the humane magistrate ordered the troops to fire over the heads of the people. Some on this began to move off, but others continued their task of plunder and destruction. No one thought of attacking the soldiery. It showed the class of people composing the rioters—the very scum of the populace. This last fire of course did not produce any effect, and the mob began to proceed to greater extremities, and set fire both to the out-houses and stables, as also to the mansion itself, when

they had possessed themselves of everything they thought of value. Only after repeated volleys from the soldiery were they driven off, and not till they had completed the work of destruction they had commenced. This did not take them long, and at last, several of their number having fallen, a panic seized them, and away they went helter-skelter in every direction out of the square. I could not resist the temptation of sallying out to see what they would next do, in spite of the warnings of my relative, who advised me to keep in the house. I laughed at the idea of there being any danger, and said that Tom and I would very soon be back again.

The troops stood their ground in readiness to march in any direction to which they might be sent. Some of the mob went off towards the east, and I went after them, hearing that they were about to attack some of the prisons, and having a fancy to see how they would proceed about the undertaking. Tom and I had gone about half a mile or more, when, coming along a street which crossed that we were in, I saw a coach driving somewhat fast. Some of the rioters saw it also, and some seizing the horses' heads, others proceeded to open the door, crying out that the person inside was a papist escaping from justice.

"Papist! I am no papist," cried out an old gentleman from the interior; "let my carriage proceed on, scoundrels, or I'll break some of your heads for you."

This threat had no effect; indeed, from the appearance of the fellows I had no doubt that their only object in attacking the carriage was for the sake of robbing the inmate. I had this time taken care to come out provided with a stout bludgeon and a sword. I knew pretty well the sort of coward hearts to be found in that sort of gentry, so telling Tom what I proposed doing, I sang out, "To the rescue! to the rescue!—off scoundrels, off!" and, drawing my sword, I rushed furiously at them, as if I had twenty stout fellows at my back. The desired effect was produced. They did not stop to see who was coming, but took to their heels and left the carriage free. I assisted back the old gentleman, who had been dragged half out of it, and, shutting the door, told the coachman to drive on as hard as he could go.

"Stop, stop! I want to know your name, young man, to thank you for your bravery," exclaimed the old gentleman vehemently.

"Hurricane Hurry, at your service, sir, a lieutenant in his Majesty's Navy," I answered. "I hail from Falmouth, sir—but I won't stop you, sir, the mob are coming back, and to a certainty they won't let you off as easily as before. Drive on, coachman, drive on for your life: I can tackle them if they attack me."

The coachman needed no second warning, but, lashing on his horses, drove furiously along the street, though the old gentleman put his head out of the coach window and ordered him to stop, as he had another word to say to me, and wanted me to get into the coach with him. I would gladly have done as he desired, as there was no object in exposing myself and Tom to the fury of the mob, and was running after the coach, when, looking over my shoulder, I saw some of the ruffians so close on my heels that I was obliged to turn round and defend myself, or I might have received a knock on the head which would probably have quieted me for ever. Knowing that there was nothing like a sudden onslaught, I turned suddenly round, and, seconded by Tom, made so furious an onslaught on the scoundrels that they one and all fled, as if a body of dragoons were upon them. The old gentleman, who was still looking out of the window, calling first to the coachman and then to me, must have seen this last manoeuvre of mine.

After Tom and I had with loud shouts pursued the mob a little way, we once more turned round and set off in order to overtake the coach. It had, however, by that time got out of sight, and though we followed in the direction I supposed it had gone, we did not again see it.

"Never mind," said I, "I should have liked to have known who the old gentleman was; he looked like somebody of consequence. However, I am very glad to have been of service to him."

After this adventure I began to reflect that it would be wiser to return home. I could not tell what might next happen. The day was drawing to a close. As we looked eastward, we saw the whole sky glowing with a lurid glare, which I afterwards found was produced by the conflagration of Newgate prison, which, after the mob had broken into and released all the prisoners, they set on fire. My relative was very glad to see me back safe, and on hearing of my adventures said that Tom and I were very fortunate to have escaped with our lives, and positively prohibited our again quitting the house. During the next day flames were seen bursting forth in every direction. Most of the prisons, as also many private houses, were broken open and burnt to the ground, and several hundred people were shot by the military, while perhaps an equal number died from drinking inordinately of spirits which they procured at the distillers', into which they broke, or were burnt to death in the ruins of the houses they set on fire. At length, however, so many troops, regular and militia, poured into London, that the rioters were completely overcome, and numerous arrests took place. Among others, Lord George Gordon was apprehended and committed a prisoner to the Tower.

Not long after this, I bade my kind friends in London good-bye, and joined my ship at Chatham. I ought to have said that they were very much interested in the account I gave them of the way I had rescued the old gentleman in the coach. Who he could be they could not guess, but they said that they would make inquiries, and if they could hear they would let me know. I felt no little curiosity to obtain this information; but day after day passed by and I heard nothing about the matter. There was something in his look and in his eagerness to speak to me which struck me forcibly at the time, and over and over again his countenance recurred to me; but whether I had ever seen it before, or why it made so deep an impression on me, I could not tell. There was nothing very remarkable in saving an old gentleman from a mob, when mobs were parading all parts of London, and undoubtedly many old gentlemen, physicians and others, were driving about in their coaches, called out, however unwillingly, by urgent business. Hearing nothing, my curiosity at length died away, and I thought no more about the matter. I must remark that Lord George Gordon was afterwards brought to trial, but acquitted of having in any way participated in the riots and plundering and destruction of property which had occurred, as also that any of the disorders had occurred in consequence of his instigation or counsel. He undoubtedly was influenced in his proceedings by a warm affection for the Protestant faith, though it may be doubted whether he took the wisest course to support it. He wished that the

multitudes he assembled should merely produce a moral effect on the Houses of Parliament. The ruffians and robbers of London took the opportunity, on finding large masses of people assembled, to create disturbances, and to incite the more ignorant masses to commit all sorts of outrages in order that they might have greater licence and opportunities of plunder. In this they unhappily succeeded, and brought no small amount of opprobrium and disgrace on the Protestant cause. I have now said, I think, enough about my adventures on shore.

On the 16th of June Captain Luttrell was superseded in his command of the Charon by Captain Thomas Symonds, whose son was appointed third lieutenant of the ship. On the 1st of July we dropped down to Sheerness, where we got in our guns. On the 12th we removed to the Little Nore, where the purser, surgeon, lieutenant of marines, gunner and carpenter quitted the ship. On the 24th we sailed from the Nore, and on the 25th anchored in the Downs. We quitted it with a convoy on the 28th, and arrived at Spithead the following morning. Here the first lieutenant was superseded by Mr Thomas Edwards. On the 6th of August we sailed from Spithead, and on the 7th anchored in Plymouth Sound. Here we remained till the 9th, when we proceeded down channel. On the 10th we took our departure from the Lizard, and once more I bade adieu to the British shore. I will not say that I quitted it with regret. I dearly loved England, in spite of all her faults, but I believed that I might on the other side of the Atlantic have a prospect of meeting with Madeline Carlyon, or at all events of hearing of her, and that alone was ample inducement to me gladly to encounter all the dangers and hardships to which I might be exposed.

Many others have, I suppose, thought and felt and hoped as I did, and many others have been disappointed.

“Hurrah for the West Indies—Spanish galleons—dark-eyed Creoles and prize-money!” was the general toast on board the Charon.

Chapter Twenty One.

Put into Cork harbour.—Sail with convoy.—Capture of the Compte D’Artois.—Arrive off Charleston.—British troops made prisoners.—Sail for New York.—Hear of Madeline through my hostess the Dutch widow.—Receive General Arnold and his men on board fleet.—In command of Arrow.—Reach the Chesapeake.—Hear of hurricane in the West Indies.—Loss of Thunderer, 74, and other ships.

Instead of at once proceeding on her voyage across the Atlantic, the old Charon was, we found, ordered to put into Cork harbour. We arrived at that port on the 11th of August, 1780, and found there HM’s ships Lennox, Bienfaisant, Licorne, and Hussar, with a hundred sail of transports.

Before I recount the events of our voyage I may as well make a few remarks about the ship and my brother-officers. Captain Symonds was himself a thorough sailor, and he showed his love of his profession by sending four of his sons into the navy. His eldest son, Jermyn John Symonds, was, though very young, our third lieutenant,—a fine, handsome fellow. He was afterwards, when in command of the Helena sloop-of-war, lost with all his crew in her on the coast of Holland. Another son, William, (see Note 1), though at that time a mere child, was, I believe, borne on our books as a midshipman. It was with no small satisfaction that I welcomed my old friend Paddy O’Driscoll, who came on board as a supernumerary, to rejoin his ship on the American station. I welcomed him the more gladly as so few of my old shipmates I was ever likely to meet again. Where were they? The deep sea—West India marshes—the shot of the enemy best could tell. But avast! I have bad enough of sentiment in these pages. I must not indulge in this vein. The rest of our officers were fine, gallant fellows, knowing their duty, and ready and able on all occasions to do it. What more can you ask of a man? Having a gentleman, and a kind, good man as our captain, our ship was a very pleasant and happy one, and that is more than can be said of many ships in my day. Captains were of necessity despots, and as they had very rough, untutored, disorderly subjects to deal with, too often very cruel, hard-hearted despots they were.

The day after our arrival at Cork we once more weighed and stood out of the harbour with the Bienfaisant, Captain McBride, having under our charge about seventy sail of victuallers bound for America. That ship and the Licorne had orders to escort us sixty leagues to the westward. We lay-to all night outside the harbour, waiting for the rest of the squadron to join us, which the Licorne and Hussar had been directed to bring up. We had drifted pretty well down to the old Head of Kinsale when, as the morning of the 13th of August broke upon us, we saw standing right into the fleet a large two-decked ship.

“If that fellow is an enemy he certainly does not seem to know what he is about,” observed Mr Edwards to me. “Does he expect to carry off some of our flock without our even barking at him? But see, Captain McBride is speaking us. What does he say?”

The signal midshipman on duty replied that he was ordering us to come within hail. We accordingly made sail towards the Bienfaisant, when Captain McBride directed us to join with him in chasing the stranger. Not till then apparently did she make us out from among the fleet of vessels crowding round us, shrouded, as we were, with the grey mists of the morning. We were all scrutinising her through our glasses, for it was still very uncertain what she might prove. Even when we stood out from among the fleet of merchantmen she gave no signs of any strong disposition to evade us, but steadily continued her course.

“She must be some English privateer. No Frenchman with a head on his shoulders would run it so near the lion’s den,” remarked Edwards.

“Faith, then, I don’t believe he’s got a head on his shoulders. That’s a French ship, depend on it,” observed O’Driscoll.

Some time longer passed before we got near the chase, for the wind was light. At half-past seven, to our great satisfaction, we saw her shorten sail and get ready, it appeared, to receive us. On this the Bienfaisant hoisted her colours and fired a shot ahead of her. We also hoisted our colours. The chase on this hoisted a blue ensign and hove-

to with main-topsail to the mast. On our getting within hail of her, we and the Bienfaisant did the same, when Captain McBride spoke her and inquired her name.

“HMS ‘Romney,’” was the answer. “Last from Lisbon.”

“I told you so,” observed Mr Edwards, when the words reached us. “She’s a fifty-gun ship, I know, though I never saw her that I know of.”

“But that ship carries more than fifty-guns if I mistake not,” I replied. “Listen! Captain McBride is again speaking her.”

“What does she say?” asked Edwards, as some words, the import of which we could not make out, came wafted over the water towards no.

Our people, I ought to have remarked, were all at their quarters ready for friend or foe—and grim, determined-looking veterans many of them looked, with their sun-burnt faces and bearded chins.

“What does she say?” exclaimed O’Driscoll. “Why, listen!—that she’s French, and going to fight for the honour of la belle France. See, our consort’s beginning the game.”

As he spoke, a volley of musketry was opened from the deck of the Bienfaisant, which was replied to in the most spirited way by the other ship, she at the same time hoisting French colours, and firing her stern-chasers at us. The Bienfaisant now ranged up alongside and fired her broadside right into the enemy. The Frenchman then fired hers, and by the way her shot flew we judged that her object was to cripple her opponent. We now stood on after the Bienfaisant, and as we ranged up fired our guns with terrible effect right across our enemy’s decks. Then on we stood, while our consort had in the meantime tacked and reached the place we had before occupied. In a short time she once more ranged up alongside the Frenchman, and poured a heavy broadside into him. Thus we continued, alternately changing places with each other. We suffered wonderfully little damage for some time. The Frenchman’s great aim was to wing us. He evidently fought not for victory, for he must have seen that was almost hopeless, but to escape capture. Never was a ship better handled or fought with more gallantry. For some time no one was hurt on board the Charon. At last one poor fellow got hit, and soon afterwards some blocks and splinters came rattling down from aloft. The mizen-topsail yard came down by the run, and I saw that it had been shot away in the slings. Tremendous was the pounding we were giving our enemy, but still he showed not the slightest intention of giving in. His deck was already covered with the dead and wounded, and the ship herself was in a very battered condition.

“That man is one of the bravest officers I ever encountered,” observed Captain Symonds, pointing to the captain of the French ship, whom we could see moving about, encouraging his people.

“I wonder whether he intends to give in at all!” said Mr Edwards as we prepared to pour another broadside into him.

“Not a bit of it; he has as much pluck as at the first left in him,” exclaimed O’Driscoll, as the thunder of our artillery once more ceased.

I could not help longing that, for the sake of the lives of his people, the French captain would give in. The action had now lasted from a quarter to eight to half-past eight. Of course the time appeared very much longer. The Bienfaisant was about to pour in another of her broadsides which had already produced such fearful effects. The deck of the Frenchman was truly a shamble; not a spot appeared free from some dead or wounded occupant. Just then the crew, fearful of encountering another iron shower, fled from their guns. Down came the Fleur-de-lys of France. Shouts arose from the deck of the Bienfaisant, which were loudly and joyfully echoed from ours. All three ships were now hove-to. On hailing our prize we found that we had captured “Le Compte D’Artois,” a private ship of war of sixty-four guns and seven hundred and fifty men, commanded by Monsieur Clenard.

A boat from each ship was sent on board. I went in the Charon’s. The brave captain of the Compte D’Artois came forward and delivered his sword to the lieutenant of the Bienfaisant. He was desperately wounded in the mouth, and he looked very sad; he had reason so to be, for his brother, a colonel of the Legion of Artois, lay dead on the deck, having been wounded early in the action, while he had lost no less than one hundred and nineteen killed and wounded of his brave crew. All his property, too, had probably been embarked in the enterprise. Many other people in the same way lost their fortunes during the war. They thought that they had only to fit out a ship of war and that they were certain to gain great wealth. They forgot that two might play at the same game, and that they were just as likely to fall into the hands of their enemies as to capture them. Poor monsieur had another brother on board. I did not exaggerate when I said that the deck of his ship was like a perfect shamble. So quickly had the poor Frenchmen been struck down that the survivors had not had time to carry them below, and there they lay, some stark and stiff, others writhing in their agony. It was enough to move the compassion even of their greatest enemies. We at once set to work to do all we could to help them and to relieve the wounded from their sufferings. Every one felt also much for poor Monsieur Clenard, for a braver man never commanded a ship or fought her longer, till not a prospect of escape remained for him. Strange as it may appear, we had only one man wounded, while the Bienfaisant had only two killed and two wounded. This extraordinary difference in the Frenchman’s loss and ours arose from two causes. He wished to escape, and fired high to try and destroy our spars and rigging; and also his crew, collected chiefly from the merchant service, and from boatmen and fishermen who had never till lately handled a gun, and having also a considerable proportion of landsmen among them, were in no way a match for our well-trained and hardy seamen. The ship was handled as well as she could be, while nothing could exceed the gallantry of her officers; her crew also fought with the greatest bravery, as indeed Frenchmen generally will fight, though perhaps not with the same bull-dog determination as the English. We agreed that when the French had had more practice, and had learned a few lessons from us, they would prove much tougher customers than they had hitherto been.

There was great cheering and congratulation on board the ships of the convoy as they came up, and in a short time the rest of them joined us with the Licorne and Hussar. In the interval the crew of the Compte D’Artois were transferred to the Bienfaisant, and she and her prize stood away for Crookhaven in Ireland. We, meantime, with the

other two ships and the convoy, made sail for the westward. We had generally on the passage moderate gales and fine pleasant weather.

On the 12th a strange sail was seen to leeward, beating up towards us. She was after a time made out to be a ship of some size, probably watching her opportunity to pick off any stragglers in the fleet. To prevent this Captain Symonds ordered the Hussar to chase her away, we making as if we were about to follow. Seeing this, the stranger put up her helm and ran off before the wind, while the Hussar crowded all sail in chase. We watched her with no little interest, for the stranger was evidently a big ship, and, if the Hussar brought her to action, would very likely prove a powerful antagonist—not that odds, however great, were much thought of in those days, and I will take upon myself to say that there was scarcely an officer in the service in command of a fifty-gun frigate who would not have considered himself fortunate in having an opportunity of engaging an enemy's ship of sixty guns or more. In a short time the sails of the chase and her pursuer disappeared below the horizon. The night closed in and passed away; the next day drew on and we saw nothing of the Hussar. Another day passed away and she did not make her appearance. Conjectures as to what had become of her now formed the general subject of conversation on board, but, like all conjectures, when there is no data on which to build up a conclusion, we always left off where we began, and waited till she came back, if ever she should do so, to tell her own tale.

O'Driscoll and I had now become great friends. I own that I wanted some one to whom I could talk to about my love for Madeline. With all his fun and humour and harum-scarum manner, he was a thoroughly honourable right-minded fellow, and I knew that I could trust him. He was delighted with the romance of the affair.

"If you can but point our where she is, by hook or by crook, I'll help you to win her," said he, in his full rich irish brogue. "You've already a pretty lot of prize-money, and please the pigs you'll pick up not a little more before long. Where there's a will there's a way, that's one comfort; and, by my faith, what I've seen of some of those little rebel colonists, they are well worth winning."

It may amuse my sober-minded readers, when they reflect on all the difficulties, not to say impossibilities, which existed in my way, to think that O'Driscoll and I should ever dream of overcoming them. But they must remember that we were both very young, and that in the navy such things as impossibilities are not allowed to exist. During how many a midnight watch did my love serve me as a subject for contemplation, and, when I was occasionally joined by O'Driscoll, for conversation also! Although I was on excellent terms with the rest of my brother-officers, I never felt inclined to open out to any of them. Perhaps it was a weakness in me to do so even to O'Driscoll, and, as a general rule, I think a man is wise to keep such thoughts to himself.

Day after day passed by and our missing consort did not make her appearance. A whole week elapsed, and we began to entertain serious apprehensions about her, and to fear that she had been captured. Our course had been so direct, and the weather so fine, that she would have had no difficulty, we considered, in rejoining us. At length a sail appeared standing towards the fleet. She was not one of the convoy, for all were together. Every glass on board was turned towards her. As the stranger drew nearer and nearer we were more and more puzzled to make out what she was.

"I see, I see!" exclaimed O'Driscoll at last. "She is a frigate and under jury-top-masts. She has been in a smart action. I see the shot-holes through her canvas. There can be no mistake about the matter. She is the 'Hussar,' I believe, after all."

On she came towards us, and the Hussar she proved to be; but the trim little frigate which she had been when she left us a week before was now sadly shorn of her beauty. As soon as she came up with the fleet Captain Symonds sent me on board to inquire what had happened. The story was soon told. She had fought a very desperate and gallant action, which, by-the-bye, I have never seen recorded in any naval history. She, it must be remembered, was only an eight-and-twenty gun frigate. The stranger after which she had been sent in chase, when she had drawn her completely away from the squadron, backed his main-topsail to the mast and waited, prepared for battle, till she came up. The enemy was soon made out to be a French forty-gun frigate, but that disparity of fores did not deter her gallant captain from proceeding to the attack. Ranging up within pistol-shot she opened her broadside, to which the Frenchman quickly replied in the same way with equal spirit. As was the case in our action with the Compte D'Artois, the Frenchmen fired high, evidently with the idea that, by crippling their opponent, they might have her at their mercy. This system might under some instances be very good, but, unfortunately for them, they frequently themselves got so completely thrashed before they had succeeded in accomplishing their purpose, that they had to cry peccavi and haul down their flags. The gallant little Hussar had no intention of running away, and therefore poured her broadsides into the hull of the Frenchman, committing great havoc along his decks. The action was continued for some time with great guns and musketry, every man in the English frigate striving his utmost to gain the victory. Numbers of the gallant fellows were struck down—some never to rise again, others desperately wounded. Each attempt of the Frenchman was bravely repulsed, and every shot fired was responded to with still greater vigour. Still the captain of the Hussar could not help watching the progress of the fight with the greatest anxiety. Already two of her top-masts had been shot away, her lower-masts were wounded, and five or six of her crew lay dead, while as many more were hurt. Still he had determined not to give in as long as his ship would float. The Frenchmen had already suffered severely, but it was impossible to say how long their endurance might last. He had no doubt that they had lost far more in killed and wounded than he had, and he saw that they had some shot between wind and water, and that their rigging was much cut up. All this gave him hopes that he might yet come off victorious. Again he ranged up alongside his big antagonist and received her fire while he delivered his own. Down came his mizen-top-mast by the run—several more of his crew fell to the deck—his rigging hung in festoons—his canvas was full of shot-holes. He thought to himself, "Ought I to sacrifice the lives of my people in a hopeless contest? But is it hopeless? No, it is not. Hurrah, my brave fellows! One broadside more, and we shall do for the enemy!" he shouted loudly. The combatants were standing on a bow-line alongside each other. Once more the Hussar fired. The Frenchman returned her broadside, and then, before the smoke cleared off and the English had time to reload to rake her, put up her helm and ran off before the wind. The Hussar was not in a condition to follow. She, however, kept firing at the Frenchman as long as her shot could reach him, and then hauled her wind and stood away to the

westward after us. She had seven killed and six badly wounded, besides other hurts. She had lost her three top-masts, while her lower-masts were disabled. Fortunately the weather was fine, for had she encountered a gale of wind her condition would have been bad indeed. I have never, as I have said, seen an account of this very gallant action in any naval history, and I therefore give it as it was described to me by the officers of the Hussar.

On the 14th of October we arrived off Charleston, South Carolina, with our whole convoy, after a favourable passage of nine weeks, and we were congratulating ourselves on its successful termination, little thinking what was to be the fate of many of the ships of the fleet. Charleston stands on a broad neck of land, with Cooper's river on one side and Ashley river on the other. They flow into a wide sheet of water, which forms the harbour of Charleston, but which is shallow, and has a bar at its mouth, on which there is very little water.

This, on our arrival, we could not cross, and the convoy had consequently to anchor outside. Charleston had, after a brave defence on the 12th of May, been captured from the Americans under General Lincoln by Sir Henry Howe and Lord Cornwallis. The latter on our arrival commanded the army which held it. Sir Henry, with part of his forces, had gone to New York. The capture of Charleston was considered a very fortunate circumstance, and it was believed that in consequence the whole of the Carolinas would yield to our arms. Never perhaps were people more mistaken. The day of our arrival at Charleston I accompanied Captain Symonds on shore. We went to the house where a friend of his, Colonel Balfour, had taken up his quarters. He most kindly received us, and invited us to his table whenever we were on shore. We slept, however, at one of the largest houses in the place, occupied by Lord Cornwallis. His lordship had just returned from an unsuccessful expedition to North Carolina, where a force of nearly a thousand men, regulars and royalists, under Colonel Ferguson, who was killed, had been taken prisoners by the Americans; many also lost their lives with their leader. Colonel Ferguson had made a foray into North Carolina, and in his retreat had been surprised among the fastnesses of the mountains by an overwhelming force of the most hardy and brave of the irregular troops of the neighbouring districts, especially accustomed to the sort of warfare in which they were called on to engage. Colonel Ferguson was a very brave and good officer, and Lord Cornwallis took his defeat and death very much to heart. As we had executed some of the rebels who, after receiving royal passes, were taken in arms against us, so now the Americans in retaliation hung several of the royalists who were captured on this occasion. In consequence of this there was, we found, a great deal of bitter feeling in the town against the rebels, and in no time had the contest been carried on in so sanguinary a way as at present.

We were aroused at daybreak by the sound of a terrifically heavy gale which had sprung up, and in going down to the harbour we found that the bar was perfectly impassable, while the ships at anchor off it were in a great state of confusion. Some were striking top-masts and letting go fresh anchors, in the hopes of riding out the gale, while others were slipping or cutting their cables, and running out to sea, several of them getting foul of each other and committing all sorts of damage. It was not till the 20th that the weather moderated sufficiently to enable us to get off to rejoin our ship. By degrees some of the ships of the convoy which had run to sea came back, but several never returned, having been captured by the enemy or lost.

On the 22nd we again sailed from Charleston with a convoy of fifty sail of transports, bound for New York. On our passage we captured a rebel privateer of eight guns and fifty men, and took a merchant brig bound from London to Charleston with bale goods. We found at Sandy Hook, where we arrived on the 4th of November, Sir George Rodney, with eight sail of the line and several frigates, waiting for a wind to sail for the West Indies. The following day we proceeded through the Narrows up to New York, where we set to work to refit the ship for sea,—an operation she very much required. I need not say that I employed my time on shore in endeavouring to gain intelligence of Miss Carlyon and her family. In making my inquiries I had, however, to exert great caution, for I knew that I might very easily bring upon myself the suspicion of corresponding with the enemy for treasonable purposes. When I slept on shore I went to the house of a worthy Dutch widow, where I had before lodged. I did my utmost to ingratiate myself with her, for I knew that if any one could obtain the information I required she would do so. Old women, I have found, nearly always are ready to listen with complacency and attention to the love tales of young men or young women, and so my kind hostess not only listened to as much of mine as I thought it necessary to tell her, but gladly promised to assist me to the best of her ability.

"And now, my dear Mrs Von Tromp, what news have you for me?" I asked eagerly one day as I walked into her little back parlour where she received her select visitors. Considering her origin, she spoke excellent English.

"Listen!" she replied; "I have not learned much for you, but what I have learned you may believe is the truth. I lately had a talk with a Virginian gentleman. Do not be afraid, sir, for he is a neutral; no rebel I ever talk with. He knows the family of the lady you want to hear about. He heard them speaking of her not long ago; she is unmarried, and they thought she would remain so. She was then in Virginia with her father, who is a very active rebel, you know."

Not listening to her last remark, the thought at once struck me that I would write to her to assure her of my constancy, and would try to send my letter by means of the gentleman Mrs Von Tromp mentioned. My good hostess was, however, terrified when I made the proposal.

"Oh, dear—no, no, it would never do!" she explained. "It would be a great deal too dangerous to attempt. The letter would be intercepted, and we should be accused of corresponding with the enemy, and some of us would be hung to a certainty. Just think, how should you like to suffer the fate of poor Major André? Ah, poor young gentleman! he was, indeed, a fine, handsome man—or almost a boy, I might say—he looked so young; he was so civil and polite and kind. I can't think of his cruel death without crying, that I can't."

Major André had been captured by the Americans, having crossed into their territory for the purpose of communicating with General Arnold, who succeeded in escaping from them and joining the British forces. He was considered as a spy, and as such, tried, condemned, and had just before this been executed—his hard fate creating much commiseration even in the bosoms of his enemies. He was fully as brave, talented, polite, and accomplished in every way as the widow described him. I assured her that I had no wish to share his lamentable fate, but that, as I was not holding any treasonable correspondence with the enemy, I could not be found guilty of so doing. I argued the

subject with her for some time.

“Ah, you know the way to an old woman’s heart as well as to that of a young one!” at last exclaimed the good-natured dame. “I cannot refuse you. Write the letter, and I will do my best to forward it. But be careful what you say. Nothing but love, remember, nothing but love—don’t forget that.”

“No fear, no fear,” I answered, laughing. “I’ll stick to my text, depend on it.”

“I don’t doubt you, and a pretty long one it will be, I suspect,” she remarked, as I got up to go off to my room. “When it is ready, bring it to me. I will do my best, and if it does not reach its destination, that is no fault of mine.”

I hurried up-stairs to the room I slept in, and was soon deeply immersed in the occupation of writing a letter to Madeline. I had no fears how it would be received, so I seized my pen, and, after a few moments’ thought, wrote on. Once having begun, my pen flew rapidly over the paper, but not so rapidly as my thoughts. When I had covered the sheet I had not said one quarter of what I wished to say. I took another and another. At last I finished and folded them up.

“Umph!” said the widow, when I took the package to her. “You will want a special courier and a pack-horse to carry this document—but don’t frown now, I am only joking. I am sure that the young lady is well worthy of the letter, and that you have not said a word more than she will be glad to hear.”

I was not in a humour to quarrel with Madame Von Tromp for anything she might say. Leaving my precious letter with her, I hurried away to attend to my duties on board my ship. At this time Admiral Arbuthnot’s squadron was lying in Gardner’s Bay, at the other end of Long Island. On the 9th, Sir Henry Howe having some important despatches to send to the admiral, the gallant little Hussar was directed to get under weigh to convey them.

Little did I think at the time that, after all she had gone through, we should see her no more. I have already described the dangerous passage of Hell Gate, where already, in consequence of the fearful rapidity of the currents, so many vessels had been lost. I watched the Hussar get under weigh. I had hoped to take the trip in her, for I had some old friends on board different ships in the squadron whom I wished to see, and I was rather annoyed at not being able to get leave to go. That was one of the numberless instances where I have discovered how little we mortals know what is good for us. To make a long story short, for I cannot now stop to give a full description of the accident, in going through that justly-dreaded passage the Hussar met with baffling winds, and, the currents catching her, sent her bodily on the rocks. Thus she became utterly helpless. No seamanship could avail her. The short, chopping, boiling sea dashed over her and beat her to pieces. Before hawsers could be got to the shore, by which her crew could make their escape, several of the poor fellows had been drowned. In the boisterous and bitterly cold weather of that season many of them suffered much before they got back to New York.

Once more we were ready for sea, and on the 2nd of December we hoisted Admiral Arbuthnot’s flag, and, proceeding to Statten Island, we were joined by HMS Thames, Charlestown, Medea, Amphitrite, Fowey, Hope, Bonetta, Swift, and several armed vessels.

I was just now speaking of the death of Major André, who was captured by the Americans when communicating with General Arnold. That officer had deserted the liberal cause, and, having succeeded in reaching the British lines in safety, had now been appointed a brigadier-general in our army. On the 3rd we received him on board with two troops distributed among the ships of the squadron. All we knew was, that some expedition of importance was to be undertaken, but on what part of the coast the descent was to be made did not transpire. I do not believe that the commanders on our side put much confidence in General Arnold, and of course the Americans, whose cause he had so basely betrayed, perfectly detested him. Had he, by the chances of war, fallen into their hands, they would have treated him as they had done poor André.

We sailed from New York on the 12th of December. In order to deceive the enemy, and to make them believe that an expedition of very great importance was about to be undertaken, we kept the admiral’s flag flying till we were out of sight of land. A course was steered to the southward; it was then understood that we were bound for the Chesapeake, and it was supposed that a landing would be made somewhere on the shores of Virginia. I scarcely knew whether to grieve or to rejoice at the prospect thus held out to me. Of course, I could not but regret that my countrymen were about to carry the war into the very part of the country where Madeline, I believed, was residing; at the same time, under the supposition that such would be done, I rejoiced at the thoughts that I might meet her, or might render her or her family assistance. Still I would not venture to reckon much on the prospect of our meeting. Numberless circumstances might intervene to prevent it. I might not even be sent on shore. I might not go near where she might be residing, or, what was probable, her friends might gain tidings of the expedition, when she would, with other ladies, move away more into the interior. Still, notwithstanding these considerations, I could not help indulging myself in the belief that, by some means or other, we should meet once again, or, at all events, that I should gain tidings of her, and be able to communicate with her. The very idea gave buoyancy to my step and manner, and made many of my companions inquire what had put me in such unusual spirits.

O’Driscoll had returned on board, having again joined the ship as a supernumerary, and as an old tried friend he entered, and, I believe, heartily, into all my hopes and fears. Some of his plans and proposals, however, though very much in accordance with the notions of Irishmen in those days, were not such, even with all my harum-scarum habits, which I could by any possibility adopt.

“Hurry, my boy, I have been thinking over this affair of yours,” said he, as we were walking the deck together. “I don’t like shilly-shallying in matters of this sort—I never did. The lady loves you, and you love the lady—well, then, to my mind, the first difficulty is got over, because, according to my notion, where there’s a will there’s a way. You’ll find her out, that’s certain. Then the next thing to be done is to get her to run away with you. She’ll go, depend on that. You take her prisoner, you know! Bring her aboard; we’ll get a chaplain to splice you. You can take her up to

New York; she'll be safe there. And then we come to another little matter; I've arranged that in a satisfactory way. You've some prize-money. I've saved a good mint one way and another, and, old fellow, I don't want it—my purse is yours. Old messmates don't stand on ceremony about such matters. My own dear little Kathleen, the only creature I wanted it for, went to glory while I was last at sea. When I got home I was desolate. I've no kith nor kin I care for, and if you don't take the money it's likely enough I'll heave it into the sea one of these days, or pitch it where it won't do any one any good, so don't think that I am doing you any wonderful favour if you take it. The truth is, Hurry, I'd be more than paid ten times over in having the pleasure of helping you to run off with the lady. I'm in my element in an affair of this sort—there's nothing I like better, barring a good stand-up scrimmage, and that's generally too soon over. Now, Hurry, just do as I say. Promise me!"

I was struck dumb; so rapidly did he pour out his proposals that I could not answer him. He took my silence for consent, and ran on. At first I was somewhat inclined to resent his remarks, but his generosity and evident unconsciousness that he was proposing anything in any way incorrect completely disarmed my anger, and, when he ceased speaking, greatly to his surprise, I burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"I am most thankful, my dear O'Driscoll, for your kind sympathy, and for the assistance you so liberally offer me," I exclaimed, as soon as I could recover myself. "But supposing I could or would persuade her to leave her home, and the protection of her family, just consider all the hardships, inconveniences, and danger she would be exposed to on board ship before I could place her in safety; and then, how could she, delicately brought up, live on a lieutenant's pay, even with such prize-money as I might save, and your aid, my kind fellow!" I added. "No, no! the thing is out of the question."

"Faith, I hadn't thought all about those little obstructions to matrimonial felicity," he answered. "Still I can't give up the idea, in case the chance should offer, of your running away with the young lady. It seems such a natural thing to do. There's a fine fellow, be prepared, that's all—and only just let me help you."

"Well, well! I have no friend on whom I can more fully rely than you," I replied. "I promise you that I will not fail to apply to you if I see that you can in any way help me."

"That's all right," said he, fully satisfied. "I knew that you would, before long, come into my views."

Our passage to the south was very tedious, for we had light winds, sad were also constantly compelled to heave-to for the laggards.

Soon after the conversation I have mentioned, on the 23rd of December, it being still calm, one of the leading ships signalled that a ship and four small sail were in sight to the southward, and that they had all the appearance of enemies. We, accordingly, crowded all sail in chase, but scarcely had we got beyond the van of the fleet when it became evident that, at the rate we were progressing, we should not come up with the chase before dark. We had, in company, a small privateer schooner fitted with long sweeps, and which rowed remarkably well. Captain Symonds directed her by signal to come within hail, and then ordered me to take thirty men and go on board her and to proceed in chase of the strangers.

"If they prove to be enemies," said he, "bring them to action, and keep them engaged at long range, knocking away their spars, if you can, so that they cannot escape till we come up. If we take the ship, as I have no doubt we shall, I will give you the command of her to take her to New York. She is evidently a big craft, and will be worth not a little."

I suspect that it was with no good grace that I thanked the captain for the confidence he placed in me. He looked surprised, I thought, but said nothing. Under other circumstances I should have been well pleased with the task confided to me, but now, when I had set my heart on landing on the shores of Virginia, suddenly to find that I might have to go back to New York was a sore trial to me. Little do we know, however, what is the best for us. As soon as the Arrow privateer came up, I and my crew went on board, and, getting out all the long sweeps, away we pulled in chase of the strangers. Every man put his full strength into the work, and we sent the little vessel along at the rate of fully three knots an hour. We felt as if we were going at a great speed, and we rapidly neared the strangers. Little did I think in those days that in my old age I should see vessels sent along in a dead calm without the slightest exertion of human agency at four or five times that speed. We kept minutely examining the strangers as we drew near. One was a man-of-war—of that there was no doubt; the others were merchantmen, probably, under her convoy. Still she did not show her colours. The Arrow carried a couple of unusually long guns, and I fully expected to commit great execution with them. They were all ready. Nol Grampus had charge of one of them. We had got within range of the ship. I hoisted English colours. The ship showed none in return. I waited a minute longer. The word "fire" was on my lips when up went the British ensign at her peak. Still I was not convinced till she made the private signal.

Never perhaps in my life before had I been so satisfied at finding a friend instead of an enemy. She proved to be HMS Royal Oak, the other vessels being prizes she had taken. Two days after this we took two other prizes, the charge of which was given to Lieutenants Seymour and Bruton. Their absence of course gave me much more work to do—not a bad thing, perhaps, under my circumstances. The following day a heavy gale of wind sprang up, and we separated from the fleet as well as from our prizes. We were knocking about for three days somewhat concerned for the fate of the convoy. There were so many privateers cruising about, that it was likely some of them could be picked off, and if any of the transports were taken or lost, the whole plan of the expedition might be disconcerted. General Arnold especially was in a state of considerable anxiety for several reasons. If this, his first expedition, should fail, he could scarcely expect his new friends to trust him again, while if by any accident he should fall into the hands of those whose cause he had betrayed, he knew full well the fate which awaited him. He was, I believe, a man possessed of considerable military talents and of general ability, but he wanted principle; and his extravagant habits placed him in difficulties from which he saw no ordinary way of extricating himself. He had just put forth an elaborate address to the inhabitants of America, not only excusing his conduct, but taking great credit for the motives which had induced him to join the King's arms. He stated that he had taken up arms to redress grievances, and that those grievances no longer existed, because Great Britain, with the open arms of a parent, offered to embrace the colonists as children,

and grant them the wished-for redress. Her worst enemies, he told them, were in the bosom of America. The French alliance, he assured them, was calculated not only to ruin the mother-country, but the colonies themselves; and that the heads of the rebellion, neglecting to take the sentiments of the people at large, had refused to accept the British proposals for peace; that for his part, rather than trust to the insidious offers of France, “I preferred,” he continues, “those of Great Britain, thinking it infinitely wiser and safer to place my confidence in her justice and generosity than to trust a monarchy too feeble to establish your independency, so perilous to her distant dominions; the enemy of the Protestant faith, and fraudulently avowing an affection for the liberties of mankind while she holds her native sons in vassalage and chains.” He winds up by stating his conviction that it was the generous intention of Great Britain not only to leave the rights and privileges of the colonies unimpaired, together with their perpetual exemption from taxation, but to superadd such further benefits as might be consistent with the common prosperity of the empire; and then he says, “I am now led to devote my life to the reunion of the British Empire as the best and only means to dry up the streams of misery that have deluged this country.”

We had numberless copies of this address on board, ready to be distributed throughout the country whenever we should effect a landing. That was far from a pleasant time we had on our voyage. Not only had we the effects of the gale to dread, but we were aware that a French squadron was not far-off; and we were kept constantly on the look-out in the unpleasant expectation of falling in with them, and having to take to flight or of undergoing a still worse fate, and of falling into their hands. Many people, in my day especially, had an idea that ships were fated to be lucky or unlucky, either because they were launched on a Friday, or that their keel was laid on a Friday, or that they were cursed when building or when about to sail, or had a Jonas on board, or for some other equally cogent reason. I always found that a bad captain and master and a careless crew was the Jonas most to be dreaded, and that to ill-fit and ill-find a ship was the worst curse which could be bestowed on her. I should have been considered a great heretic if I had publicly expressed such opinions in my younger days; indeed, I probably did not think of them as I do now. The Charon was considered a lucky ship, or, in other words, Captain Symonds was a careful commander, and so few on board had any fear of our falling in with an overpowering enemy or meeting with any other mishap. They could not as yet be proved to be wrong; the gale abated on the 28th. The following day the weather became moderate and fair, and we rejoined the fleet off the capes at the entrance of the Chesapeake. We found the squadron augmented by the arrival of two or three ships from the West India station. These were to have joined to take part in the operations about to be commenced, but the terrific hurricane which had lately raged over those regions had either totally destroyed or disabled so many, that no others were then in a fit condition to proceed to our assistance. Several of the officers came on board of us, among them many old friends of mine, and from them I gathered some accounts of that tremendous visitation.

It first broke on the Island of Jamaica, at the little seaport town of Savannah-la-Mer. That hapless place, with the adjacent country, was almost entirely overwhelmed by the sea, which rushed in over it with tremendous force, driven on by the fury of a tempest whose force has rarely been surpassed. The gale began at about one o’clock in the afternoon from the south-east, increasing in violence till four p.m., when it veered to the south, then reaching its height, and continued thus till eight, when it began to abate. Terrible was the havoc committed in these few hours. The waves, raised to a height never before witnessed, foaming and roaring, rushed with irresistible impetuosity towards the land, sweeping into the bay and carrying before it every building it encountered; numbers of the inhabitants it overtook being drowned, while the rest fled shrieking before it for safety to the Savannah. There the ruins only of houses remained to afford them shelter. To add to the horror of the scene, lightning of the most vivid description flashed from the skies—the wind and waves howled and roared in concert—darkness came on, and the earth itself shook and trembled as if about to swallow up those whom the waters or their falling habitations had spared. The smaller vessels at anchor in the bay were driven on shore and dashed to pieces, and the largest were torn from their anchors and carried up far into the morass, whence they could never be removed. One ship, the Princess Royal, was hove on her beam-ends, but again righted by the earthquake or by the force of the wind, and was left fixed firmly in the ground.

With the morning light the scene of destruction presented to the eyes of the survivors was truly heart-rending. The ground where the town had stood was strewed with the mangled forms of the dead and dying, scattered among the fragments of their dwellings. Scarcely a roof remained whole or a wall standing. Of all the sugar-works none remained; the plantain walks were destroyed; every cane-piece was levelled; and some hundred people, whites and negroes, were killed. In Montego Bay, and indeed throughout the island, the consequences of the tempest were equally disastrous. But if people on shore suffered thus, still more melancholy was the fate of the numerous fleets which came within its influence. Those of England, France, and Spain equally suffered; many being wrecked, and others foundering with all hands.

The hurricane did not reach the Leeward Islands till the 19th. It raged at Bridgetown, Barbadoes, from the 10th to the 16th, with no less fury than elsewhere. The evening of the 9th was particularly calm, though a glow of an unusual red appeared in the sky, and heavy rain began to fall. On the morning of the 10th the hurricane began, and by the afternoon the Albemarle frigate and all the merchantmen in the bay parted from their anchors and drove to sea. By night the fury of the tempest had reached its utmost height, and dreadful were the consequences. It is impossible to describe the scenes of horror and distress occurring on every side. A friend of mine was at the house of the governor, which was a circular building with very thick walls. The roof, however, soon began to fall in, and the family were compelled to take shelter in the cellar. The water, however, speedily found its way there, and, rising four feet, drove them into the open air, through showers of tiles and bricks and timber falling on every side. They at last took shelter under a gun-carriage, but several guns were dismounted, and every instant they dreaded being crushed by the one under which they were sitting. They were close, also, to the powder magazine. A flash of lightning might destroy them in a moment. The armoury had been already blown down, and all the arms and stores and other things in it were scattered around. No place seemed safe, for whole roofs were lifted up, and beams were blown about like feathers, and darted with violence to the ground: so that the roar of the elements, the crashing made by the falling houses, and the shrieks of the inhabitants, were almost more than human courage could bear.

All waited anxiously looking for the dawn of day, but the light only exhibited a scene which made them wish that it

were again dark. Only ruin and desolation were visible on every side; houses overthrown, trees and plantations levelled, the ground strewed with dead bodies, and the shore covered with wrecks. At the other islands life and property suffered equally. At Saint Pierre, in Martinique, the new hospital of Notre Dame was blown down, overwhelming 1600 patients, and 1400 other houses were destroyed. In Fort Royal Bay four ships foundered, and every soul perished. At Saint Lucia the destruction was very great. His Majesty's ship Amazon was driven to sea and most miraculously escaped foundering. She was commanded by the Honourable Captain William Clement Finch. An old friend of mine, one of the lieutenants, gave me the following account:—

"We saw by the look of the weather that a hurricane was coming on, but while we were making everything snug it was down upon us, and we were driven from our anchors, happily out to sea, instead of on the shore. We at once got the ship under storm staysails, and as long as the canvas held she behaved admirably; but as night drew on the gale increased and every stitch of canvas was blown from the bolt-ropes. It is impossible to describe the terrific fury of the gale by this time. One thing was very clear, that if we did not cut away the masts they would either go by the board, or she herself, from her terrific labouring, would go down. The captain evidently did not like to cripple the ship by cutting away the masts, and kept waiting in the hopes that the gale was at its height and would soon abate. Vain was the hope. The gale, on the contrary, kept increasing. At last he sent them aloft to cut away the main-topmast. Quick as lightning they flew to obey the order, for they well knew how much depended on its execution. Scarcely were they aloft when the hurricane struck us with greater fury than ever.

"'Down, down, for your lives!' shouted the captain; 'the mainmast must go.'

"While we were waiting for the men to come down—and never did a few moments of my life appear so long, for I knew that every single one was of importance—a terrific gust struck the ship. Over she heeled; down, down she went.

"'She's gone, she's gone!' shrieked out many on deck.

"I hoped that she would lift again, but she did not. Lower and lower she sank. All who were on deck, captain, officers and crew, who could manage it, clambered up on the ship's side. Some poor fellows who were to leeward, and unable to haul themselves up to the weather side, were washed off by the foaming sea, and, unable to help them, we saw them drowned before our eyes. We felt that in another moment their fate might be ours, for so far gone was the ship that the wheel on the quarter-deck was already under water, and to our dismay we saw that the ship was settling down every moment lower and lower. All the time she kept moving about terrifically, and all we could do was to cling on and watch for our approaching dissolution. Higher every instant rose the water, and it had now reached the after part of the carronade slides on the weather side. All hope was now gone. No ship with a heavy armament like ours had ever floated in such a position. Those who could or dared pray prayed; the rest waited in dull or hardened indifference for their fate. There was a tremendous deafening crash. I thought our last moment had come, but no, at that instant I saw the masts breaking away like mere faggots; the bowsprit, spanker-boom, everything went, and with a spring the ship righted so much that the lee gunwale rose even with the water's edge.

"'Now, my lads,' shouted out our captain in a tone which animated all hands; 'now's our time! Overboard with the guns; we shall yet keep the ship afloat.'

"We all scrambled back on the deck, and everybody, fore and aft, set to work with a will to obey the captain's orders. Capstan-bars, handspikes and axes were in requisition for active service. First we got the lee quarter-deck guns and carronades overboard; then we hurried forward and launched one of the forecastle guns into the sea, and cut away the sheet anchor. All the weight we took off the lee-side had so good an effect that still more of the ship's side rose above water, and we found that we could get at the lee-guns on the main deck. What was of equal importance also, we were able to reach the pumps. The first thing was to get the lee main deck guns overboard. It was some of the most trying work we had yet to perform. As I looked aft, and then glanced forward, I could not help perceiving, as I believed, that the ship was going down stern foremost. Others were under the same impression. Still a daring body, led by the gallant Packenham, our first lieutenant, worked away with such determination that one gun after the other was sent plunging into the ocean. Meantime the pumps were rigged, and we made a desperate attempt to free the ship from water. Already it was above the cable on the orlop deck, and there was an immense quantity between decks. Our previous unexpected success encouraged us to proceed. No men ever worked with a better will than did our people; still, it's my belief that seamen always will thus work when a good example is set them. We were evidently diminishing the water, and the ship was no longer sinking, when an accident occurred which made us again almost abandon hope. On examination, it proved to be that the stump of the mainmast had worked out of the stop and been driven against one of the chain-pumps. The carpenter and his mate and crew hurried below to see what could be done, but scarcely were they there when the cry arose that the other pump was useless. Still they were undaunted. While the stump of the mast was being secured, they laboured away to repair the damage. At length one of the pumps was put to rights: a cheerful shout announced the fact. Then we set to work on the other, which was in time cleared, and once more the water flowed out at the lee scuppers in a full stream. The ship was strong, and tight as a corked bottle. Wonderful as it may seem, not a leak had been sprung. The ship having at length been got somewhat to rights, the crew were mustered, when it was found that twenty men had been drowned or seriously disabled. In a few hours she was cleared of water, but there we lay, a helpless wreck on the ocean, an easy prey to the smallest enemy. Our safety existed, we knew, in the fact that every other vessel afloat must be in nearly an equally bad condition. When the weather moderated we rigged jury-masts, and after great exertion got back into harbour, thankful to heaven for our providential preservation from a fate to which so many of our fellow-men had been doomed."

Of his Majesty's ships alone, a great number were lost or dismasted. The Thunderer, 74, Captain Walshingham, which had just arrived at the station with a convoy from England, was lost with all hands. The Scarborough, of 20 guns, was also lost with all hands. The Stirling Castle, 64 guns, was lost, only the captain, Carteret, and fifty people escaping. The Phoenix, 44—Deal Castle, 24—Endeavour brig, 14, were lost, part only of the crews escaping. The Berwick, 74—Hector, 74—Grafton, 74, Captain Collingwood—Trident, 64—Ruby, 64—Bristol, 50—Ulysses, 44, and Pomona, lost all

their masts, while the two first had also to throw all their guns overboard. They formed the squadron which had sailed from Port Royal with the trade for Europe, under Rear-Admiral Rowley. He, with five only of his ships in a most shattered condition, returned to Jamaica, while the Berwick separated from him, and, almost a wreck, arrived under jury-masts in England, no one expecting that she would keep afloat till they got there.

Again I must sing, as I often have to do—

> "Ye gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease,
> Ah! little do you think upon the dangers of the seas."

Note 1. Afterwards Sir William Symonds, Surveyor of the Navy. Another son was the late Admiral Thomas Symonds, several of whose sons are or were in the Navy. Captain Thomas Symonds here spoken of was also the son, I believe, of a naval officer. His brother was Dr Symonds, Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge.

Chapter Twenty Two.

Old Nol's dream.—The Charon on shore.—Afloat at last.—Expedition up the Chesapeake.—Sent on shore.—Capture guides and hostages.—Visit Hampton.—Kindly received by Madeline's friends.—Her likeness but not herself.—Warned of approach of an enemy.—We retreat, and regain our ship.

With a proud confidence that we were sailing on to victory, and as all hoped and believed to bring the war to a conclusion, the squadron entered the Chesapeake on the evening of the 30th of December.

The Charon, however, did not make a good beginning. The lead was kept going, and with a fair and light breeze we were running quietly on. Suddenly, just as eight bells had struck, there was a shock felt—not a very violent one, happily—but the cause we knew too well; the ship was on shore on the Willoughby Shoal. The canvas was furled, and an attempt instantly made to get her off; but there did not then appear much chance of our efforts proving successful. We had been toiling away for two or three hours, and still the ship stuck fast.

"I don't like this here event by no means at all, Tom," I heard Nol Grampus observe to Tom Rockets.

Nol, though a sensible fellow in the main, was a thorough old salt, and with all the usual prejudices of his class.

"To my mind ill-luck has set in against us. I had a dream t'other night. I thought as how, while we was a-standing on under all sail, thinking ourselves all right and free from danger, far away from land, I saw a big fish—she was a whopper, depend on that—a-swimming along over the sea. I looked at her, and she opened her mouth and made right at the ship. Her upper jaw reached far up above the main-top mast truck, and the lower one, I'd no doubt, dipped far away down below her keel. Well, as I was a-saying, on she came, roaring away like a young porpoise, and heaving the foam right over our mast-heads. I knew what would happen, and so it did. Just as easily as the big shark in Port Royal harbour would swallow a nigger boy, she made a snap at the ship and bolted us all, masts and spars and hull, and I felt as how we was all a-being crunched up in her jaws. I woke with a start, which made me almost jump clean out of my hammock, all over in a cold sweat, and right glad I was to find that it wasn't true; but, d'ye see, Tom, as to going to sleep again, I couldn't for the life of me, but lay awake a-kicking up my toes and turning the matter over in my mind. Says I to myself, 'There's some harm a-coming to the old barkie of some sort or other, or my name's not Nol Grampus. When we gets ashore this evening,' says I to myself, 'this is the beginning on it,' and you'll see my words comes true, Tom."

There was not light enough to allow me to observe Rockets' countenance, but I felt very sure, from the exclamations in which he indulged, that he was taking in the whole matter with open-mouthed credulity, scarcely understanding that Grampus was only describing his dream, and that he had fully made up his mind that some dreadful accident was about to happen to the ship. The scene I have been describing took place during one of the cessations from labour, while the captain and first lieutenant and master were considering what means could next be adopted to get the ship afloat again. I was anxious that Nol's remarks should not be heard by the rest of the crew, for I knew by experience how greedily such an idea as the one he had expressed—that the ship was doomed—might be taken up by the crew, and perhaps produce the very event he had predicted. I was about to step forward and interfere, when the order was issued to carry out another anchor astern, and Grampus and his listener had to go about their duty. All night long we were toiling away, getting out all our anchors, starting the water, even lowering some of the guns into the boats.

"I told you so; I knew how it would be," I heard Grampus remark just as he happened to meet Tom, while I was passing. "Ill-luck has come to the ship, and ill-luck will stick to her, unless so be we gets a parson aboard and manages to heave him into the sea. That'll set things to rights again, may be."

I was amused at the old man's recipe for averting the doom from the ship. It was not, however, new to me, for I had before heard a similar proposal made under like circumstances. Never did a set of men labour and toil more perseveringly than did our crew that night. Still the ship stuck fast. It became at last a matter of doubt whether we should have to throw all our guns overboard, and perhaps our provisions and ammunition; and if so, all hopes of gaining prize-money or of doing anything in the way of fighting was over for a long time to come. Captain Symonds of course was unwilling to resort to this alternative till the last. Grog was served out to all hands, and then we set to again with a will. Hour after hour passed; as yet the weather remained moderate, but we could not conceal from ourselves the disagreeable fact that, should it come on to blow, in the position in which we were placed, the ship would too probably be knocked to pieces. We were all so busily employed that the hours did not pass so heavily as they would otherwise have done. We were in constant movement ourselves, and had to keep the ship in constant movement to prevent her from forming a bed for herself in the sand. The tide, which was ebbing when we got on

shore, at last turned and began to flow. Slow enough it came in to suit our impatience. At length dawn appeared. The crokers were of opinion that the clouds looked threatening. “If a gale springs up, the old ship will leave her bones here, that’s very certain,” I heard one or two of them remark. I watched the current as it came sweeping by us; the water was evidently rising round the ship. Again all the strain we could command was put on the hawsers. None but a seaman can understand the satisfactory sensations we experienced as her vast hulk yielded to our efforts. We felt that she was gliding off the bank. “She moves, she moves! hurrah, hurrah!” was shouted fore and aft. Her speed increased, round went the capstan right merrily. Again and again the men shouted. She was clear of the bank. One after the other the anchors were weighed, sail was made on the ship, and rapidly we glided up the mighty Chesapeake. We proceeded up as high as Newportneuse, and so suddenly and unexpectedly did we come on the enemy that a considerable number of merchantmen were unable to make their escape. As soon as we had brought up, the boats were lowered, and away we went in chase.

The moment the crews made out who we were, they cut their cables and ran, while we in hot speed went after them. Some few gave it up as a hopeless case and hauled down their colours; others ran on shore, and their crews set them on fire, or we did so, to prevent any one from benefiting by them. They were mostly loaded with Virginian tobacco. No one in the fleet wanted a good supply of the fragrant weed after that. We took or destroyed a dozen or more brigs and schooners. It might have been necessary, but it was cruel work, and I did not think it was the best way to make the planters of Virginia love us the more. Such was the way our expedition commenced operations.

Before I proceed I must recommend my readers to look at a map of Virginia bordering the southern or rather western side of the Chesapeake, and examine the scene of the operations which, under the directions of General Arnold, we were about to commence against the rebels. To the east will be found that large estuary of the Atlantic running nearly north and south, and known as Chesapeake bay, or gulf, or river. It forms the eastern boundary of Virginia. Flowing into it from the west the river Potomac bounds the State on the north, while a vast marsh, known by the unattractive name of the Dismal Swamp, separates it on the south from North Carolina. Between the Potomac and the Dismal Swamp several other rivers and creeks are to be found. The largest is James river, with Portsmouth and Gosport near the mouth. Running into it on the north is Hampton creek, on which stands the town of Hampton, and a little to the north of it again is York river and York Town, which was to become the scene of operations of a character most disastrous to the royal cause. York Town stands on an elbow of York river, between it and James river. Some way up James river is the town of Richmond, the capital of the State of Virginia. The country was, at the time of which I am speaking, as densely populated and as well cultivated as any part of the province of North America. The Dismal Swamp is an exception to the fertility of the surrounding country. It is a vast quagmire, composed of vegetable matter and the decayed roots of trees and plants. On the surface appear in rich luxuriance every species of aquatic plants, from the delicate green moss to the tall cypress. It covers, I was told, an area of a thousand square miles, and is forty miles long and twenty-five broad, having, however, in the centre, a lake of some size fringed to the very borders with dense masses of trees which extend even into the water itself. The water is perfectly level with the banks, and sometimes overflows them. Altogether, from its uninhabitable and impassable character, and the sombre appearance of its vegetable productions, it well deserves the name given to it.

The last day of the year 1780 had now arrived. Captain Symonds sent for me and informed me that I had had the honour of being selected for some important duty, and that he could fully rely on my carrying it out with my usual zeal, energy, and discretion. I bowed, and replied that I was always anxious to do my duty; but my heart, I confess, did beat rather quickly and anxiously in consequence of the possibility I at once saw of realising the hopes I had so long entertained, I need not, however, again revert to that subject.

“Some intelligent pilots are required to conduct the men-of-war and transports up James river, as also some guides are wanted for the army when they land,” said my captain. “Now you see, Mr Hurry, as they won’t come simply because they are wanted, you are to go on shore and catch them. Captain Hawthorne of the 80th Regiment, with two detachments, one from the Queen’s Rangers and one of his own men, will accompany you. You will have altogether fully three hundred men. With their courage and discipline they will be a match for a thousand or two thousand rebels, and I expect that you will carry out your instructions with credit to yourself and advantage to the service.”

I bowed, and the captain continued: “It is believed that the enemy have secured some of their vessels in Hampton creek. You are to find out where they are, and, if you can, take possession of them and bring them away. If not, burn or destroy them; at all events, acquaint yourself sufficiently with the country to enable you to lead an expedition up the creek to capture them. With regard to the inhabitants, you are to treat them with civility and in a conciliatory manner. If necessary, of course you will coerce them, but as much as possible show them that we come as friends rather than as foes.”

Having assured the captain that I fully comprehended my directions, and would endeavour to carry them out to the full, I took my departure, to prepare for the expedition.

I had a hundred picked men with me, including Nol Grampus and Tom Rockets, whom I kept by me as my bodyguard. We got the soldiers all on shore by seven o’clock in the evening at Newportneuse, where I joined them with the blue-jackets. Meeting with no opposition, we were under the impression that our landing was unnoticed. Forming on the shore we began our march at about eight o’clock in good military order, the Rangers in front, the seamen in the centre, and the 80th in the rear, with advanced and flanking parties from the Rangers. I felt that we were in an enemy’s country, that any moment we might be attacked, and that such precautions as we were taking were in no way derogatory to those who would desire to be considered brave men. Others, as will afterwards be seen, held a different opinion and suffered accordingly. Captain Hawthorne, however, fully agreed with me in the wisdom of adopting the precautions I proposed. We advanced in perfect silence, feeling our way, for we were ignorant of where the path we were following would lead us. Road, properly so-called, there was none. After proceeding half a mile or so through a tolerably open country we reached a thick wood, extending so far before us on either side that it was in vain to hope to pass round it. Whether or not it was full of lurking enemies we could not tell. There was nothing to be done but to penetrate through it. There was something solemn and rather depressing in the deep silence of that gloomy forest, with the tall gaunt trees towering above our heads and shutting out the sky itself from view. In some

places it was so dark that we could scarcely discover our way, and as we marched on we went stumbling into holes and over fallen trunks of trees and branches, and more than once I found myself up to my middle in the rotten stem of some ancient monarch of the forest long recumbent on the ground. Some of the men declared that the wood was full of rattle-snakes, and that they heard them rattling away their tails as they went gliding and wriggling along over the ground, rather surprised at having their haunts invaded by the tramping of so many hundred feet. Others asserted that there were ghosts and hobgoblins and evil spirits of all sorts infesting the locality; indeed, I suspect that there was scarcely a man among them who would not more willingly have met a whole army of mortal enemies rather than have remained much longer in that melancholy solitude. Every moment I expected to hear the sharp crack of the enemy's rifles and to see the wood lighted up with the flashes, for I could scarcely suppose that they would allow us to pass through a place, where, without much risk to themselves, they might so easily molest us and probably escape scot-free. On we marched, or rather stumbled and groped our way, till at length we emerged from the wood into the clear light which the starry sky and pure atmosphere afforded us. We were now among fields and fences, which gave us intimation that some human habitations were not far-off. In a short time we saw before us a good-sized mansion standing in the middle of a farm, with various out-houses. Our first care was to draw up our men closely round it. Hawthorne and I, with about twenty followers, then approached the front door and knocked humbly for admission. Soon we heard the voice of a negro inquiring who was there.

"Some gentlemen who wish to see your master on important business," I answered.

"Ki! at this hour! Come again to-morrow, den; massa no see nobody to-night."

"It is business which cannot be put off," said I. "Open, Sambo, you rascal, or I shall be apt to break your head or your shins rather before long if you are not quick about it."

Still Sambo seemed to have his suspicions that all was not right, and very soon we heard somebody else come to the door and a discussion commence as to who we could be. Again I knocked and began to lose patience.

"Open, friend!" I exclaimed; "we are not robbers, nor are we officers of the law, but we have a matter in which we want your assistance, but cannot delay."

Soft words often have an effect when rough ones would fail. The bolts were withdrawn, and, the door opening, a gentleman in a dressing-gown and slippers, his wig off, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his whole appearance showing that he had made himself comfortable for the evening, stood, candle in hand, before us. He held up the light and peered before him into the darkness to ascertain who we could be. When his eye fell on our uniforms and the red-coats of the soldiers his countenance assumed a most ridiculously scared appearance, and with a groan of terror he let the candlestick fall from his hands. The expiring flame, as the candle reached the ground, showed me a female arm stretched out. It hauled him through a doorway, and the door was slammed and bolted in our faces. Directly afterwards we heard a window thrown up, and a voice exclaimed—

"Fly, Ebenezer, love! fly and hide thyself, or these red-coated villains will be the death of thee!"

We stood very quietly waiting the result. I knew pretty well what it would be. In two minutes a voice was heard outside the window—

"Oh, mercy, mercy! Bridget, let me in again, let me in!" it said. "The house is surrounded by armed men, and thy unhappy husband is truly caught in the snares of the enemy."

We had no time to spare, so I thought it best to catch our friend and see what we could make of him. I accordingly knocked at the door and desired to be admitted.

"Oh, mercy, mercy! oh dear, oh dear!" was the only answer I got.

"Well, my friends, I can wait no longer," I exclaimed, in a voice which showed that I would not be trifled with. "I have something to communicate to you, and if you come out peaceably it will save trouble, and be better for all parties. You have my word that no harm whatever is intended you."

There was some discussion inside. I knocked pretty loudly two or three times with the hilt of my sword. The hint was taken, and at length the door was slowly and cautiously opened, and the worthy farmer and his portly dame stood before us. I asked him his name.

"Ruggles," he answered, looking as if he did not love me certainly, "Ebenezer Ruggles, and that's my wife Bridget. And now, stranger, what is it you want of us?"

"Why, my friend, all I want you to do is to guide a party of his Majesty's troops and blue-jackets by the nearest and best road to the town of Hampton, and to give me such other information as I may reasonably require," I replied, somewhat sternly. "I have lost some time already, so put on your hat and great coat and come along."

"What! you are going to carry my husband off, are you? He'll not go; I tell you that he shan't!" exclaimed Mrs Bridget, walking up in front of him, like a turkey hen defending her young. "Whatever you want to know I'll tell you, but you shan't take away my good man from me. He'd catch his death of cold, I know he would. Here, Jeremiah! Boaz! Timothy! Luke! Sarah! Martha! Jane! come and stop your dear father from being shot, murdered, drowned, hung up as a Tory! Oh, dear, oh, dear! I don't know what will happen to him."

As she spoke, a number of children streamed in from an inner room, the smaller ones in their night-gowns, and all more or less in *déshabille*, as if they had been hurriedly summoned out of their beds. They looked at me, and the soldiers and sailors behind me, and then threw themselves shrieking and crying round their father's neck. As I knew that we should take very good care of the poor man, I could not stand this scene very long, and had at last to tell him

that he must put an end to it, or that I must order the soldiers to separate him from his children and to carry him off by force.

“Oh, you cruel, hard-hearted slave of a tyrant!” exclaimed their mother, advancing boldly towards me; “you will not take him away—you will not—you dare not! You’ll have his life to answer for if you do.”

“Come, come, madam,” said I, “we must end this business at once. Your husband must accompany me at all events. No harm will happen to him, so don’t be alarmed. Now, sir, put on your hat and accompany me.”

I had a strong suspicion that she wished to gain time, and had perhaps sent off some one to try and bring down the enemy on us.

Again there was a furious chorus of hugging and shrieking and crying and kissing.

“Don’t go—you shan’t go—Papa, you mustn’t go—we won’t let you go—hard-hearted, cruel tyrants!”

Such were the phrases which reached my ears, but Ebenezer Ruggles saw that I was in earnest, and, signing to his wife, she brought him a thick pair of shoes, a great coat, a stick and his hat, and then, in spite of the renewed cries of his children, he signified, in a manly, fearless way, that if we compelled him he would accompany us without resistance. I accordingly took him by the arm, and succeeded at last in separating him from his wife and children, and leading him out of the house. Even after we had got some distance off we heard the cries of poor Dame Bridget and her disconsolate brood. Ebenezer bore the trial very well.

“Now, friend Ruggles,” said I, “you must understand that, if you guide us right and play us no tricks, we will restore you safe to your wife and family, but if you lead us into any difficulty I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of shooting you through the head.”

“Oh! if that’s the case, then, I must tell you that you have come two miles out of the road to Hampton,” quoth Mr Ruggles. “If you had gone on, you would have run your noses against a pretty strong force of our States’ army, who would have made mince-meat of you, I guess.”

“They must have been pretty strong to impede the progress of a thousand men,” said I. “However, lead us by the best road and you shall be well rewarded.”

“That’s reasonable,” said Ruggles; and forthwith turning round, away he trudged alongside me at the rate of nearly four miles an hour. He led us back right through the dark wood and into the open country, and at last we reached a fine broad open road. Along that we marched at a great rate. We soon, however, came to a house. We instantly surrounded it, and, very much to the surprise and alarm of the inhabitants, made them prisoners. I rather think that our friend Ruggles was not sorry to have a companion in his misfortunes. We soon had several. Every house we came to we surrounded, and had to capture the inhabitants, that they might not escape to give the alarm through the country. I cannot describe all the scenes that occurred. Some were rather amusing, as we knew that we were not going to injure the poor people. Others were painful, from the dreadful alarm into which both men and women were put when we appeared at their doors. Still greater was it when they found that they had to accompany us on our march.

The night was drawing on, and there were as yet no signs of the town for which we were bound. Every moment, of course, increased the probability of our being attacked, for, notwithstanding all our precautions, we scarcely hoped to have prevented some of the people getting off, who might give notice of our advance. I began to suspect that Mr Ruggles was playing us false. I told him so. He assured me that we were close upon Hampton. I cocked my pistol to his ear, to remind him what would be the consequence should he be playing us false. He stood firm, and my confidence in him was restored. In five minutes he asked me to halt my people, and assured me we were close upon the town. Just then the advanced guard fell back, and reported that they had suddenly found themselves at the entrance of a town. We accordingly formed our force into three divisions. One party went round to the other side, one remained where we then were, and a third, which I led, entered the town. Having made a rapid survey of the place, Captain Hawthorne and I placed a strong body of men at each end of the principal streets, and the outskirts of the town being at the same time strictly watched, we felt now that no one could escape or enter the place without our knowledge. These arrangements being made, we commenced a series of visits to the abodes of all the principal inhabitants. So silently had we proceeded that many of them were not aware that the town was in our hands, and their dismay may be more easily conceived than described when they found armed men knocking at their doors, and in some instances breaking them open. One of the first houses we visited was that of an oldish gentleman—the richest merchant, we were told, in the town. We knocked at first gently, and then louder and louder, till we heard some one coming along the passage, and a negro voice inquired who was there and what was wanted. The usual answer, “Your master—business of importance—quick—quick!” made the poor black without further consideration open the door, when in we rushed, and he, stepping back, tumbled head over heels, and upset two or three of the first men who got in. Amid shouts of laughter from us, and shrieks and cries from a whole posse of negroes who ran out from their own dormitories, we hurried up to the principal staircase. The hubbub, as well it might, roused the master of the house and his better half from their drowsy slumbers—so we concluded—for a gruff voice in tones irate began scolding away from the top of the stairs at the blacks, demanding why they made so terrific a noise—joined in occasionally by other far sharper notes.

“The blacks are not to blame, old gentleman,” exclaimed Hawthorne, springing up the stairs. “How do you do! We call upon you at rather an unseasonable hour, I own, but our stay in the place is short you will understand. We will have a little conversation together on public affairs, and then I must trouble you for the keys of your stores, or an order for the delivery of such provisions as we may require, for which I am directed to offer you payment.”

The old gentleman, not comprehending who we were, was almost struck down at first on hearing this address, but, after a time, recovering himself, he begged leave to slip on some more clothes, and promised that he would then

come down into his sitting-room and speak to us.

We heard him and the sharp-voiced lady discussing matters up-stairs.

More than once Hawthorne had to sing out—

“We are in a hurry, sir—we are in a hurry,” before his better half would let him appear.

I left Hawthorne and him to settle matters while I with my men proceeded to other houses. We had given strict orders that no violence whatever was to be used towards any of the inhabitants, and I fully believe that the lieutenants and midshipmen under us did their best to repress anything of the sort. Still it was necessary to keep a watch on all parties. Of course I was obeying the orders I had received in what I did, and had no choice; but, at the same time, I must own that I felt excessive repugnance in thus having to disturb and frighten out of their senses the inhabitants of a quiet town, who had in no way done anything to offend us. I resolved, however, to make amends to them by every means in my power, by treating them with the utmost delicacy and kindness. We had already seized on a dozen or more of the principal people, and marched them off to the square in the centre of the town, where they were kept under a strong guard as hostages for the good behaviour of the rest, and as a guarantee for our safety while we remained in the place. Not slight was the alarm and agitation when they were told that the instant any attempt was made, either by any of their fellow-townsmen or by any of the enemy’s troops outside, to re-take the place, their lives would be forfeited, while a pistol was kept presented at the head of each of them to carry this threat into execution. Having, in my rounds, visited the square, and comforted our prisoners as much as I could venture to do, I again went on with my domiciliary visits. At the next house at which I stopped the door was instantly opened by the black servant.

“Oh, massa officer! oh, massa officer! you frighten de poor young ladies till all die!” he exclaimed as we entered the hall. “Oh, ki! oh, ki! dey kick and squeal on de sofa like little pigs going to have dey throat cut. Oh, ki! oh, ki! what shall we do?”

“Where are the ladies?” I asked. “I will try what I can do to banish their alarm.”

“Dis way, den, sare—dis way,” said the negro, ushering me in a great hurry into a large and handsomely-furnished room, lighted by several candles. There were several sofas. On two of them lay two ladies, apparently in hysterics, while several other ladies and female attendants, black and brown, were bending over them and applying restoratives.

“There, sir! that is what you and your people have done!” exclaimed an elderly and rather portly lady, turning round and advancing towards me while she pointed at the younger females, whom I took to be her daughters, on the sofa.

Some of my men were following me. When the ladies saw them they shrieked louder than ever, so I ordered them all to go outside the house with the exception of Tom Rockets, and then addressed myself to the lady who had thus spoken to me—

“I regret excessively the cruel necessity thus imposed on me, madam,” said I, “but accept the honour of an officer and a gentleman that no harm shall be done to any member of your family. Let me entreat the young ladies to calm their fears. My people are under perfect command, as you may have seen by the way they obeyed my orders, so that you need be under no apprehension either from them.”

“I’ll trust you, sir; I’ll trust you,” said the lady, frankly putting out her hand. “There is something in your countenance and manner which assures me that you speak the truth.”

I could only bow to this pretty compliment—I hope it was deserved. These words had great effect in calming the agitation of the young ladies, and in a few minutes they were able to dismiss the negro girls and the scent bottles and the plates of burnt feathers, and to sit up and enter into conversation. The room was still too dark to enable me to see much of their countenances, but I thought their voices sounded very pleasant and sweet, and I pictured them to myself as very charming young ladies.

“The hour is somewhat unusual for tea,” observed the lady of the house, “but I doubt not after your long march you will find it refreshing.”

I thanked the lady very much, and assured her that I should particularly enjoy a cup of tea. She accordingly gave the order to an attendant slave, and in a short time a whole troop of black girls came in with urn and teacups and candles, and in a twinkling a table was spread, and all the party drew round it.

As I was approaching the tea-table, I started and stood like one transfixed, for there appeared before me, with the light of a candle falling full on her countenance, a young lady the very image of Madeline Carlyon. “It must be her,” I thought; and yet my heart told me that it could not be, for she did not appear to recognise me. The young lady, however, saw my confusion, and looked up with an inquiring glance at my countenance. Women have, I suspect, very sharp eyes in discovering where anything connected with the heart of the opposite sex is concerned, and are generally equally clever in concealing what is passing in their own. She kept looking at me, and I looked at her for a minute or more without speaking. More than once I made a move towards her as if the lady I saw before me must be Madeline, and then the expression of her countenance showed me I was mistaken.

At last I was aware that I was making myself somewhat remarkable or, as some of my friends would have said, very ridiculous; so, trying to overcome my agitation, I drew my chair to the table and sat down. I watched the young lady, and observed that she still cast an inquiring glance at me, as much as to say, “For whom do you take me?” On the strength of this I thought I would venture to inquire if she was in any way related to Madeline. Just as I was going to speak, a cup of tea was handed to me. I first emptied half the contents of the sugar-bason into it, then said I took

very little sugar, and asked for a spoonful. Then I threw off the tea as if it were a doctor's dose, and passed my cup for some more. At last I mustered courage to look across the table and to say, "I beg pardon—I fear that I must have appeared very rude, but your resemblance to a young lady whom I know is so very striking that I should suppose you to be her sister if I was not aware that she has none."

"Then you must be Mr Hurry!" she said quickly. "I am considered very like my cousin, Madeline Carlyon. She has spoken to me about you—of your kindness and generosity—oh, how very fortunate!"

The countenances of all the party were turned towards me, and they looked at me with an expression of interest and pleasure. The elder lady got up and, taking my hand, exclaimed—

"We welcome you indeed most cordially, Mr Hurry. Our kinswomen have spoken most warmly of you, and we consider ourselves most happy in having met you, though you come in the guise of an enemy."

I had not said all this time who I was, it must be understood. It made my heart bump away very hard when I found the manner in which Madeline had spoken of me to her relatives. I made as suitable a reply as I could to all the complimentary things which were said to me; and then, as soon as I could, I inquired in a trembling voice where Madeline Carlyon then was, and how she was. I felt very sure that my secret was out, and that there was no use in disguising my sentiments.

"She is now residing with her father not very far away from here. They were, however, to stay with some friends in the neighbourhood, and we are not quite certain where they may be at this present moment," answered the elder lady. "We will, depend on it, take care to let her know that we have seen you, and she will rejoice to hear of the courteous way in which you treated us, even when you were unaware who we were."

I expressed my thanks, and then remarked that even then I did not know their names.

"Langton is my name," said the lady. "These are my daughters, and that young lady is my niece, and the other is her sister. They are Carlyons. Grace is indeed very like her cousin, and some curious mistakes have occurred in consequence."

I need not repeat more of our conversation. In a few minutes I felt perfectly at home, and I must own had almost forgotten the errand on which I had come to the place. Tea was over, and I was about to ask for paper and a pen to write to Madeline when the sound of a bugle recalled me to the stern reality of my duties. I started up. I longed to send a message to Madeline—yet what could I say? I felt that all reserve must be thrown to the winds. I took Mrs Langton's hand: "Tell her—tell her that I am true," I exclaimed. "Oh, that this dreadful war were brought to an end!"

Again the bugle sounded; Tom Rockets put his head in at the door. He had been carried off to be tended on by the slaves below.

"We must be off, sir," said he; "the red-coats are forming outside, and from what I can make out there is likely to be a scrimmage."

I shook the ladies warmly by the hand. In vain I endeavoured to get them to tell me where they believed Madeline Carlyon then was. One spoke, then another; mentioning the names of different places, which of course I did not know, nor could I conceive by their descriptions in what direction they were to be found. Several shots were heard; again the bugle sounded. I dared not remain another moment. I tore myself away, still ignorant of a point I would have given much to ascertain, and rushed out. My own men had formed outside the house; the other different parties who had been carrying on the examination of the town were hurrying into the square from all quarters. Some of them brought us the information that our advanced guard was attacked.

"Then the hostages must answer for it," said Captain Hawthorne.

The no-little-alarmed old gentlemen we had in our power entreated that they might be allowed to try and stop the attack. We, of course, were glad enough of this, and we let them go to the front in charge of a strong body of our men. In a short time they returned, well contented to find that the attack had been made merely by a hundred volunteers or so, who on finding our strength had retreated. We knew, however, that they would not go far-off, and felt the unpleasant assurance that we should, in all probability, be continually harassed during the whole of our march back, and perhaps even have to fight our way through a crowd of active enemies.

Under these circumstances Hawthorne and I agreed that we should, without a moment's delay, commence our march. It was now about two o'clock in the morning. We had performed the service we had come on, and gained all the information we required. We had ascertained that the surrounding country would supply us amply with provisions; that the vessels which had taken refuge in the creek could not be cut out without a strong force, and that the people were, if not actually in arms against us, far from favourable to the royal cause, as Arnold had led us to suppose they would be. We had also distributed large numbers of his address. Discharging some of the more elderly of our prisoners, we began our march, carrying with us the younger men and those whom we had picked up on the way. We soon found that our retreat was to be anything but pleasant. Scarcely had we got clear of the town when the crack of rifles showed us that an enemy was in our rear. Our road led us through numerous woods more or less dense. We had got to about the centre of the first, when on either flank bright jets of flame were seen darting out like the flashes of fire-flies from among the trees. I could almost have fancied that they were fire-flies had not the flashes been accompanied by sharp reports, and had we not felt the bullets whizzing about our ears. By proceeding, however, in the careful way in which we made our advance, we kept the enemy at bay, and they saw that we were not a force to be trifled with. It would have been useless barbarity to have punished our prisoners for what they could not help, but we told them that we should hold them responsible if any serious attack was made on us. Still it was somewhat provoking to have our men hit without being able to go in pursuit of our nimble adversaries, for, of course, they were off and away the instant we made a movement towards them. Thus we proceeded as rapidly as the nature

of the ground would allow. Whenever we reached the habitation of one of our prisoners, we thanked him for the assistance he had afforded us, and allowed him to remain, on his undertaking not only not to act against us that day, but to do his best to prevent his countrymen from attacking us. This was very judicious; for although, I believe, fresh skirmishers came on, the old ones gradually withdrew, and thus we never had, at a time, any very large force with which to contend. Several of our men had been wounded, but none had been killed that we were aware of. However, when, at seven o'clock in the morning, we reached the place of debarkation, we found that, exclusive of the wounded, one seaman and six soldiers were missing. What had become of them we could not tell, but as they were not seen to fall, it is more than probable that they deserted to the enemy. When I returned on board the Charon, Captain Symonds was pleased to say that the general was highly satisfied with the way the expedition had been conducted. Whatever may be thought of General Arnold, I may here remark that he was a first-rate soldier and a clever man, as was proved by all the expeditions he planned and the exploits he performed.

Thus ended the year 1780. Who could then tell the important events the following one was to bring forth?

Chapter Twenty Three.

Advance of army up James river.—I command a flotilla of boats up Nansimond river.—A dark night.—Surround a house.—Interview with Madeline.—Warned of plan to capture us.—O'Driscoll at home.—Rapid pull for liberty.—Mackey's Mills.—People wide-awake.—Hot fire.—Regain ship.

The new year of 1781 commenced with the advance of the whole army, under General Arnold, up the banks of the James river, protected by three ships of war—the Charlestown, Bonetta, and Swift. No attack was made on us; indeed, there was no force of the enemy, it was believed, in the neighbourhood in any way capable of impeding our progress. That evening I was again sent for, and, in order to ascertain that important fact, I was directed to take command of five boats and to proceed up the Nansimond river. "You will learn, also, what shipping is in the river," said my captain; "and, Mr Hurry, you will not forget to see how they can best be cut out." Having received this brief professional admonition, I took my departure.

I had the Charon's cutter, the Thames's long-boat, and three other boats, each commanded by a lieutenant or master's mate. I gave them all, in the clearest way, their instructions, for I felt that we were about to engage in an expedition which might prove extremely hazardous, though but little honour was to be reaped from it. The Nansimond river is about twenty-five miles long, and generally about half a mile wide; but in some places, as high up as the west branch, it narrows to about fifty yards. Not far from the entrance is the town of Nansimond, and higher up a place called Mackey's Mills. Nearly at the source is a town or village called Suffolk. This information I had obtained from the prisoners we had taken on our previous expedition.

Darkness had long settled down before my five boats collected alongside the Charon. Never was I out in a more pitchy night. Dense clouds covered the sky, and not a star was visible. On first stepping into my boat, after leaving the light of the cabin, I could see nothing.

"You all understand what we are to do, gentlemen?" said I to the officers under me. "Follow closely in my wake. Let not a word be spoken. If we are discovered and attacked, we are to put about and pull down the stream; if not, wait till I give the order to return. Shove off!"

Our oars were muffled, so that not a sound was heard as we pulled away through the darkness towards the mouth of the Nansimond river. We had a pilot with us who professed to know the navigation, and we believed that we could trust him. By degrees my eyes began to grow accustomed to the darkness, and I could distinguish the outline of the shore. We entered the river about ten o'clock, and slowly groped our way up the stream, one boat following the other in line, like a long snake wriggling its way through the grass. On we pulled. Sharp eyes, indeed, must have been those which could have discovered us from the shore. But few lights were streaming from the windows of the houses of Nansimond as we passed that town. Early hours were kept by the colonists in those primitive days, and most of the inhabitants had retired to rest—not aware that an enemy was so close to them, or dreaming of danger. As long as we continued in the wider part of the river we had no fear of being detected. However, as our object was to obtain information, I resolved to land near the first house we could see on the shore. My plan was then to surround it, keep all the inmates captive, carry them up the river with us, and land them again on our return, so as to prevent them from giving notice of our expedition, much in the same way that we had done on our march to Hampton. The darkness, however, made this no easy matter, for not the sign of a house could we distinguish on the shore. Sometimes we pulled towards one bank and sometimes towards the other, but to no purpose. If houses there were, they must have been among the trees, and the inhabitants must have gone to bed and extinguished all their lights. At last I resolved to land, and, with part of one boat's crew, to explore the country on foot. Grampus, Rockets, and two other men accompanied me, while the boats pulled slowly along, ready to come to my assistance should I be surprised. I walked two or three miles in this way, stumbling along through woods and swamps and other impediments; but, though we crossed several ploughed fields, no houses could we discover. At last, from very weariness, I was compelled to take to the boat again. Several times we landed, but with the same want of success as at first. We came in time to Mackey's Mills. I had made up my mind to catch Mr Mackey, at all events, and make him serve our purpose. Accordingly we landed, and having lighted our lanterns to save ourselves from tumbling into the mill-dams or traps, which we supposed would everywhere abound, we surrounded the buildings, and proceeded to search for the miller and his men; but neither Mr Mackey nor any of his people were to be found. The mill appeared to be deserted, so we had our trouble for nothing. Once more we took to the boats. The river was here, for some distance, very narrow, but it widened out again as we proceeded upwards. Again and again we landed, always keeping the most profound silence. I had duly impressed on the minds of the people the fact that our lives and the success of the enterprise depended on our so doing. We were all, however, beginning to get rather vexed at our want of success, especially as we had no safety-valve in the expression of our feelings. At times it appeared as if the river flowed through the centre of some large forest. On either side the tall trees rose up, forming a dark wall, with the sky

overhead and the smooth black current of the river on which we floated flowing beneath. I trusted that none of the enemy had discovered us, for I thought to myself, if they have, this is just the place they will select to attack, and very little chance we shall have, in that case, of successfully running the gauntlet and getting off scot-free. However, our business was to push up the river as far as we could go till we discovered the vessels we were to look for, taking care, only, that we had time to return before daylight should discover us to our foes. On we went, till we reached a part of the river called the West Branch. It appeared to me that the night had become less dark than at first. Perhaps it was that the banks were freer from trees. We kept carefully examining either shore. I fancied as we pulled on that I could distinguish a rough sort of landing-place.

“A house will not be far-off from it,” I said to myself, so I gave the order to pull in for it. My eyes had not deceived me. There was a regular formal landing-place, and not three hundred yards from it I thought that I saw a house. Leaving two men in each boat I drew up my party and gave the order to advance that we might immediately surround the house, if such, as I suspected, there was. With the same precautions which we had hitherto used we advanced as rapidly as we could venture to move towards what I took to be a building. I soon found that I was not mistaken. The barking of a dog also told me that the place was inhabited, and at the same time warned us that the inmates were very likely to be aroused by our approach. I had charged all those under my command on no account to use violence, whatever might occur, unless in our own defence, should we be attacked by the enemy.

As we drew near I saw that the house was a large one, and that it had all the appearance of a gentleman’s country seat. We found ourselves also in a good road leading apparently into the interior. I therefore called a halt, and, leaving some of the men where we were, I led the rest round so as closely to surround the premises on the land side. I also bethought me of placing a guard to watch the approach by the river, for I thought it very likely that if any one wished to escape there would be a boat concealed under the banks by which they might effect their object. While I was making these dispositions the barking of the dog continued, but as he did not rush out on us I concluded that he was chained. He had, however, aroused the inmates, for as I passed through the garden I saw a light in one of the rooms down-stairs and other lights, passing the windows of the upper storey. From the situation of the lower room down-stairs I suspected that it must be the drawing-room or one of the sitting-rooms, and, halting my men under the shadow of a shrubbery, with directions to remain there till I summoned them, I approached the window for the purpose of trying if I could see any of the people within. There were two windows to the room. The blind before one of them was drawn down, so I went to the other. The lower shutter to that was also closed, but by standing up on the window-sill I could look into the room. What was my surprise to see a lady sitting at a table, on which stood a lamp, with a book in her hand, reading. Her back was towards me, but from her figure and dress I thought she was young. What surprised me was to find a lady sitting up at that hour, for it was now between two and three o’clock in the morning. Something unusual must, I suspected, be going on in the house. I was afraid that the sudden appearance of a body of armed men would seriously frighten the lady, and so I resolved to enter the house alone and take my chance of meeting with opposition from any man who might be there. A door opened into the garden. It was not bolted. I lifted the latch and entered. A light stood in the hall. I was not mistaken as to the character of the house; it was evidently that of people of fortune. On my right hand was a door which I conceived led into the room where I had seen the lady. An impulse I could not resist induced me to open it. The noise caused by my so doing made the lady turn her head. Her countenance was very pale and tearful. She looked up at me; her eye brightened: I sprang forward and threw myself at her feet. Madeline Carlyon was before me. So astonished and overcome by numberless conflicting feelings was she that I thought she would have fainted. She uttered my name in a tone of doubt and hesitation, as if she did not believe in the reality of what she saw before her. I took her hand and pressed it to my lips.

“It is I, Madeline, who have never ceased thinking of you since we parted,” I exclaimed,—“one whose only wish has been to find means to make you his own when the blessings of peace have been restored to our country—one whose earthly hopes are all centred in you. You are indulging in no dream—no fancy—I am really and truly before you.”

However, I need not repeat all I said on the occasion. I had no great difficulty in persuading Madeline that I was really before her; but when she inquired how it was that I came to be there, unwilling indeed I felt to tell her that I had come in hostile guise. At last, however, I had to confess the truth.

“Then I understand it all,” she exclaimed hurriedly. “Oh, believe me, you are beset with dangers. I ought not to betray the councils of my countrymen, and yet I cannot let you fall into the trap which has been laid for you. Your arrival in the river was immediately known, and a plan was forthwith formed to cut you off. The whole country has been for some hours alarmed. My own father heads the force, consisting, I heard, of more than four hundred men, who are about to take post at Mackey’s Mills to cut off your retreat. Silently as you may have come up the river, your progress has been, without doubt, closely watched. Perhaps even now your presence here is known, and anxiety on my father’s account prevented me from retiring to rest, and little did I think who was in command of the British boats. I knew not even that you were on the coast. But I must not lose time in talking. What advice can I give you? Stay, oh, let me consider! The party must already have nearly reached Mackey’s Mills. They will be there before you can possibly pass that narrow part of the river. Oh, this cruel, cruel war! What ought to be done? I am sure that my father himself would deeply grieve to find that stern duty had compelled him to injure you, and yet how could even I ask him to act otherwise than he will do? I know that I ought not, as a patriot, to give you the warning that I now do. Let me collect my thoughts and consider by what plan I can best secure your safety. It would be useless, I fear, to advise you to deliver yourselves up as prisoners of war, and thus avoid bloodshed. Yet how can you escape from the trap into which you have run? You smile and shake your head. I know—I know. You would say that you must try to fight your way through a host of rebels rather than yield yourselves prisoners. Your safety consists in the rapidity of your movements.”

She was silent for some minutes and then continued—

“There are, as high up as Suffolk, several vessels—a ship, a sloop, and a brig. Let it be known by any people whom you can fall in with that you are aware of this fact, and it will naturally be supposed that you have gone up the river to bring them off or to destroy them. The plan was to detain you by various stratagems in the river till daylight, when

it was expected that you would easily be cut off and destroyed if you should attempt to fight your way through the crowds of riflemen lining each bank of the river, or otherwise that you would be compelled to give yourselves up as prisoners. I fear me much, I repeat, that this latter course you will not follow—I know you will not. Then you have only your speed on which to rely. You will have to run a terrible gauntlet between well-practised sharpshooters. Start without a moment's delay. The militia will, I fear, have reached Mackey's Mills before you can get there; but if, as I hope, they will believe that you have gone up the stream, they may not be on the watch for you, and you may push by without being perceived."

Such was the tenor of the words the agitated and alarmed girl poured out. I felt sure that I could follow no better plan than the one she suggested. Still it was heart-breaking thus to leave her. I have not intruded any part of our conversation on my readers relating more especially to ourselves. She had said all that I could wish to assure me that her heart was still mine, and I had poured out my own long-pent-up feelings into her ears. I had been sitting by her side. She started. A sound was heard in the house—scuffling of feet—a loud scream—people running here and there. The dog barked loudly outside. Two black girls rushed into the room.

"Oh, missie, missie! murder, murder! thieves, thieves!" they cried out. "Dey be here—dey be everywhere!"

Just then they caught sight of me. Instead of screaming, they stood as if petrified. At last, pointing at me, they exclaimed, "Oh, missie, who dat?"

The question was a difficult one to answer, but Madeline showed her presence of mind by replying calmly—

"A friend who little expected to find me here, but he will take care that no harm happens to any one in this house. We may be thankful that he and his followers are here to protect us. Now go and tell the rest of the people who remain in the house that they must not be alarmed. Let them assemble in the hall. I will go and speak to them after I have seen Mrs Elbank and Miss Porter. Go—run! Be good girls, and do as I tell you."

The quick, firm manner with which she spoke had a wonderful effect on the negresses, and instinctively off they ran, perfectly satisfied, to obey her orders. She explained, briefly, that Mrs Elbank was an old lady, the owner of the house where she and her father were staying.

As soon as the girls had disappeared she took my hand with perfect frankness and maiden modesty, while she looked up into my face with an expression which showed me the true feelings of her heart.

"Farewell, farewell!" she exclaimed. "Let me entreat you not to remain a moment longer. Every instant's delay may produce danger, and, too probably, bloodshed. Should, by any chance, the militia discover that you are here, they would come back with an overwhelming force and cut you off. Go—oh, go!"

As she spoke these words her feelings overcame her and her sobs choked her utterance. I would have given worlds to have been able to stay and comfort her. I did all I could. I took her in my arms and imprinted a kiss on her brow. It might be the last, but I dared not think so. No, I felt that we should meet again. "I obey you now, dearest," I cried, in a tone intended to reassure her. "Fear not, I shall escape the danger you dread, and I will return perhaps before long."

I added some solemn words of comfort, and then I rushed from the room and hurried into the garden where I had left my men. I found from them that O'Driscoll had captured an old negro servant, who, hearing the dog bark, had come out to see what was the matter, and that, conducted by him, he had entered the house where he now was. This accounted for the disturbance I had heard. I accordingly went back to the front door, which was obligingly opened by our friend the negro, who seemed by his manner to have long-expected me. With many bows he led me into a handsome dining-hall, when what was my surprise to find O'Driscoll and another officer seated at a table with an abundance of viands spread before them, and wine of various sorts sparkling in decanters by their side.

"Really, these rebels treat us very well," said O'Driscoll as I entered. "When we caught that old gentleman he told us that supper was all ready, and that he had been ordered to invite us in to partake of it, and to beg us to remain as long as we felt inclined."

"I do not doubt it, Mr O'Driscoll," I answered sternly. "But, sir, we have duties to perform, and our orders were to proceed up the river as far as we could go. Now I have discovered that there are several vessels at Suffolk, four miles above this. We must go and try to cut them out. Thank the owners of the house for their hospitality, but we cannot stay to benefit by it," said I to the negro, giving him a dollar. "Keep that for yourself, and remember that all Englishmen are not cannibals and savages."

Having directed O'Driscoll to call in the rest of the other parties guarding the approaches to the house, we quickly assembled at the rendezvous I had appointed outside the gates, whence we set off as fast as we could for the boats. I could not help having some dread lest they should have been attacked during our absence, and if so, I knew that we should at once be made prisoners. I did not, however, express my fears to any one. The way to the boats appeared very long. I thought more than once that we must have mistaken our road. Great was my relief therefore, when I found that we had at length reached the spot where they lay concealed. I now called the other lieutenants round me, and briefly explained to them the information I had obtained. I did not think it necessary to say whence I had obtained it. They unanimously concurred with me that we had done all that could be required of us, and that our only proper course was at once to proceed down the river, and to endeavour to pass our enemies before they could expect us, or were prepared to impede our progress.

"Well, gentlemen, to our boats without delay," I said—not speaking, however, above a whisper, for I thought it very likely that we might have listeners in ambush. "Rapidly and silently, like Indians on a war trail, let us make the best of our way down the stream. If any boat is disabled, let the one ahead of her take her in tow. If fired at, do not attempt to fire in return, but pull away for our lives. Now shove off."

Away we went. I took the lead, keeping the centre of the river. Strange as it may appear, I thought much more of the meeting I had just had with Madeline, of all she had said to me, and of all I had said to her, or wished that I had said, than of the terrific danger to which we were exposed. I use the word advisedly. Let any one fancy what it would be to pass down a channel fifty yards wide, each bank being lined with four hundred, or, for what I could tell, twice that number of sharpshooters. The latter hours of the night continued as dark as had been the earlier part; there was a slight rain, or rather mist, which increased the obscurity, while the wind had got up, and its low moaning among the trees assisted to conceal the sound made by the boats as they clove their way through the water. We had also come up with the flood; the tide had now turned, and there was a strong current which much assisted our progress. These circumstances gave me hopes that we might yet successfully run the gauntlet of our enemies. There was another circumstance to be dreaded, which might prove fatal to us. Should the enemy have time to collect any boats and attack us on the river, we could scarcely hope to cut our way past them as well as the riflemen on shore. When any great danger is to be incurred, it is a great relief to be able to speak. This was now denied us, and each man was left to his own thoughts. Mine, I may say, were not gloomy—very far from it. Sometimes they were bright and almost joyous. On we went. When I brought my thoughts back to the present, I could not help feeling that any moment we might see the flashes of a hundred rifles, and hear their sharp cracks as they opened on us. We had got to the southern end of the West Branch, but, as yet, not a sound from the shore had been heard. We were approaching the narrow reach, on the banks of which Mackey's Mill is situated. Most of us, I believe, felt an inclination to hold our breath as we pulled on. The current here was very strong. I kept as nearly as I could in the centre, the other boats following. I could just distinguish the dark outline of the building we had before visited against the sky ahead of us, when a voice, I knew not whence it came, shouted, "There they are! Fire!"

In an instant the whole line of the shore burst into flame—rapidly sounded the cracks of the rifles, and thickly about our heads flew the bullets. At that moment I thought I saw a canoe dart away down the river, and I doubted not that our enemies had stationed her there to watch for us. Thicker and thicker came the leaden shower, several shots going through the boats' sides, though as yet no one was hit. Still I had no notion of giving in. "Now, my lads, give way for your lives!" I exclaimed in a loud whisper. "Many a man has passed through hotter fire than this unscathed."

I scarcely think I was speaking the truth when I said this. So dark was it, however, that I did not believe that we could be seen from the shore, though the flashes of the firearms lighted up the dark woods, the red-brick mill and its out-houses, and threw a lurid glare over the whirling current as it hurried by its overhanging banks, while ever and anon we could clearly distinguish the glancing arms and the figures of our enemies as they stood drawn up along the banks, pouring their fire down upon us.

On we pulled, silently as ever, and as fast as the men could lay their backs to the oars. We were, however, I knew too well, only at the commencement of the narrow passage, and I could not tell what opposition we might have to encounter before we got through it. My boat was light, and pulled easily, but some of the other boats were very slow—the Thames's long-boat especially—and rowed very heavily, and I kept anxiously turning round to ascertain that they were following me. For some time I could count them, one after the other in line, coming up after me. Then I turned my eyes on the banks of the river. By some means our enemies calculated our downward progress with great accuracy if they did not see us, for, while some were blazing away, I could see other bodies hurrying along the side of the river, to be ready, I doubted not, to attack us as we came down; some were on foot, but others were on horseback, who had much the advantage of us in speed. At last I found that I was getting ahead of the other boats, so I had to slacken my speed till the next boat came up to me. It was the Charon's cutter, commanded by Mr Bruton. When I looked back I found that the Thames's long-boat was nowhere to be seen. Bruton said she had only just dropped astern, so begged leave to go and tow her up. This I allowed him to do, telling him that I would remain till he and the other boats came up. I began to fear, however, that the missing boat might have been cut off. Away dashed the gallant fellows after her. Whatever might happen, I resolved not to attempt to escape myself unless I could bring off the rest of the boats or the survivors of their people with me, though, from the fastness of my own boat, I might possibly have effected that object. My men behaved admirably, though exposed to so hot a fire; not a murmur escaped them at the delay, while they lay on their oars waiting for the appearance of the missing boat. The other two boats I saw coming on, and they soon caught me up. Great was my relief to see Bruton, with the Thames's boat in tow, at the same time emerge from the darkness. Then, once more, away we all went together down the stream.

I own myself that, under other circumstances, I should have very much liked to have had a shot at our pertinacious foes, and I have no doubt so would my followers, but the knowledge that Madeline's father was among them restrained my arm, and I felt a curious satisfaction in being fired at without attempting to injure my assailants in return, and that I might hereafter be able to assure him that I had not knowingly lifted my hand against him.

We were not long about doing what I have been describing. Had we, I do not believe one of us would have escaped the leaden shower rattling through the air and splashing up the water on every side, literally wetting our faces. I could already feel several holes in the side of my boat close to me; then there was a deep groan of suppressed pain, but no one ceased rowing. On we went. A sharp cry from one of the boats astern of me showed me too clearly that another of my people was wounded. Still the boats dashed on with unabated speed. This success made me hope that we might still escape. We had passed, I thought, the greater part of the narrow portion of the river. I had not much fear, when we could reach the wider parts, that we should get through unless attacked, as I have said, by a flotilla of boats.

Never did I hear such a rattle or cracking of rifles as the four or five hundred militia and irregulars kept up on us. However, there was nothing derogatory to their character as marksmen that they had hitherto done so little execution, for had they been the best sharpshooters in the world, their science would have availed them nothing through the pitchy darkness which happily enveloped us.

At length I fancied that I could distinguish the stream widening away before us, and, judging from the flashes of the fire-arms, the banks were much farther apart than before. I was not mistaken. With a satisfaction I can scarcely express I saw that all our boats had come through, but still the enemy kept up a hot fire astern of us into empty space, evidently not knowing where we were. My men seemed inclined to shout when they found themselves in the

wide reach of the river, but I restrained them, not knowing what enemies might be lurking about near us on the water. Then we continued pulling steadily on, till here and there I saw a light gleaming on the shore, which I calculated must come from the town of Nansimond. If a flotilla of boats were on the watch for us, I thought that we should probably here encounter them—not that I any longer despaired of escaping from them, even should they attack us. I had directed the officers not to attempt to retaliate unless actually boarded, but to employ all their energies in making their escape. This was, of course, the wisest policy.

On we went. The town was passed. No boats appeared. We were approaching the mouth of the river. Daylight was now breaking. I was only too thankful that we had not delayed till then to make our way down the river. Either we should all have been taken prisoners, or few if any of us would have survived the murderous fire to which we should have been exposed. At length we emerged from the river and finally arrived on board the Charon at about ten in the morning with only two people wounded, though the upper works of our boats were riddled like sieves.

Thus ended an expedition fraught with so much personal interest to me. We all also gained credit for our exploit. We had completely performed the duty for which we had been sent, having made ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the river, and ascertained that it would be impossible to cut out the vessels which had run up to Suffolk unless a very strong force, if not the whole army, was to proceed up for that purpose. More and more as I thought over what had occurred did I pray that the war might soon cease, and that, if Englishmen must be fighting, they might not be called on to cross their swords with their relatives and friends.

Chapter Twenty Four.

Sent to Hampton with flag of truce.—Visit my friends.—Disappointment.—A foraging expedition, in which I obtain a prong in the leg instead of honour.—A disastrous one made by my shipmates.—A second trip to Hampton.—Attempts on my loyalty.—Expedition proposed under Arnold.—O'Driscoll accompanies me on a trip up the river to warn Madeline.—Meet Colonel Carlyon.—Narrow escape on our return.

I was to have, I found, very little time for rest or reflection. This, I dare say, was the better for me. Scarcely had I breakfasted when I was again sent for to be despatched, as I was told, on special service. My satisfaction, however, was great indeed when I found that I was to be the bearer of a flag of truce to Hampton, with a letter to the patriot, or, as we called him, the rebel general commanding the district.

I was quickly ready to start. I should now be able to send a message to Madeline, to assure her of my safety, and perhaps to make arrangements to keep up a regular communication with her. On one point only was I somewhat puzzled. How could I speak of her without allowing it to be suspected that she had given me the warning by which I had escaped from the trap laid to catch me? I had heard of the stern treatment any of the rebels had received who had been found guilty of treachery towards their party, even from General Washington himself, and I knew not what construction might be put on Madeline's conduct should it be discovered. I determined, therefore, at all events to be very cautious how I spoke of having met her. These thoughts occupied my mind till I landed. I then hired a horse and a guide, and proceeded with Tom Rockets only as my companion, mounted on rather a sorry jade, towards Hampton. There were not many white men to be seen on the road. The negroes doffed their hats and always addressed me in a civil and friendly way.

Without any adventure I reached Hampton. Having then delivered my despatches I sought out the house of my new friends, the Langtons, where I hoped that I should be able to wait till the reply was ready. As soon as I entered the house I was shown into the drawing-room, where the ladies received me with the greatest kindness. Mrs Langton assured me that, from the way I had treated the inhabitants of Hampton the other night, I should always be received there as a friend. They insisted on having dinner got ready at once for me, and I found that they were collecting all sorts of eatables sufficient to load my horse as well as Rockets and our guides, which they thought might prove useful.

They had heard, I found, nothing of my expedition up the Nansimond river, and as no one could know that I was one of those engaged in it, I considered it prudent to say nothing about the matter, and I trusted that Madeline would remember that, unless she betrayed her secret, none of her friends were likely to discover it. In the course of conversation her cousins spoke frequently of her, and I sent her several messages. I hoped by their tenor that she would understand that I had not mentioned our having met. My great hope was that Mrs Langton, guessing how things stood, would invite her to come to Hampton, and that I might thus have the opportunity of meeting her, should I again be sent on shore with a flag of truce. None but those who have been knocking about for months and years together at sea among rough uncivilised men can fully appreciate the satisfaction which a sailor feels in spending a few brief hours under the soothing influence of refined female society.

It was with a feeling of undisguised annoyance that at last I received my despatches and had to mount my horse to return. No one would have supposed, as my friends bade me farewell, that I was serving on the side of their enemies, and yet I am certain that no more sincere patriots were to be found in America, only they had the sense not to confound the individual with the cause with which circumstances compelled him to side.

The army, with their guns, ammunition, and stores, had now safely disembarked, and were on their march up the banks of James river. The first lieutenant of the Charon, with a detachment of our men, had accompanied them. I was therefore selected in his place to take command of a party consisting of a hundred seamen and marines from the different ships of war, and to go on shore and forage for the squadron. The marines were commanded by a Lieutenant Brown, and I had two navy lieutenants besides under me. No duty I could have been ordered to perform would have been more distasteful, yet I had no choice but to obey and carry it out to the best of my ability. Having landed at Newportneuse, we began our march at eight o'clock in the morning into Elizabeth County. Not having been brought up like some of my Highland friends in the art of levying black mail on my lowland neighbours, I could not

help feeling as if I had suddenly turned into a robber when I found myself entering a farm-yard, and, without a word of explanation, quietly collecting the cattle and pigs, or sheep or poultry, and driving them off. We marched about ten miles inland as rapidly as we could, and then, facing about, swept the country before us. On espying a farm we surrounded it, and then, rushing in, we took prisoners all the negroes we could find, and made them drive out the cattle and sheep. The pigs and poultry we killed and placed them in some carts, which, with the horses, we carried off. Having possessed ourselves of everything of value in the farm, notwithstanding the indignant protestations of the farmer's wife, for the farmer himself was away with the army, I suspect, we proceeded onto the next farm. This was owned by an old man with several sons, we were informed by one of the negroes. The sons were all fine young men, and were either in the militia or belonging to some irregular troops. We expected to find only the old man at home, but as we drew near the outbuildings a fire was opened on us from some loop-holes in the walls. As I had no fancy to have my men shot down I led them rapidly round to the front and charged into the farm-yard, over some slight barricades which had been hastily thrown up. At the same moment a dozen to twenty men rushed out of some sheds on one side and attempted to drive off a herd of cattle from a pen near at hand. I, with Rockets and some of my people, followed them so closely that they were compelled to leave the cattle to defend themselves. Most of them seemed inclined to continue their flight, but an old man, whom I took to be the owner of the farm, exerted himself to rally them, and shouting, "On, friends, on! Drive back the robbers!" charged up towards us. I was rather ahead of my men. Some of his people fired. I suspect the muskets of the rest were not loaded. Before I had time to defend myself the old man had his bayonet through my leg, and had I not used my cutlass pretty smartly the rest would have finished me or carried me off prisoner before my men could come to my rescue. When they did come up, they quickly put the rebels to flight, and I was not sorry to find that his friends had dragged off the brave old man without his receiving any injury. We were taught a lesson by this, to be more cautious in future when plundering the farms, lest they might be found fortified and prepared to receive us. My wound was bad enough to prevent me from walking. Hunting about, we found a horse and a saddle fitted to him, by which means I was able to continue my progress. On arriving at several farms we found that, although no attempt was made to defend them, all the cattle had been driven off and the pigs and poultry concealed. Now and then the grunting of a pig or the cackling of a hen betrayed the dust-hole or cellar in which they were imprisoned. The men were, in most instances, absent, but the women seldom failed to abuse us in no measured terms for our behaviour, nor could I help feeling that we deserved everything, that was said against us. My men, I must say, behaved very well. In no instance did they offer any violence to the villagers, and when they were abused they only laughed and retaliated with jokes, which, if not refined, were harmless.

We continued our foraging labours, (some people might have called them our depredations), till about three o'clock in the afternoon, when I judged that it was necessary to commence our retreat. From the experience I had gained I felt pretty certain that we should be harassed on our march by the enemy. I therefore formed my people in the best order I could for defence. Our six butchers, with their axes, saws, and knives, marched ahead as an advanced guard. We had collected in all fifty-seven head of cattle and forty-two sheep. These were driven by thirty negroes and closely surrounded by the seamen, who formed the centre. In the rear came the marines to cover our retreat, while on each flank I placed four marines, who were occasionally relieved from the rear. Brown laughed at my precautions, and said that they were absurd and useless, and so I found did my lieutenants, but I knew that I was right, and kept to my plan.

Had the country been open our progress would have been easy, but instead of that it was thickly wooded, so that our order of march was constantly broken. I kept riding about, doing all I could to keep the people and the cattle together; but every now and then where the wood was thickest I could see an ox, or a cow, and a couple of sheep, slyly impelled by a cunning negro, stealing away between the trees; and perhaps, while I sent some of the seamen in pursuit of them, others would break away in an opposite direction. Of course, when the negroes were overtaken, they always pretended to be endeavouring by lusty strokes to drive the animals back to us, and there was little use in attempting to punish them. Besides this inconvenience, every now and then, whenever we had to pass any hilly or broken ground behind which an enemy could find shelter, we were certain to be saluted with a shower of rifle-balls. At first I attempted to retaliate by sending some of the marines in pursuit, but by the time they got up to the spot from whence the shots were fired no enemy was to be seen, and I was only too glad to get them back without having them cut off. This showed me that our enemies, though persevering, were not numerous.

Considering all the difficulties I had to encounter, it is not surprising that when we arrived at the place of embarkation our stock had been reduced to forty-three head of cattle, with a proportionate diminution in our sheep, though our two carts with the pigs and poultry arrived all safe. We embarked at seven o'clock in the evening on board some vessels sent to carry us and the result of our foraging expedition, to our respective ships. I had not lost a man, and with the exception of my own hurt, no one was wounded. I felt sure that my success was attributable to the dispositions I had made, and the careful way I had effected my retreat, and that seeing me so well prepared to receive them had prevented the enemy from attacking me. I expressed myself to this effect when I returned on board, but was only laughed at for my pains, and asked what I had to fear from a few despicable rebel boors, whom a volley would in an instant put to flight.

"Very well," said I. "If any of you have to perform the same work, and do not take similar precautions, depend on it you will have to rue your neglect."

"Oh, nonsense," was the answer. "We know what the fellows are made of. They are not worth powder and shot."

Greatly to my annoyance, the very next day I was again directed to land with the same number of men for the same object. It was satisfactory to know that the way I conducted the expedition was approved of, but yet I would gladly have got off the duty. Just then, finding that a flag of truce was to be sent to Hampton, I solicited the commodore to allow me to go on that service.

"Yes," he replied. "The inhabitants are acquainted with you; and when you make your appearance they will understand our dispositions are friendly."

I was much flattered by this compliment, and still more pleased to gain the object I had in view. The commodore told me to direct Lieutenant Fallock, second lieutenant of the Iris, to take charge of the foraging party in my place. I earnestly advised him to use the same precautions I had on the previous day, assuring him, from the experience I had had in the numerous expeditions I had commanded in America, that the people would never attack a force if well prepared for resistance, and that the wise principle the people adopted was only to fight when they could obtain some material advantage. Fallock smiled scornfully. I found that Lieutenant Brown of the marines had been talking to him and telling him of my over-cautious and tedious way of retreating, as he called it. I found afterwards that Brown had advised him to take only forty marines as amply sufficient to defeat any number of the enemy likely to assemble to attack them. The officers who had accompanied me had also told him that, as we had not seen more than twenty rebels in arms at a time, he was not at all likely to encounter more than that number, though it was improbable that any would venture to attack him. Having urged the point as strongly as I could, I proceeded on my mission while Fallock and his party prepared for their expedition.

“Don’t be afraid, Hurry,” said Brown, whom I met as I went down the side, “we shall return in whole skins, and bring you back a good supply of beef and mutton.”

I hired a horse and proceeded as before, without any particular adventure, to Hampton. Having delivered my message to the proper authorities I went to the Langtons.

I own that as I approached the house my heart beat many times quicker than usual, for I could not help persuading myself that Madeline might have gone there. When the door was opened by the black servant I tried to discover by his countenance whether my hopes were likely to be realised.

“Is there anybody here?” I asked with a trembling voice.

“Oh, yes; dere be all do young ladies and Madame Langton all at home. Glad see you, sare,” was the answer I got.

I did not venture to ask more. The drawing-room door was opened. I held my breath. Her likeness was there, but she was not. I dared not ask for her, and I too soon found that my hopes were vain.

I found myself, however, received by the family as an old friend. They had heard from Madeline. She had, with the wisdom which I felt sure belonged to her, not mentioned having seen me. They had, however, from other sources heard of the expedition up the Nansimond river, and of the courteous way, as they expressed it, in which the English had behaved while in possession of Mrs Elbank’s house. It was reported, however, naturally enough, that though the boats had got off, nearly all the people in them had been killed or wounded. I assured my friends that on this point they were under a mistake; but as I did not like to dwell on the subject for fear of betraying myself, I left them still unconvinced that they were in error.

As I was wishing my friends good-bye, a gentleman came in to whom I was introduced. When he heard who I was, he begged that I would delay my departure for a few minutes, saying that he would have the pleasure of accompanying me part of the way. Having delivered a message to the Langtons he left the house, requesting that I would remain till his return. His name, my friends told me, was Sutton, and they added that he was a friend of Colonel Carlyon’s. When I heard this, all sorts of ideas rushed into my head, and I could not help hoping that the meeting would be productive of some important consequence, yet how that was to be I could not tell. Mr Sutton soon returned booted and spurred for a journey.

“Perhaps I may go farther than I at first proposed,” he observed, as we mounted and rode out of the town. “I am glad to meet you, Mr Hurry, for I have heard of you for some time past, and you have won the regard of many patriots by the way in which you have on several occasions behaved towards those who have fallen into your power. I, with the sentiments I entertain, can only wish that you served a better cause, at the same time that I would not seek to induce you, as an officer bearing his Majesty’s commission, to swerve from the allegiance you owe him.”

When Mr Sutton said this I could not help feeling that he wished to try me, so I considered some time before I replied. I then said—

“This barbarous war must some day be brought to an end, and then without any sacrifice of principle I may be able not only to express the feelings I entertain for the people of America, but to act according to them.”

“Well said, sir,” he answered; “we must all eagerly look forward to that time, and, from the way you speak, I feel sure that no temptations would induce you to quit the cause you serve, however much you may sympathise with those opposed to it.”

“I trust not, sir,” said I firmly. “The path of honour is a very clear one; I have always endeavoured to walk in it.”

“I know you have, and perhaps you may wonder why I just now volunteered to accompany you. Thus far I will tell you: I wished to make your acquaintance, and I also considered that I might be of some service to you. Although you bear a flag of truce, so great is the exasperation against all those serving in arms under the traitor Arnold, that I thought it possible you might be insulted, if not injured, by some of the more ignorant country people.”

I thanked Mr Sutton for his kindness, though I suspected that he had other reasons for wishing to accompany me which he did not explain. Of course I could not ask them. He did not mention the names of either Colonel Carlyon or his daughter, and, much as I longed to do so, I could not bring myself to speak of them to one who to me, at all events, was a perfect stranger. He soon also began to talk of affairs in general, and proved himself a very well-informed man and an entertaining companion. I could not help fancying at times that he was endeavouring to draw me out, and to assure himself of what my sentiments really were. We passed several parties of armed men, but when they saw him they doffed their hats, or saluted him in military style, with every mark of respect. When within about a mile of our usual landing-place he reined in his horse.

“I can go no farther with you,” he said; “I have no wish to fall into the power of any of Arnold’s followers. Farewell, Mr Hurry. We may meet again, perhaps, before long, and when we meet I trust that it will be as we now part—as friends.”

I made a suitable reply; and then, turning his horse’s head, he put the animal into a full gallop, and was soon out of sight. It was late when I got on board. A gloom, such as is always felt after a disaster has occurred hung over the ship. The foraging party, or rather a remnant of them, had just returned. They had a melancholy tale to tell. Mr Fallock had taken the same road I had gone on my expedition, and had succeeded in collecting a considerable number of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry—indeed, forage of all sorts. All went successfully with him and his party till they commenced their return. Instead, however, of marching in the proper order I had proceeded, the cattle were not kept well together, and the men were allowed to scatter about, and, when any of the animals strayed, to follow them to a considerable distance from the main body. The seamen and marines thought it very good fun, and went shouting and laughing along, the officers totally forgetting that they were in an enemy’s country. They had proceeded some few miles without being molested, and were congratulating themselves on their own wisdom, and on my folly in having taken so many unnecessary precautions, when suddenly the crack of a rifle was heard—then another and another—and a band of horsemen were seen galloping up and cutting down the stragglers, who in vain attempted to make a successful resistance. Lieutenant Brown, calling to the men near him, charged the enemy, but the horsemen, wheeling about, left the ground clear for a body of footmen, who, as he advanced, opened a heavy fire on him. He was seen to fall, as were many of those with him; the rest attempted to fly, but the horsemen were upon them, and, with the exception of one man who got back to the main body, they were all cut down, or compelled to yield themselves prisoners. Another small party had, in the meantime, attacked the rest of the stragglers, and had prevented them from falling back on the main body, while the greater part of the cattle were dispersed and driven off. Lieutenant Fallock had, while this was going forward, called in all the remaining seamen and marines round him, and presented as bold a front as he could to the enemy. In spite of his diminished numbers, and the feeling that he had been, in consequence of his own want of forethought and foolhardiness, surprised by an enemy he despised, he fought with the greatest coolness and bravery. Even in numbers he saw that the Americans were inferior to what his party had been at the commencement of the attack, but now he had lost several of the seamen and the greater part of the marines, and the people with him were falling thickly from the bullets of the concealed riflemen. His only chance of escape was to retreat in close order, and as rapidly as he could till he got out of the wood. This he did, facing about, and delivering his fire whenever an enemy appeared. Outside the wood he made a bold stand, and drove back his foes, keeping up a hot fire on them till he found that his ammunition was almost expended. Then once more he retreated. He had escaped without a hurt, though several shots had passed through his clothes, and many of his people were wounded. With the remnant he at last succeeded in reaching the landing-place, where the boats were in waiting for him.

The next day, when I went on shore to inquire for Brown, I found that he had just died of his wounds. Nine marines were killed, eleven were taken prisoners unhurt, and several more were found on the ground wounded, while of those who got off very few escaped unhurt. Such was the termination of this foraging expedition—the disaster arising entirely from the folly of the officers, who would persist, as many had before done, in despising their enemy, and refusing to take the proper precautions to guard against surprise. This is only one of many instances of a similar folly which I observed throughout the American war. I speak of military officers especially. There is something in the character of Englishmen which makes them over-confident and foolhardy, and they will require to be taught by some very severe lessons before they learn the importance of caution. This want of caution in an officer, when entrusted with the lives of brave men, is a very great fault, and shows great folly and an unfitness for command. The vice, I am happy to say, is not so prevalent generally in the navy. Most spirited and dashing enterprises are undertaken, and are successful, for the very reason that forethought is employed and proper precautions are taken to ensure success. Young officers are too apt to mistake want of caution for spirit and bravery, and to despise those who are careful and anxious for the lives as well as for the health of those entrusted to their care. I am now an old man, but I find these sentiments penned in my journal, written at the time of the occurrence I have described, and they have been still more and more impressed by the experience of fifty years. Since then a long, long catalogue of melancholy disasters might be chronicled, all contributing to sully the glory of the British arms, which have arisen from those two causes—the neglect of proper precaution, and a foolish conceited contempt of the enemy.

Where a subject is matter of history I need but briefly touch on it and I have therefore often skimmed over subjects of far more importance than those I have described. I will now give a sketch of the proceedings of the troops under General Arnold, and the mode in which the ships of war were employed in assisting them. Having marched up James river, supported by some small ships of war, as I have before mentioned, the general reached Burds Landing on the 6th of January, and from thence, with only fifteen hundred men, pushed on to Richmond, the capital of Virginia—a distance of no less than one hundred and forty miles from the Capes of Virginia. He defeated all the forces sent against him, and arriving in that city, destroyed or brought off large quantities of stores, provisions, ammunition and some guns and stand of arms, returning to Burds Landing with the loss only of three killed and fifteen wounded. This was one of the most important expeditions undertaken into the interior of the country, for all the stores I have mentioned were destined for the supply of the southern army of the rebels opposing Lord Cornwallis in the Carolinas. It was followed up on the 12th by an expedition headed by Colonel Simcoe, who with his own corps surprised two hundred rebel militia and killed or took prisoners about fifty of them. On the 14th the troops moved to the town of Smithfield, where they captured forty hogs-heads of tobacco. On the 15th the troops evacuated Smithfield, and the squadron moved down to Newportneuse. On the following day that very active officer, Colonel Simcoe, was engaged in a skirmish with the rebels, the result of which was that he made prisoners of an officer and fifteen privates of a militia regiment. The occupation of Portsmouth had now, I found, been determined on. It stands on a southern branch of that estuary called Hampton Roads, into which James river empties itself. Between it and Smithfield is the Nansimond river with Mackey’s Mills situated on its bank, about half-way up, while higher still on the West Branch was the house belonging to Mr Elbank, where I found Miss Carlyon on the night I and my party so narrowly escaped being cut off. The moment the above information reached me, and I ascertained the direction the army was to march, I became alarmed lest they should pass near Mr Elbank’s house and take possession of it. I knew too well what had occurred on former occasions, and if it was known to have been occupied by Colonel Carlyon, it would too

probably be destroyed, and the inmates alarmed and inconvenienced, if not insulted and injured. I had every reason to believe that Miss Carlyon was still there with her friends, unless our visit to the place had been a warning to them to quit it. What could I do to save her? I thought rapidly over the subject. I was not long in coming to a resolution. I must find some means of communicating with her. Could I trust any one with the message? No—at every risk I must go myself. Any personal danger was of course not to be taken into consideration, and I reflected that the cause I served could, not be injured by any information I could give her. Besides this, in a public point of view, I and those under my command, in our late expedition up the Nansimond, owed her a debt of gratitude for the warning she had given us, which we, to the best of our power, were bound to repay. Sometimes I thought that I would go openly to the commodore and ask his leave to go up the river to Mr Elbank's, and then again I was afraid that by some means or other Miss Carlyon's name might become known, and that her party might hear that she had given the information by which my companions and I had been preserved from the ambush laid for us. That would expose her to an annoyance to which I would on no account subject her. I easily persuaded myself that I alone could properly go. Perhaps the prospect of seeing her biassed me. I knew that I could depend on assistance. Although O'Driscoll had been less cordial with me since the night of our expedition, in consequence of the way I had spoken to him, I knew that he would be delighted to accompany me if I asked him; so of course would Tom Rockets. We had picked up, some time before, a light, fast-pulling canoe, which a couple of hands could send along at a great rate. The use of this I could command. How to get leave to quit the ship for a night was the difficulty. Without leave I could not go. Neither would I tell a falsehood to obtain leave. I resolved, therefore, to go frankly to Captain Symonds, to plead my constant good conduct, and to beg that he would trust me and O'Driscoll and one man away from the ship to carry out a matter of importance. I went to him accordingly. He hesitated a good deal, as I knew he would. He asked to have the matter more fully explained to him. I told him that I would rather not explain it—that should it fail, no blame might be attached to him.

"There must be blame if I allow you to leave the ship ignorant of where you are going, and any ill results from your expedition," he answered.

I saw that he was right.

"Well, sir, then, as you desire it, I will tell you my object, and leave it to your generosity to allow me to accomplish it," I answered, lifting up my head and looking boldly at him, for I felt relieved of a difficulty. I told him briefly the state of the case.

"I do not hesitate a moment in giving you leave, and for such an object will gladly share the blame, if blame there be," he replied with a well-satisfied look.

It was amusing to witness O'Driscoll's delight at the thoughts of the expedition.

"Arrah! now, that's just as it should be!" he exclaimed; "and, my dear boy, now, if you could but clap the sweet girl into the boat and pull off with her, you'd be placing her out of danger, plaising yourself and doing the right thing."

I did not argue the subject with him, as I had already done so in vain, but I let him run on. From the alacrity with which he set about our preparations it might have been supposed that he was the person most interested in the result. A light boat was easily procured. Rockets was of course ready to accompany us. We resolved to go without arms, but to wear our uniforms that we might not be accused of being spies. I wrote a letter, which I kept in my pocket, addressed to Colonel Carlyon, informing him that my object in visiting the house where he was residing was to request him to remove his family and friends from it, lest it should become the scene of strife between the contending parties. Should we be taken prisoners I intended to show this and to claim his assistance to obtain our release. We left the ship early in the evening, and with a fair wind our light skiff flew quickly over the water towards the mouth of the Nansimond river. I never saw O'Driscoll in such high feather. Had I been inclined to be in low spirits he would have kept them up. Commend me to such a companion in all cases of this sort, he joked, he told good stories, he sang and rattled on without cessation. It was sufficiently dark when we neared the mouth of the river to enable us, with our sail lowered, to enter without much chance of being seen from the shore. Though the wind was fair, of course after that we could not venture to carry sail, so we took it by turns to steer while the other two pulled. Lights were glimmering in Nansimond as we passed, but we gave the town a wide berth, and then had little to apprehend except from a stray boat, till we got up to Mackey's Mills. We kept a sharp look-out, to avoid any boat crossing or coming down the stream. As we glided by the mills we could hear voices of people speaking in them, but we kept near the opposite bank, and no one, we fancied, saw us. Of course our oars were muffled, and as we sat as low as we could in our little boat, very sharp eyes would have been required to make us out. As long as there was a flood-tide we got on very well, but it was high water before we got to Mackey's Mills, and in a short time a strong current set against us. It was hard work in some spots pulling against it; not that I minded that, but I was anxious to hurry on to perform my mission and to assure myself that Miss Carlyon had retired to a place of safety. We had just got into the broader part of the stream, when, as I peered through the darkness ahead, I fancied I saw a large object coming right down upon us. I instantly steered the boat over to the north shore, and in a whisper told O'Driscoll and Rockets to cease pulling. I was but just in time, for immediately after a large boat full of people hove in sight. We could hear them talking, and we made out that they expected an attack that very night from the English. Had they seen us they would probably have supposed we had been sent in advance, and would have shot us all down. The circumstances made us consider how we should manage to return, for they would certainly be on the look-out for us. Other boats also would be coming down, which we might have some difficulty in avoiding. Still, what I had undertaken I was determined to accomplish. We pulled on without stopping. No other boat was seen. At length we reached what we believed to be the place where we had landed on the night when I had met Miss Carlyon. I knew it by the peculiar outline of the trees—otherwise it might have been easily passed. O'Driscoll agreed with me that I was right; so, running in under the bank, we effectually concealed our boat in the bushes, and, clambering up, stood on the open ground with the house we were in search of at no great distance from us. After a short consultation O'Driscoll consented to remain near the boat with Rockets, while I proceeded alone to the house. If I was well received I was to summon him. My heart beat pretty fast as I approached the door. It did not occur to me till my hand was actually on the knocker that it was nearly midnight, and that in all probability the family would be in bed.

However, I knocked with tolerable distinctness, and then waited the result. I saw lights gleaming at the windows, and before long a voice in negro accents asked who was there and what was wanted.

“A messenger with important information for Colonel Carlyon or his daughter,” I answered. “I come alone, as a friend, tell your master.”

“Admit him,” said a voice.

The door was opened and I entered. Before me stood an officer in uniform, with a brace of pistols in his belt and a sword by his side, evidently prepared for service. I threw open my own cloak to show what I was, and followed the officer into a well-lighted room on one side of the passage. Supper was on the table, and another gentleman was in the room. I instantly recognised him as my companion on my ride from Hampton.

“Ah, Mr Hurry, I am glad to see you!” he exclaimed in a cordial tone, stretching out his hand. “I little expected to meet you again so soon. What brings you here?”

Now I was prepared to warn Miss Carlyon and her lady friends of danger, but I had no intention of giving information to a stranger of the movements of the British army. I felt myself placed at once in a dilemma. I need have had no scruples on the subject, as the enemy often knew as much about the matter as anybody else. I hesitated before replying.

“I came to give some information to Colonel Carlyon, on which I expected that he and his daughter only would act,” I answered. “I have never met Colonel Carlyon. Do I see him now?”

“You do,” said the officer to whom I had first spoken. “I am Colonel Carlyon, and I am glad to welcome you, sir, to thank you for the inestimable service you have more than once rendered those dearest to me. Whatever you have to communicate you may say freely before this gentleman, my most intimate friend.”

Feeling that I might trust to them, I, without further delay, told them the object of my adventure.

“You have not come alone, though,” he remarked, after thanking me cordially for the information I had given him.

I told him that O’Driscoll and Rockets were waiting for me at the boat. He insisted on sending for them, and in a very short time they made their appearance, and while the negro took care of my follower, we were soon pleasantly seated at supper. I, as may be supposed, was hoping that I might have an opportunity of seeing Madeline. At last I mustered courage to ask for her. Her father hesitated, I thought, before he replied. At length he said—

“Yes, she will indeed wish to thank you personally for the risk you have run, and the exertion you have made for her sake; but I know not whether your meeting can be productive of advantage to either of you. A wide gulf separates one from the other. I know not how it can be crossed. I would rather, sir, that you would not insist on this interview.”

He spoke, it seemed to me, in a stiff and constrained manner. I could only repeat what I had before said to Madeline. “This war must before long come to an end, and then I will come and claim her for my wife,” I answered boldly.

“Well spoken, sir,” said Mr Sutton, turning to me. “With my opinions, I can only regret that you have to wait till the war is terminated. I can answer for it that Madeline would not forgive us if we sent you away without letting you see her. When you have finished supper, if you go into the drawing-room, you will probably find her there.”

My heart gave a jump, and as to putting another mouthful down my throat I found it impossible. I got up and hurried into the room I had before met her in. She was there. The old negro had taken good care to tell her of my arrival. I will not describe our meeting, and all we said, and the hopes we indulged in. I was amply repaid for what I had done for her sake. Her father and Mr Sutton were, I found, about to start on some expedition, but the news I brought them made them alter their plans. The time too soon arrived that I must take my departure. It was with a pang I left her, not knowing when the uncertain chances of war would again allow us to meet.

“Remember, should you ever desire to quit the standard you now serve under, you will be welcomed in a land of freedom, and we shall not expect you to turn your arms against your former comrades,” said Mr Sutton, as he wished me farewell.

I felt very much inclined to quarrel with him for the remark. It sounded strangely like asking me to turn traitor to my country, and I was glad that Colonel Carlyon did not repeat the remarks of his friend. We left the family about to prepare for their departure in the morning, while we returned to the river. O’Driscoll said nothing till we had once more taken our seats in the boat, and then he expressed his disappointment at what he called the tameness of the result of our expedition.

“Arrah, now, I thought we should have had some little fun at all events,” he exclaimed. “I was waiting to see you appear with the lady in your arms, and to have the old colonel with his pistols popping away after us while we were pulling like fury for life and liberty down the river; and after all to have it end in a quiet pleasant supper, and some matter-of-fact conversation, is very provoking. However, your friends gave us some capital Burgundy, and that is some consolation.”

In this strain the eccentric Hibernian ran on till I had to hint that it would be wiser not to speak, lest we might be overheard by any of the enemy. He then told me that Colonel Carlyon and Mr Sutton had given him a pass that, should we fall in with any of their party, we might not be stopped. We, however, proceeded as cautiously as before, for we had no wish that our expedition should become known. We got as far as Mackey’s Mills without meeting with any adventure. As before, we gave it a wide berth, for we could hear the sound of voices, and it appeared evidently occupied by a body of men. However, as long as they all kept talking together they were less likely to discover us.

We paddled, therefore, quickly and cautiously on, but without any apprehension of being found out. We had almost lost sight of the mill, and were congratulating ourselves on getting clear altogether, when the stillness of the night was broken by a loud sharp voice exclaiming—

“There they go! Give it them, lads, give it them! After them, after them!”

The next moment a sharp fire of musketry was opened on us, the flashes, however, showing that we had passed the spot where our enemies were posted. The balls, however, fell round us unpleasantly thick. Then again there was another volley, and, by the flash of the pieces, we could see a number of men hurrying into a boat, with, we had no doubt, the intention of pursuing us. Our skiff pulled well. O’Driscoll and Rockets, who were rowing, bent manfully to their oars. Away we flew over the water, and though the troops on the shore still continued to fire, the bullets happily flew wide of us. We had a good start of the pursuing boat. From the glimpse we got of her she was of some size, but if, as we hoped, she was heavy in proportion to her size, that would be in our favour. At all events, all we could do was to pull away with all our might, and to keep a straight course down the river. We could hear the shouts of our pursuers, and of the people hailing them from the shore. They only induced us to make greater exertions to keep ahead of them. On we dashed. In a short time we felt sure that we were already distancing them. Their voices grew fainter and fainter. We got into the broad part of the river. We had now another chance of escape. Should they be overtaking us, we might slip on one side, and in the darkness and eagerness of the chase they would probably pass by without observing us. Still that was not our wish. We wanted to get out of the river without being questioned. On we went, till we could neither see nor hear anything of our pursuers. At last a few lights here and there of some midnight watchers were seen glimmering from the town of Nansimond. We glided by it. We reached the mouth of the river, and not till then did we slacken our speed. I then relieved O’Driscoll at the oar. I was duly grateful for the exertions he had made for me, but I evidently did not hold a high place in his estimation.

“Ah, you English boys don’t understand how to do things!” he observed, with a sigh. “In ould Ireland we’d have managed an affair of the sort very differently.”

Just at daylight we got on board our ship—I, at all events, being very well contented with the result of our expedition. I afterwards heard that the Americans stated that they had pursued and chased a large British flotilla out of the river with only a couple of boats, and that we had lost twenty men in killed and wounded. From so slight a source does many a tale of wonder spring.

Chapter Twenty Five.

Operations under Colonel Simcoe.—Sent to Mackey’s Mills.—My friend’s house sacked.—Colonel Carlyon taken prisoner.—Render him a service.—Troops embark at night.—My loyalty questioned.—Mills burnt.—In command of Rattlesnake.—Sail with prizes.—A wintry voyage.—New York once more.—Serve on board Chatham.—Mismanagement of the war.—Rejoin Charon.

I must endeavour to get on more rapidly than heretofore with my account of public matters. On the 18th of January the British army marched from Smithfield southward, and the squadron moved down to Newportneuse. Among the most active of the English officers was Colonel Simcoe. On the 16th he surprised and took prisoners an American officer of militia and fifteen privates. From the report I heard I was much in fear that Colonel Carlyon was the officer taken, but I had no means of ascertaining whether or not such was the case. At all events, I hoped that his daughter was in a place of safety.

On the 18th the army reached Mackey’s Mills, and I received orders to proceed with a detachment of boats to supply them with bread and other provisions. I hoped now to gain the information I was so anxious to possess. Our present expedition was very different to those in which I had before been engaged. We now went up in daylight, with a force which no enemy was likely to attack. Mackey’s Mills were reached soon after noon, and when I had delivered the provisions I was ordered to remain to assist in passing the troops across the river on their way to the attack of Portsmouth. The embarkation was not to take place till midnight, so I had ample time to go up the river to ascertain whether the house where Madeline had been residing had been attacked. O’Driscoll was ready enough to accompany me, to give me, as he observed, one chance more of doing the proper thing; but, before I went, I was anxious to ascertain whether Colonel Carlyon had indeed fallen into our hands. I had, at the same time, no reason to fear that he would be treated harshly or with want of courtesy. Only, if he was a prisoner, I naturally wished to see him, that I might offer him all the assistance in my power. Going on shore, after some difficulty I found out Colonel Simcoe’s quarters at a farm-house a mile away from the mills. I introduced myself to him, and told him my errand—that I was acquainted with Colonel Carlyon’s family, and that I wished to be of service to him. He replied that the officer he had taken had refused to give his name and rank to the party who had captured him.

“I understood that he and his men were surprised,” I remarked.

“Not at all,” was the answer. “He was apparently covering the retreat of another party who appeared to have some women and other encumbrances among them. To do the rebel gentleman justice, he fought very bravely, and did not yield till he was completely overpowered.”

I begged that I might see the prisoner, and, after some little hesitation on the part of the colonel, he handed me the necessary order. Thanking him for his courtesy, I set off for the cottage used as a prison. It was situated a quarter of a mile nearer the mills. A strong guard was posted in the neighbourhood, and a couple of sentries paced up and down before it. I showed my order to the lieutenant in charge of the party and was at once admitted. I looked round the chamber. Near a casement window, seated on a rough stool, with a cask serving as a table, I beheld Colonel Carlyon. He turned his head when I entered, and I thought that his countenance brightened when he saw me. He rose and held out his hand.

“I regret, sir, to see you here as a prisoner,” said I. “Hearing that an officer had been captured, I hastened, should it prove to be you, to offer such services as I am able to render.”

“The fortune of war, Mr Hurry. I may be thankful that I have escaped wounds or death,” he answered in a cheerful tone. “Believe me, I am grateful to you for this attention, and I only wish that I had the means of showing my gratitude.”

He, of course, well knew that he might some day have the power of showing it most effectually. My first inquiry was, of course, respecting the safety of his daughter, and he assured me that he had every reason to believe that she and her companions had reached the house of some relations in the interior, and that he should have accompanied them had he not been so hotly pursued by Colonel Simcoe’s persevering and lightly-accoutred troops. When he heard that I had made preparations to go up to Mrs Langton’s house he exclaimed—

“You may render me a great service by so doing. In the hurry of our departure, in consequence of your warning, a small desk was left behind. It contains not only money and jewels of considerable value, but some papers of the greatest importance. I had but just discovered my loss when I was taken prisoner, and the only person I could have entrusted to go in search of it was killed in the same skirmish in which I became a prisoner.”

I naturally was much pleased with this opportunity of rendering a service to Colonel Carlyon. I had but little time, however, left in which to perform it. After he had explained to me in what part of the house I was to look for the desk, I took my departure and hastened back to the river, where I found O’Driscoll with Rockets and two other men waiting for me. The tide was favourable, so that we had no difficulty in getting there. The scenery wore so different an aspect by daylight to what it had done in the dark that we could scarcely recognise the spots we passed. We landed and approached the house. There, indeed, was a melancholy change. The shrubberies had been cut down, the garden trampled under foot, and the house itself plundered and set on fire—I think by accident—I scarcely believe it could have been done wantonly. I began to fear, when I saw what had occurred, that I must give up all hopes of finding the desk of which I was in search. O’Driscoll and I felt very indignant when we saw the destruction which had been wrought by our troops.

“Well, after all, war is a dirty business!” he exclaimed, after contemplating the scene of ruin for some minutes without speaking. “Fighting in the open field, where hard blows are given and taken, and man meets man on equal terms, is all very well in its way. I don’t object to sacking a town which holds out when it should have given in, but the burning down of old ladies’ houses, and injuring the property of people who could not have caused any offence, I cannot stand. I should like now to discover the officer who was commanding here and allowed this. I would pick a quarrel with him and call him out to a certainty.”

My friend had certainly curious notions, not uncommon among his countrymen in these days. Sad, indeed, was the scene of havoc and destruction which met our gaze on every side, not only about the house, but in the fields and cottages in the surrounding country—war’s melancholy consequences. We had no time to contemplate it.

“Come, O’Driscoll,” said I, “we will search through the ruins for my friend’s case, but I scarcely expect to find it.”

“Something like looking for a needle in a rick of hay,” he answered; “or, rather, far more hopeless, for it is very unlikely that the case should have escaped being burnt or carried off.”

O’Driscoll, Rockets and I hunted in different directions. I first endeavoured to find the room which Colonel Carlyon had described to me. That portion of the house had not suffered so much as the rest; most of the flooring of the room was burnt, but the fire had been extinguished before the whole had been consumed. I climbed up to it, not without risk, for the burnt rafters gave way under my feet. I knew the room from the position of the window, which looked into a little courtyard. A portion of the furniture had escaped, though blackened and disfigured. My hopes revived as to finding the desk. I hunted eagerly round. It was too evident that everything considered of value had been carried away. I was about to scramble down again by the way we had come up when I bethought me of looking out of the window for the enjoyment of the prospect, which was a very beautiful one. Woods, fields, the terraced garden, distant hills, and the river rushing by were well combined to form it. As I looked out, my eye fell on a heap of rubbish in one corner of the courtyard, with burnt and broken pieces of furniture, and I fancied that I saw the edge of such a case as I was in search of sticking out from among them. I quickly descended and found my way to the spot. I eagerly pulled out the object I had seen. It was a peculiarly old-fashioned, unattractive-looking case, and from its outward appearance no one would have supposed that it contained objects of value. I felt sure that I was right, and that I had got the object I was seeking. I sang out to O’Driscoll, who after a little time heard my voice and was delighted at my good fortune. Calling Rockets, we then hurried back to the boat. There was no time to be lost, for night was coming on; we had a long pull before us, and I was anxious to deliver the case to Colonel Carlyon without delay. After this I had to assist in getting the boats ready for the embarkation of the troops. Away we pulled. O’Driscoll was in high feather, laughing and joking to his heart’s content.

“You’re in a fair way now, at all events, to win the lady, my boy,” said he. “Only just keep moving, and put yourself under my guidance. We must soon knock this rebellion on the head, and then, do ye see, you can step in and be of still greater service to the father and the family, and claim your reward. Oh! it’s beautiful. I see it all now as clear as a pikestaff.”

Certainly, we neither of us at the time thought what a different turn affairs were to take from what he was then calculating on. Yet, I must own, I had even then my misgivings on the subject. As soon as we landed, I hurried as fast as my legs could carry me to the cottage where Colonel Carlyon was kept a prisoner. His satisfaction was very great when I delivered the case to him, and the way in which he expressed his gratitude was manly and cordial in the extreme.

“It is useless for a prisoner to make promises, which, should your party finally triumph, he may never be able to

fulfil," he observed with a grave look. "In the latter case, those taken with arms in their hands may be hung, drawn and quartered as traitors, in accordance with the time-honoured custom of our fathers. If the patriots are victorious, the prisoners will be liberated with all the honours which can be showered on them, and I may have the satisfaction of proving that I am not ungrateful for what you have done for me and mine."

I found some difficulty in answering properly to these remarks. I could not say that I wished the royal cause not to succeed, and yet I certainly did not desire to see the Americans completely defeated and humbled. I therefore said—

"I trust that a peace, honourable to both parties, may ere long be established, and that the Americans may gain to the full what they consider their just rights."

"That will never be unless victory smiles on our arms," he replied with a faint smile. "We must conquer to obtain our rights. What has hitherto been denied will never be otherwise granted."

I looked at my watch. I found that I must hasten back to the boats.

"Farewell, sir!" I said. "I have duties to which I must attend at present, but I will endeavour, if possible, to see you again before I return to my ship."

"Stay one moment," said he; "I would ask you to ascertain from our friends at Hampton if they have received positive information as to the safety of my daughter and her relatives. When you gain it send me word, and you will add to the weight of the debt of gratitude I already owe you."

He said this in a stiff way, as if unwilling to give me the task. This I thought but natural. Though I was conferring obligations on him, my position as a poor lieutenant was unaltered, and I knew that he could not desire to entrust his daughter's happiness to my charge, even should peace be established. It was almost the hour appointed for the embarkation of the troops when I got down to the river. So well had our arrangements been made, that I doubt whether the enemy knew what we were about. There is something particularly exciting and wild in the movement of a large body of armed men at night. I could not help remarking the scene in which I was taking so active a part. Rapidly flowed by the dark river; boats crowded with men and horses were continually passing, while others were returning empty for a further supply; people with torches were stationed on both banks of the river, to enable the soldiers, as they came down, to take their proper places in the boats, the lights from the flaming brands throwing a ruddy glare over the stream, and making the tall buildings of the mills stand out prominently from the dark forest in the background. All night long the work was going on, for it was a slow process to get across horses, artillery and ammunition, provisions and baggage. The first thing in the morning, after his men had rested but a couple of hours, the indefatigable Colonel Simcoe set off towards Portsmouth to summon the town to surrender. At 2 p.m. the army began their march, and arrived before the place the following day, when the inhabitants, finding that resistance was useless, surrendered at discretion. I endeavoured to ascertain where Colonel Carlyon and the other prisoners had been placed, but was unable to discover any clue to their place of imprisonment. As soon as the rear of the army was out of sight, all the officers commanding boats assembled on board a brig, which had been captured in the Nansimond river, previous to returning to our ships. It was with much regret that I heard it proposed to burn Mackey's Mills, and to ravage the country round, in consequence of the attack which had been made on our boats. I opposed the suggestion with all my might. I said that I thought it a wanton destruction of property, that would in no way advance our cause, and would certainly exasperate the sufferers against us. Not only were my counsels disregarded, but several remarks were made hinting pretty broadly that I was too friendly disposed towards the enemy. I had to stand a severe fire from several of my brother-officers. Some, among whom was O'Driscoll, began to joke, and I took it very ill from him, as he knew the depth of my sentiments, and I considered his conduct a breach of confidence. Others went on from joking to make more serious remarks, which I felt reflected on my honour, so much so that I rose up and declared that if another observation of the sort was ventured on by any present, I must insist on settling the matter at another time and place. Some held their peace after this, but some continued to talk of officers showing lukewarmness and want of loyalty to the king's cause, and to declare that such had better declare themselves to be the rebels they were at heart.

The last man who spoke was a Lieutenant Dawson. I was surprised that he should venture to speak thus, for he was a man of whose spirit or courage I had but a mean opinion. My impulse was to throw a pocket-pistol I seized hold of across the table at his head, but I restrained my anger. Though he was my junior in the service, we were engaged on public duty together, and, under these circumstances, it was a serious matter for one officer to strike another, even in those days.

"Mr Dawson, you must know what you say is false, sir," I exclaimed. "Can any one here say that I have been slack in my duty—that I have ever shown the white feather—that I have ever done anything derogatory to the character of an officer and a gentleman? If no one here condemns me—then, sir, I shall make you eat your words, and acknowledge that the insinuations on which you have ventured were most foul and unjust."

No one spoke. Dawson looked confounded.

"No one condemns me," I added. "That is well; but will no one speak in my favour—will no one say that, to the best of his knowledge, I have never failed in my duty, or acted otherwise than as a British officer ought to act?"

"In faith, Hurry, I'll speak in your favour, my boy, and gladly too," cried O'Driscoll, with all the enthusiasm of which his warm heart was capable. "If every one fought as well, and did their duty as completely as you do, we should have had this war over long ago—that's my belief; and small blame to you if you think a pair of bright eyes in this western hemisphere brighter than any to be found in the old country; besides, you've never been in my part of Ireland, or you might be of a different opinion. Now, gentlemen, if any one has anything to say against Mr Hurry, then let him say it to me. I'll settle the matter for him."

This diversion of O'Driscoll's completely silenced all opposition to me, and Dawson, not wishing to come into a

personal conflict with my hot-headed though warm-hearted Irish friend, slunk out of the cabin.

I was, however, left in a decided minority with respect to an attack on the mills, which it was determined forthwith to destroy. I was of course under the orders of the commanding officer of the brigade of boats, who happened to be Lieutenant Edwards, first of the Charon, so that I had no choice but to obey. As soon as our crews had taken some refreshment we pulled away in battle array for the mills. A few irregulars and armed peasantry, who had entered the place when the army had quitted it, were speedily put to flight when we landed. Piles of brushwood were collected and heaped up inside the building in different parts of it. Fire was set to them, and rapidly the flames burst forth, and, catching the dry wood-work of the mills, were soon seen climbing up from storey to storey, twisting themselves in and out of the windows, and encircling the beams and rafters in their deadly embrace. I never saw any building so rapidly consumed. Higher and higher rose the devouring flames; down came tumbling the roof and lofty walls; with loud crashes the floors fell in; showers of bright sparks flew on every side, and nothing but a mass of burning ruins—a huge bonfire—remained before us. The men shouted when they saw the destruction they had caused, like mischievous schoolboys. They little thought or cared to whom the property belonged, or who were the sufferers. They would just as readily have burnt it had it belonged to royalists. They enjoyed the sight of the conflagration—the effects of their own handiwork. Many of the officers, too, shouted and clapped their hands, and seemed to take as much pleasure in the mischief they were producing as the men; but this might have been a mere exhibition of their loyalty and patriotism. Having thus effectually destroyed the mills, our commanding officer ordered us to march into the interior to forage, or, in other words, to plunder any farms the army had spared, and to commit any other acts of mischief the time would allow. I need not enter into particulars. Cattle we spared, as we could not carry them off, but we collected sheep and pigs and fowls wherever we could find them. To this, of course, I could not object, as provisions were necessary; but at length we came to the house of a gentleman—a colonel of militia we were told—and, though no defence of it was attempted, it was proposed to burn it to the ground. Against this further wanton destruction of property I loudly protested—

“It has lately been said that I am a friend of the rebels,” I exclaimed. “That I deny; but I do not deny that I am ashamed to see my countrymen destroy the property of people who make no resistance, and who are Englishmen as much as we are. Such conduct can only cause a bitter hatred to spring up in the breasts of the sufferers, which will make them refuse ever again to become our fellow-subjects and friends.”

Mr Edwards did not at all like my interference; but my remonstrance had an effect, and though he allowed the house to be plundered, and the furniture to be destroyed, he soon after ordered a retreat, observing that he could not depend on my co-operation or assistance. The owner of the house, as it turned out, was in the neighbourhood, with a considerable body of men, and he very nearly succeeded in inflicting a severe retaliation on us by surprising and cutting off our party. However, we discovered his approach in time to get into order, and, though he and his men followed us for some way, we kept him at bay, and reached the river without loss. Lieutenant Edwards at once returned on board our ship in the Charon’s barge, leaving me in command of the boats—directing me to land and forage at any convenient spot towards the mouth of the river. Here again, however much against my inclination, I must obey orders. We had observed a large farm a little above the town of Nansimond. As we proceeded down the river we suddenly pulled in towards the shore. Sixty men, without a moment’s delay, ran on and surrounded the farm before the inmates had time to drive away any of the stock, or, indeed, had perceived our approach. We soon collected everything eatable on which we could lay hands, and were in our boats and away again before any force had time to assemble from the neighbourhood to attack us. Such was the system of warfare which I believe General Arnold recommended and encouraged—the most galling and injurious to the unhappy colonists. We got on board our ships by midnight, with provisions sufficient to supply all the ships’ companies for a couple of days.

The Rattlesnake, a ship pierced for fourteen guns, but mounting ten three-pounders and six swivels, had been captured at Portsmouth, and the next morning I received orders to take command of her, to fit her for sea, and to hold myself in readiness to proceed with charge of all the rest of the prizes to New York.

The army was at this period employed in throwing up works for the defence of Portsmouth, and in making excursions into the surrounding country to crush, it was said in the despatches, any embers of rebellion which might yet be smouldering there. As I have before remarked, the way taken to produce the desired result was anything but effectual. I was very nearly being deprived of my new command in a somewhat summary way by the sinking of my vessel. A terrifically heavy gale of wind sprang up on the night of the 21st, and first driving one of the larger prizes foul of her, which carried away my fore and cross-jack yards, fore channels, both quarters and best bower-anchor, (such a grinding and crushing and crashing I never before got on board any craft); scarcely was she clear when another craft came thundering down aboard of me, and very nearly completed the work which the other had commenced. However, I did manage to swim while several other vessels drove on shore and were, with all their crews, lost. For several days after that I was employed in refitting my ship for sea.

On the 25th I proceeded with my convoy of prizes to Portsmouth, and when there, General Arnold sent for me and informed me that the commodore had assured him I should immediately sail in the Rattlesnake for New York with despatches for Sir Henry Clinton. After he had handed me his despatches I took my departure. He informed me of their contents that, should I be compelled to throw them overboard, I might be able to give a verbal report to Sir Henry of the wants of the army. Those wants were not a few. More guns, ammunition, food and clothing,—all were required.

On reaching Sewel’s Point, where I brought up to receive the commodore’s despatches, I was surprised to receive an order to return immediately and to give back those entrusted to me by General Arnold. This order originated, I afterwards discovered, in consequence of some unaccountable disagreement which had arisen between the general and the admiral. General Arnold said nothing when I gave him back his despatches, but he looked not a little angry and astonished. When the heads fell out it is not surprising that want of success was the result of their undertakings. My journal is full of various little incidents which happened at this time. The Charlestown and Hope captured in the Chesapeake a rich fleet of eight rebel merchantmen bound for the Havannah. The lieutenant of the Swift was made prisoner in consequence of an illegal use of a flag of truce. Several officers and men were blown up when chasing a

rebel brig, and an artillery officer, heading a foraging party, was killed. The squadron was kept on the alert by an account brought by the General Monk sloop-of-war of a French ship of the line and two frigates having sailed from Rhode Island, it was supposed, for the Chesapeake.

Once more, on the 31st, the old Charon, during a heavy gale of wind, drove on shore, but by great and prompt exertion was got off. To keep her in countenance, when on the 5th of February I sailed with my prizes under convoy of the Charlestown for New York, on going down the West Branch I also got on shore, but succeeded in quickly getting off again. I had no little trouble in keeping the prizes in order. The Americans left on board one of them persuaded the people to side with them, and they ran her on shore, purposing to give her up to the rebels. I went in chase of her, fired several shots into her, and then, manning one of my boats, boarded her, captured her crew, who had been unable to escape, and got her off, made sail with my recaptured prize, and rejoined the fleet at midnight, when I put the mutineers on board the Charlestown, to be dealt with according to martial law.

On the 11th, at night, finding the “Langolee,” one of my prizes, some distance astern, and suspecting that she was about to give us the slip, I dropped astern, and, taking her in tow, brought her into the middle of the fleet. At midnight, however, a heavy gust of wind compelled me to cut the hawser and clap before it. With the small crew I had I found no little difficulty in handing my sails, which, after some time having done, I struck topgallant yards and masts and lay-to under a close-reefed mainsail. Once having made the ship snug I endeavoured to discover the whereabouts of the rest of the convoy, but not a trace of them could I discover. I hoped, however, with the morning light to make them out. When the cold-grey dawn spread over the ocean and I went aloft not a sail was in sight.

“This is no great misfortune,” said I to Grampus when I came on deck. “The Rattlesnake is a prime sailer, and by taking advantage of the winds we shall reach New York much sooner than if we had been obliged to whip up the convoy. We are a match, too, for any of the smaller rebel vessels we are likely to fall in with, and we must run away from the bigger ones.”

“That may be, sir,” answered the old man, “but d’ye see, sir, I’ve no great opinion of this here craft if it was to come on any long course of bad weather. I’ve a notion she’s an old craft, and I doubt much the soundness of her timbers and planks.”

I was rather inclined to laugh at Nol’s prognostication, and thought no more about his remarks. Before, however, many hours had passed, the gale, which had hitherto been blowing pretty steadily, increased in fury; the sea ran very high, and the spray, as it broke on board, froze hard on deck and sheathed the rigging in ice. When short-handed this is very trying, as double the strength is required to make the running rigging work. Happily we were under snug canvas, for I do not think we could have made or shortened sail. Towards evening Grampus came up to me with a look of concern in his countenance.

“I told you so, sir,” he said, touching his hat. “The old ship has sprung a leak. She has not lost time in letting in the water, for there are four feet already in the hold.”

Immediately on hearing this appalling news I gave orders to man the pumps, but it was at once found, to our further dismay, that they were useless, for they were choked with ice. Since the gale sprang up we had been unable to light a fire. In vain for a long time we tried. Without boiling water or a hot iron it was impossible to clear the pumps. The water was rapidly gaining on us. There seemed every probability of the ship sinking under our feet. Such has been the fate of many poor fellows—to have gone down in a cold, icy sea, hope and help far away. Such was the risk I had often before run, but never before had the expectation of it been brought so prominently before me. Never before had I, it seemed, so much to lose. Never so much to which to look forward with hope. Our efforts to light the fire became more and more frantic. At last I bethought me of applying salt to the ice in the pumps. We fortunately had a good supply of it on board. By forcing the salt down with a long iron the ice was melted, and the pumps at length got to act. Frantically we pumped away with our two pumps. We sounded the well; the water had decreased. This gave us courage to continue our exertions. At length we were able to keep the ship free. Still the gale continued, and I had my apprehensions, from the condition of the ship, that another leak might yet be sprung and all our efforts prove vain. Even a winter gale of wind in those latitudes off the American coast must come to an end, and this, by the morning of the 5th, sufficiently abated to allow me to set the fore and main stay-sails. I then stood towards the land. At noon Rockets came into my cabin, where I had gone to snatch a few minutes’ sleep, and reported a ship and two schooners in sight.

“An enemy, I’ll warrant,” I said to myself testily. “I shall be driven out to sea again, or perhaps, after all, fall into their hands.”

Still I stood towards them, ready to make all sail to escape should my suspicions be realised. I could not make them out. When I got within signalising distance I made the private signal, and great was my satisfaction to find in answer that the ship was the Charlestown, and the schooners two of the convoy.

The next day we made the high land of Neversink, and that evening reached the entrance of New York harbour. It was with the greatest difficulty, however, that we could work our way into it, so full was it of floating ice, through which it was often scarcely possible to steer. The other prizes which had parted company with me in the gale arrived all safe three days afterwards. The accommodations of one of the prizes, the Charity Brig, being much superior to those of the Rattlesnake, I took up my quarters on board her. I invited also some of the more gentlemanly and pleasant of the midshipmen to live on board her also, so that we were able to form an agreeable society among ourselves. At New York there was none in which we could mix with any satisfaction. Whenever I went on shore I did not fail to visit the house of my old Dutch friend, the widow Von Tromp. It was already so crowded with soldier officers that I could not live there altogether, had I been so disposed, but in truth I preferred remaining on board ship with my brother-officers. As I was allowed a guinea a day for my table I was able to live in comparative luxury and comfort.

On the 10th we began to discharge our prizes, which were loaded with tobacco. On clearing the Rattlesnake I had indeed reason to be thankful that I and those who had been with me on board were still in the land of the living. Her entire bottom was completely rotten, and all who saw her were astonished that she had made the passage from Portsmouth to New York. It seemed a miracle that the water had been kept out of her. Her whole bottom had to be replanked before she was again fit to put to sea. This is only one of the numberless escapes from destruction which I have had during my life.

The widow Von Tromp was delighted to see me, and especially interested in all I had to tell her. I was amused with her notions about the war. Her sympathies were evidently with the American party, but at present she assuredly reaped no small profit from the custom which the military brought to her house. She tried sore to reconcile the two opinions—she wished well to the patriots, and yet she was in no hurry to see the war brought to an end. Often since have I seen people on more serious matters halting between two opinions.

“Ah me, Mr Hurry, I wish the war were ended and my dear friends from the south would come back, but den dees nice young officers all go away and I see dem no more! Oh, it is vary sad, vary sad!” she used to exclaim, after descanting on the liberality of her guests. “But den you come back, Mr Hurry; member dat. You always come and see de widow Von Tromp.”

Of course I promised, and intended faithfully to fulfil my promise, little dreaming at that time the course which events would take.

Having discharged faithfully and, as I hoped, to the satisfaction of all concerned, the duty on which I had been sent, I requested the commanding officer of the port that he would enable me and my people to return to the Charon by the first opportunity. Just as I had done so I called on board the Chatham, now commanded by my old friend Captain Hudson, with whom I sailed in the Orpheus. He received me most kindly, and informing me that two of his lieutenants were sick in the hospital, requested that I would perform the duty of first lieutenant on board till I could rejoin my own ship. Anxious as I was, for private reasons, to get to the south, I could not refuse his request. I accordingly at once went on board with my people and commenced the duty of first lieutenant, and pretty hard duty it was; but it is a satisfaction to me to feel that I never refused, during the whole course of my naval career, any duty offered me, however hard or irksome it might have promised to be.

On the 18th of March we sailed from Sandy Hook for the southward, having under our orders the following fleet, viz. Chatham, Roebuck, Raleigh, Bonetta, Savage, Halifax, Vulcan, fire-ship, with a number of transports, which had on board two thousand troops under the command of General Phillips, who had not long before been released by a cartel concluded a few months previously with the enemy. We were going, I found, to the assistance of General Arnold, who was under very serious apprehensions of being overwhelmed by a French fleet with an expedition on board, which it was supposed had sailed from Rhode Island to attack him.

On the 18th we spoke the Pearl and Iris, from which ships we learned that an action had been fought a few days before between the British fleet, under Admiral Arbuthnot, and the French fleet from Rhode Island. Although pretty fairly matched as to numbers the general opinion was that the English ships should have done much more than they did. They drove back the French and prevented them from reaching the Chesapeake before our arrival, but not a Frenchman was sunk or taken, whereas I believe that Admiral Arbuthnot might have followed, cut up, and dispersed the whole French squadron had he possessed the spirit which should animate the bosom of every officer in the service. His only excuse was that some of the ships under his command had suffered in the late hurricane, and that the crews were worn out in their exertions to repair damages and put again to sea. I would gladly see the accounts of such engagements expunged from the annals of English history.

We arrived at Lynhaven Bay in the Chesapeake on the 28th, and found Admiral Arbuthnot’s squadron lying there repairing the damages of the late action. On the next day I rejoined the Charon, having been absent from her nine weeks. I was now in hopes of being able to get on shore to make inquiries for Colonel Carlyon and his daughter, but as I found that we were every moment expecting to sail in search of the French fleet I was compelled to restrain my impatience and to endure as I best could all the anxiety I felt about them.

Chapter Twenty Six.

A cruise.—Leave the Chesapeake.—New York.—Press-gangs at work.—Cruel scenes.—Evil tidings from home.—British take possession of York Town.—Preparations for defence.—A dangerous trip.—More losses—A narrow escape.—Slight hopes of success.

At this period of the American war both parties seemed so equally balanced that it appeared doubtful which after all would come off successful in the contest. The superior discipline of the British, and the experience and talent of their generals, had frequently obtained for them the victory in the expeditions which had of late been undertaken. General Arnold’s plans had hitherto never failed in Virginia. Lord Rawdon had obtained a considerable advantage over General Greene in South Carolina, while it was hoped, from the bravery and talent of Lord Cornwallis, that he would carry everything before him in North Carolina. He had been posted at Wilmington in the southern part of that province. His supplies however failing, he took the bold resolution of marching through North Carolina to join Generals Phillips and Arnold at Portsmouth. Sir James Wright held the town of Savannah in Georgia, and Colonel Cruger the important post of Ninety-six in South Carolina. New York and the country in the immediate neighbourhood was in possession of the British, and at that city Sir Henry Clinton, as Commander-in-chief of the British Army in North America, held his head-quarters.

The British forces however, it will thus be seen, were broken into small divisions and stationed at posts so much apart as to be of little mutual assistance. The war thus raged pretty equally in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia,

and while the force seemed everywhere sufficient for destroying considerable tracts of country, and accumulating a great deal of spoil, it was wholly inadequate to the main purpose of bringing matters to a conclusion. Thus numbers of brave men lost their lives without any equivalent result, and veteran battalions were worn down by fruitless exertions of valour, and by a series of most brilliant successes which produced no permanent result. On the other hand, although the French had landed a small army under the Marquis de la Fayette, the American forces were mostly ill-disciplined and disorganised, and although it cannot be said that they were favourable to the English, they were discontented with the treatment they were receiving from their own government, many of them being ill-paid, ill-clothed, and often but scantily fed. The unsuccessful attempt of the French fleet to enter the Chesapeake was also a great damper to the patriot cause.

At this time the American forces were separated into as many divisions as the English. General Greene commanded in the Carolinas, the Marquis de la Fayette was in Virginia, and watched the banks of the James River, to prevent the further advance of the British in that direction, while General Washington himself remained with another army in the north, his head-quarters being Newport in Rhode Island. Soon after this General Phillips died, and General Arnold, greatly to the disgust of our officers, who did not at all like serving under him, would have had the command, had not Lord Cornwallis arrived with his army from the south at Portsmouth.

Such was the state of affairs on shore. At sea the British arms were in most instances victorious. While the Marquis de la Fayette was hovering about General Arnold in the hopes of cutting him off by land, the French expedition to the Chesapeake, concerted at Rhode Island by Monsieur de Ternay and the Count Rochambeau was, as I have described, defeated by the fleet of Admiral Arbuthnot. The British also were collecting a large fleet to be ready to encounter one which was expected on the coast of America from the West Indies under the Count de Grasse.

The war was no longer confined to one between England and her revolted colonies, but we had now the French, Spaniards, and Dutch to contend with on various parts of the American coasts, and mighty fleets were collecting to contest with us as of yore the sovereignty of the seas. I, for one, looked forward with the greatest satisfaction to an engagement with either the Spaniards or the French, the hereditary enemies of England. I regretted at the same time that the Americans had adopted the dangerous expedient of calling in their assistance. If they were to be free, I felt that it would be better for them to achieve their independence by themselves, instead of trusting to those who were too likely to play them some treacherous trick in the end. I felt, however, that our own Government was more likely to come to terms considering the immense pressure brought against the country if the Americans would be but moderate in their demands.

On the 2nd of April we sailed from the Chesapeake with the whole of the squadron, consisting of seven line-of-battle ships, two fifty-gun ships, five frigates, and two sloops, and stood to the southward in search of the French fleet. On the 5th the fleet tacked and stood to the north-east.

There is something very exciting and interesting in forming one of a large fleet of men-of-war. I had sailed often, and more than enough with fleets of merchantmen and transports, but then I had generally to act the part of a whipper-in to a pack of lazy or worn-out hounds, and had to run in and out among them, hailing one, signalising a second, and firing a shot at another to keep them all in order, caring very little how my own ship looked, provided I could accomplish my object. Now, on the contrary, each ship sailed in proper order, and one vied with the other in the neatness of their appearance, and the rapidity with which various evolutions could be performed.

On the 6th the Charon was detached ahead of the squadron to look into the Delaware to ascertain if the French fleet was still there. We obeyed the order with alacrity, though we expected that if they were there we should be very quickly chased out again. We had great hopes that this would be done, as we might thus lead them down upon our own squadron which was well prepared to receive them. O'Driscoll rubbed his hands as we sailed up that magnificent estuary, keeping a bright look-out on every side for the mast-heads of the enemy's fleet.

"Arrah, now, won't it be fun to see them all come bounding out like bulldogs when by chance a stranger comes suddenly into the courtyard where they are chained up, all barking, and leaping, and pulling with the amiable wish of tearing him to pieces!" he exclaimed, as I was expressing a hope that they might still be found there.

On we sailed, till at last we felt convinced that the Frenchmen had already put to sea. Once more therefore we stood out again in search of the Admiral. On the 11th we spoke the Chatham, which ship had also been sent to look-out for the enemy. She had taken a prize, and from her had gained the information that a large fleet of merchantmen was in the neighbourhood, bound from Saint Domingo to Philadelphia under the convoy of the Dean and Confederacy State frigates.

I ought to have said that we had hove-to, and that Captain Ord of the Chatham had come on board us, Captain Symonds being the senior officer. Captain Ord now proposed that we should in company cruise off the heads of the Delaware in the hopes of intercepting this valuable convoy. Once more there appeared a certain prospect of my picking up an ample supply of prize-money, but greatly to our disappointment; Captain Symonds declined to accede to the proposal, though he allowed Captain Ord to remain if he thought fit. This Captain Ord said he should do, and returned on board the Chatham, while we made sail to the northward. That evening I heard Nol Grampus holding forth on the subject.

"I knew it would be so," he exclaimed, clapping his right hand down on his hat, which he held in his left; "our ship's got ill-lack in her sails, depend on that. I don't say nothing against our skipper; what he does is all right and above board, and a better man nor officer never stepped a deck, but, mark my words, that 'ere 'Chatham's' people now will be filling their pockets with gold dollars, while we shan't have a penny piece to chink in ours; as for our ship, I knows what I knows, and I thinks what I thinks."

The effect of old Nol's remarks were, however, counteracted before long, for on the 13th we sighted a large brig, which immediately stood away from us. We, therefore, made sail in chase. She sailed so fast we had to do our best to

come up with her. It seemed, however, doubtful whether we should do so. Nol shook his head, and remarked that night would come down, and that she would slip away before we could overhaul her. Hour after hour passed. It was evident that we were gaining on her, and at length, at the end of a chase of seven hours we came up with the stranger, when she struck her flag and proved to be the Peggy, rebel privateer, of fourteen guns and seventy men, loaded with rum and indigo, from Carolina to Philadelphia.

On our arrival at New York with our prize, we had the mortification to find that the admiral approved of Captain Ord's proposition, and still greater was our annoyance to hear a few days afterwards that he, with the Roebuck and Orpheus, had taken the Confederacy and several of her convoy.

And now I was engaged in a scene, to do proper justice to which completely baffles all my powers of description. The fleet were sadly in want of men. By some means or other they must be procured. New York was, we heard, full of seafaring men, boatmen and others, accustomed to the water, whom the war had driven from their usual vocations, and who were now living on shore. To get hold of these was our object. It would not do to attempt to capture them by driblets, for if a few were pressed, the rest would take alarm and hide away where we were not likely to find them. The admiral's plans were quickly and secretly formed. All the boats of the fleet were ordered to assemble, with the crews well armed, by break of day, on board the Rainbow. Silently we pulled in for the city much in the same way that we should have attempted to surprise a place held by an enemy. Having completely surrounded all the lower parts of the town inhabited by the class of men we wanted, we commenced our press. While one portion of our force were told off to keep guard, the others broke into every house without ceremony, where there was a probability of finding men. Very seldom we stopped to knock for admission. Generally the door was forced open, and in we rushed, seizing the husband from the arms of his wife, and very often allowing him scarcely time to put on his clothes, while we were compelled to endure the bitter invectives, the tears, the screams, and abuse of his wife, whom we were thus cruelly robbing. Sometimes the men, aided by their better halves, made an attempt at resistance, but were speedily overpowered, bound hand and foot, and carried off. Often, too, we fell in with young men of a better class, mates of merchantmen and others lately married; and truly pitiable was it to witness the grief and agony of the poor young wives as they saw their husbands in the power of our rough-looking and seemingly heartless press-gangs. They did not scream; they did not abuse us; but often on their knees, with tears and sighs, they implored us to release those who had become dearer to them than life itself. These appeals I found harder to withstand than anything else, and had to steel my heart and to assume a roughness which I did not feel, to resist giving way to their entreaties. I did, as it was, all I could to assure them that their husbands would soon again be at liberty; though I might have remembered, had I thought more about it, how bitterly they would be disappointed. In too many instances, husbands and wives then parted, never met again. Fathers, also, were torn from their children, leaving them desolate indeed; young sons were carried off from their parents. We had not time to stop to listen to any remonstrances. Men must be had at every cost. The only question asked was, "Have you a protection?" If not, seamen, and often landsmen, if they were stout fellows, were bound hand and foot and carried off to the boats. I would have given much to have allowed one young man, especially, to escape. He had been aroused by the noise in the street, and was sitting up dressed when we entered his house, holding his wife in his arms. She was a fragile, delicate-looking girl, soon about to become a mother. I felt almost sure when I saw the couple that the shock would kill her.

"You will not take him, sir?" she said, calmly appealing to me as I entered the room in which my men had just seized him, though even they were inclined to treat him with some delicacy. "He has been an officer, sir. You will not carry him off and make a common seaman of him? Oh, sir, he is my husband, he does not wish to leave me. Let him, let him remain!"

This simple and artless appeal affected me much.

"He surely has some protection," said I. "Pray, let me see it."

"Oh, you relent, you relent!" she shrieked out joyfully.

"I have no protection that I am aware of, except the right of being free," answered the young man mournfully.

If I let this poor fellow off, so I must many others, and, besides, my duty is to take him; orders must be obeyed, I reflected.

"It cannot be helped," said I gruffly. "You must come along with us. The captain may let you off when he hears your story."

"I'll go quietly, but do not bind me, for mercy's sake," he answered calmly.

I walked out of the room. There was the sound of something falling on the floor. The poor young wife had fainted. Thus the husband had to leave her, unconscious of her bereavement, he was conveyed on board the Charon. Before we left the port, a letter was brought him from the shore. He was a widower. While he remained in the ship he was to all appearance a steady, obedient man, but I suspect that he wreaked a bitter vengeance ere long for the cruel wrong he felt that he had suffered.

The result of this hot-press was four hundred men, captured that forenoon. A fleet of transports now received on board another division of two thousand troops, to be conveyed to the assistance of Lord Cornwallis, at Portsmouth.

On the 12th of May, having fallen down to the Hook, we sailed with the whole fleet for the southward. Nothing occurred on the passage except the capture of an unfortunate brig, which found herself near us in a calm, and upon which nearly all the boats of the squadron set at once. It made me think of a number of birds of prey pouncing down on some poor beast of burden which has dropped through fatigue on the road. The commander-in-chief having given up the command of the convoy to Captain Symonds, leaving also the Roebuck and Assurance, he parted company, while we continued our course for our destination.

We anchored with the convoy off Sewel's Point on the 20th, and Captain Symonds remained in command till the 30th, when the Richmond coming in, he was relieved of that duty by Captain Hudson. Twice during that time I was sent on shore with flags of truce to Hampton, where I was, as before, most hospitably received by my friends the Langtons. My first inquiries on returning to the coast of Virginia had been for Colonel Carlyon. He was still a prisoner at Portsmouth; but, from what I could learn, I had hopes that he would soon be exchanged. I was unable to see him before I was sent off to Hampton. On reaching the house of my friends, I eagerly asked after Madeline. I felt that it was unnecessary with them to disguise my feelings, and that it would please them better if I spoke openly to them on the subject.

"Where is she? Is she safe? Is she well?" I exclaimed, almost before the first greetings were over.

To all my questions they gave me satisfactory answers, and I went back much lighter of heart than I had been for a long time. They also loaded me with all the luxuries and delicacies which their most fertile province can produce, and welcomed indeed they were by my messmates, who had been for some time living chiefly on salt pork, beef, and peas-pudding—not pleasant food during a warm spring in that southern clime. On my second visit I had the satisfaction of negotiating the exchange of Colonel Carlyon and some other Americans with several of our own officers, who had been captured in the numerous engagements our forces had lately had in the Carolinas, as well as in some of what I may, with justice, call our marauding expeditions in Virginia. I had an opportunity of seeing Colonel Carlyon but for a moment, when he again expressed his gratitude for what he was pleased to call the very great services I had done him. Curious it may seem, but I had rather he had said less on the subject, and taken it for granted that nothing could give me greater satisfaction than assisting the father of one to whom I was so deeply attached. There was, I thought, too much stiffness and formality in his mode of expressing himself. I, of course, speak of what my feelings were at the time, and after I had left him my spirits once more sank to their former level. Those were busy times, and I had not much opportunity of being troubled with my own thoughts.

Once more, on the 4th of June, we put to sea, to convoy thirty sail of transports back to New York; chased a rebel privateer on our way, but she escaped us. When there, we refitted the ship, and sailed again for Virginia on the 24th of June. On the 26th spoke the Solebay and Warwick, with a convoy from Europe, and after parting from them on the same day, sighted another sail, which did her utmost to escape from us. We accordingly made sail after her, and at the end of four hours, on coming up and signalising her, she proved to be no other than the Cartwright packet from Falmouth to New York. The moment I discovered this my heart began to beat with anxiety to hear from those I loved so well. It was long since I had had any news from home. Letters might, I knew, have been written, but being so constantly on the move as I had been, there were great probabilities of their having missed me. The packet hove-to. She had letters on board for the Charon. The bag was delivered. I had one. There was a black seal to it. The handwriting was that of my sister.

There was bad news, I knew. For some moments I dared not open it. One of our family circle was gone. When I returned his or her place would be empty. I tore open the letter. One we could all of us least spare, one we had every reason to love and revere, was taken from us. My father was no more. A choking sensation filled my throat—tears, long strangers, then started to my eyes. Often had I pictured to myself the delight I should feel, should I carry home Madeline as my bride, in presenting her to him. I knew how he would admire her, how proud he would be of her, how he would have delighted to call her his little rebel American daughter-in-law. All that was ended. I should never again see the kind, good old man. I dashed the tears from my eyes, and in a hoarse voice gave the order to trim sails as we once more shaped a course to the southward.

We arrived off the Heads of Virginia on the 9th of July, and found there the Richmond, Guadaloupe, Fowey, and Vulcan fire-ship. It had been for some time seen that the town of Portsmouth was not a tenable post. The neighbourhood, especially in the summer season, was unhealthy, and ships of any size could not get up sufficiently near it to assist in its defence. The commanders-in-chief had accordingly resolved to evacuate it, and to occupy York Town, on the James River, instead. The latter place was supposed to possess many advantages over the former, while the river was navigable for ships of far larger burden than those which could approach Portsmouth.

The first division of the army having embarked on board the transports by the 30th of July we sailed with them, Lord Cornwallis himself, who took the command, being on board the Richmond. We landed the troops on the 2nd, and took possession of York Town and Gloucester without any opposition. It was not, however, till the 19th that the second division of the army arrived, Portsmouth being entirely evacuated. There was a general feeling that events of considerable importance were about to occur. While we were eagerly looking for a reinforcement of troops and the arrival of a fleet capable of competing with the French, the enemy were assembling their forces in the neighbourhood, and it was very evident would bring the whole of their strength to bear upon York Town, and to endeavour to crush our army there before the arrival of the aid we so much required. I resolved at all events to note down from day to day with even greater care than heretofore the occurrences which might take place in the stout brown journal which had already been so long my companion, and which I had preserved through so many chances of destruction both by fire and water—from thieves and the carelessness of servants and others to whom I had from time to time been compelled to entrust it. Yet here it still is, battered on the outside, like its owner; but, though its leaves are somewhat yellow and stained, as sound as ever in the main, and with the ink as black as the day it was written. Brief but, believe me, perfectly accurate, according to my means of information and my own observation, are the descriptions I am about to offer of those events. Before, however, I go on with my journal I will give a short account of the position now taken up by the British army.

The peninsula which is formed by the rivers James and York is one of the richest and most beautiful parts of Virginia. York Town is situated on the south bank of the latter-named stream and on the narrowest part of the peninsula, which is there but five miles across. Gloucester Point is on the north, and therefore the opposite side of the river, into which it extends so far that it reaches within almost a mile of York Town. The two posts thus completely command the navigation of the river, which is here of sufficient depth to allow ships of considerable size to ascend it. The force with which we now occupied these two important positions amounted to about 7000 men, and it was the intention of Lord Cornwallis so completely to fortify them both on the sea and land sides, that they might resist any attack likely

to be made against them either by the French fleet or the combined American and French armies till we could be relieved by Sir Henry Clinton or by a fresh army and fleet from England. It was too well known from the first that the army was but ill-supplied with guns, and indeed with all the munitions of war requisite for carrying on offensive, or even defensive, operations against the enemy. This became still more evident when the guns and ammunition were landed from the ships-of-war, and the crews were summoned on shore to work them. Every effort was made to put our positions in an efficient state of defence, for our hopes of being relieved from New York were very slight, it being understood that General Washington was preparing for an attack on that city with all the forces he could muster in the north, at the same time that a sufficient number of troops were left in the south to give us a good deal of trouble, and to cause much anxiety to our commanders-in-chief. By my daily journal I find that on the 20th of August the Charon's lower deck guns were landed for the defences on shore, while she with the Richmond was moored so as to flank the enemy should they make an attack on Gloucester.

21st.—The troops were engaged in throwing up works, while the seamen of the squadron were employed in landing the guns and ammunition, the transports, meantime, being secured under the town of York.

22nd.—The seamen were employed in the boats, landing at every available spot on the river, and foraging. On the following day detachments of men were landed to assist the troops in throwing up works.

24th.—Foraging parties from the army and navy procuring fresh provisions often having to take them by force, while the remainder were employed on the works. It was an ominous circumstance that at no time did the inhabitants offer a cordial welcome to any of our troops, although to individuals they were often inclined to show courtesy and kindness.

25th.—The Richmond sailed for New York, leaving the command of the squadron to Captain Symonds.

26th.—I was sent to get off a schooner belonging to the enemy which had been run on shore in a small creek. I accomplished my mission, and, she being found a serviceable little craft, the commodore kept her as a tender, and appointed me to the command of her.

27th.—The Bonetta was sent to anchor on the Shoe as advanced ship to give notice of the approach of an enemy. I was employed with thirty seamen in fitting out the tender.

28th.—While the army was employed as before on the works, they were engaged in pulling down the houses in front of York Town, greatly to their amusement, it seemed. Tackles were hooked on to the top of the walls, and thundering down they came almost on the heads of the men. The wonder was that numbers were not crushed beneath the ruins as off they ran, laughing and shouting with glee at the havoc they had committed.

29th.—The Guadaloupe and Express despatched to Charleston, and the Loyalist sent to the Shoe to relieve the Bonetta.

30th.—A day of much excitement and no little anxiety. About noon the Guadaloupe and Bonetta were seen standing up the harbour under all sail, and soon it became known that they had been chased by a fleet of French ships, consisting of twenty-six sail of the line, besides frigates, fire-ships, bombs, and transports, who followed them to the mouth of the harbour and captured the Loyalist within three miles of the town after a most gallant resistance, her masts having gone by the board before she struck her colours to the enemy. This fleet is commanded by the Count de Grasse, and has come direct from the West Indies. Three of their ships brought up at the mouth of the harbour, but the main body anchored at Lynhaven Bay.

31st.—The enemy's forces have assembled at Williamsburg, about twelve miles from York, under the command of the Marquis de la Fayette, and the French fleet advanced to the Shoe. Thus is York Town shut in both by sea and land, and it becomes evident that they intend more and more closely to press us in till they completely invest our positions. The troops and seamen engaged hard at the works. The shipping removing further up the harbour.

September 1st.—The French landed 6000 troops up the James river, which joined the Marquis de la Fayette at Williamsburg. The enemy now far outnumber us. I was sent for by the commodore that night, and directed to guard, till she had safely passed the French advanced ships, an express boat which was sent off to convey important despatches to New York, describing the dangerous position in which we were placed. The risk of being captured was very great. My greatest safeguard was in the very boldness of the undertaking. The night was dark, and as the roads where they were anchored were very wide, I might hope to slip by without being observed. As soon as night fell we sailed. The wind was fair, and we stood boldly on, looking out for the dark forms of the enemy's ships. One after the other were passed, till at midnight we were clear of the enemy, as we believed, and the despatch-boat stood on her course for the northward, while I made the best of my way back to port. Here I arrived by daylight, and my report seemed to give great satisfaction to the commodore.

2nd.—The seamen of the fleet were removed on shore, and took up their quarters in tents. Engaged night and day in throwing up works towards the sea, from which quarter an attack may be expected.

3rd.—Nine of the French ships advanced to Tous Marsh, and the rest employed in landing the artillery and stores up James river.

4th.—Mounted all the Charon's eighteen-pounders on the new sea works. The seamen engaged in pulling down the front of the town, and in cutting trees for stockades.

5th.—The enemy preparing to commence the attack.

6th and 7th.—The seamen unrigging the ships and hauling some transports on shore for the defence of the place. The army, as before, employed without intermission on the works, day and night.

8th.—The enemy's advanced ships quitted the river and joined the main body at Lynhaven Bay in consequence of Admiral Graves having appeared off the Capes with twenty sail of the line. After some slight skirmishing with the French, the British admiral was compelled from their great superiority in strength to retreat. The French also on their return to Lynhaven Bay unfortunately fell in with the Richmond and Iris frigates, both of which were captured.

9th.—My duties are very arduous, but honourable, and show the confidence reposed in me by my superior officer. I went down the river in the tender to reconnoitre the enemy's fleet, with orders to come occasionally up in sight of York to signal what was going on among them. The French fleet from Rhode Island under Monsieur de Barras had now joined them, making their force consist of thirty-six sail of the line besides frigates, fire-ships, bombs and transports. During the night I signalled to York Town that the enemy were at anchor in Lynhaven Bay, and then I stood off and on in sight of them, watching for any movement till daylight.

10th.—Observed the enemy getting under weigh from Lynhaven Bay. Watched them till they stood towards the Shoe. Ran up and signalled accordingly. Soon after they anchored at that place.

11th.—Calm, moderate weather. At four AM the enemy began to advance from the Shoe, at which time I lay becalmed about three miles from them, and as they brought the sea breeze with them while I was without power of moving, I felt that my time was come, and that I should once more fall into their hands as a prisoner. Ou Trou and all its horrors rose up before me. Old Nol looked very grave.

"It's hard times we shall have of it, Mr Hurry, if the breeze don't be smart about coming, sir," he remarked, shaking his head. "I'd sooner by half have a chance of fighting, sir, than running for our liberty."

"We have no choice left us, I fear, Grampus," said I. "However, we'll do our best, and not give in as long as the little barkie can swim."

"That's it, sir, that's the thing. The people will stick by you and go down in the craft if you wishes it," was his answer.

This being the spirit of my men, my hopes revived. The enemy came on slowly, but still they were nearing me. With hearty good-will every one on board kept whistling for a wind, but for all that the breeze did not come. At six o'clock one of the headmost ships tried the range of her guns by firing a shot at me. It came pretty near, but a miss is as good as a mile. There was, however, no time to be lost. Another and another shot came whistling after me. I cut away my boat, the breeze was rippling the water astern. I trimmed sails, the wind filled them. Once more the craft began to move. She slipped faster and faster through the water, and away she went before the wind with everything we could clap on her like a scalded cock, as O'Driscoll remarked afterwards, and for this time happily escaped the durance vile I had been anticipating. At noon I made the signal that the enemy were still approaching, and at four o'clock, they having anchored at the mouth of the harbour, I ran up to the town with the conviction that Othello's occupation had gone. In the evening I accordingly received orders to haul her on shore and to join the Charon's at the battery in which they were posted. I do not mean to say that we did not hope by some means or other to succeed, but even the most sanguine could not help acknowledging just then that things looked black and threatening in the extreme.

Chapter Twenty Seven.

Defence of York Town.—Sent with fire-ships against French fleet.—Failure.—In command of battery.—Fierce engagements.—Colonel Carlyon a prisoner and wounded.—The Charon blows up.—Desperate condition of the town.—Death of my old follower.—Attempt to evacuate town frustrated by a gale.—I am badly wounded.—Army of Lord Cornwallis capitulates.—War at an end.—Prisoners kindly treated by Americans and French.—Madeline becomes my nurse.—News from England.—Sir Hurricane Tempest has left me his heir.—I marry the little rebel.—Finis.

I could not help feeling, in common with many other thoughtful officers, that we were on the eve of great events. Each day, each hour confirmed this opinion, and now we were startled if not confounded by the undoubted information that General Washington had arrived with a considerable body of troops from the north. He arrived on the 24th in the Chesapeake, with, it was said, six thousand French and continental troops, whom we had the mortification to see a frigate and a body of transports go down to bring up, we no longer having the power to molest them. Thus still further was the dark thunder-cloud augmented, about, we believed, to break over our heads. Day and night, however, we continued working at the batteries, and levelling houses, and clearing all the ground round the lines of everything which might afford the enemy shelter in their expected attack.

September 15th, 1781.—Two ships of the line and a frigate came up a mile nearer the forts, and under cover of their guns foraging parties went on shore, whom we were thus prevented from attacking.

16th.—Never did men work harder than we had been doing to strengthen a position to enable us to hold out till the arrival of a fleet superior to the French; and from news received our hopes again arose that it might yet arrive before we were driven to extremities. Many persons have been blaming Sir Henry Clinton for allowing General Washington to pass by him, but the truth is, he did not expect that this would have been done, but fully believed that he purposed rather to besiege New York itself.

17th.—A ship of the line advanced from the shore and joined those off Tous Marsh. Signals being made all day long between the French Commodore and the Compte de Grasse. French frigates passing and re-passing between their squadrons. Something evidently in the wind.

18th.—Our forces employed as usual in pulling down houses and throwing up works.

19th.—All the women and children, the negroes and other non-combatants, were sent out of the town to enable us to eke out our not-over-abundant supply of provisions.

20th.—The soldiers engaged in throwing up works, the seamen in cutting down trees and in forming stockades.

21st.—Heavy rain fell, greatly retarding the progress of the works. I was not a little pleased to hear that an attempt was to be made to destroy the French squadron at the mouth of the harbour, and that four fire-ships were to be employed on that service. I immediately offered to command one of them—an offer which was at once accepted. Lieutenants Conway and Symonds were appointed to command two others, and Mr Camel, a lieutenant of a privateer, had charge of the fourth. Our wish was to be under the orders of Captain Palmer of the Vulcan, whose experience and judgment we felt would insure success, but the commodore decided on allowing each of us to trust to our own abilities and to act according to circumstances. The vessels were patched-up schooners and sloops, and fitted in so hurried a way that they were scarcely manageable. The experiment was to have been made that night, but the wind and weather proving unfavourable, Captain Palmer, with whom we consulted, advised us to defer it till the following—

22nd.—The wind being about north-west, it was this evening considered practicable to attack the advanced ships of the enemy, and we accordingly made preparations for our hazardous expedition. The Vulcan and four other vessels were to be employed in the service. I was of course well acquainted with all the risks to be encountered. I knew that I might either be blown up, or, if overtaken by the enemy, cut to pieces without remorse, no quarter being given to people engaged in that sort of work. During the first day after volunteering I had not time to think much about the matter, but four-and-twenty hours spent in comparative inaction enabled me to contemplate the consequences in their true light, and though I felt as resolved and determined as ever, I knew well that this might be the last day of my existence. I did not so much dread the future, I own, as regret all I was leaving behind. I thought over and over again of Madeline—of the happiness I had hoped to enjoy with her—of the grief should I fall, my death would cause her. I thought of my family and of the dear ones still surviving at home who hoped to welcome me when war was over, but would hope in vain. I felt very grave and sad, but not the less resolved or undaunted I may say, and determined to do my duty. The time was approaching for our start. I walked aft and stood looking over the taffrail away from the crew, and there I offered up a deep, earnest prayer for protection for myself and also for my people in the expedition in which we were engaged. Yes, I prayed, and sincerely too, believing that I was praying aright as I stood over all those terrific combustibles which were to bring havoc and destruction among hundreds of our fellow-creatures not more guilty, not more worthy of death than were I and my fellows. I will not stop to moralise on that subject, yet I have often since thought that it is one worthy of deep consideration. Of one thing only I was certain that, as an officer in the Navy, I was doing my duty to my king and country in endeavouring to destroy their enemies, and all the rest I left to the guidance of Him who rules all things for the best. I now feel that there is a purer law, a stricter rule which should prevail instead of those which most men follow, but it would be out of place here to discuss the subject.

The ships in the harbour gave out the hour of midnight. It was the signal agreed on for starting. We made sail, cut our cables, and ran down the river. The wind held fair, the night was dark, and there appeared every probability that our undertaking would succeed. Nol Grampus, Rockets, and four other men were with me to man the boat in which we were to make our escape. Not a word was spoken. Every arrangement had before been made. Having placed our vessels in a position from which they could not fail to drift down on the enemy, we were to set fire to them, and then, jumping into our boats, pull away for our lives. There was not much fear of pursuit if the vessels hit their marks, as we knew that the boats of the squadron would be engaged in endeavouring to clear their ships of the burning craft. If, however, through a change of wind, or any other circumstance, they should drift clear of the ships, it was probable that the boats might come in chase of us to take vengeance on our heads for the injury we had attempted to inflict on them.

There lay the French squadron before us, no one on board dreaming of the havoc and destruction about to be wrought among them. It was just two o’clock in the morning. Our little flotilla of evil was slowly approaching. Evidently no sufficient watch was kept ahead of the French ships. Our success appeared certain. Suddenly a bright light burst forth, revealing our vessels clearly to the enemy, and shedding a lurid glare over their ships which lay sleeping on the calm water ahead. What had happened? There, blazing away on the right of our line, was the fire-ship commanded by Mr Camel, the lieutenant of the privateer. The proceeding was as unaccountable as strange, and I at once suspected that he had thus acted to betray us. I never have had cause to place much confidence in privateer officers, though undoubtedly many brave men are to be found among them. The instant the flames blazed up, the roll of drums was heard on board the French ships beating to quarters. Then a brisk fire from thirty to forty guns was opened on us, and the shot came rattling thickly about our heads. The light had revealed to the Frenchmen our fire-vessels, and they could not tell how many more might be in the rear, so they hurriedly cut their cables, and, in the greatest confusion, endeavoured to make sail to get out of our way. Mr Conway next set fire to his vessel, Symonds following his example, and both taking to their boats. I had still hopes of effecting my purpose, so I stood on. I had not gone far before Grampus exclaimed from forward—

“There, sir; there are the French launches; they are after us!”

Such was the case.

“Haul up the boat, my lads!” I exclaimed. “Jump into her!”

As the men slipped over the side I set fire to the train, and, before I had time to jump into the boat, the vessel was in a blaze from stem to stern. The Vulcan was the last vessel fired. She was, at the time, within her own length of a French twenty-four. What had become of her gallant commander and crew I could not discover. The French launches were after me. My people pulled away with all their might. It was, indeed, a matter of life and death. The other boats were ahead, and I hoped safe. Several bullets came whizzing past us. As I looked astern, my satisfaction was great to see our fire-ships still blazing away, and the Frenchmen drifting, as it appeared, towards the shore. As it afterwards

appeared, two of them did drive on shore, and I believe that, had our ships had their guns on board, we might by prompt action have run down and destroyed them before reinforcements could have come to their aid. Happily for me the French launches were recalled to go to the assistance of their ships, and, finding myself no longer pursued, I lay on my oars to try and discover what had become of Captain Palmer. To my great satisfaction, he soon made his appearance, having, at first, wisely pulled across the stream, where he had not been observed. All the boats assembling together, we returned considerably crestfallen and dispirited to our tents. Whether it was treachery, cowardice, or want of consideration induced the privateer's man to set fire to his vessel I cannot say, but owing to him alone was the failure of our expedition to be attributed.

23rd.—The French this morning got off their ships, and removed to a more respectable distance from the garrison. Guard-boats were sent down the river, and continued rowing all night. This duty pressed very severely on the seamen of the fleet. The enemy began their march from Williamsburg, and on this day attacked and drove in our pickets.

24th.—The seamen were directed to man the guns in the front, and they were then to-day reviewed by Lord Cornwallis.

25th.—To-day the seamen were again inspected by Lord Cornwallis, and went through the exercise of the great guns before him, when his lordship expressed himself highly pleased with our conduct. At this time, the first lieutenant of the Charon commanded a battery in the centre of the lines of one twenty-four, two eighteens, and two twelves; I had charge of a battery with three eighteenss and four sixes, in front of the 17th Regiment to the right; Lieutenant Symonds, one of three nines to the left of mine; Lieutenant Conway, of two nines, to the right of all; Mr Conway, of two twelves, as flanking guns; the master of the Fowey, of two nines, in front of the 43rd Regiment; while all the batteries to the left were manned by seamen from the transports, under the command of the agent. All the sea batteries were commanded by Mr Robb, master of the Charon. Thus it will be seen that the Navy took a very active part in the defence of the place.

26th.—The seamen's tents were to-day moved in front of the quarters of the army, close to our batteries. This was done, as we were in momentary expectation of being attacked by the enemy.

27th.—Our pickets were driven in, and the enemy advanced in order of battle. The troops marched out to meet them, Lord Cornwallis being resolved to give them battle; but they retired as we advanced, evidently at that time not wishing to bring on the final struggle. Our army, therefore, returned within the lines.

28th.—At noon the enemy appeared in front of our works, in force about 26,000. They extended the whole distance from the right to the left of our lines, and a very formidable force they appeared. It was evident that they wished, by their show of numbers, to strike terror into the hearts of our men. They were mistaken, however, if such was their object, for nothing could persuade our fellows that any one of themselves was not equal to twenty Continentals or Frenchmen. It is very well for the men to despise an enemy, and to feel sure that they can thrash him; but officers, on the contrary, cannot have too much respect for him, nor do too much to insure victory, or take too many precautions to guard against surprise. A body of the enemy advancing to reconnoitre in a ravine in front of my battery, I opened fire on them till they rapidly dispersed.

29th.—Lord Cornwallis, having in vain, with his small army of 5000 men, offered the enemy battle, and finding them intent on waiting their own time to attack him on the left flank, moved this night with all the army inside the works. He did not doubt but that, by acting on the defensive, we should be able to hold out till the arrival of the long and earnestly-expected fleet and army to relieve us. It is no disparagement to the bravery of our little army to say that that succour was most earnestly prayed for. A body of French horse and foot attacked the German Legion, who had to retreat under the cover of a battery to the left. I had again to open fire with my 18-pounders on a body of the enemy who appeared in front of the works, but took to flight as the shot went rattling in among them.

30th.—The enemy broke ground, and began to throw up redoubts, moving on at the same time in three columns towards our centre. They quickly took possession of two of our redoubts, which we had evacuated on withdrawing into the town. At eleven o'clock they attacked the right and left of the town with the intention evidently of storming the flanking redoubts. A smart action ensued. Our men behaved magnificently, so did the enemy; but after severe fighting for two hours they were repulsed, and while our batteries played on them they were driven back in great confusion into the woods behind the town.

1st October.—The Hessian Legion with other light troops made a sortie, and while skirmishing in front of the town captured several of the enemy. The Hessians returned into the town close to my battery. I observed that they were carrying among them a person on a litter. At first I thought that it was one of their own wounded people, but as they came nearer his uniform showed me that he was an American officer. A strong impulse induced me to hurry down to meet him, and I knew at all events that very likely the Hessians would not understand him, and I was anxious to render him assistance—a mark of my interest in the Americans which I felt glad my duty would allow me to bestow. I started when I got up to the litter, for though his features were convulsed with pain, I recognised Colonel Carlyon. He had been shot through both his legs. He knew me when I spoke to him. I explained who he was as well as I could to one of the Hessian officers whom I knew, and entreated that he might be carefully looked after. Just then O'Driscoll, who had come on shore from the ship, arrived to pay me a visit, and volunteered to accompany Colonel Carlyon to some house where he might be comfortably lodged, and to get a surgeon to attend to his wounds. I explained to the colonel what I had done. He pressed my hand warmly as if he understood me, for he was in too much pain to speak, and I hurried back to my battery.

The enemy were now night and day engaged in throwing up works, while our batteries kept up a continual cannonade on the people labouring in them, which impeded their operations somewhat. Notwithstanding this, from the immense number of men employed, the works were raised with astonishing rapidity. At night a negro was caught deserting to the enemy with a note in his possession from one of the merchants in the town describing the distressed

state of the garrison. I have not spoken much of our distress, but it was very great. Our supply of food was daily becoming more scanty and bad, and it could scarcely be concealed that even our ammunition was failing us. The treacherous merchant was at once taken in custody, to be tried for his crime.

2nd October.—A constant and heavy cannonade kept up all day on the enemy's working parties. They nearly completed their first parallel. Our men occupied in throwing up works.

3rd.—Much as yesterday. The enemy bringing up their artillery.

4th.—A flag came in from the enemy; the cause I know not. Perhaps to offer terms. We kept up as hot a fire as our want of ammunition would allow. Each day I sent to inquire after Colonel Carlyon, but could not leave my battery.

5th.—The French displayed five stand of colours on their works, while the Americans displayed their new States' flag of the Stars and Stripes; we eagerly looking for that relief which would enable us to sally out from behind our works, beside which we stood fretting angrily, and drive them away into the recesses of their woods and marshes.

6th and 7th.—The enemy mounting their heavy artillery on their first parallel and supplying their batteries with ammunition. The garrison throwing up traverses to defend the works.

8th.—The enemy attacked our pickets on the left at midnight, and drove them inside the lines. Some time after this a body of them came to the barricade and persuaded the officers that they were deserters. The officers of the 43rd regiment, in a most unwary manner having got on the works to show them the way in, were treacherously shot at and killed, their murderers making their escape.

9th.—The enemy having completed their works and mounted their guns, their batteries opened on the evening of this day with great vigour, that on the right of eight 24-pounders, and that on the left of four 24-pounders and two eighteens. Day and night the cannonade continued without intermission—we, as well as we could, keeping up a reply. Several shot having struck the Charon and Guadaloupe, they were removed farther down the river. It will be impossible to account for the killed and wounded in each day's action. I may be able to say something about it if I come out of the work alive. All I can now say is that the slaughter is very great. Among the killed this day is the commissary-general, who with several other officers lost their lives, while sitting at dinner, by a shell which burst among them.

10th.—The enemy opened several fresh batteries to-day. One of them commanded the Charon, on which they began to cannonade with red-hot shot. I heard of her danger from Tom Rockets, who came hurrying into the battery with a look of as much concern as if the town had been taken.

"They're at her, sir!" he exclaimed. "They're blazing away like fury, and I see'd smoke, when last I looked at her, coming up her main-hatchway. Poor old barkie! I don't by no manner of means like the look of things."

I could ill spare any of my people from the battery, but I despatched a master's mate, with Grampus, Rockets, and a few other men, to render what assistance they could. They, however, very soon returned.

"I know'd it would be so," exclaimed old Grampus, throwing down his hat and almost blubbering outright. "The dear old barkie, there's an end on her. I know'd she was to have ill-luck from the time we first came inside them Capes of Virginia; but I didn't think, that I didn't, that she'd have been blown to blazes by them infernal hot iron balls, which to my mind ain't fit for Christians to make use on, that they ain't. Well, there was we a-waiting for a boat to get aboard her, though I didn't think there was much use, seeing she was in a blaze from stem to stern. In a few minutes the flames licked and coiled themselves up round the masts and spars till they reached the mast-heads, and then she broke adrift from her moorings, and, not content with getting burnt herself, what should she do but drive aboard a transport which she set on fire, and then there the two were burning away together, without the power of mortal man to stop them. The enemy were still commanding them, while our old barkie, to show that she was game to the last, kept firing away her own guns as long as one of them remained mounted, and then up she went in a shower of sparks and flames, and wasn't long in burning to the water's edge."

The master's mate told me that, notwithstanding the circumstances Nol had described, he could scarcely restrain him and the other men from shoving off to get aboard the frigate. The inconvenience we suffered, the loss of our things, was not to be compared to our regret for the destruction, (for her rate), of one of the finest ships in the Navy. Scenes almost indescribable of distress and death, misery and suffering, now crowd around us on every side.

This evening the enemy, having mounted more of his artillery, totally silenced Number 5 battery commanded by the first lieutenant of the Charon, the shot and shells having torn up his platforms and dismounted his guns. He, with his men, was therefore obliged to quit it. At ten o'clock at night the enemy under cover of their guns made a general attack from the centre to the left, but were again repulsed. Twice I witnessed the Hessians give way before the enemy in front of my works. The cannonade continued all night with a warmth hitherto unsurpassed. The slaughter in all parts of the town was very great. We were occasionally employed in restoring the works which the enemy had knocked down. Not a moment was there for rest; every man was employed either in fighting or toiling with pickaxe or shovel. Many parts of the town were set on fire, a lurid glare being cast over the whole scene, exposing to sight the falling buildings, the brave garrison working their guns or labouring in the trenches, the wounded carried off on litters, the dead strewed about in every direction; the whole to my idea presenting a picture more awful and terrific than any I had ever yet beheld; yet I had seen, as may be remembered, in my day a good deal of hard fighting.

11th.—No words of mine can properly describe the dreadful condition to which our small but brave garrison was reduced. The enemy this evening began their second parallel by which they advanced three hundred yards nearer to us. Their fire continued incessant from heavy artillery and mortars, and we opened fresh embrasures to flank their works, keeping up a constant fire from all the howitzers and small mortars were possessed. Upwards of a thousand shells were thrown into the works this night, and every spot alike became dangerous. To talk of the thundering of the

cannon, the cries of the wounded, and the shrieks and distressing gestures of the inhabitants, whose dwellings were in flames, and knew not where to seek for safety, will but give a faint picture of what was taking place. Yet amidst all this havoc, destruction, and suffering, the known scarcity of everything necessary to prolong the siege, no murmuring was heard. Not a wish was expressed to give up the town while the most distant hope remained of our being relieved. On the contrary, our gallant little army, taking example from their chief, exhibited the most undaunted resolution, and hourly gave proof of their attachment to the noble general who had so often led them on to victory in the field. One man there is, and one only, who may well tremble at the result. Often do I think of him and what his fate will be if the place is taken by assault. Yet, strange to say, he appears as cool and fearless as the rest. On this night the enemy burnt several transports with red-hot shot and sunk two others from a battery on the left. The inhabitants who still remained in the town, and other non-combatants, were now living in holes under the cliffs or along the shore by the river side. Even there, however, they were not safe, the shot finding them out in their places of refuge and destroying numbers of them. My great anxiety was for Colonel Carlyon. He was recovering from his wounds, but I dreaded lest a stray shot or shell might penetrate the hospital, and that he might share the fate of so many of our own people. I sent him a message whenever I had an opportunity, and received many kind expressions from him in return.

12th.—At eight o’clock this morning the enemy sunk one of the fire-ships from a fresh battery thrown up during the night. All day a hot fire was kept up from it which almost completed the destruction of the shipping intended for the defence of the town against an attack by sea.

At nine o’clock the chief officer of artillery waited on the commodore with a message from Lord Cornwallis, requesting that the lieutenants of the navy with their men should move on from the right into the hornwork on the left, which the crews of the transports had quitted in consequence of the heavy fire to which it was exposed. It was every instant expected that the enemy would storm the works. Hearing this, I immediately volunteered to work this battery, and set off for it accordingly, with a midshipman and thirty-six seamen, it being understood that I was to be relieved in eight hours by the first lieutenant. In fifty-two minutes after my arrival in the hornwork the enemy silenced the three left guns by closing the embrasures, and shortly afterwards they dismounted a twelve-pounder, knocked off the muzzles of two eighteens, and for the last hour and a half of the time I had undertaken to hold the post left me with one eighteen-pounder. Although even a part of its muzzle also was shot away, I kept up a fire with it, determining to hold out to the last. My poor fellows were falling thick around me. Numbers had been wounded; scarcely one had escaped; eight had been killed. Tom Rockets had received a bad injury on one arm; still he worked away with the other, helping as best he could to load and fire the gun. The midshipman, Nol Grampus, and I were the only men in the battery uninjured. Old Nol stood as upright and undaunted as ever. The gun had just been loaded; he held the match in his hand; he was about to fire. At that instant I saw a shell pitching into the battery. Our gun went off. Its roar seemed louder than before. At the same instant there was the noise of the bursting of the shell. I was covered with dust and smoke. It cleared away, but when I looked out for Grampus, expecting to see him at the gun, he was gone. A little way off lay a mangled form. I ran up. It was that of my old faithful follower and friend. He knew me, but he was breathing out his last.

“I knowed it would be so, Mr Hurry,” he whispered, as I stooped down over him. “When I saw the old barkie go I knowed that the days of many on us was numbered. I’d have like to have seen the war ended, and you, Mr Hurry, made happy. Bless you, my boy, bless you! You’ve always showed your love for the old seaman. Well, it’s all right. I don’t fear to die. He who rules up aloft knows what’s best. He will have mercy on a poor ignorant sailor who trusts on One who came on earth to save him. That’s my religion. You stick to that, boy! I can’t see. I’m cold, very cold.”

I took my old friend’s hand. He pressed it faintly. “Thank ye, thank ye,” I thought he said. His lips moved for a few moments, then suddenly he fell back. A shudder passed through his frame, and he was gone. A better or a braver seaman than Nol Grampus never died fighting for his sovereign’s cause.

I had to spring up and help work the gun, for another of my poor fellows was just knocked over. I looked at my watch. It was the time my relief should arrive, and time it was, for the midshipman and I were the only two now remaining unhurt. Out of the thirty-six men who followed me into the battery nine lay dead, eight more were breathing out their last on the ground, and of the nineteen others most had lost either an arm or a leg.

At last my brother-officer with some men appeared. He stood aghast, as well he might, at the spectacle presented to him. As he was approaching me a shell fell in the space between us, sending its fragments in every direction. I felt that I was wounded, and, staggering back, I fell to the ground. My brother-officer ran to lift me up. I found that I had been struck on the right leg and received a severe contusion on the head, but in a few minutes I was able to stand. The midshipman also was wounded in the arm by the same shell, and he and I were the only two people able to walk out of the battery. Of the others several died before they were removed. I left it at a quarter-past six, and on my way past the redoubt, where he had been the greater part of the time, I received the thanks of my Lord Cornwallis for what he was pleased to call my gallantry and determination.

13th.—Too clearly does it appear that a struggle in which we can scarcely hope to be the victors is approaching. The besiegers have greatly augmented the number of their guns and mortars in the works of their second parallel, while our lines, it is evident, are becoming every hour more and more defenceless. Even the most sanguine begin to despair of the arrival of relief in time to save the garrison from a surrender, although the commander-in-chief at New York sends us assurance that he will come to our aid; but he has not started, and any hour may seal our fate.

At five this evening, in spite of my wound, I again quitted my battery on the right, having volunteered to command two eighteen-pounders on the left. I kept up a constant fire with them all night on the enemy’s works. By the morning the battery was masked, and I and my people returned to our own works.

14th.—Our works were now in every direction reduced almost to heaps of ruins, and incapable of withstanding the tremendous fire poured into them by the enemy’s artillery, which, from want of ammunition, we had no power of silencing. Considerable breaches were made in our strongest batteries and redoubts; indeed, it was too evident that

they were no longer tenable. Early this morning the enemy sunk another fire-ship and two transports; at seven in the evening they attempted to storm the flanking redoubts to the right, but were repulsed with considerable loss. We were all kept on the *qui vive*, for it was evident that they had not done with us yet. This was proved at nine o'clock, when we were warned that they were advancing against us with a force believed to be not less than 17,000 men. From right to left they came on, with drums beating and loud huzzas, and attempted to storm our works. We opened on them with all our guns from one end of our works to the other. They replied with their musketry, and it may well be supposed how terrific appeared that blaze of fire extending throughout the whole length of that wide-stretching line. It was a sight which, although many are the battles I have seen, I shall never forget. Then there were the burning houses, the bursting shells, the roar of the artillery, the rattle of the musketry, the crashing of falling buildings, the blowing-up of mines, the cries of the combatants, the shrieks of the wounded, the loud clang of the martial bands, the wild huzzas of the stormers, the defiant shouts of our gallant fellows,—all these must be thrown in, and yet after all no adequate conception can be formed of that midnight scene of slaughter and destruction. Our men fought fiercely and desperately; soldiers and sailors vied with each other in their feats of gallantry. Bravely they stood at the breaches in our crumbling works; the sick and wounded rushed to the trenches. I heard a voice near me which I recognised as that of Tom Rockets.

"I thought you had been in your bed, Tom," said I.

"So I was, sir," he answered; "but I couldn't stay there when this sort of fun was going on, so as I'd yet one arm at liberty I thought as how I'd come and use it alongside you, Mr Hurry; I knew you wasn't over well to do either."

Tom had no jacket on, and his arm was bound up just as it had been when he managed to make his escape from the hospital. Although in most directions we drove the enemy back, they managed to carry two of our flanking redoubts on the left, which had hitherto retarded their approaches, when nearly all the poor fellows in them were, as is generally the case when a post is taken by storm, put to the bayonet.

15th.—The enemy lost no time in throwing up a line of communication between the two flanking redoubts, which they perfected before daylight. The consequence of this to us was most disastrous, for they would now rake the whole of our lines. Still we persevered and returned, though it must be owned but feebly, the vigorous fire they kept up on us.

16th.—At half-past four in the morning, Lord Cornwallis directed a sortie to be made in order to destroy or to spike the guns in one of the enemy's batteries which was causing us most annoyance. The party consisted of about a hundred and fifty men from the guards, the light infantry and the 80th regiment. Never have I seen a more spirited or dashing affair. Away they went, nor stopped till they had surmounted the enemy's works, which were found to be occupied by French troops, upwards of a hundred of whom were bayoneted. Eleven guns were spiked and in five minutes they were back again within our lines with the loss only of twelve killed and wounded. Scarcely anything took place in the garrison with which the enemy were not made acquainted. The general, therefore, never allowed any of his intentions to transpire till the moment of execution. It was therefore without much surprise that I heard at midnight that boats were in readiness to convey the troops over to the Gloucester side, and that the seamen were to keep up as heavy a fire as we could, to deceive the enemy. When the troops had passed over we were to make a rush for the boats and get across to follow them as best we could. What was then to be done we were left to divine. The sick and wounded and prisoners, and our guns and stores, were of course to be abandoned. Scarcely had I heard of the proposed plan before I found that the embarkation had commenced. The night had been threatening, and now a storm with wind and rain, thunder and lightning, such as I had not often witnessed, commenced and increased in fury. It made our work easier in deceiving the enemy, though our artillery seemed but a mockery of the thunder of the skies. Our gallant seamen felt that the safety of the army depended on their exertions, and in spite of the showers of shot and shell falling among us all night, most nobly did they stand to their guns. The time was approaching when I expected to receive orders to call them off from the lines, that we might commence our retreat. O'Driscoll was engaged in the embarkation of the troops. He was to come when they had crossed, to assist me in managing the retreat of the seamen. At length I heard his voice in my battery.

"All right," I exclaimed. "One shot more and we'll make a run for it."

"Not at all right," was his answer. "The plan has failed, and if the enemy discover our condition we are done for. I came to stop you from leaving your guns."

"What has happened?" I exclaimed.

"The larger part of the army were got across in safety when the gale increased so much that I began to doubt the possibility of passing over any more. Even the empty boats could scarcely make head against it. I was going to represent this to the commodore, when I found that two of the boats full of troops had drifted down the river before the gale. If the poor fellows in them have escaped drowning, they will by daylight fall into the hands of the enemy. This settled the question; the further embarkation of the troops has been stopped, and now I must hurry away to endeavour to get the main body back again before our manoeuvre is discovered."

The troops remaining on the York side once more returned to the lines, and the night passed away, as had many previous nights, both sides keeping up a heavy cannonade with the addition of the fearful storm which raged till long after the sun had risen on the scene of slaughter and destruction.

The plan formed by our noble general was worthy of him, desperate as it may appear, and would, I believe, have succeeded had not the elements been against him. Sallying from the lines at Gloucester Point as soon as all the army had crossed over, he intended to attack the camp of the French cavalry, mount the infantry on their horses, and push on by rapid marches towards the north, till he could form a junction with such forces as Sir Henry Clinton might send out to his support. Part of the navy and a small body of troops were to be left behind to arrange terms for the inhabitants as well as for our poor wounded and sick men, who could not be moved. The baggage also of course was

to have been abandoned. Had the plan succeeded, it would have been looked upon as one of the most gallant exploits on record. Still many lives might have been sacrificed and no adequate object obtained, so I doubt not that events turned out for the best.

17th.—At length the storm began to abate, but great was our anxiety lest the enemy should discover our situation and attack us. Happily they did not come on, and by noon we were able to bring back that part of the army which had crossed the river. Our generals held a council of war, and it became known that the sad hour had arrived when we must sue for terms with the enemy, or undergo all the dangers of an assault with the certainty of being defeated at last. With feelings of sorrow and regret we saw the flag of truce depart. We waited the result with anxiety. Whatever were the terms proposed they were peremptorily refused by the enemy, and our brave general determined to hold out for one day more on the bare possibility of relief arriving from New York. The fire accordingly re-commenced on both sides with greater fury than before.

18th.—During the whole morning the fire from all the batteries continued with unabated warmth, though one after the other our guns were becoming useless. I continued working away at mine with gloomy desperation. I was suffering from my wounds, from fatigue, and from hunger too, for our provisions had almost failed us. I could have gone on, however, as long as a man remained alive to help me work my guns. At last a shot came through the embrasure at which was a gun I was on the point of firing. Suddenly I felt my arm jerked up—the match dropped from my nerveless arm, and I fell. At that moment the signal was given to cease firing. Another flag of truce was going forth. I felt that I was desperately wounded—I believed that my last hour had come.

It was just then four o’clock. This was nearly the last shot fired during that hateful and fratricidal war. Angels were rejoicing that blood had ceased to flow, though proud British hearts were sad and humbled at the thoughts of their defeat. That hour struck the knell of England’s supremacy in the West, and gave forth the first glad notes of the establishment of American Independence. Directly afterwards the cannonade from the side of the enemy ceased along the whole extent of their line.

My men, when they saw me on the ground, lifted me up, and placed me on a litter already deeply stained with blood. O’Driscoll arrived, and sincere was the sorrow and commiseration he expressed when he saw me. I inquired for Colonel Carlyon, and entreated that I might be conveyed to where he was.

I felt a longing desire to see Madeline’s father once more, and to send by him, should he survive, my last message of love and devotion to her. I thought that he would not hesitate about delivering them.

“I will inquire where your friend the colonel is,” answered O’Driscoll. “He was removed, I know, for the house where he lay was too much battered to be longer tenable. I am uncertain to what quarters he has been removed.”

My heart sank within me when I heard these words, for I fully believed that Colonel Carlyon had been killed, and that O’Driscoll was unwilling to wound my feelings by the information. My men now moved on with me through the town. I need not again describe the scenes I witnessed—the dead scattered about, piles of ruins, houses battered and blackened, the remnant of the inhabitants wandering about looking for their lost friends, maimed and wounded soldiers and seamen—gaunt, pale and starved—others still unhurt, looking angry and sullen at the thought of our defeat. Officers were standing about in groups, greeting each other with vexed and sorrowful looks. I was suffering too much physically to feel deeply on the matter, but my sensations were of a very mixed character, and I do not feel that it was derogatory to my character, as a loyal subject of his Majesty, or as a British officer, to say that I heartily prayed that the war might be over, even though the proposed humiliating surrender might be the last great event connected with it. After I had been conveyed through several ruined, half-burned streets, my bearers at length stopped at a house where O’Driscoll told me he believed Colonel Carlyon was to be found.

Such was the case. Though sitting up, he was unable to walk. The expression of sorrow and commiseration which lit up his countenance, and the kind words with which he greeted me, gave me the assurance that I was regarded by him in the light I desired. It was some time before a surgeon could attend me—so many more urgent cases demanding the care of the medical men in every direction. In the meantime notice was brought us that a cessation of arms had been agreed on, and which time was afterwards increased till the following day.

Like a father or a fond brother did Colonel Carlyon tend me all that night, refusing to lie down till my wounds had been dressed, and I had sunk into the slumber I so much needed.

19th.—The day—painful, though scarcely to be called humiliating, to the brave army which had so heroically endured that desperate if not protracted siege—at length arrived. Lord Cornwallis, finding that our enemies had resolved to grant us alone the terms which they had previously offered—that we had not as yet experienced the effect of the fire from the flanking redoubts, armed with numerous pieces of heavy artillery ready to open on us—that our garrison was now reduced to scarcely three thousand effective men, in want both of provisions and ammunition—felt that the only course open to him, to prevent the horrors of an assault, and to save the lives of the remainder of his troops, was to accept them. Accordingly, at noon, the army surrendered prisoners-of-war to the United States of America, while the navy became prisoners by arrangement to the Compte de Grasse. At one o’clock a regiment of American troops, followed by one of French, took possession of the works, with drums beating and colours flying, when the British flag was struck, and that of America displayed in its stead. At three o’clock the British troops marched out, with drums beating and colours cased, towards the enemy’s lines. There in a wide field were drawn up the armies of the allies, with the generals ready to receive them. Proud and happy, indeed, must Washington and his brethren-in-arms have felt at this, to them, glorious termination of the struggle.

Sullen and sad looked our men, I was told, as, with gestures of impatience and vexation, they grounded their arms, and then marched back into the town. At the same time the enemy took possession of all our lines and works. My wounds, though severe, were not dangerous, and I was able to take an interest in all that was going forward, and to receive the visits of friends who came to inquire after me and to offer me assistance. With regard to the condition of

the garrison on the day we surrendered, I can state positively that, on a correct muster, we were unable to march out more than two thousand five hundred men. We found, therefore, that we had lost, in killed and wounded, upwards of a thousand, and from sickness four hundred and fifty. From this calculation it will be seen that we had about a hundred and ten killed and wounded every day after the enemy opened their batteries. The remaining troops were at Gloucester, on the other side of the river, the works of which they bravely defended to the last.

The ruinous condition of the town and works, which altogether did not cover half a mile of ground in length and nothing like it in width, may be conceived by the accounts I have already given. I may remark that from one end to the other it was strewed with shot and shell, and had truly the appearance of a ploughed field. I must not close my account of the public events of this memorable period without speaking of the civility and humanity the English prisoners received from the French—so different to that which I experienced when I fell into their hands at Saint Domingo. They showed evident compassion for our condition, and not only rendered us every delicate attention in their power, but gave the officers a captain's guard of grenadiers to guard them from the insolence and abuse of the American soldiers, who showed, it was said, much disposition to ill-treat and rob them. The excitement and the great exertion made by all had hitherto kept at bay the attacks of sickness from many who now began, their toils over, to succumb to them. Intermittent fevers appeared, and few, I believe, escaped. Among those who died was my gallant friend and brother-officer, Lieutenant Conway, whose name I have before frequently mentioned. For my own part, I received the greatest personal kindness both from Americans and French. Those especially who had at any time received any attention from the English seemed anxious on this occasion to exhibit their gratitude. Among them I must particularly mention Monsieur Clenard who commanded the Compte D'Artois, the French ship we and the Bienfaisant took off Ireland. He now commanded one of the ships of war in the French fleet. He showed the Charon's, in particular, every mark of esteem and kindness. So did a French officer we took in the Peggy privateer, when we went in search of the French fleet, and whom we had properly treated when he was on board us. Such conduct reflects the highest honour on the French, and authorises them to expect, should any of their people at any time by the chances of war fall into our hands, the same kindness and consideration.

The American officers were not backward in the same liberal and generous conduct. I had on one occasion—I omitted to mention it—an opportunity of showing a favour to the son of a Colonel Matthews in the American army. Colonel Matthews immediately came and offered money, servants and horses, and invited me to his house as soon as I could be moved. Mr Jones also, a gentleman residing at Hampton, whose family I had met there, sent the instant he heard we had been defeated to ascertain how he could best serve me, and wrote to assure me that, should I decide to remain on my parole in America, he would request General Washington to allow me to reside at his house, and that money or anything he had was at my service. Just at the same time I received a similar message from Mrs Langton, whose house was not more than seven miles from York Town. I need scarcely say that, grateful as I felt for all the other offers of kindness I had received. I resolved, should I have the power, to accept hers. The public events which took place on the days subsequent to the surrender may not be considered of general interest. On the 20th the French ships of war came up the harbour, and on the following day the British troops were marched into the country, where they were to be distributed, and kept as prisoners of war till the conclusion of peace. The seamen still remained in the town. On the 21st, paroles of honour were granted to the officers of the Navy, who were to go to Europe in flags of truce with all the seamen and marines. Every exertion was made to fit out the vessels remaining in the harbour for this purpose, but it was not till the 2nd of November that they were ready to take their departure. On the very day we capitulated, Sir Henry Clinton, with a large fleet of line-of-battle ships and frigates, with seven thousand of his best troops, set sail from New York. He did not appear off the Capes of Virginia till the 24th, when, hearing what had occurred, he returned to New York. It was not, however, till the 26th of January, 1782, that a treaty of peace was signed at Paris, the happy news of which reached Philadelphia on the 23rd of March. But I am anticipating events.

Colonel Carlyon was sufficiently recovered two days after the surrender of York Town to be removed to Mrs Langton's, but several days elapsed before I was able to follow him, when I obtained permission from the commodore as well as from the Compte de Grasse, to remain in America till my health was restored. I had an affectionate parting with O'Driscoll and with my old follower, Tom Rockets, who were the bearers of many messages from me to my family.

"Tell them, O'Driscoll," said I, "that though I am a loyal subject of King George, I see no reason why I should not win the hand, as I believe I have the heart, of a daughter of America."

"You're right, my dear boy," he answered. "You'll be doing the most loyal thing in your power, for you'll be winning back a subject who would otherwise be lost, and gaining many little subjects too, maybe, old fellow," he added, with a poke in my wounded ribs which almost upset me.

At length a litter was brought into my room, and I was carried in it on men's shoulders to the house of my friends. What words of mine can do justice to the generous kindness and the delicate attention with which I was treated by all the family, and the marks of tender affection I received from one who was there to welcome me? When I first looked up, after I had been placed on the bed prepared for my wounded form, Madeline stood by my side. My wounds healed. I rapidly recovered my strength, and then the depressing feeling of my poverty, of my utter inability to support a wife as I desired that Madeline should be maintained, came over me. She ascertained the cause of my despondency.

"But papa can obtain employment for you," she remarked. "Why not, when there is peace, leave the British Navy and enter that of the United States? Surely it is equally honourable!"

Little did she know, when she said that, how, with all its faults, I loved the glorious Navy of England: I perhaps scarcely knew myself, till the sensations which the suggestion conjured up in my bosom told me. Even the idea of quitting the sea and following some occupation on shore had not the attraction for me which might have been supposed. Still I had resolved to adopt the latter alternative if her father would bestow her hand on me. He had been absent for some time, attending to public affairs. At length he returned. I explained to him my position. I thought he

looked grave and sad as I went on speaking.

“I have been under a mistake,” he observed. “I thought that you were in the expectation of receiving a good property, and that you would have the means of supporting my dear child. This war has ruined my estate, and I am but little able to leave her anything. It will be better for you both to part; I grieve that you should have again met.”

These words pierced me to the heart, and overthrew all the bright visions I had conjured up. They were so unlike, too, what I expected to hear from him. I pressed my hands on my face and groaned. I dared not meet Madeline. I thought that, too probably, he would prohibit me from seeing her again. I sat the picture of despair. Just then a negro servant entered the room, and gave a packet of letters to the colonel. He handed me one with a black seal. Another blow. Some other member of my family dead. It is too bitter. I cannot stand this. I’ll go to sea again, and hope that in mercy I may lose that life which has become too burdensome to bear. Such thoughts, (wrong and impious I know they were), passed through my mind as I kept the letter in my hand before breaking the seal. I looked at the superscription. It was from my dear sister Jane. I tore it open. The contents soon riveted my attention. It was not long. One passage ran thus:—

“Some weeks ago, our old relation, Sir Hurricane Tempest, much to our surprise, sent to ask one of us to go and nurse him, saying that he was, he believed, on his death-bed, and beseeching us to have compassion on a friendless, childless old man. The lot fell on me. I found him very different to what I expected, and interested in all matters concerning us. Do you remember, Hurry, rescuing an old gentleman from the mob in London during the Lord George Gordon riots? That was Sir Hurricane himself. He knew you; and when I told him about you, and that you had fallen in love with an American lady, the daughter of a rebel, and that you had no means of marrying her, he answered, ‘But he shall have the means. I’ll give them to him. I like his spirit. I like her. Her friends have espoused the right side—the side of liberty. They were not afraid to stand up boldly against tyranny and injustice. Tell him I shall be happy to welcome the little rebel as my niece, if I live, and, at all events, to know that her children will inherit my property.’ Soon after this our kind old uncle died, and he has left you, as far as I can understand, fully three thousand a year.”

How my heart bounded when I heard these words! I handed the letter to Colonel Carlyon. He rose and took my hand.

“I had not intended to be very stern when, just now, I spoke to you,” he said, and I knew that he spoke the truth. “I wished to ascertain whether your affection for my daughter was as great as I was assured it is. I know that you are eager to give her, before she hears it from others, the satisfactory information you have received. Go and tell her.”

I did. A few days subsequent to the news of peace being received, we were married. After a tour in the States she accompanied me to England, and my American bride won golden opinions from all the relatives and friends to whom I had the happiness of introducing her. A dutiful and affectionate wife she has always been to me, and I have had just cause to be thankful that I married the Little Rebel.

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